

Folklore of Sussex County, Delaware

By Dorothy W. Pepper

Written in 1976.

John H. Middleton had a meat store in Selbyville from 1907 to 1911. This was the first meat store with a refrigerator for meat south of Georgetown. His brother-in-law (Allie) and Harvey Evans built the wooden refrigerator and packed it with sawdust. The ice was secured from mill ponds and was stored in tiny houses. It was packed in sawdust to keep it from melting until needed for refrigeration. The meat store was on the present Beulah Stevens property on Main St.

The High Hill Crossing was located at Cemetery Rd Selbyville.

The Frankford and Breakwater Railroad (part of the DE, MD, VA Railroad Co.), extended service to Selbyville in 1886

Nancy Williams, grandmother of Dorothy Pepper was the first person buried in Redman's Cemetery on Jan. 27, 1887 in S.W. corner.

Guns would be fired from McCabe Store porch to call people to town when news of importance came to the village or other communications were needed. Delaware Statesmen Thomas F. Bayard, the first person to bear the title of Ambassador to Great Britain gave a speech from the porch. He came with other notables on a train from Wilmington. 800 people showed up to hear him speak.

During the Great Storm of Sept. 1888 (hurricane) a square rigger named the Barratine, went through the iron pier of Lewes.

Druley's Tide: Jan. 15, 1831 named for Captain Druley who lived in Bayville near the marsh gate who was drowned in the storm, which brought tides 13 to 16 feet above marsh level. There were many stories on sheep and cattle hanging in the tree limbs when the tide went down.

D.J. Long had a water powered lumber mill in 1840 and would sell lumber at market in Milford.

Clara Holloway (Angel of Mercy) was born Dec. 7, 1866 between Selbyville and Frankford. She started teaching at "Cemetery" near Gumboro.

Rick "Uncle Rink" Showell and his wife Sarah Showell, lived on Polly Branch. Uncle Rink could be seen going to town on his with horse and carriage carrying a burlap bag for groceries. Parents would tell children to be good or Uncle Rink would put them in his bag and leave you in Polly's Branch, which was thought to be haunted.

In 1862 Cyrus Timmons offered \$300 for an individual to go to the Civil War for him, he was 18 years old. He lived in Dog Corner, now known as Roxana. Selbyville and Roxana men belonged to the Sixth Regiment of Delaware Volunteers, Company D. They guarded Fort Delaware on Pea Patch Island and the railroad bridge at Havre de Grace, Md.

A fire on Feb. 13, 1916 burned the business district.

Williamsville was named for Ezekiel Williams. He owned the only house in the village at the time. A steam mill was erected and later a store. Later on a post office was put into the store.

Additional Tidbits in Time:

In the Selbyville area the first store was established in 1808 in or about Omar (named by Preacher Ayers). It was called Buzzard's Glory where men would sit around telling tales, snitching crackers and drinking corn liquor like buzzards.

The town of Roxanna was originally at the road intersections called "Dogs Corner".

In Ocean View the Halls store was named by Sea Captain Henry Burton.

Cypress Fires came to the area in 1820 on what was then the Joshua Hudson tract. Fires also occurred in 1860, 1871, 1880 and 1895.

The Williams Store in early Selbyville was known for making shingles and was owned by Henry I. Williams (born 1829).

The first automobile in Selbyville was purchased by Wirrie Long in 1908.

Please note: The information given above has not been researched to determine its accuracy or lack thereof. Therefore it remains folklore from the early days of the founding of the Town of Selbyville, as conveyed to us by Dorothy W. Pepper an early resident.