

The Bacon Family

The hamlet of Five Corners derives its name from the intersection of 3 roads: Routes 98, 279 and Bacon Road. Rt 98 is the original 2nd Meridian Survey Line of the Holland Land Company. Rt 279 essentially follows the original route of the Oak Orchard Road leading from Batavia to Lake Ontario. Bacon Road, running east and west, was named for the family who most influenced the history of that intersection.

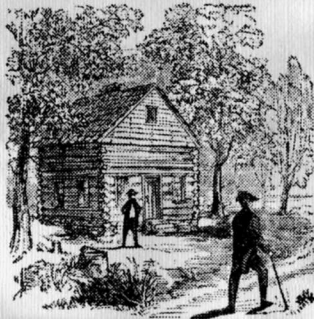
Three brothers, all in their early 20's came from Burlington, CT to the new frontier of the Holland Land Purchase in the early 1800's. They were the sons of Moses & Rosanna (Rust) Bacon.

Moses, the first to come, selected 200 acres and worked for the Holland Land Company to help open the Oak Orchard Road. His earnings were applied towards paying for his land. That road today follows Rt 98 from Batavia north and continues on Rt 279 to Lake Ontario.

In December of 1813, the War of 1812 touched the settlers in this area. Moses Bacon was called out with the militia to defend the frontier at Molyneux Tavern in what is now Niagara County. Moses served again in September of 1814 at the Battle of Fort Erie. During that battle he was shot in the neck and taken prisoner by the British to Halifax, Canada. He was released at the end of the War in 1815 and returned to his home where he lived out his life.

Moses' brothers, Elias & Hosea, followed him between 1819 & 1823. Moses sold part of his land to each brother. In those first years the brothers started a sawmill where they sawed timber from the trees felled to clear the land.

Elias built a log cabin and barn by the side of the spring just north of the corner. He brought his wife, Sarah, from Connecticut to live in the western wilderness. The barn was log with a thatched roof in which he kept a cow and horse. After clearing his land & planting crops, Elias was financially able to build his cobblestone home.



Hosea was the youngest brother and first visited the Holland Purchase when he was 19 years old. For four years after he spent summers here with his brothers cutting and sawing timber at the mill and clearing land for planting. He worked at the sawmill until 1828 when he

received the deed to his property, located east of Five Corners, on what is called Brown Road. He built a frame house there, which was later replaced with a cobblestone home and the farm acquired the name Greystone.



The Community

Education at Five Corners in the early years was conducted in a variety of buildings. Around 1820, school was held just south of The Corner in a log barn "that leaked when it rained". The next summer school was in a log house northwest of The Corners, which was the first house built south of the Ridge Road. The next summer it was held in a corn crib just south of The Corners. From there it went to a horse barn just north of The Corners.

By 1824 Moses and Sarah decided to help in the schooling of the children and deeded a piece of land to be used to build a school house. A cobblestone school house was built and serves today as a private residence on Route 279, just north of the intersection.

In May of 1834 Moses and his wife again served their community by deeding a piece of land for a burying ground. That cemetery, The Union Cemetery stands today just north of Moses' brick home built the following year in 1835. Moses, a civic minded man, was also a trustee of the Congregational Church in Gaines Village in 1824 and 11 years later contributed financially to the establishment of the Phipps Union Seminary in Albion.

Descendants of the brothers carried on business at The Five Corners into the 20th century. Elias Scott Bacon lived in a brick house on the point of the triangle, today housing an insurance company. He built a foundry and manufactured farming implements. His son, Scott E. Bacon, carried on after his father with a foundry and fine furniture manufacture just north of the house.

Nieces of the Bacons inherited the Elias Bacon farm after the turn of the century, where Ruth Neilans, a descendent, lives.

Earl Harding, also a descendent, grew up at Five Corners in the Moses Bacon home. Earl went to Cornell University and graduated in 1920. His accomplishments were many for both Gaines and N.Y.S. He was president of the N.Y.S. Horticultural Society, one of the original directors and president of the Natl. Cherry Institute, chairman of the Natl. Cherry Growers Meeting, Director for six years of the N.Y.S. Agricultural Society, to name but a few. Mr. Harding was appointed by Governor Rockefeller to the New York Marketing Order Advisory Board and the Marketing Development Board for Apples. He also served on the Town Board for 21 years.



*Revised and provided courtesy of:
Watt Farms Country Market - 2003
Located on the Earl Harding Farm.*

Sugaring



Moses had a large sugar orchard of maple trees for making sugar. Often he exchanged some of his maple sugar for muscavado sugar from some local merchants. Moses made his sap troughs by cutting straight grained basswood trees 15-16 feet in diameter, splitting the log through the center and chopping out the inside. This would hold a pail of sap. In a few years these were replaced with pine buckets which were easier to handle.

He cut a large whitewood tree into a log of 21 or more feet long, dug out the inside with an ax and adze which made a trough to hold more than 20 barrels of sap. The sap was boiled in a cauldron kettle in the woods. The syrup was then strained into pails and carried to the house. The syrup was allowed to settle and then was turned carefully into a kettle to boil, leaving the much treasured maple sugar.

Over 

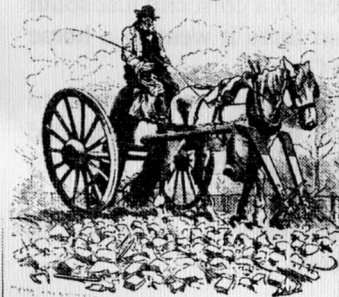
The Family Farms

Approximately 100 years after settlement in 1913, the farms of the three brothers were described in a local atlas:

Moses' farm, then owned by his descendent, E. J. Harding, was described as containing 122 acres with good wells and springs. 31 acres were fruit including 15 in apples, 10 in peaches and apples, 5 in peaches, apples and pears and 1 acre of quinces. 85 acres were set to wheat, oats, tomatoes, peas, etc., with the remainder left to meadow and pasture. The farm boasted a brick home 30' x 35', horse barn 28' x 40', poultry house 16' x 45', pig sty 20' x 30', ice house 12' x 16', scale house 16' x 20'; smoke house 6' x 8'; and a silo 12' x 30'.

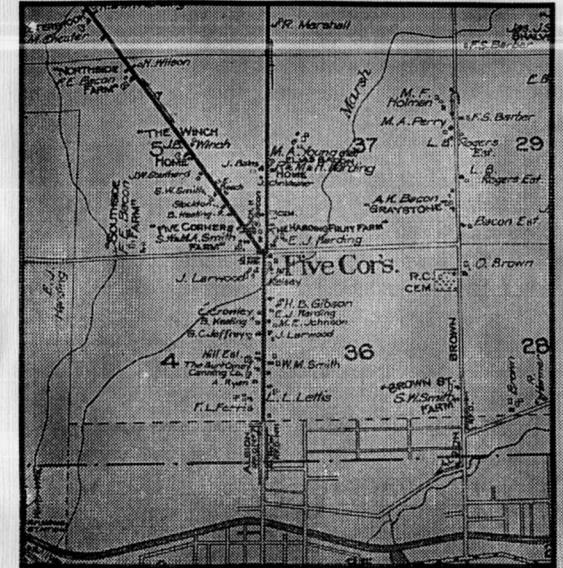
In 1913 Elias' farm, owned by two of his nieces, is listed as containing 105 acres: 15 acres in wheat; 15 in beans; 27 in oats and hay; 10 in apples and pears; 10 in lumber and the remainder in pasture. The farm had plenty of water supplied by a creek, springs and a well. Its buildings included the stone residence 30' x 78', barn 36' x 95' with an ell of 27' x 63', cooper shop 18' x 21', hennery 21' x 21'.

Greystone Farm, Hosea's home, was listed as 125 acres on Brown Road with 5 good wells. The farm was devoted to fruit, vegetables and grain including: 14 acres in apples; 1 in pears and peaches; 7 in sweet corn; 3 in potatoes; 10 in wheat; 5 in corn; 9 in oats; 5 in cabbage; 34 in meadow; 4 in timber



and the rest in pasture. The buildings included a Cobblestone house 30' x 60', a horse barn 26' x 40', a pig sty 20' x 20', and a hay shed 16' x 48'.

A Heritage of Farming & Community



Map taken from the 1913 New Century Atlas.
Orleans County, New York

The Bacon Family At Five Corners