



Oneida Cultural Heritage Department

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The Salt Pork Avenue Project



INTRODUCTION

Nineteen ninety-two marked the beginning of an exciting project that would take more than 13 years to complete – the re-creation of Salt Pork Avenue. According to Tribal Historian, Loretta V. Metoxen, the Jacob Shenandoah property was sold to E. P. Boland. Boland took five acres and built a series of small houses which became rental units. That was the first Salt Pork Avenue. Many of the older members of the Oneida community will remember the block-long Salt Pork Avenue in Oneida. In the old days, on any given day, you could smell the salt pork cooking as you walked down the street.

In the mid 1960's, the Hobart Town Board renamed Salt Pork Avenue as Shenandoah Drive. As the years passed by, Salt

Pork Avenue has not been forgotten, especially not by the Oneida Cultural Heritage Department.

The location of the log home reconstruction project is the north side of Highway 54, just west of Hillcrest Drive (Highway FF). Access to the homes is by Pleasant Lane to Kahonk Road. The original allottee for this parcel of land was Noah Swamp.

Most of the homes on Salt Pork Avenue date back to the mid 1800's. It was deemed imperative that, as these homes were being replaced by newer, modern structures, the older structures be preserved as a part of Oneida's historic past. These homes are a direct link to our ancestors from New York who began migrating to Wisconsin in the early 1800's. They utilized the materials at hand to build their homes. There was an abundance of timber, mostly oak, but also cedar and pine.

As a part of the reconstruction process, a consultant, James K. Hayward, was hired. James is a restoration specialist who was, at the time, working at the Heritage Hill Park construction. His first assignment was to assess the log homes for disassembly and restoration and to outline his process.

RESTORATION PROCESS

Restoration is a complex process which begins with a thorough assessment of the structure. Careful documentation is taken via notes, drawings, and photographs to assist in the reconstruction. It is also a running record of the reconstruction process.

James K. Hayward states:

“Research is an important part of documentation. Research includes the study of historic material such as old photographs, personal letters and diaries. This information is helpful in planning what will be done during restoration. For example, a period photograph can be helpful in determining whether a chimney is brick or stone.”

It is only after the original structure is assessed and documented that disassembly can occur. Non-historic material is removed, and recovered treasures are documented. Old newspapers, letters, or diaries provide information to help better re-create not only the structure, but the original “feel” of the building.

As the reconstruction process occurs, modern building codes are applied to the historic buildings, keeping the “new” buildings safe, and assuring they will last.

Consultant Hayward says:

“The process ... is lengthy and time consuming. It requires the talents and special skills of many dedicated people. From assessment, documentation, disassembly to reconstruction, historic restoration is a labor of love for the people who contribute to the preservation of our historic past.”

HISTORY OF THE PROJECT

Between 1992 and 1996, five homes were disassembled in the manner James Hayward described. They were stored in a barn on Highway 29 until 1998, when they were

moved to the barn at the Cultural Heritage Department.

On October 26, 1998, a General Tribal Council (GTC) motion was made by Tribal Historian Loretta V. Metoxen, that \$250,000 for reconstruction of the log homes be included in another resolution. The motion passed and the project was on the move again.

The site which had already been designated in a 1996 GTC resolution was excavated and the foundations laid. In the spring of 1999, James Hayward was again consulted to teach the staff how to reconstruct the log homes. Now it was just a matter of reconstructing the houses.

Like a giant tinker toy set, each log home was carefully laid out next to the reconstruction site in preparation, but in the fall of that year the project was held up because of problems with the lease. In order to not lose the funding, the \$250,000 was placed under CIP Project status. Gratefully, the Business Committee was supportive of the Cultural Heritage Department’s efforts and the project moved to number three on the CIP priority list. Culture, history and language had become a national priority.

The log home project was always included in the overall Cultural Center Plan and in the year 2000, the log homes project appeared on the Land Commission agenda several times. Finally, the Cultural Center Plan was given one year to submit an overall project site. At that time, the CIP Plan was 95% complete.

In August of 2000, the CIP plan for the Cultural Center, which included the log homes project, was completed and submitted to the Land Commission agenda and all the required committees. The log homes project was tabled by the Land Commission. On Nov. 13, 2000, a public hearing was held for the reconstruction of the five log homes into an historic Oneida village. A conditional use permit was granted.

A lease agreement was approved on March 19, 2001. To the relief of the Cultural Heritage staff and all parties involved, reconstruction of the log homes resumed. During the summer of 2003, driving down Highway 54, just approaching the Brown County Park, the “new” Salt Pork Avenue could be seen going up.

Eventually, James Hayward moved on to other projects within the state and in 2004, a new contractor, Jerry Dewayne, was hired to continue the project.

Doors and windows were installed, some of the roofing completed, and the final finishing needs were identified to complete the log homes. The fall of 2005 marked the completion of the project and the beginning of the furnishing and usage planning.

Throughout 2005-2007, the Oneida Department of Public Works assigned a crew to continue the work to finish the log homes. The crew completed the exteriors with board and batten, sealed the homes, and applied a preservative to the exterior. Then, they began work on the interior window casings, lofts, and floors. They did a fantastic job! In 2007, an open house was held to provide the opportunity for the community to share their families' stories of living in these log homes and to provide input for the usage and furnishing of the interior.

THE LOG HOMES



JOHN Q. ADAMS HOUSE
Dexter Drive

This house was also known as the Dexter House. It was removed from Dexter Drive which used to cross Duck Creek and continue on to County Highway J at the time the house was built. It was located behind the Hidden Valley Driving Range near Duck Creek just off Highway 54 in Oneida, Wisconsin. The house is believed to have been built around the mid-1800's.

According to an old newspaper clipping about the house, Leroy King, then owner of the Hidden Valley Driving Range told reporters, "I was out on the course and a guy came up to me,

a guy that had to be around 90, told me that house used to be down by the creek. It was moved up here around 50 years ago." That would have been about 1930.

When the house was dismantled, copies of the Press Gazette from the 1930's were found used as insulation. Interestingly enough, one of the newspapers had an article about a gambling casino!

The house was the original homestead of John Quincey Adams who was born July 4, 1849 to Cornelius and Susan (Cornelius) Adams. On September 15, 1872, he married Celicia Cornelius in the Holy Apostles Episcopal Church in Oneida, WI. She is the daughter of Moses Cornelius and Christine King. She was born about 1855. Together they had twelve children. In addition to the house, there was also a big barn.

When John Q. died, the house and land were willed to his oldest son, Simeon Adams. Against the will of his family, Simeon sold the property to non-tribal people in the 1930's or 40's.

After many years, the Oneida Land Office purchased it from Widow Margaret Vanevenhoven along with some other lands that she owned.

The Site: This log building was not constructed on the site where the disassembly occurred. The building showed signs that it had previously been dismantled and reconstructed. Charring from a fire that had occurred at some time in the history of the building was found on many of the interior log walls, however no charring was found on any other material. The first floor interior was divided into three areas. The exterior of the building was covered with asphalt siding.

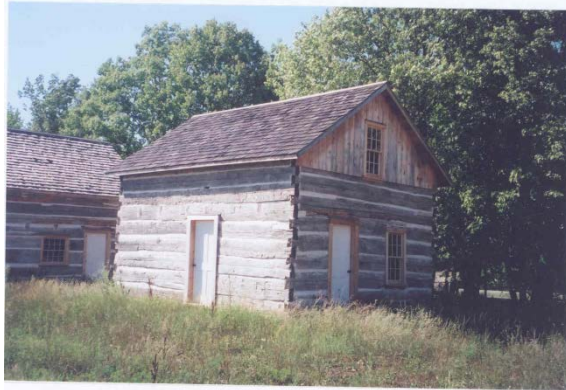
This reconstructed building was moved to the current project site at some earlier period. Items found and examined, such as newspapers, nails and hardware suggest that the reconstruction occurred sometime in the latter part of the 19th century.



CHAUNCEY BAIRD HOUSE
144 Shenandoah Drive

The last owner of this house was Harry Leutjen who sold it to the tribe on June 4, 1992. Harry Leutjen was born September 11, 1931 to Henry and Matilda (Baird) Leutjen. He is the grandson of Chauncey and Tillie (Metoxen) Baird. Chauncey was the eighth of Cornelius D. and Margaret (Hill) Baird's twelve children and was 13 at the time of the allotments. Together Chauncey and Tillie had eight children.

***The Site:** The Baird House appears to be original to the site where the structure was disassembled. The period of construction appears to have been between the turn of the century and World War I.*



NELSON SKENANDORE HOUSE
173 Riverdale, Drive

This house was initially called the Webster House because that was the name of the family living in the house at the time of its disassembly. It was located between the railroad track and County J and was the original homestead of Nelson Skenandore. Nelson was, at the time of allotments, 7 years of age. He was born October 5, 1882 to Jacob and Christine (Swamp) Skenandore. He later married Olive

Reed, the daughter of John and Elizabeth (Cooper) Reed and together they had eleven children. One of their granddaughters, Alma, married Donald Webster and they were the last inhabitants of the house.

We think that the cabin underwent a major reconstruction some time before 1948. We found newspaper dated 1898 glued to the underside of the second floor joist system. When we took up the sheathing floor of the first floor we found the same dates on the material along with shadows of the second floor joist system. We think that the first floor sheathing was originally the second floor. At some time before 1948, the second floor flooring was removed and replaced with a matched flooring. The second floor flooring was then used as a sheathing on the first floor and covered with a matched pine flooring.

During the reconstruction the floors were removed. The first floor joists were repaired and the stairway in the southwest corner of the cabin was closed up. A new stairway was constructed in the northeast corner of the cabin. A third stairway replaced the second in the same place, however, it was a pull down type which retracted into the ceiling.

The cabins first floor ceiling was a matched beaded board with several layers of paint. The second floor ceiling was 4x8 sheets of paperboard with one layer of paint.¹



THE ELIJAH E. SKENANDORE HOUSE
600 Silas Drive

This house was built on the original allotment of Elijah E. Skenandore, born February 18, 1853 to Nicholas and Susan

¹ Field Notes for the Nelson Skenandore House by James K. Hayward September 21, 1993

(Cornelius) Skenandore, and died in September, 1930. He married Mary Margaret Baird on January 13, 1884 in the Holy Apostles Episcopal Church. She was born September 28, 1868 to Cornelius D. and Margaret (Hill) Skenandore. Together they had eleven children.

In November of 1995, an inspection was made to determine the condition of the dwelling for repairs or replacement with a HUD housing unit. At the time of inspection, it was determined that the present dwelling was unfit for human habitation and that it needed to be removed immediately.

While inspecting the structure, it was noted that the center core of the dwelling was actually a two story log cabin that had been covered over inside and out with conventional frame addition being added on later to the east and west ends of the original structure. Further inspection indicated that the original logs appeared to be in good condition. It was believed that this structure was the original Elijah Skenandore home since it was located on his original allotment and the way the logs were assembled.



THE JACOB SHENANDOAH HOUSE
140 Shenandoah Street

The original allottee for this homestead was Jacob Shenandoah. He was born 1840 to son of Elijah and Mary (House) Shenandoah and died September 16, 1890. He married Christine Swamp, born 1846 to Hannah Swamp and together they had fourteen children. Coincidentally, Jacob is the son of Elijah Skenandore and the father of Nelson Skenandore making three of the houses related. The last family to live in the house was Hilton Charles.

Observations of numerous logs suggests strongly that the material used in the

construction of this house came from structural support members of a road or rail bridge.

Evidence that the material was part of some earlier bridge was found in logs containing threaded steel nuts and bolts. In addition, numerous dimensional holes were found drilled through the logs. Rust shadows were observed over these holes indicating the previous presence of oxidizing steel washers. Also observed on the sill logs were angled steel fasteners which may have been for tie-rods which connected the bridge floor to the bridge truss system and were simply cut during salvage operations. Also observed on several logs was excessive nailing as well as paint patterns inconsistent with any construction during assembly of the house.

To my knowledge, no log building in Wisconsin was constructed in its entirety using material salvaged from a former bridge. This point alone expresses the uniqueness of the builder who constructed a home using material no longer serving its original purpose. In addition, because so much of the building had been so well preserved in its original condition, consideration should be given to include this building in plans for a future outdoor museum.²

THE THOMAS ELM HOUSE

In 1998, the Cultural Heritage Department staff began the dismantling the Thomas Elm house, built in 1911 north of the intersection of County roads J and FF. Thomas Elm was married to Electa Metoxen.

The logs from that home were to be used as replacement logs in the reconstruction of the five previously listed homes.

PROPOSED USES

As you enter New Salt Pork Avenue, there will be three houses on the left side of the street and two houses on the right. Each log home will have a plaque with historical information, photographs of families that lived there and their families' genealogy.

Now, the log homes are in the final stages of completion and the community will be

² Field Notes for the Jacob Skenandore House by James K. Hayward January 28, 1996

asked for input. The following are some suggestions that the planning team came up with for possible uses of the buildings. On the left is the John Q. Adams House. It is the largest and could be used by community members and tribal organizations to conduct workshops such as lace making, quilting/sewing, corn husk dolls, gustoweh classes, basket making, pottery, making wampum beads, and as a meeting area.

The first log home on the left is the John Q. Adams House. It is the largest and could be used by community members and tribal organizations to conduct workshops such as lace making, quilting/sewing, corn husk dolls, gustoweh classes, basket making, pottery, making wampum beads, and as a meeting area.

The second log home on the left, the Nelson Skanandore House, could be completely refurbished as it would have looked when Oneida people lived in this historical home, complete with out-buildings.

The first house on your right, the Jacob Shenandoah House, could be used as a model workshop which would display the trades and tools of Oneida people such as blacksmith irons, harness making tools, or a lapidary shop for the making of wampum beads.

The last two log houses on the ends of the road will be for visitors and workshop participants to warm up and change for seasonal activities such as: lacrosse, snowshoeing, snow snake contests, maple syrup camp, cross-country skiing, camping, and canoeing.



The Old Salt Pork Avenue

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