

Palmyra men preserve a little piece of history

By Beth Hoad
Palmyra Historian

Sometimes it takes very little to preserve history. Lawrence “Mick” Snyder, II and Jim Long proved that for about \$25 and some elbow grease they could make a visual difference, give back to their community, improve the view from their front window and help preserve Palmyra’s history.

Beginning in the late 1920’s and continuing until 1959, New York State funded the installation of more than 2800 historical site markers throughout the state, including 35 in Wayne County. Most are standing and in good condition even though road widening, accidents and vandalism have taken their toll. Legislation allocated funding for their erection, but none was directed for maintenance. Many of those familiar blue and yellow cast steel signs are in various stages of deterioration and are difficult to read from a distance.

Traditionally maintenance is the landowner’s responsibility. When Snyder and Long noticed the two signs in front of their North Creek Rd. home on Snyder’s family farm were pitted and rusting, they contacted my office about having the signs reconditioned. They are concerned with keeping the property looking nice and Snyder had previously obtained a state grant to rehab the large barn where his father and grandfather kept their dairy cows beginning in 1961. “Repainting the signs was kind of like the icing on the cake,” said Snyder.

The sign in the front yard of his family farm home reads: *Site of Pioneer Home of Gideon Durfee Built 1811*, and the second located across the road from the house states: *Rope Walk Here rope was manufactured in 500 foot lengths. It was used on the Albany Schenectady R. R.*

They removed the signs from the posts and Long began the 3-hour per sign cleaning and repainting process. After he cleaned the rust and loose paint from both sides with a wire brush, he sprayed them with primer and then the background color, Rustoleum #7727 Royal Blue. When the blue had dried, he rolled Rustoleum #7747 Sunburst Yellow onto the raised letters with a short napped roller, and voile, the signs looked as good as new!

Later they offered to refurbish a third sign in front of the East Palmyra Presbyterian Church. Two weeks later, the sign, which reads, *East Palmyra Church First to be organized in State, west of Pre-emption Line, 1793*, looked as good as new.

As mentioned above, some of the original signs have disappeared such as the one located along North Creek Rd. about midway between Schilling and Harris Rd. at the sight of the first area saw mill built by the pioneer Reeves family. It read; *Saw Mill Brook Long Island Colony settled here May 2, 1792*. If by chance, anyone knows what happened to that sign, please contact my office at Town Hall – 597-5521.

On behalf of Town of Palmyra government and residents, I wish to publicly thank Mick Snyder and Jim Long for their efforts to help preserve Palmyra History.

(Caption) Mick Snyder is shown with the historic marker located on his family farm.