

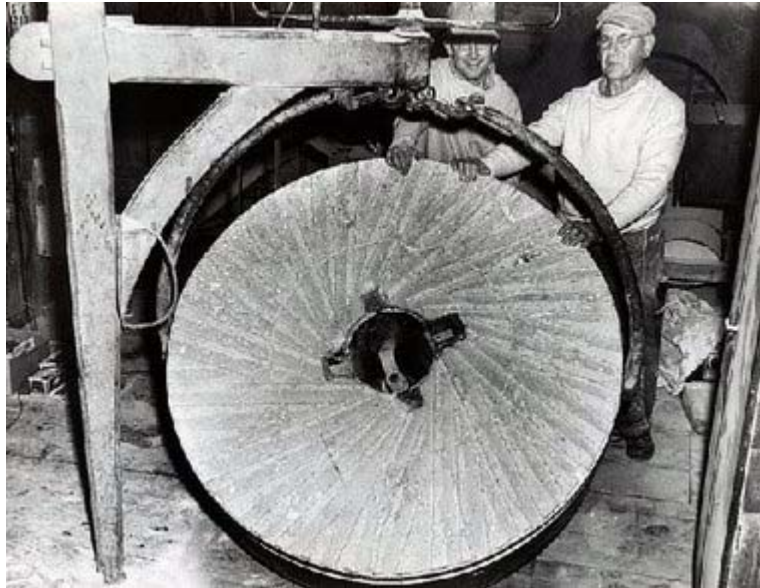
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Books of Central New York: From manufacturing in Baldwinsville to a history of Tully Lake

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Dick Case / Post-Standard columnist
By



Courtesy Onondaga Historical Association
Museum & Research Center

A mill stone is moved for sharpening in 1954 at the Mercer Milling Co., 4 Syracuse St., Baldwinsville. It was being moved by John Naylor (left) and Gardner Mercer. Dull stones produced less valuable coarse flour.

Bob Bitz is a one-man book industry.

He's out with his latest this week. These are not airy memoirs; they're serious histories. "Darn it," Bob explains, "it needs to be recorded."

The newest book is "A History of Manufacturing in Baldwinsville and the Towns of Lysander and Van Buren." It's a well-researched and illustrated 190-page study of the industries of the author's home turf. Bob's the retired turkey farmer (Plainville Farms) who turned 81 this month.

This is the man's fourth book, starting with a history of agriculture in his hometown of Lysander, in 2007. Then he brought out "A History of Agriculture in Onondaga County" (2008) and "Four Hundred Years of Agricultural Change in the Empire

State" (2010). No. 5, "Tales of a Turkey Farmer," is due out soon, before Bob and his wife, Janice, head for Port Charlotte, Fla. for six months.

"I put in more than 1,000 hours in that one," Bob says of his book about Baldwinsville-area industries, from making cigars to paper, pottery and candles. Among many gems, we learn that New Process Gear Corp., now a Chrysler Corp. subsidiary in Syracuse, got its start in Baldwinsville, as New Process Rawhide Co., making gears out of tanned hides. The industry moved to Syracuse after the Baldwinsville factory burned in 1898.

Bob's working on a book about transportation, which he admits has at least a year of work to complete.

"It's fun," he says of his research. "Keeps me out of trouble."

He's retired as president of Plainville Turkey Farm, once the Northeast's largest turkey grower, before the family

business was sold in 2007.

Bob's donated books to Baldwinsville Library and McHarrie's Legacy Museum, which lent him some of the pictures in the new book. They'll sell for \$15 a copy, which is what it costs him to print the book.

Tully Park history



Courtesy Tom Fox

Tully Lake used to be home for three large hotels, including the Tully Lake Park Hotel. It burned down in 1914.

Tom Fox's book, "A History of the Tully Lake Park Association," is a labor of love, also.

"Some books need to be written," according to the retired accountant, whose family's has camped on Tully Lake since 1941.

The book is exhaustive (150 pages) and full of illustrations and maps. It includes the stories of the largest of three hotels on the lake, Tully Lake Park Hotel, which burned in 1914, and Tully Furniture Manufacturing Co., as well as sketches of artists who lived in the colony. The association of campers started in 1888.

Tom's selling copies of his book for \$25 from his home, 101 Draycott Rd., Fayetteville, 13066.

CCC camps

Another definitive study of a subject, "Adirondack Civilian Conservation Corps Camps: History, Memories and Legacy of the CCC," comes from author Marty Podskoch, who has given us books about Adirondack and Catskill fire towers and other Adirondack studies.

The CCC book covers the public works camps that operated from 1933 to 1942 under President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal in the Adirondacks and elsewhere in New York. There were 26 Adirondack camps. The state program included some 220,000 men who built bridges, constructed dams, put up fencing, installed pipes and water systems and fought fires.

Marty's book is full of pictures and has 352 pages. It's in local bookstores for \$20. The author lives in East Hampton, Conn.

Also in my book pile:

"Teflon Shelly," a novel written and published by Ron Ryan, a fire investigator with the county Department of Emergency Management and a code enforcement officer with the Town of Onondaga. Ron has conducted thousands of fire investigations in his fire-service career, including arsons connected to Shirley Winters, who is serving a 20-year prison sentence for the killing of two of her children.

Any readers who might see a tie to Shelly Summers, the main character in the book, and Winters are on their own. The book is \$20.95 at bookstores.

"Listen to Our Past" is the newest history from Brookfield Central School, Class of 2010, working under Oneida Lake historian Jack Henke. It sells for \$12 at Brookfield Central, Box 60, Brookfield, 13314.

The 200th anniversary of Dewitt Community Church this year is observed with a history of the church produced by the church's history committee. It's available from the church.

"As Autumn Leaves Turn." This is John H. Briant's latest Adirondack Detective book. The retired state trooper-author will sign books at Barnes and Noble at New Hartford, 1-3 p.m. Oct. 1 and 1-3 p.m. at Downtown Coffee and Book Store in Auburn, Oct. 22.

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