

Did you know Solvay was once called Geddesburgh? That and other interesting facts about Solvay found in new history of the village

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By



This is a photo looking down Cogswell Avenue in the village of Solvay. The cone-shaped objects on the horizon are the kilns of Iroquois China Co., which was founded in 1905 and closed in 1969. The former pottery factory, with its distinctive "cone" kilns, became China Towne, a furniture outlet. The photo is one of many in an updated history of the village called simply "Solvay."

Fifty-two years after the original came out, a new edition of a history of Solvay has been published.

The original researcher and primary writer is the same, Barbara Rivette, now the town of Manlius and villages of Fayetteville and Manlius historian. The book is called, simply, "Solvay." It arrives with the same cover as the first book: Blue.

Barbara said the 1959 original has been re-edited and supplemented with up-dated material and pictures. "More than a third of the material is new," the historian explained.

She said the first "Solvay" was intended primarily for use in Solvay schools, where it came to be known as "the blue book." The plan was to bring out a series of histories for local schools. The publisher was the late Frank Richards of Phoenix, who died shortly after the first book came out. Barbara Rivette had already started a second book, about Syracuse, which she had filed away.

The new edition brings readers up-to-speed on developments in Solvay, which was founded as "Geddesburgh" in 1794 by James Geddes. The new name was chosen to honor the Solvay Brothers, inventors of a process for making soda ash. That plant was responsible for Solvay's incorporation (in 1895) and its long-run prosperity. The company closed in 1986, delivering what the author calls a "stunning blow to the village."

Barbara agrees that Solvay eventually re-invented itself, with a new industrial base. "It wasn't the end of the world, after all," she commented.

Solvay Process, later Honeywell Corp., closed life as a "grassy field," as a company official had predicted.

Solvay "suburbs" such as Westvale and Lakeland thrived; the estates of "The Process" executives were replaced by a

pleasant residential neighborhood called Piercfield.

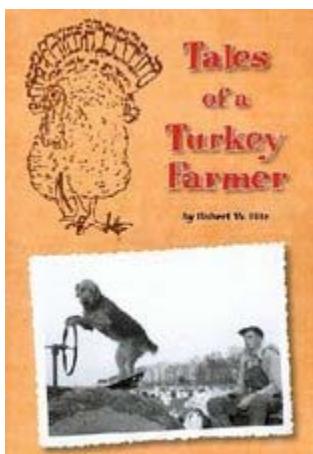
One "old" Solvay tradition, the Tyrol Club, founded in 1929, rolls along as one of the oldest Tyrol clubs in the country. It is a club for former residents of the northern Italian "Tyrol" district and their families.

Barbara Rivette says she's planning to continue her busy career as a researcher, writer and editor. Her honors include the medal of the Onondaga Historical Association awarded in 2004 for "distinguished, extraordinary or lifetime service to the cause of preserving the interpreting local history."

The new "Solvay" was published by her daughter-in-law, Judith Lamanna Rivette's Oh, How Upstate Enterprises. Judith is the author of three books of Solvay stories.

Copies of the book are on sale, for \$20, at the Book Cellar, in the former Pozzi Hotel on Milton Avenue, and at Onondaga Historical Association in downtown Syracuse.

Other new books



This is the cover of a new book by Bob Bitz, a member of the family that owned Plainview Turkey Farm, which was sold in 2007.

"Tales of a Turkey Farmer" is a recollection by Bob Bitz, a member of the family that owned Plainview Turkey Farm, which was sold in 2007. Bob, who is a one-man book industry, is resting in Florida this winter and working on a book about transportation.

He brought out "A History of Agriculture in Onondaga County" as well as a book about farming in Lysander. He wrote a book about agriculture in New York State and this year, a "History of Manufacturing in Baldwinsville and the Town of Lysander and Van Buren."

The turkey farm memoir is 88 pages and sells for \$7.95.

"The Best of the Tales of Sterling" is by Don Richardson of Fair Haven, who has collected his weekly newspaper columns into a book which recounts historical events, personal memoirs and stories of Sterling and Fair Haven.

The book, of 268 pages, sells for \$15 and is available at the Little Red Schoolhouse Museum in Sterling and in Oswego at River's End Book Store and White Maritime Museum.

"The Butterfield Trail and Overland Mail Company in Arizona, 1858-1861." Forty years of study and research into the Butterfield Trail in Arizona have produced the 186-page book, written, mapped and photographed by Gerald T. Ahnert of Syracuse, who keeps a cabin in Alaska's Klondike region. Butterfield Trail recently was nominated as a National Historic Trail.

"Run for Your Life!" Jackie Miron, who writes a running column for The Post-Standard, is the author of a biography of a local running sensation, Lopez Lomong. He is one of the "lost boys" from the Sudan who ran at Tully High School after relocating to the United States and went on to become an Olympic hero.

The book sells for \$11.95 on Amazon.com.

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