

Russell Cole Blacksmith Shop, Pultneyville
HISTORY SHEET
General Information

Name of Structure: Russell Cole Blacksmith Shop

Address: 4226 Lake Rd, Pultneyville
Parcel ID: (544600) 66119-09-111616
Atlas: 1858: "BSS"; 1874 "A Brewer B.S.Sh"; 1904 "BSS" (hatched)

When Built / Mason: Unknown
When Razed: ~1900 (still shown on 1904 atlas)
Why: Seriously eroding into the lake, it was demolished

Original Owner: Russell Cole¹
Subsequent Owners: Aaron Brewer; David Benedict (maybe)

Original Use: Blacksmith shop
Subsequent Use: Always used as such

Photographs: Several

Description:

Design details:

Large 2-story BBS, long side faced road; double wide entrance door flanked by two windows on each side and 4 windows centered above the lower windows. Quoins, lintels and sills were of sandstone. Upper windows on road side lacked lintels, as the eaves extended to the top of the window openings. Windows 6-over-6. Courses were either 4 or 5 per quoins on front, depending on quoin height. Small water-rounded stones of varying hues set in very neat rows. Two internal chimneys near the eastern (right) gable end. A 12-riser set of stairs was on the exterior of this same end, extending from the front to the upper window on the waterside elevation.

West gable end appears to have had a center entrance with one window on the right, but none on the left; and one window centered above it, however, from historic picture cannot tell if there were window openings on the lake-frontage side or not.

Masonry details:

Cannot be discerned from photographs.

KC Note: On the 1874 atlas, it is labeled "A Brewer BSS". This tiny sliver of property north of the road is actually part of the larger parcel on the south side of the road.

¹ Russell Cole is believed to be the first person associated with this blacksmith, although no substantiating documentation can be found. See the 5/3/1951 and 7/20/1950 articles below.

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References

<http://nyshistoricnewspapers.org/lccn/sn88074529/1950-07-20/ed-1/seq-6/>

Williamson Sun & Sentinel —SUNSPOTS, By Lilah Henry

"... Near the foot of Jay Street there was a wide pier jutting out from the shoreline in the heyday of Pultneyville's lush era. There were at least two storehouses on the pier, I am told, with chutes for loading produce into the holds of the steam boats which called regularly at the pier. ... The pier itself, I am told, was wide enough for a team of horses and wagon to turn around on it.

The late Clarence Burcroff told me that on a clear day the remains of the cribbing of this old pier can still be seen beneath the waters of the lake. In those early days there were buildings along the lake side of Washington Street where today the spray from the waves on a windy day wets the pavement.

On the north side of Washington St, somewhere near the end of Jay St, stood a cobblestone blacksmith shop. Ray Tufts recalls that the smith was run by one Aaron Brewer and that there was land enough behind the shop to drive a team of horses between the building and the water. A look at the shoreline today makes this all sound fantastic, because the waves have now practically beaten away all the land right to the road's edge."

<http://www.nyshistoricnewspapers.org/lccn/sn88074529/1951-05-03/ed-1/seq-6/> William Sun & Sentinel

"The incident this past week of the marker at the end of Jay St being endangered by the gnawing waves, has brought to light the story of the old two-story cobblestone blacksmith shop. It stood not far from the present day marker and is remembered by some of the older Pultneyville residents.

By talking with different families whose roots go deep into the history of Pultneyville I have tried to unearth details about the old smithy. **To date I've not been able to determine who built it.** The *McIntosh History of Wayne County covering the years 1789 to 1877* states that a blacksmith shop was erected in the very early days by a Russel [sic] Cole.

It is possible that this cobblestone smithy of which we are speaking could have been the one Russell built. At any rate his son George is said to have operated a wagon shop on the second floor of the old blacksmith shop. George's brother-in-law, Aaron Brewer², is known to have been one of the early blacksmiths to have a shop in the cobblestone building.

² <https://brouwergenealogy.blogspot.com/2012/11/unplaced-john-j-brewer-of-wayne-co-new.html> Aaron (b. 4 Jan 1831 at Williamson, NY, d. 13 Mar 1899 at Pultneyville, NY, m. Sarah Cole and had two sons Frederick and George).

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Miss Alice Waters of Pultneyville who is the great-granddaughter of Brewer thinks it is possible that Aaron Brewer's father—John I Brewer—could have been the first blacksmith who used the shop, since both Brewers were blacksmiths...

I have recited these different versions of who built the old cobblestone building and what man was the first blacksmith, simply to show how difficult it is to verify facts even a half century after they happened. Each family has a little different version version of a given event and written records discovered thus far seem to be both inadequate and inaccurate in spots.

At any rate most Pultneyvillians are agreed that the cobblestone blacksmith shop (which was quite a pretentious building in its day) went out of existence about the beginning of this century. The point of land on which it stood (just east of the foot of Jay St) was gradually worn away by the action of the waves, until the water began to undermine the foundations of the building. As a result it cracked and sagged and finally had to be demolished. I am told that the last blacksmith who had his business in the old cobblestone structure was David Benedict... Grace Haskins recalls playing about the cobblestone blacksmith shop with the other neighborhood kids before it was taken down. She recalls that there was space enough between it and the lake for a roadway for a team of horses. There was an outside flight of steps on the east side of the building.

Old timers recall the big mill stone in the front yard, where the blacksmith used to lay a wagon wheel, while he hammered the red hot iron tire into position on the felly, after heating it at his forge. The ringing of the strokes against the iron tires was an accepted part of the sounds along with the breaking of the waves and the rattling of the anchor chains, in early Pultneyville. The old mill stone used in the yard of the blacksmith shop, I am told, came originally from the grist mill which stood near 'the bridge' in Pultneyville. Today it can be seen in the terrace of the former Jamison house on the corner of Jay and Washington Streets, now owned by Stuart L. Perkins."

<http://www.nyshistoricnewspapers.org/lccn/np00200001/2007-11-01/ed-1/seq-12/>

The Sun & Record (Williamson NY)

"... Aaron Brewer was one of the prominent mid-19th century blacksmiths in town. Aaron lived on the corner of Washington and Jay Streets. His shop was in the cobblestone building on the lake shore across from his home ... Aaron Brewer passed away in 1899 and his cobblestone shop fell into the lake when it was undermined by shore erosion in 1900."

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Ancestry
Russell Cole

In researching Russell Cole (Cowles), I have found several people with this name (/variations thereof) in several states. This has confounded the attempt to uncover definitive information—to find the *right* Russell Cole. The "*Family Genealogy...*", cited below, is most complete and decided regarding the places and timeframes confirming the known already established facts (ie Russell Cole was in Pultneyville in the early years of the 19th century, including during the War of 1812, unlike other same-named people discovered in ancestry searches.).

This resource tells us Willemena Peper married Russell Cole in Pultneyville. He was captured in the War of 1812 at Pultneyville but managed to escape. By 1825, Russell Cole had moved to Pittsford and had a blacksmith shop there. He was still there in 1828, but moved to Cambridge, Indiana where both he and Willemena both died at an early age (about 1837). Research of cemetery records in that area did not list their graves. We don't know when they died or where they are interred.

<https://archive.org/details/familygenealogyb00laws/mode/2up?q=russell+cole>

Family genealogy: Baird, Blair, Butler, Cook, Childs, Clark, **Cole**, Crane, De Kruyft, Edwards, Finney, **Fleming**, Graves, Grandine, Haney, Hitchcock, Kerwin, Lawson, Lowry, McAlpin, **Peper**, Richardson, Rittenhouse, Southwood, Stolp, Williams and Wright

© 1903 by Lawson, Publius V. (Publius Virgilius), 1853-1920

Excerpts —

Letters written home by Jacob Cook Fleming, Pultneyville

p. 47: "The correspondence which follows shows that Jacob Fleming went away from home in July, 1824 into New York State, where he always lived afterwards. He was then twenty-one years of age, had a good education, had an honorable trade of blacksmith and a strong, robust constitution. He was capable of enduring any amount of hard labor ..."

Page 49 - FOURTH LETTER

"Williamson, May 15th, 1825 Honored Father and Mother: ... I am now working in a shop in Pultneyville on shore of Lake Ontario for Thomas Thatcher, where I began last February, and expect to expect to stay until 1st of March next year, unless he sells out. ...

Page 50 - FIFTH LETTER

"Addressed at 'Mendon, October 23, 1825' ... Honored Father and Mother: ... I have met with another disappointment as I expected to stay with Thatcher a year, but he has rented his shop and quit smithing. I left him on the 7th of September, and next day went to work for **Russell Cole** eighteen miles from Pultneyville (at Pittsford) where I was before, and was then acquainted with him, and worked until a few days ago, for him at \$16 per month. I am now mowing for William Claisdel in this township of Mendon and he wants me to stay with him. But

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after one month here I expect to go to work for Cole again for \$20 a month, board, washing, etc. **Where Cole lives is in township of and Village of Pittsford** in County of Monroe (10 miles south of Rochester)."

Page 50 - SIXTH LETTER

"Pittsford, January 6, 1826. Honored Friend and Relatives: I am working in village of **Pittsford**. Thatcher has moved here and I am working for **Thatcher & Cole at the smithing business**. Our work is entirely boat irons and spikes. There is a great deal of boat building here. They have twenty-seven to repair against the canal [Erie Canal] opens in the spring, and six new ones to build as soon as it can be done. I am getting \$20 per per month in cash, board, washing, etc."

Page 212

"Deacon **Abraham Peper** was the title by which Mr Peper was known in Pultneyville. ... Abraham Peper was at Pultneyville during war of 1812. They drove all their stock south, into the interior, to secure it from the British, whose ships hovered along the shore in sight of land, watching for chances to obtain fat American beef. The name of Abraham Peper is not found on the official rolls, as a soldier in the war of 1812, as he was then nearly sixty years of age; but his **sons-in-law, Russell Cole** and Nicholas Lawson and others of the family, took part. He assisted the best he could."

The ancestry continues on with various members of the family, then on pages 221-22 gets to: "**Willemena Peper**, daughter of Abraham Peper, second and Willemena Blommert, born February 14, 1795, in Oostzouburg Holland, came to America, at seven years, with her parents, in 1802, and settled with them at Pultneyville, where she **met Russell Cole and where they were married**. From *Military History of Wayne County*, we find he was the first blacksmith and gunsmith in Pultneyville.

'**Russell Cole was a blacksmith by trade and also a gunsmith, an ingenious mechanic and withal something of a hunter. He could make a gun and use it. He married a daughter of Deacon Abraham Peper.**'

"When the enemy were fired on they were scattered about the village; but scampered for their boats, and returned the fire. In their retreat they seized a number of citizens as prisoners, whom they took to their prisons in Canada. One of those seized was Russel [sic] Cole. He jumped away from his captor in front of Ledyards store, dashed around it to the creek, and swam to the other side. The British in the small boat begun to fire and especially at the bushes into which Cole had escaped. An old ashery on that side of the creek bore marks of the bullets for some time.

Russell Cole carried on the smithy business at Pultneyville, until the winter or spring of 1825, when he opened a smithshop at the village of Pittsford, in Monroe County, N. Y., 28 miles southwest of Pultneyville. Here he had Jacob Cook Fleming working for him in 1825 and

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1826. In January, 1826 he was in partnership as Thatcher and Cole, in smithing business, making boats, irons and spikes. They had twenty-seven boats to repair before opening of navigation in the spring on the Erie canal. **He was still there in 1828. Eliza Ann (Peper) Albee says he moved to Cambridge, Ind., and that he and Willemena his wife died there about 1837, leaving them surviving four boys and one girl."**

<https://www.seekingmyroots.com/members/files/G001118.pdf>

Genealogy of the Cowles Families in America © 1929

p 1177

"RUSSELL COWLES, names of parents not found, b. near Pultneyville, Wayne Co NY; d. before reaching old age; m. Wilhelmina Pepper, who d. soon after 1835."

It goes on to list children (Sophia b. 1819; Henry Russell Cowles b. 4/13/1823 in Pultneyville NY m. 12/18/1846 in Franklin Co, IN to Elizabeth McCaffrey) but nothing to inform additional details about the Russell Cole, subject of this research.

<https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?m=65348>

Marker: The Battle of Pultneyville May 15th, 1814

Location: 43° 16.922' N, 77° 11.007' W. Marker is in Williamson, New York, in Wayne County.

Marker is at the intersection of Washington Street and Mill Street, on the right when traveling west on Washington Street

... "6. Shots are exchanged, the British retreat to their ships, and take 3 prisoners, Richard White, Prescott Fairbanks, and Russell Cole. Russell escapes and swims to shore."

Ancestry

Aaron Brewer

<https://w-phs.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/W-PHS-November-December-2019-Newsletter.pdf>

Lakeview Cemetery, Pultneyville

"Aaron Brewer was born on January 4, 1831 and passed on March 13, 1899 Aaron was married to Sarah Brewer ... Aaron Brewer was Blacksmith from 1850 to 1890, with his shop being a two-story cobblestone building on the north side of Lake road across from Jay Street.

<https://brouwergenealogy.blogspot.com/2012/11/unplaced-john-j-brewer-of-wayne-co-new.html>

Aaron (b. 4 Jan 1831 at Williamson, NY, d. 13 Mar 1899 at Pultneyville, NY, m. **Sarah Cole** and had two sons Frederick and George).

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Lakeview Cemetery, Pultneyville NY

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/134898800/aaron-brewer> (1831-1899, m. 1852)

From The Wayne Co. Alliance, Wednesday, March 22, 1899

East Williamson

"Our population has decreased considerable this Winter. Two deaths to record this week: those of Aaron Brewer and Mrs. Isaac DeLelys. Mr. Brewer, who was a retired mechanic and who was well-to-do had been a conspicuous figure on our street for several years. In the morning he had been after his mail and did some shopping as was his custom; he came home where his niece, Mrs. Wraight was. (Mr. Wraight being gone to the woods several miles distant.) He went out again, did not return to dinner, was still gone at supper time, when after supper Mr. and Mrs. Wraight both going to a small shed in the rear of the house found him hanging to a rope. Having adjusted the rope about his neck he made death doubly sure by first shooting himself in the head. The whole neighborhood was soon aroused and Coroner Carr notified but did not arrive until 11 o'clock when the body was taken down. Following so soon on another suicide no little consternation was manifested among our people. A note in his pocket was sufficient, the Coroner decided that no inquest was necessary. About the only reason given for the act being that he was to have been married in a few days. Interment was at Pultneyville, Thursday."

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/177611746/sarah-brewer> (10/29/1832 - 10/27/1893)

Children:

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/177611747/frederick-johnson-brewer> (1857 - 1918)

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/177611749/george-c-brewer> (1861-1892)

NOTE:

For more information about Russell Cole and the Battle of Pultneyville (May 15, 1914):

Landmarks of Wayne County, New York, edited by George W. Cowles © 1895, p 62

<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=loc.ark:/13960/t1jh49v0n&view=page&seq=80&skin=2021&q1=cole> and

Military history of Wayne County, N.Y. : Military register. Wayne County in the Civil War, 1861-1865, by Lewis H Clark, © 1883, p216-217

<https://archive.org/details/cu31924080772019/page/216/mode/2up?q=russell+cole>

[Rochester NY Times Union 1931 - 5092.pdf](#) (5/13/1931)

British Troops Landed At Pultneyville Harbor 117 Years Ago Thursday