

# Bethinking of Old Orleans

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H. Justin Roberts

Pictured here is H. Justin Roberts as he appeared in 1946 while serving on the Orleans County Board of Supervisors. Actually, Mr. Roberts was supervisor of the Town of Shelby beginning in 1938 and served for twenty-two years. A prosperous farmer, now retired, and a resident of Shelby, he is also the father of prosperous farmers. He is a man with a keen interest in his community with a sensitivity for its heritage. His daughter, Anna R. Bundschuh of Penfield, New York has submitted to me a story of great human interest as related by her father.

## ROBERTS FINDS FORMER INDIAN CAMP

By Anna R. Bundschuh

A long-time goal of H. Justin Roberts of Maple Ridge Road was reached last fall when he was able to relocate what he believes to be the site of an old Indian camp of 150 years ago that he had located as a boy some 85 years earlier.

Roberts, now 96 years old, relates, "In the Roberts family, we had always known the story of my great-grandfather, Ziba Roberts Senior, and his sick baby Henrietta. Ziba had first moved into the Town of Shelby with his wife in 1826. They purchased land from the Holland Land Company on the west side of the East Shelby Road about one-half mile south of the East Shelby Church. They first built a log cabin and then, after the Civil War, built a beautiful large frame house that became known as the Roberts Homestead to later generations.

My great-grandfather after the birth of a baby daughter in January 1833 had gone to a nearby Indian camp to get assistance for his desperately ill baby," Roberts said. "Ziba and his wife, Susanna Wolcott Roberts, were fearful that they would lose the baby. They already lost their last child who had died in infancy."

An Indian woman returned with my great-grandfather. She looked at the baby for a long while, then picked her up and cuddled her to her breast. For a long time she swayed and rocked back and forth, holding the baby and chanting sounds that seemed to say 'Hen-ri-et-ta'. After the Indian woman finally put the baby down, she was much better. When the baby got well, she was named Henrietta after the sounds made by the

Indian woman. According to our family lore, this was the beginning of the use of the name Henrietta for girls in the family for some generations.

"As a matter of interest, this Henrietta Roberts pioneered on a farm in Illinois with her husband, James Wolcott. After they retired, they returned to Medina and lived on West Avenue. Henrietta lived to the ripe old age of 74," Roberts says.

"When I was a boy around the turn of the century, I set out to find the location of the Indian camp visited by my great-grandfather. My parents and I lived in White Pigeon, a few farms south of the Roberts Homestead, on a farm which had belonged to my grandfather, Horace Roberts. I often roamed the countryside and felt free to explore neighboring farms for the location of the former Indian campground."

"I was sure that I'd found it when I located a spring on a knoll, about a mile or so north of the Oak Orchard Swamp. I found hundreds of chips of flint on the land around the spring, as well as two perfect spearpoints. I always felt that the Indians had brought the flint from an area about 15 miles south near Indian Falls where a stone ledge above a small deep lake has seams of flint. I reasoned that a camp would have to be located near fresh water and was sure that this had been the location of the Indian camp of my great-grandfather's time."

"Last fall, I went three different times to the area I remembered. With some assistance, I was able to find the camp's location. Since my youth pine trees have been planted and the spring is no longer in evidence. But I feel certain that we found the correct location based on the terrain of the land."