

OTEGO HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



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MEET DON LENT

Isaac Lent, Don's great, great, great grandfather, was born in 1785 and came from Amsterdam, New York to Otego in 1807. Since then a generation of this family has consecutively called Otego their home. Two of Isaac's sons, Lorenzo (1815) and James (1820) were Don's great, great grandfathers.

Don's Dad, Elmer, was the great grandson of James Lent. Elmer is the only person in the history of the Lents who lived to be over 100 years of age. He was born February 27, 1907 and died February 27, 2008. Elmer would have been 101 in April, 2008. Don is proud of the fact that he is still driving his father's car.

His mother's Beulah (Card) was the great granddaughter of Lorenzo Lent. She was from the town of Butternuts and walked to the one room school, District 16, nearby. (Don still has the teacher's bell from that school.)

Don was born Sept. 21, 1932 in his grandfather Card's house. He thinks that Dr. Ford was the doctor. Don was born double club footed. Dr. Edward Parish was his foot doctor in Oneonta. From the time he was two weeks old until he was twelve, he endured the pain whenever the casts needed to be changed. When he started school, Don said he walked with difficulty using crutches. He suffered the indignity of much bullying from some of his classmates. To this day bullying in school is a subject that

Don feels very strongly about.

Don has no blood brothers and sisters. He has an adopted sister. Her name is Flora Taylor. She lives in Gilbertsville. There were 2 foster children in the family. Only one, Mary Peck, remained with the family. She now lives in New Berlin and cared for Don's father the last 4 to 5 years of his life.

Don said that his parents taught him to live a moral life and he got



his bottom whipped more than once. The house that Don grew up in was built in the 1700's. There was no electricity at all in the home until the late 30's to early 40's. This reminded Don of one time in his life as an adult when he was facing some financial difficulties and had a problem paying an electricity bill for one month. So he went to the Electric and Gas Com-

pany and told them that he could not pay the January bill. They did not want to turn his electricity off and in return he did not want to enroll in any of their plans. Don told the company to decide how they wanted to handle that one January bill and he left. Three days later a person from Oneonta called and said that if Don would come in and sign some papers, he would not have to pay that one bill. He signed the papers and he never heard anything about it again.

Don and his dad did many things together. Don was raised on a farm about 1 ½ miles from his present home and milked cows by hand before he went to school each day. In the 1940's, Don and his dad would drive his cows to the Sam Emerson farm for milking while a cement floor was being installed in their barn. The Emerson barn was built in the mid to late 1800's. Don and his dad knew that barn inside and out. It became the model for the miniature barn which is now on loan and displayed in the Otego Historical Society. Don and his father built the model barn. He spent 600 hours building the pine, three-story structure.

Don's Dad bought his farm from Berossus Cook in 1929. After Mr. Cook died, the property he had lived on at the time was sold to George Fritz and his sister Alice from Orange, New Jersey. The Fritz's took in boarders and in the late 1940's, one such family was Jack and Evelyn Brown and their son Eugene from New York Avenue in Brooklyn. Don and Eugene became fast friends.

Mrs. Brown managed an ad agency in New York City which included

or Dotty as she is known) was not impressed with her blind date. She was going to SUCO at the time. But Don kept going to see Doris at SUCO until she finally agreed to date him again. They first met in 1953 and got married in 1959. Don's first job was working for a farmer named Smith on the East Branch of the Otsdawa. They lived on the farm. Next they moved to Roxbury and worked for an electrical engineer who was a gentleman farmer. Later they moved to Doris' home town of Ithaca to yet another farm. Don's next job was with International Correspondence Schools in Ithaca. He sold Correspondence Education Courses door to door.

After returning to Oneonta, Don worked for the Daily Star in the editorial department and then changed jobs to Norwich and in 1968 worked for the Evening Sun in their advertising department. That is the year he went out on his own and began the Lent and Lent Advertising Agency. He and his wife, Dottie ran the agency for 18 years before retiring.

In the agency, Don was a graphic designer, creating logos, brochures, advertising campaigns and corporate identity programs. Don's ad agency dealt with several mid-size corporations in manufacturing as well as local banks, savings and loans, and retailers.

One of Don's manufacturing clients was taken over by a larger corporation and closed the facility. Its general manager, now out of a job, came back to Don and asked him to help establish an identity for a new corporation he was establishing. That business is now Norwich Aero Products.

Another company, for which Don created a product brochure, used

the brochure in an international exhibit in Las Vegas. A group of Japanese businessmen liked the brochure so much; they created a Japanese version of it. Don still has a copy of that version.

Don's and Dot's daughter Teresa went into the armed services in Fort Jackson, South Carolina. Their son Rusty went into military service. He was given the honor of being selected as one of 28 candidates to serve President Ronald Reagan. Their third child, Brian is now a financial advisor for NBT.

Presently, Don and Dottie enjoy antiques and collectibles. In 1980 they started "The Treasure House", but now just take their collection of antiques and collectibles to a local fair and antique show. Don has many interests and skills. He talked about the log home hours building the pine, three-story structure he lives in. He designed it, had it cut to his specifications and built it. Don is very proud of a 100 foot long stone wall which is along the back of his house. Don said he has a philosophy of when you want to learn how to do something whether it is how to build a log home, start a business or build a stone wall, you think and plan a solid foundation for it and then go about getting the job done the right way.

**From the Elma Mitchell
Collection of Stories**

(1956) Paul Buchert lost one of his best friends. Last summer his son found a young crow and spent quite a bit of time taking care of it. Paul taught it to say a few words. Paul says that the crow was a real clown. He would pick up and hide anything that glittered. He also liked paint brushes straight from the can and one day when Paul

was using yellow paint the crow picked up a brush and accidentally painted its feet yellow. A few days later when the crow was out of his cage again, he disappeared. Paul is afraid that someone may have shot him but isn't sure. If you see a crow with yellow feet and legs that swears like a muleskinner, please call Otego YU8-6832.

*The Changing Face
of Otego*



Kathy Knox, DDS of Otego Family Dental at 374 Main Street had been a dentist in both Cobleskill and Naples, NY. Neither place suited them completely so when they information from Dr. Barrett that he was selling his practice in Otego, they came to investigate. The size the village attracted them immediately. Although they still commute to and from Cobleskill, they are building an apartment beneath the office Bob, who is Kathy's office manager, said that they will be so happy when they can get to know folks from the Otego area on a more personal basis and can put that daily drive to Cobleskill behind them.

**Cookie Exchange
on Monday, November 21
at 2:30 at Harris House**

