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SEARCHING FOR PAZZI LAPHAM

—Laurie Messinger

As one of Greene County's earlier post-Revolutionary settlers migrating from the Nine Partners Patent in Dutchess County and relocating in the unsettled area northwesterly of the present hamlet of Earlton in the township of Coxsackie, Pazzi Lapham has long intrigued local historians. Beers' *History of Greene County* makes brief mention of him; the George and Alice Peters Collection as well as the Brunk Family Papers yield up more clues. But it is the added research of Mrs. Messinger which provides the framework for a more detailed study. There are still gaps in the chronological outline. Persons having knowledge or interest in Pazzi Lapham are encouraged to correspond with the author.

THE EDITOR

Few things about Pazzi Lapham are more puzzling than his name. In some Dutchess County records it appears as "Parze" or "Parzi." He was born to a Quaker family and the Quakers were prone to give descriptive names to their children — Temperance, Remembrance. In a Lapham genealogy the name "Pardon" appears. Was Pardon shortened to Parze and did it eventually become Pazzi? Whatever — a number of eighteenth century documents still exist bearing the signature "Pazzi Lapham." And as Pazzi Lapham he was known.

Pazzi's great-great-grandfather was the first of his ancestors to settle in America. John Lapham, a weaver, born 1635 in Devonshire, England, died 1710 in Dartmouth, Massachusetts, first having settled in Rhode Island. Records indicate that his son John eventually acquired a considerable amount of real estate in Rhode Island. Another John Lapham, grandson of John the weaver, moved his family from Massachusetts to Dutchess County, New York and was an early settler on the Great Nine Partners Patent. John of Dutchess County had a son Benjamin who married Lydia Page; these two were the parents of Pazzi Lapham. The buying and selling of land was a family practice and Dutchess County documents disclose Benjamin was no exception.

Members of the Society of Friends (Quakers) were much put upon by both Whigs and Tories during the American Revolution. It was a matter of religious conscience and Quaker practice to refuse to swear oaths or to "register and bear arms." Since the Quakers were in the main a better class of settler, in the years before the American Revolution allowances were frequently made for their religious doctrines. But with the outbreak of hostilities they became a sorely buffeted group. For refusing to swear oaths of allegiance to the revolutionary dis-



1788 Survey map by Leonard Brunk

Showing Pazzi Lapham's 166 acres

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Pazzi Lapham (continued from page 1)

tracts or not joining the local militia bodies, they were fined and/or confined. Quaker property was seized and sold at sheriff's sales. Benjamin Lapham, adhering to these and other Quaker tenets, refused to subscribe to the oath of allegiance and was at times imprisoned. Family legend has it that son Pazzi rode ninety miles on horseback in one day to prevent confiscation and sale of Lapham household and farm belongings.

By the time of the outbreak of the War of Independence Benjamin and Lydia's three sons appear to have strayed from the strict Quaker birthright principles. Pazzi, Solon and Reuben are recorded as serving as enlisted men in the Sixth Regiment of the Dutchess County Militia. Pazzi's service earned him land bounty rights which he assigned to another.

These Dutchess County Laphams appear in the published *Public Papers of Governor George Clinton*: Benjamin Lapham for refusing to take the oath; an undated list of Whigs and Tories names Pazzi as a Tory (a puzzling classification since he was enrolled in the militia); another list of Whigs, Neutrals, Doubtfuls and Tories dated June 10, 1779, names Pazzi as neither Whig nor Tory but as "middling."

If there was doubt as to Pazzi Lapham's loyalty to the revolutionary government it did not prevent his neighbors electing him to public office between the years 1776 and 1784. He served the Charlotte Precinct of Dutchess County as an Overseer of Highways and at times as an Overseer of the Poor. For both offices he would have had to take the prescribed oath.

With the end of the Revolutionary War, the migration of settlers from New England and the lower reaches of the Hudson Valley increased dramatically. A number of Dutchess County Quaker families were attracted to cheap land on easy terms in the Coeymans Patent. They bought on lease, or outright by cash or mortgage. The Bedells and others located in the Stanton Hill section of the present township of New Baltimore. Some, including Pazzi Lapham, Talmages, Tryons and Hutchinsons, sought out supportable land in Great Lot Two of the Seventh Allotment of the Patent. It is interesting, too, that during this same period of time, Pazzi's brother Solon leased from Isaac Verplank in perpetuity, 167 acres in Great Lot Two of the Fourth Allotment of the same patent. That land lay in what is now the Town of Westerlo. Solon did not occupy the land but re-leased it to others. Another example of the Lapham generations' speculation in land.

It is in 1787 that Pazzi Lapham's name first appears on the assessment list for the Cossackie District, then a part of Albany County. Was he then already a resident?

The earliest recorded land transaction involving Pazzi, so far located, is a mortgage dated January 31, 1788 taken by Peter S. Schuyler of Albany Flats in the sum of 300 pounds, described as a tract of land with improvements "now possessed by the said Pazzi Lapham and formerly in the possession of Jadhah See and Isaac Page, containing 100 acres." (Pazzi's mother was a Page) This mortgage was discharged July 22, 1790.

On July 12, 1788, an arbitration committee set a value of 150 pounds on improvements Solomon Palmer had made to "property now in Lapham's possession" containing 21 1/2 acres. Was this an additional Lapham purchase?

In December of 1788, Leonard Bronk surveyed Great Lot Two of the Seventh Coeymans Allotment for Coeymans' heirs Abraham, Anthony and Coenrad Ten Eyck. This survey of the east half of the lot shows ten sublots, with Pazzi Lapham's name on subplot Four, containing 366 3/4 acres, and the word "Sold." On the survey map there are shown several roads, one of which is labeled "Road to Saw Mill," and which leads to Lot Four. Near the junction of this road with one coming in from the east, and on the east branch of the Potic Creek, are drawings depicting two buildings, one of which is labeled "saw mill." The east branch of the Potic passes near the center of the lot in a north-south direction. A mortgage dated March 21, 1789 is recorded in Albany County with Pazzi Lapham as mortgagor and Coenrad, Abraham and Anthony Ten Eyck as mortgagees. The amount is set at 238 pounds and covers 366 3/4 acres of land in Lot Two of the Seventh Allotment. Reference is also made to "the Road Leading to said Pazzi Lapham Mill." The description of the mortgaged property matches exactly Leonard Bronk's survey of December 1788. This mortgage was discharged May 11, 1789. These various land transactions indicate Pazzi's interest in buying and selling land, a pattern which continued for a number of years.

Other land transactions involving Pazzi Lapham are noted. These include:

May 1789 - Sale of Pazzi Lapham's saw mill to Stephen Hedges, Jr. Since this document is incomplete, it is uncertain just where this mill was located, although it was in the Seventh Allotment. Certainly it could not have been the saw mill that Pazzi Lapham continued to operate.

December 25, 1789 - Pazzi Lapham agrees to sell to Samuel Fitz Lantier 15 acres west of the house of Christophel Deyo.

January 12, 1790 sale to Leonard Bronk and Philip Conine Junior 87 acres in Lot 6 and 160 acres in Lot 5 of the Seventh Allotment.

The May 1789 saw mill sale is a puzzlement since in October of that same year Pazzi agreed to deliver to Christophel Deyo by the following spring 38,000 square feet of board in exchange for land. Did Lapham own two mills? That is doubtful.

After 1793 no records of Lapham land transactions are to be found either in Albany or Greene Counties. Leonard Bronk in his surveys made reference to Lapham landmarks. In one dated March 25, 1793, he mentions "Laphs Road." Unfortunately, the original Leonard Bronk survey map of Great Lot Two of the Seventh Coeymans Allotment has not been located if it still exists. What we do know of Bronk's work as a surveyor comes from his personal papers and is fragmented in nature.

A further note of interest regarding Lapham's property concerns the Forestville Commonwealth. Long before the communes of the turbulent 1960's, Robert Owen came to this country from England with a dream of people

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Pazzi Lapham (continued from page 2)

working together, relying on themselves for all their needs, sharing equally and living in harmony. An earlier experiment at Haverstraw having failed, in 1826 a new community was established at the site of the former Lapham mill. Those drawn to it were mainly Quakers. But this experiment, too, failed and in less than a year the community disbanded.

One special event in Pazzi Lapham's life is preserved in the Van Dyck-Bronk law papers. It concerns an altercation between Pazzi and Robert Goes which took place at General Training in Coxsackie township where male citizens gathered for military maneuvers. Lapham brought charges against Goes and the depositions of the witnesses survive. Most of the deponents agreed that Goes was the instigator. Solomon Palmer, Jeremiah Conine, Samuel How, J. C. Canady, Capt. Bronk, Henry Rodes testified in Lapham's behalf. Only one, Barent J. Goes, testified in Robert Goes' behalf. Matthew VanDenBerg, another witness, gave a more or less neutral account.

It appears that two of the group decided to race their horses. At this time a dispute arose between Robert Goes and a Mr. Towner, who struck each other with "sword and whip." Lapham interceded and attempted to separate the two. Goes followed him, claimed Lapham had torn his clothes and demanded satisfaction. He grasped Lapham by the throat and "choked him black." Whereupon Lapham said "take notice for [Goes] will have to pay for that." As he turned away Goes kicked him, with that Lapham threw his coat aside and said Goes might kick him again, and Goes did kick him again. When Lapham turned to face him, Goes struck him and he fell upon his hands and knees. The blow landed near his eye drawing blood. Lapham then told Goes he had "one eye left." J. C. Canady who visited Lapham a few days after the incident stated Lapham had a black eye and a cut above the eyelid. Lapham told Canady he had gone to Goes in an attempt to pacify him, and that Goes had struck him but did not knock him down.

Judgment was for the plaintiff.

More light is thrown on the life of Pazzi Lapham as a resident of Coxsackie, through entries in an ancient ledger identified as being that of Moore and Burrell. This firm owned, or acted as agent for the owner of, the sloop *Morning Star* - shipping mainly lumber and grain from Coxsackie to New York with stops at various river towns along the way. In addition to the river trade, they were purveyors of merchandise, particularly that which the settlers did not produce or manufacture for themselves. They sold everything from pins to rum. The ledger covers the period November 1793 to January 1800, and represents monthly statements of entries from a day book. Each customer was assigned an account number. Pazzi Lapham's was twenty-one. Beginning in January 1797, the handwriting changes and the entries are fewer and less frequent.

Pazzi Lapham must have been well-known in the area, for his trips to Coxsackie were frequent. Here he brought the products of his saw mill - planks, joists, and board - for shipment down river, taking back with him the

necessities and now and then a luxury. Sometimes, he was accompanied by his son, Eliakim, and a few times Eliakim made the trip by himself. Frequently, when Eliakim was present, one of the items appearing in the account was raisins. Eliakim may have had a fondness for raisins, or perhaps he was buying for his mother's baking needs.

Not unexpected, is an early entry showing a charge to Pazzi's account for three mill saws. For provisions required at home there were entries for sugar, molasses, tea, and on one rare occasion - coffee. Another one-time purchase was two dozen lemons. Clothing purchases were few - a Castor (beaver) "hatt," two pairs strong shoes, two pairs hose (one pair of these "plaited silk"). Among the few personal items one finds tobacco, combs, a pen knife, eight and one-half inches hand soap, and one book entitled "Webster's Selection." For the household - twenty yards bed ticking, lengths of linen, thread, tumblers, and a "set" of knives and forks. Other purchases included a horse whip, shot and powder, locks, H L hinges, Sweede's iron, and twelve lights of 9x7 window glass.

It appears that Lapham either operated a tavern or the home was a way stop for traveller's. Charges for quantities of alcoholic beverages appear in Pazzi's account - gallons of rum and wine, a pipe of brandy, cases of geneva (an aromatic and bitter gin). Because of the large quantities involved it is apparent this was not entirely for home consumption.

Of Pazzi Lapham's domestic life little is known. His marriage to Bethany Foster produced eleven children, of whom seven survived, two being daughters - Lorana who married David Wyman and lived in Dutchess County, and Tacy who married Simon Southerland and lived in Delaware County and possibly later in St. Lawrence County. The surviving sons of Pazzi and Bethany were Eliakim, Seneca, Alexander Hamilton, Fayette and Solomon.

Family records indicate Pazzi, son of Benjamin and Lydia Page Lapham, was born October 22, 1750 in Dutchess County, New York. His wife, Bethany, was the daughter of Caleb and Abigail Watson Foster. Although Pazzi's parents were Quakers, only his mother's name appears in Quaker records of the Nine Partners Monthly Meeting. Neither does Pazzi's name appear in the Nine Partners records nor in Quaker records for Albany and Greene Counties. Was he "read out of meeting" for joining the militia?

Local lore has it that Pazzi Lapham's death resulted from an accident at his mill. Family records give the year of death as 1795, but the same record also states son Solomon was born September 1, 1797 at Coxsackie. If Solomon's birth date is correct, then Pazzi died in late 1796 or early 1797 at age 46 or 47. The Moore and Burrell ledger entries seem to indicate the latter date. Where was he buried? A diligent search of the Community Cemetery, practically next door to Lapham land, reveals no marked grave. Did his wife, Bethany, who is supposed to have died when the two youngest sons were infants, return to Dutchess County before her death?

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Lapham Family

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In addition to the subsequent whereabouts of daughters Lorana and Tacy mentioned earlier, the son, Fayette, lived for a time in the household of his uncle and aunt, Reuben and Orpha Lapham Stanton. The Reverend Reuben Stanton was then living in what is now the Town of Westerlo. Eventually, all of the children returned to Dutchess County to live among relatives. Most of them married into Dutchess County families. Some remained in Dutchess County, and others moved to western New York State and even farther west to Ohio and Texas.

The sons, Seneca, Fayette, Alexander and Solomon, all worked on construction of the Erie Canal, Seneca being a contractor. These brothers built the arches for the first aqueduct at Rochester and constructed the wood work for the double locks at Lockport.

Eliakim, the eldest son, appears to have remained in the Columbia-Dutchess County area for some time. In October and November of 1796 Eliakim was paid 25 pounds 5 shillings 9 pence for 60 days labor performed for Leonard Bronk. It will be remembered that Leonard Bronk and Philip Conine Jr. bought land in the Seventh Allotment from Eliakim's father, Pazzi. *The History of Little Nine Partners* contains references to Eliakim and his family. It reports his marriage to Rachel Harris at Pine Plains; that he settled in Columbia County on a farm adjoining Martin Van Buren; later moved to Stayvesant and later to Penn Yan. His move to Penn Yan must have been in later years, perhaps after his sons moved there. In 1812 his children were students at a boarding school in Pine Plains. Eliakim and his son John Harris kept a store at Pulvers Corners in the Town of Pine Plains. In 1831 John H. was partner in a store with Helmus Wandel at Pulvers Corners. At an early date Eliakim's son, Ludlow E., was a stone finisher living in Pine Plains. John and Ludlow later moved to Penn Yan. Eliakim Lapham died in 1828 and is buried in Stayvesant. His wife, Rachel, died in 1863 at Penn Yan.

Seneca Lapham moved about following his trade of builder. He lived at various locations in New York State, wherever his work took him, eventually making his home in Ohio where he worked on the construction of the Miami Canal between Cincinnati and Toledo.

Fayette Lapham lived for many years at Egypt, Monroe County, New York. He was an accomplished builder and maker of furniture. Like his ancestors before him, he bought and sold land in that area.

Solomon, who had worked on canal construction with his brothers, located in Ohio and later removed to Texas.

Of Alexander H., little is known except that he married, raised a family, and lived at Egypt, Monroe County.

In 1853, Lorana Lapham, daughter of Solomon and granddaughter of Pazzi, made a trip East visiting relatives along the way. She kept a journal of her travels. From this account it is learned that Lorana's mother was a Dutchess County native. Lorana visited her Uncle Fayette and his wife who were then living in Poughkeepsie, and her Aunt Lorana and her husband, David Wyman, who were living at Shultzville, Dutchess County. One of the

highlights of her trip to Dutchess County was a visit to the homestead where her great-grandfather, Benjamin, and her grandfather, Pazzi, had lived, a Lapham burial ground being located across the road from the house. A search of Dutchess County cemetery records at the New York State Library failed to disclose any inscriptions recorded from this cemetery.

Pazzi Lapham's years in the Town of Coxsackie were few, barely a decade. His family did not remain there. Yet, he left his impression. One suspects his unusual name had something to do with it.

*Receipt to 1812 from Head of Mohawk Company
against the water rights belonging to the
333 James Pazzi Pazzi Lapham*

Lapham's Receipt in Justice's Case

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THE DR. LEE AND MARTHA ANN (HALLOCK) ENSIGN MEMORIAL

A letter of inquiry from Mrs. Frederick W. Memmott, Jr. of Hartsdale, New York, and a prompt reply detailing the purpose and scope of the Vedder Memorial Library, has convinced Margaret Van Wyck Memmott that her family papers should be deposited with the Greene County Historical Society as a memorial to her great grandparents, Dr. Lee and Martha Ann (Hallock) Ensign. At the time of his passing in 1859, Dr. Ensign was president of the Board of Trustees of the Village of Catskill. Both Dr. Lee and Martha Ann Ensign are buried in the family plot in that village.

The Ensigs, prior to their move to Catskill, resided at Marlboro, Ulster County, where Dr. Ensign served as a medical practitioner. While there he was appointed Surgeon to the 141st Regiment of Infantry, his appointment being signed by Governor Seward. Included in the gift, in addition to the military appointment, is Dr. Ensign's fully equipped pre-Civil War medical kit.

Genealogical notes detail the various generations of Ensigs in New England as well as related branches. This aspect of the collection includes the Dr. Lee Ensign and Martha Ann Hallock marriage certificate of 1839.

Both Martha Ann (Hallock) Ensign and the daughter, Harriet Lee, were personages in their own right. The literary quality and the breadth of topical coverage in Martha Ann's writings indicates a superior intellect; her penmanship is outstanding. Daughter Harriet attended Catskill Academy in 1858-59 where she demonstrated proficiency in her studies, being rated by Professor Fairbairn as a "top-notch" scholar. Subsequently, armed with glowing recommendations from leading Catskill citizens, she secured a teaching appointment at the Poughkeepsie Female Academy. While teaching at that establishment, she became acquainted with Milton E. Curtiss, a bank employee, who later became her husband.

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