



Jesse P. Haines, Map Maker

The History Center has much to be thankful for concerning its recent good fortune to acquire the original Jesse Haines' engraved printing plate for the Village of Lockport that dates to 1829-1830. This 176-year old map-artifact has come home once again to a city that still bares a striking resemblance to the 1830s village that it records.

The cartographer, Jesse P. Haines, was an early pioneer to Niagara County who arrived to this area in 1818. Haines was born in Wilmington, Delaware, in 1793, son of Jesse and Rachel Haines. He married Sarah Snell and lived in Philadelphia and Columbus, Pennsylvania, before coming to this area with his wife and infant son, Thomas. Haines bought 150-acres of land south of the present High Street and built a small log cabin. At that time, the land was still covered with forest. Haines home on Locust Street later went on to be the residence of Niagara County Historian Clarence Lewis. Haines described his nearest neighbors as an Indian family that lived in a "wig-wam." During his first year at the site, he cleared 12 acres of timber with his own hands. Haines was a Quaker, and active in the affairs of the first Quaker Church to be erected in the village. In 1829, Haines gave one-acre of land for a Quaker cemetery, which was located opposite the current Locust Apartments. As time progressed, Haines built a large frame house next to his early log cabin.

Although Jesse Haines purchased his land to use as a farm, his avocation of land surveying became increasingly important. It was during the 1820s that many settlers sought land around the proposed path of the Erie Canal that was sold by the Holland Land Company. Haines laid out streets and building lots that set the stage for the rapid growth of the Village of Lockport. He made the first official map of the village in 1830, and was criticized by a Buffalo newspaper for creating a map of the village that included proposed growth far beyond reasonable expectations. In his map, Haines assigned many streets with a numerical designation, that were later changed to names. Haines made another map in 1845, extending the boundaries even farther, and that map is still, today, the basis for some land transactions in the city.

Haines' talents for surveying were well utilized, not only in Lockport, but also in Niagara Falls, and other communities in Niagara and later, Erie Counties. He is also credited with laying out and mapping the Village of Niagara Falls. An early receipt indicates payment to J.P.Haines by Niagara County.

3/20/1847: For surveying south part of Courthouse Square-\$1.

4/8/1847: For grading Courthouse Square south of Niagara Street-\$2.

For one paid assistant-.50

Total \$3.50

At the time of Haines' arrival in 1818, he recorded finding the remains of an ancient settlement that pre-existed his arrival. He found traces of over 100 circular pits about four feet deep and some 15 feet in diameter, with huge trees growing in them, indicating that several centuries had past since the pits were first dug. Mr. Haines named this area, extending from Willow Street to Lincoln Avenue, Pittsfield. Aboriginal relics from the prior civilization were commonly found that included arrowheads and early tools.

Haines lead a good life and passed to his final reward on August 31st, 1877. He is buried, along with his wife, in the Friends Cemetery at Cold Springs. Many of his original surveying tools, including his compass and chain, and now his original map plate from 1830, are on display at the History Center, at 215 Niagara Street in Lockport. Special thanks for the map plate acquisition are extended to the Grigg-Lewis Foundation, whose concern for the history of Niagara County has once again been poignantly demonstrated in their funding of this important purchase.