

# The Talcott Family Connection

Volume 8, Number 2

Summer 2024



## **My experience at a Talcott reunion**

by *Deanna Talcott Pyle*

While I have always been interested in history and my ancestors' exploits, attending the Talcott Family National Reunion is priceless for my personal collection of stories and anecdotes. I suspect you will discover the same, and urge you to attend. I have a particular fondness for the Chicago reunion, primarily because my direct line of 'greats' had close affiliations to everything I saw and appreciated. And if it wasn't one of them, it was 'some other cousin' who made remarkable contributions to the community.

A lot of inexplicable questions had lurked in the back of my mind for years and were answered at that reunion. For example, my first cousin, Mancel, had an uncommon name. I soon learned it was an inherited family name handed down via Mancel Talcott, an extraordinary entrepreneur and philanthropist in Chicago, IL. A visit to the Mancel Talcott Public School of Fine Arts was extraordinary and it was a privilege for reunion attendees to donate school supplies to the staff and students.

While I had been to Rockton, IL as a teenager and again when my children were older, nothing prepared me for seeing the area with the reunion. I had been to the Talcott Free Library which Wait Talcott donated in 1888, but at the reunion the library staff wheeled out a trove of ledgers, newspaper articles, and information that was riveting. Ledgers, detailing every purchase, in perfect cursive, were astonishing. Historically accurate records on the Talcott family who lived there were available for us to examine.

We drove a few blocks to the home of my great, great grandfather, Henry Walter Talcott. It was a massive stone home for the era, and the only house of the Talcott brothers which still stood. I fought the overwhelming urge to knock on the door and invite myself in. It was a moment of "oh, if only those walls could talk." I knew a lot about Henry Talcott from my father's accounts: he was deeply religious and insisted the first thing built in Rockton should be the church... to which he allegedly gifted the church bell. As an outspoken abolitionist, when his son, my great-grandfather, Dwight Lewis, served during the Civil War, then survived capture and imprisonment in Andersonville, Henry met the paddle wheeler who delivered him in St. Louis. Dwight had lost half his body weight, dropping from 147 lbs to 75, and Henry carried him for three weeks like a baby until he was able to withstand the journey home

to Rockton. It was at this reunion I learned this great, great man was more than an abolitionist... he was part of the Underground Railroad.

Years prior I was astonished when my father handed me a packet of letters: the correspondence from my great-grandfather and his family during the Civil War. I chose to transcribe the letters, making my fair share of mistakes from their elaborate cursive writing. But when we visited the Rockton Cemetery, to visit my family's resting place, I walked through the headstones and met 'old friends' my grandfather had written about in his letters. I knew some of their stories and it was a homecoming of sorts, finding out which of his friends had survived the Civil War and who, sadly, had not.

The Reunion offered one surprise after another, history coming to life. We took a short detour to Rockford and saw the Talcott 'skyscraper,' surely a marvel in 1927. We visited the cemetery and learned about the Talcott brothers' keen business sense, as well as their vision for the

future. They were instrumental in the founding of Beloit College and The Rockford Female Academy (now Rockford University). The Talcott accomplishments and contributions simply amaze.

I'm returning to Rockford this year and to a reunion brewing with information and steeped in history. I hope you are too. It will be an opportunity you won't want to miss! Join me, won't you?



*Deanna Talcott & Ember Fontaine in 2017*

## **Another reunion attendee's story**

by *James Pyle*

In just a few months the Talcott family reunion will be gathering in Illinois, and I'm looking forward to it. The last one I attended was in Kansas City in 2013 and it sure was a good time. It's great to meet family you don't know and catch up with those you haven't seen in some time. The historical tours were great, absolutely loved visiting the WWI museum as well as the Truman Presidential library.

The highlight for me was the auction and I had the

honor of being the auctioneer. The funds raised are used to keep these events going which is really important. The variety of items from homemade items to new and old ones... there seemed to be something for everyone. Rumor has it I may be the auctioneer again. If you can donate something, please do. We're hoping to make it a fun event for everyone!

Will the famous "Talcott Fudge" be for sale at the auction this coming reunion? There was vigorous competition at the 2022 reunion over whose fudge was the best. In the end, there was no fudging the numbers when it came to fudge raising the greatest amount of money and the bidding was extremely aggressive for each container of fudge on the auction block. In the end, everyone had a fun time and the winners fudged by sharing some of their tasty loot with their Talcott family members.

### **Neil Talcott's "Memories" — Chapter 3**

*by Neil F. Talcott of Lovelock, NV when he growing up in Unionville, NV.*

#### **I remember Harry Salvai—**

Harry Salvai was an Italian bachelor who lived up the canyon from us. He ran a few cows and raised grass hay to feed them through the winter. My brothers, Harold and Leroy used to work for him when the hay was ready to put up. If anything broke, the only fix Harry knew was, "Get som of dose goot bailing vire." Needless to say every thing from the harness for the horses to the wagon was wrapped in bailing wire. Harry was the only one that I knew who could take a young green willow and tie it around a fence post instead of using staples to hold the barbed wire. He always tied them with a square knot, too. Harry raised a few chickens letting them run lose. As a result, the hens laid eggs just about any where. The Riha kids and I used to sneak up to his hay stack to find eggs, we took them up in the brush out of sight where we built a small fire to roast the eggs. The one big problem was to find fresh eggs!

Harry stood about 5' 6" and weighed about 180. He didn't move too fast. I remember one time he had a cow that got into a porcupine. By the time he found her, her nose was swollen real bad. He brought her to our corral where Harold and Leroy roped and threw her down, and Harry pulled the quills. Needless to say, the cow didn't like this very much. Because our corral was made out of willows, the only place you could climb over was at the gate which was made of boards. When Harry got through pulling the quills, he started for the gate. My brothers let him

#### **Check out**

**the new Talcott Family Association**

**website at —**

**<https://www.talcottfamilyassociation.org>**

get only part way before they let the cow get up. He made it over the top in record time with the old cow hooking at the seat of his pants as he went over the top.

There were a lot of apple trees on Harry's place. He never sprayed for worms, but when the apples were ripe, he would pick them and peddle them in Imlay and Lovelock. All the kids knew who "Apple Harry" was. When he was at the door trying to sell apples to the housewife, the kids would be out in the street trying to steal apples out of the back of Harry's truck.

One year Harry decided to sell out and move to town. He had sold all his old cows when something went wrong with the sale of the ranch. He ended up buying another bunch of cows. The big problem was the ones he bought were used to having all they could eat without having to rustle for it. Well, it was late winter and Harry didn't have much hay, and the new cows started dying like flies. Dad had to go talk to him to make him drag the dead ones down below the mouth of the canyon. Because there is always a down draft in the evening, the smell was pretty rank!!

Harry gave me one of the calves when the mother died. I raised it on a bucket. That was the start of my cow herd which I branded it with the bar NF. The bar was over the top of the NF and the NF were made as one letter. I wanted just the NF which was my grandfather's iron, but the brand recorder said it was to much like the NP, so I had to put a bar over the top. Dad would always let each one of us kids brand a calf for our own each branding time. If I remember right, I think I had about 20 head when Dad passed on, and I took over the ranch. I was 17.

Harry had a cousin, Claudy Massari, who lived across the valley in the mouth of Klondike Canyon, about 15 miles as the crow flies. Claudy had a Model T Ford and would drive over to Unionville to see Harry and to get his mail and any groceries that came in on the mail stage. If by chance the Model T wouldn't start, he would walk. If we saw him walking up the road, we would ask him where his car was. His answer was always, "She no want to come, I tell her to stay home." These old boys were tough and knew how to live on next to nothing. Claudy carried all the water he used from a spring about 5 miles up the canyon. He had a yoke and two 5-gallon cans like the Chinese used.

Claudie had a copper mine in the mouth of Klondike Canyon, Showing lots of copper color in the rock. One time, some mining company offered him \$30,000 for the mine. He said, "She worth 30,000 to you, she worth 60,000 to me." Claudy died in the county indigent home in Lovelock.

The Talcott Family Connection is published by The Talcott Family Association, Inc. It is published the first quarter of the year and mailed by USPS or by e-mail to all Talcott family members in the mailing address data base. Other times throughout the year, it is sent via e-mail to all Talcott family members in the Talcott e-mail list. It is edited by Dexter Talcott at 708 Mavor ST - Springfield, OH 45505 — [djtalcott@gmail.com](mailto:djtalcott@gmail.com). Talcott family stories, historical information and articles of interest are encouraged and may be submitted to the editor. Inclusion in future issues is subject to space available.





7th National

# Talcott Family Reunion

August 1-4, 2024

Baymont by Wyndham Rockford

662 North Lyford, Rockford, IL

Phone: 855-212-5749

Room rate \$103/room + tax

Dead line to register is June 30

Hot breakfast included.

# Reunion Schedule of Events

**Thursday, Aug 1**

**Registration - 3 pm to 5 pm & 7 pm to 10 pm**

**Friday, Aug. 2**

**9:30 am - depart for Rockford Library**

**Speaker - Bill Edmundson**

**“History of Talcott’s in Rockford, Wait & Sylvester Talcott.”**

**Tour of Waterpower district and possible church and graveyard.**

**Lunch on your own.**

**1:15 pm - Meet at Midway Museum and Village for Tour.**

**Supper on your own.**

**7 pm to 10 pm - Chase your Family tree at Hotel/ late registration.**

**Saturday, Aug. 3**

**9:00 am - Depart for Rockton Historical Society**

**9:30 am – Speaker, Marilyn Mohring on “History of Rockton, A proud Talcott family.”**

**Lunch on your own.**

**Talcott free library**

**Self-guided tour of Talcott home in the area, Race area, and graveyard.**

**5:45 pm - Dinner at Machine Shed**

**7 pm - Business meeting and auction at Hotel**



You are invited to join the **Talcott Family** group on Facebook which is limited to descendants of John & Dorothy Talcott who came to America in September 1632.