

1st place winner

Seneca Jones and Roxmont Poultry Farm – September 2002

by Leah Heal

Some people believe that history is not important, but Fred Bagley is an eyewitness to tell you that the most interesting people are in our history.

Fred Bagley is one of the oldest living residents in Moultonborough. He will be 96 years old in May of this year. Fred moved to this town with his wife after he retired. He has lived here for approximately 25 years. Surprisingly enough our school nurse, Beverly Taylor-Charest is the daughter of Mr. Bagley. I enjoyed the time I spent with Fred. He is a kind and interesting man. He shared a wonderful story with me about Seneca Jones and the Roxmont Poultry Farm.

Arthur Jones and Mini Tappan- Jones had a son, Seneca Jones. There is a mystery involving the birth of Seneca Jones. I could not find the exact place or date of his birth. One speculation is that he was possibly born in Sandwich. There was a fire that destroyed the town records that may have contained the information of his birth. The only information that I was able to find was on his tombstone in the graveyard on Sheridan Rd. Seneca was born in 1905. The Jones lived on Jones Road, which is off of Sheridan Road in Moultonborough. When I saw his house I was amazed at the beautiful view. To think that Seneca once lived there made me feel that he was a very fortunate man. He liked it so much that he lived there his entire life.

As an adult, Seneca was a thin and tall man, he was five feet and ten inches give or take. He wore a tan colored baseball cap, tipped sideways on his head. A cigar would always be hanging out of his mouth. When a person approached him the odor of a cigar filled the air. He often had turned up the collar of his shirt or had forgotten to put it down in the morning, no one really knew for sure. Seneca was a very colorful and smart man. Everyone liked him, although he was an extremely crazy driver. He would always cut corners on the road and one time during his extreme driving he hit a fence on Sheridan Road and was in huge trouble with the police. Seneca's fast driving may have been one of his only down falls. One of the most interesting things about Seneca was that he had a self-

sufficient farm, which he believed was the only one of its kind in this area. His farm became the Roxmont Poultry Farm.

Seneca, at first, raised rabbits on his farm. Later, he decided that chickens would make a better profit and ended up with eight thousand feathered friends. He was very serious about his work, but Seneca could always take time for others. When Fred Bagley went to visit Mr. Jones, his daughter would come along for the trip.

While Beverly roamed the farm she used to stuff eggs in her pinafore pockets. Time and again Mr. Jones would stop her and show her how to carry them correctly. He would show her that if she carried them in baskets they would not break. Seneca never got angry with her, no matter how many times he had to tell her this lesson. Mr. Jones had large and small houses to keep the chickens. In one of his large houses, he had forty cats with kit-tens, smiling he would say to the young girl, "if you need a kitten and you can catch one, you may have it."

If you were to work at the farm, at the end of the day you would be extremely exhausted. The day began with the sound of roosters crowing in the yard. It would take until noon to feed the chickens two tons of grain. In the afternoon you would first clean the droppings out of the coops and then put fresh bedding in every stall. Some afternoons you would have to inoculate the birds. Work on the farm involved dealing with the birth and death of the chickens. To hatch the eggs they had to be put into a hatching machine. The hatching machine kept the eggs warm through their incubation period. Butchering and dressing the chickens, for sale, was by far the worst job of them all. It was very time consuming and bloody.

I learned from Fred Bagley that it took more than one man to run the farm. In fact, Fred would sometimes work for Seneca, but he did it as a favor not a full time working job. Fred told me about a man named Charles Thomas Abbott who worked for Seneca full time. When I talked to Charles Abbott he seemed very pleased and joyful about the 10 years he worked for Seneca. I was glad to speak with Mr. Abbott about his time on the farm. He gave me two great pictures.

It was surprising to me to find out that Seneca did not sell his chickens to local residents. He sold them only to people who came to him from Massachusetts. Hubbard Farm and White Rock Farm purchased large

quantities of Seneca's chickens. However, local residents did buy grain and eggs from him.

Seneca married very late in life. He married Elena Rizzo, from Massachusetts, on October 7, 1948. He and his wife never had children. Unfortunately he did not have anyone left behind who was like him to carry on his splendid passion for life. Sadly he died on May 22, 1971 at the age of 65. Even though he did not leave any children behind, I believe he left his wonderful life story for me. He taught me a lesson that I will never forget: History is important, because some of the most interesting and important people are in our history.