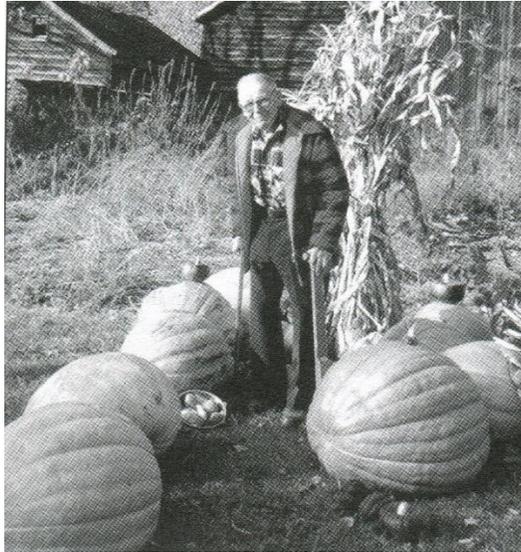


This Week in Saratoga County History

Elmer Droms Clifton Park's Oldest Resident dies at 102

Submitted by John L. Scherer October 22, 2020



Elmer Droms with his famous pumpkins ca 1998

Long time Clifton Park resident Elmer Droms died on Friday, October 27, 2000 at age 102. He had been an occupant of Maplewood Manor Nursing Home in Ballston Spa since spring. Prior to that time, he occupied a two-hundred-year-old farmhouse on Droms Road, near Grooms Corners, his home for 98 years. Elmer had lived alone since 1962, when his wife Edith died. As Clifton Park Town Historian I had the privilege of interviewing him on several occasions and he always had a very keen memory and a sharp wit. He was a master storyteller, and enjoyed telling about a Clifton Park that no one would recognize today. On March 16, 1998 the Town of Clifton Park issued a proclamation honoring Elmer on his 100th Birthday which was celebrated on March 26 of that year.

Elmer was born in Alplaus, Schenectady County in 1898, and in 1903 his family moved to the farmhouse near Grooms Corners, on the road now named for his family. His life filled the twentieth century, and he was a witness to all its turmoil and changes. Elmer was five years old when the Wright Brothers flew the first airplane. He watched canal boats being pulled by mules down at the Erie Canal in Rexford, and recalled Clifton Park's first automobile whose noisy engine

interrupted class at the one room schoolhouse at Grooms Corners. Before the days of refrigeration, Elmer cut ice on the Mohawk River. Electricity and the first telephones were new inventions that made life on the farm easier. Elmer witnessed the first radios and televisions, two world wars, and the advent of the computer.

When asked once what he attributed his long life to, Elmer replied "Trust in God, lead a clean life and have fun." He truly enjoyed life. He grew some of the largest pumpkins and vegetables in the area, earning him a moment of fame each fall on a local television newscast. At age 96, he was still operating a tractor with skill. Elmer was a mischievous youth. He was educated in a one-room schoolhouse at Ray and Sugar Hill Roads where he said he caused his share of anxiety for his teacher. Elmer and his friends used to toss .22 caliber bullets into the pot bellied stove just for excitement. The gleam in his eyes as he told of his experiences at age 100 revealed that Elmer's character had not really changed all that much. He was still full of the devil!

My last visit with Elmer was in March 2000 at Ellis Hospital, just before he went to Maplewood Manor. I wanted to learn something about the Historic Grooms Tavern from someone who could remember it in the early 1900s. He, however, knew I was interested in local murders, and proceeded to tell me a fascinating story from the turn of the century.

Elmer Droms passing marked the passing of an era in Clifton Park history. Probably no one else is left who can remember the entire twentieth century in Clifton Park. Elmer was certainly an eyewitness to history, and he remembered it so well. His knack for remembering, especially people's names and dates was uncanny. It is a shame to lose that personal contact with our past, but I have no doubt that the angels are now listening intently as Elmer continues to spin his yarns.