

Thomas **McClintock**, David **Eason**, and Low **Miniger**
By Douglas H. Shepard, 2003

The year 2029 will be the 200th Anniversary of Fredonia's incorporation. However, long before 1829 -- December 1803 -- the first recorded settlers were here, breaking ground and preparing the way for all that has followed. Who were these brave people we should be honoring next month? Thomas **McClintock**, David **Eason**, and Low **Miniger**.

Karen **Livsey's** *Western New York Land Transactions, 1804-1824* and **Young's History of Chautauqua County** give some of the details. In 1803, **McClintock** took articles on Lots 8 (the one Zattu **Cushing** later wanted), 14, and 20 in Township 6, Range 12 (most of today's Village of Fredonia). **Eason** settled on part of Lot 20 near today's Risley Street bridge, and Low **Miniger** near where Temple and Matteson streets intersect.

When they arrived, they had very little means to procure what they needed and there being no other settlers in the area, everything had to be created from scratch. They set about erecting some form of shelter and establishing themselves so that they could survive, each building a log cabin on his land.

At the time, the only road -- a primitive one following an ancient Indian trail -- ran about where Route 20 is today to West Sheridan, then dipped sharply south along today's Elm Street, to avoid the gulch at Canadaway Creek, instead crossing the creek at a shallow ford on the flats below today's intersection of Union Street and Eagle Street. **McClintock** built there on the flats.

The Holland Land Company files have preserved several letters between **McClintock** and the office in Batavia reporting on progress and asking for improved roads and other assistance. Finally, the three decided to move further west. In effect, they turned in their contracts in exchange for new ones on what seemed like more promising land in Portland and Westfield.

That gave Zattu **Cushing** the opportunity to article Lot 8, the one he had originally hoped for, and Hezekiah **Barker** to take Lot 14 instead of a lot in Portland that he had originally considered. **Cushing** built a log cabin next to the road on the heights overlooking the creek while **Barker** moved into **McClintock's** abandoned cabin on the flats below. Those are the names -- **Cushing** and **Barker** -- we think of today as our Village's Founding Fathers. As the first permanent settlers, they were, but let us not forget those who went before and prepared the way: **Miniger**, **Eason**, and **McClintock**.