

# Funeral Planned Tomorrow For Verdi Burtch, Writer

## Ornithologist, Store Owner Passes in Branchport

Branchport—Funeral will be conducted in the home at 2:30 p. m. tomorrow for Verdi Burtch, noted ornithologist, writer and partner in the Burtch brothers store here for 45 years. He died late Thursday night (Dec. 27, 1945). He was 77 years old on Christmas Day.

The Rev. J. Harold Riggle of the Seneca Falls Methodist Church, former pastor of the Branchport church, will officiate at the funeral, assisted by the Rev. Hiram Rogers, rector of St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Branchport.

Mr. Burtch was born in Penn Yan, a son of Joel and Emma McGuin Burtch, the eldest of five children. His parents lived in Branchport during his youth and he attended school there, playing hooky to watch the first wild geese settle on Lake Keuka in the spring and spending only the briefest of hours in sleep when the flights of jewel-colored warblers came north.

### Wrote for Bird Books

With the years his interest and knowledge of birds grew and from his vast store of ornithological data he has contributed to practically every authoritative book on birds that has been published during the past several decades. Among these publications are Eaton's "Birds of New York," which is the recognized state bird book. When Frank M. Chapman, dean of American ornithologists, wrote "Warblers of America," Mr. Burtch contributed the chapter, Life History of Warblers of Yates County, and many pictures. In Gordon Alymar's "Bird Flight" there are many photographs by Mr. Burtch.

He made bird photographs for a study series for the New York State Department of Education and another study course for Pennsylvania State College. He made lantern slides of bird life for the United States Department of Agriculture and contributed many photographs and much data to the monumental work, "Life Histories of North American Birds," the fullest account of North American birds ever written, and published by the United States National Museum. He also was a contributor to many national magazines.



VERDI BURTCH  
... noted bird lover

Mr. Burtch was the first person to do bird banding in this area and from this work has come a great deal of authentic data. Banding approximately 150 of the little red-headed tree sparrows and the tiny song sparrows each winter for many years, he has received reports from birds bearing his bands from thousands of miles away. He has undoubtedly done more to make Yates County bird minded than any other person who has ever lived here. He was one of the very few men in the area who could recall having seen flocks of the now extinct passenger pigeons. His collection of birds' nests, eggs, and mounted specimens is large and unique.

### Kin of Pioneers

Mr. Burtch, who was a descendant of the first settlers of Yates County, married Miss Maud E. Townsend of Dresden, who survives him, on June 28, 1894. Their golden wedding anniversary, marked by an open house and dinner last summer, was an event participated in by practically the whole of the Branchport community.

Mr. Burtch was a member of the American Ornithologist Union, Wilson Ornithologist Club, American Museum of Natural History, Cooper Ornithologist Club, the local bird club and conservation club, the Izaak Walton League and the Episcopal Church.

He leaves, besides his widow, a daughter, Vireo (Mrs. John N. Whitaker of Bluff Point); two sons, Forest Burtch of Trenton, N. J., and Kirkland Burtch of Branchport; four grandchildren; three brothers, Orba, who is partner in the Branchport store; Wright, and Joel Burtch of Cleveland.

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## Keuka Conservation Club To Form Bird Sanctuary

Penn Yan—Honoring Branchport's famed ornithologist, Verdi Burtch, a bird sanctuary is being established by the Keuka Park Conservation Club.

The area for the Verdi Burtch Sanctuary was purchased from Roy Cook, and covers the marsh on the west side of Guyanoga Valley Creek near Branchport. The land extends north to the site of the old trolley tracks, and the southern extremity goes beyond the Burtch home property.



**MONUMENT HONORS RED JACKET'S MOTHER.**

Verdi Burtch, Branchport, is shown pointing to monument erected near Branchport in memory of the mother of Red Jacket, Indian orator and chief. The land on which

monument rests has been presented to the New York State Historical Association by William Millsbaugh of Sheffield, England, who purchased it from Raymond Twiliger.

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# State Acquires Memento To Red Jacket's Mother

Penn Yan—It was 10 years ago that the seven-foot granite boulder bearing a bronze tablet was erected over the grave of Red Jacket's mother near Branchport, the first monument in the Empire State to be dedicated to the memory of an Indian woman.

Now the lot, 200 feet by 40 feet, and including the monument, has been purchased of Raymond E. Twiliger by William H. Millspaugh of Sheffield, England, and given to the New York State Historical Association. The transfer was brought about by Dr. Arthur C. Parker of the Rochester Museum and Verdi Burtch, of Branchport, lifelong friend of Millspaugh, who acted as his agent.

The monument, which was brought from Guyanoga Valley through the efforts of Burtch, stands atop a mound and beneath it, enclosed in copper, are the bones of Red Jacket's mother. Her son was one of the most famous native American orators and peacemakers. The original expense of the stone and plaque were defrayed by Millspaugh, who was born in Branchport, and who is now conducting a vital wartime industry in Sheffield.

## Goal of Pilgrimages

It is expected that the sale of the lot will lift the spot from its half forgotten estate and, after the neglect of years, proper care will make it again the goal of historical pilgrimages.

History of Yates County and the town of Jerusalem speaks of Red Jacket's mother as a "remarkable woman," although all accounts of those early days are strangely silent on the early years of Red Jacket's life.

In 1794 Col. Timothy Pickering consummated the first basic treaty of the United States with the Indians of the Six Nations, a treaty that remains in full force. The council was held at Canandaigua. At that time Canandaigua and Geneva already were flourishing towns and Bath had been established by Charles Williamson, but Yates County still was a wilderness.

## Boy Left in Her Care

Red Jacket's mother, Ahweyneyonk, was about 62 at that time and it was about then that Asa Brown, son of a white family, was left in her care while his parents went on a trading trip. Asa was 13 at the time, and whether or not his people ever returned to the vicinity, he became a foster child of the Indian family and when his Indian mother died, assisted at her burial. Through him the accurate location of the grave has been preserved.

Home for the gentle Indian woman and the two boys, Red Jacket and Asa, was at the little settlement on the slope of the western shore of Keuka Lake, at the sandbar near the mouth of Basswood Gully. It was a notable spot for it lay close to the great east and west trail of the Finger Lakes and directly upon the Keuka trail to the Susquehanna.

## Member of Wolf Clan

From Cattaraugus records, according to findings of Dr. Parker, Ahweyneyonk was a member of the Hotaioni (Wolf) clan, one of the noble clans of the Senecas. The bronze plaque on the big granite stone bears symbols of her religion and race.

One is the "Sacred Hill" on the east shore of Canandaigua Lake and the Tree of Peace, said to have "pierced the sky." Within a shield is the head of a wolf, and at the bottom is a jar of pottery over a fire, emitting smoke and steam. In the left corner is a lighted pipe of peace, for Red Jacket's father was a Cayuga and the Cayugas were the pipe bearers of the Iroquois League. However, Red Jacket was not classed as a Cayuga but as a Seneca because the children of Iroquois took their ancestral nationality from the maternal side.

History has preserved Red Jacket's name side by side with the greatest orators of the country and the leading peacemakers of the people that were allies of our young country in the War of 1812. He is buried in Forest Lawn Cemetery at Buffalo and a handsome monument saves his grave from obscurity.