NNHS NEWS LETTER Northville Northampton Historical Society

Issue 65 January 2016 Editor Gail M Cramer



HACK

We don't like to hear that word today. In modern times it means "to gain unauthorized access to data in a system/ computer. It has a very different meaning than years ago. Today we are afraid someone will "hack" into our computer.

The words Hack or Hackney stems from London, England, meaning a carriage or vehicle to transport passengers to a destination of their choosing by way of a hack or hackney carriage.

According to an article on the internet, the first hackneycarriage licenses date from 1662, and applied literally to horse-drawn carriages, later modernized as hansom cabs (1834), that operated as vehicles for hire. There was a distinction between a general hackney carriage and a hackney coach, a hireable vehicle with specifically four wheels, two horses and six seats, and driven by a jarvey.



Hacks waiting to take passengers into the village of Northville that had arrived on the F. J. & G railroad.

Some London Hacks









A London Hack or Taxi today

Hack continued

The Northville railroad station was located on the west side of the Sacandaga River. Access into the village of Northville was a narrow bridge. It soon was evident that a regular hacking service into Northville was much needed. The Lawton Coal Company purchased a tenseated horse-drawn hack which transported people between the village and the station for a fee. It also carried mail bags. Charles Lawton was conductor for many years. John Cole drove a four-seated horse-drawn hack from Northville to Sacandaga Park.

As the automobiles came on the scene, the horse-drawn hacks faded, Harvey D (Bub) Eaton, John Grennell and Arthur Fowler and Lewis Snell, drove Model T Fords as taxis to the station, the Park and points North.

In 1908 a village ordinance was passed that hack licenses would be required. Horse-drawn hack, two seats, \$10.00; Three seats, \$15.00; Horse-drawn bus, \$25.00; and small automobile taxi \$50.00.

In later years, Frederick R. Stuart and Jesse Blowers conducted taxi service in the Village. There may have been others.

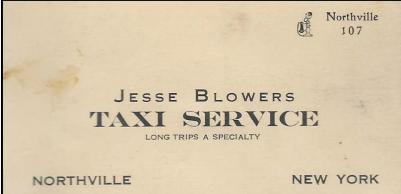




DRIVING THE "HACK" ... this is one of the first taxicabs in the Northville area. This old photo, taken in 1910, shows Lewis Snell behind the wheel of a Ford Model T. He met passengers arriving on the F. J. & G. Railroad station in Northville, and then drove them north to Lake Pleasant, Speculator and Piseco. (Photo courtesy of Ralph Snell, Johnstown)



A motorized "hack" taxi on West Bridge Street.





You will note that Charles, as many men during that time period had more than one job. He is mentioned in the article about "Hacks" as one of the drivers. His obituary tells of his diverse interests and businesses.

Excerpts from his obituary

Charles B Lawton, aged seventy-one years died at his home on the corner of Second and Center Streets. He had been confined for two days with the influenza, though he had been in poor health for several years.

When a young man, Mr. Lawton ventured forth in the world. He was a great lover of the horses and he handled them for a number of years and in fact till his last days. Years ago when the large menageries and circuses used to travel on the roads drawn by the horses, he being handy with the reins used to drive 10 and 12 pair on the leading wagons, and he often time entertained his friends relating his experiences. After he left this work he came to this village and started a livery and sales stable with G. E. Van Arnam.

With his father D. S. Lawton, he carried the mail from this place to Hadley. When he gave this up he established a transfer line in the village and a general carting business. Later ran a general truck-man and jobbing business. (note the receipt as "Dealer in Coal, Hay and Straw Trucking and Furniture moving a specialty") For years he was the manager of the Standard Oil Co in this section.

Probably no person will be more missed than "Charlie" Lawton for his heart was as large as his means and many persons were the receivers of his noble generosity.

Survivors are his wife Eva Roberts Lawton, one sister; Mrs. Hugh Barker, two brothers, Harry Lawton and Ivory C. Lawton.



Charles B. Lawton

STATEMENT In Case of Error, Return this Bill for Correction Northville, N. Y., rpl To C. B. LAWTON. Dr. DEALER IN COAL, HAY and STRAW TRUCKING AND FURNITURE MOVING A SPECIALTY **13 SOUTH FIRST STREET** 1050 110.20 1 sh 32 23

Village of Northville One hundred years ago 1916

We had a president instead of a mayor, Franklin N. Wright, and in March of that year I. E. Bowman was elected. Health Officer was Dr. Collie J. Robinson. Charles Miller appointed as police constable at a salary of \$300.00 per year. Jackson S. Green appointed as Street Commissioner. Trustees of the village: W. H. Mosher, W. A. Smith, P. C. Pickard and W. F. Carpenter. Hack fees were assigned. Good reports from the Water Commissioner, Street Commissioner, Light Commissioner and Side Walk Commissioner. (from the 1916 minutes of the Village of Northville)

