

## **Did You Know About Halfmoon's Mott Family?**

### **Mott's Inc. Apple Processing Empire**

#### **Lynda Bryan, Town of Halfmoon Historian**

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This fascinating story has two beginnings; the story of John Krasuski, the last family to live on the farm, and Zebulon Mott, the first family to live on the Farm to Market property. There were several owners of the property before John's parents Frank and Helen Krasuski purchased it in 1944. John's memories of the farm he grew up on and researching his roots, had him travelling back to the 1700's and to the Kayaderoasseras patent where this and much of Halfmoon property can be traced. This story is of 5 Generations of Motts and Zebulon being the first.

**Generation #1: Zebulon and Rebecca Mott.** Zebulon Mott, the original deed holder in 1795 and a very prominent man in the Town of Halfmoon's early history. Zebulon was the Town Supervisor from 1801 – 1817, served in the NYS Legislature, was Deacon of the First Baptist Church that stood at the corner of Farm to Market and Pruyn Hill Roads and is buried in the Newtown Cemetery that remains today. Zebulon's Brother Samuel, compiled and was the editor of Mott's Almanac.

**Generation #2: Zebulon's son John** lived on the adjacent farm to the west of his parents Zebulon and Rebecca.

Generation #3: Samuel Roger Mott, John's Son, was the last Mott to live on the farm in Halfmoon. Samuel spent many a day walking through the orchards with his grandfather Zebulon. There, he learned the tricks of the trade in processing the apples for cider and vinegar. Word got out and he started selling his product to his neighbors. The Logo on every jar reads: SINCE 1842 and that was the year that Samuel was 16 years old selling his product to his neighbor's right here in Halfmoon! The cider was made by hitched horses that plodded in a circle, crushing apples between two large stones drums. This was a centuries old production. As the demand grew so did the mill. The horses were replaced with a more modern method using water power and steam to operate the presses.

In 1868, Samuel (46), his wife Ann Mary Coon and 4 of their 5 children left Halfmoon and moved to Bouckville, NY buying a 1/3 interest in a cider vinegar factory. In 1869, he bought out his two partners. Samuel, like his Grandfather Zebulon, was Supervisor of the Town of Madison for 17 years, and also served as a member of the NYS Assembly.

Generation #4: John Coon Mott, Samuel and Ann Mary's oldest son, and the last Mott to be born in Halfmoon, did not move with the family to Bouckville. He lived in NYC where he opened a cider mill of his own that was located where the Jacob Javitt's Convention Center is now, near Pier 76. Father and Son merged their companies in 1879 forming the S.R. & J.C. Mott Company. In 1882 the mill in Bouckville was processing 14 carloads of apples = 600 barrels of juice per day. A barrel contained 25 gallons, to give you an idea of their production. They were now shipping internationally.

Generation #5: Charles Stewart Mott, John's son, studied the fermentation process in France and Germany. He worked in the family business and at the turn of the century, he became the Superintendent of his Uncle Fredericks (Samuel and Ann Mary's 3<sup>rd</sup> child) business called Weston-Mott Wheel Works. They produced metal wheels for bicycles, carriages and rickshaw's and later axels. They were offered a proposal to build a plant in Flint, Michigan and produce wheels for "Horseless Carriages". Uncle Frederick, not wanting to move, turned the business over to his nephew Charles. The success of the company caught the eye of a new up and coming company who wanted to purchase Wheel Works. Charles sold the business in 1913 in two pieces in exchange for stock in the new business called General Motors! By 1942 he was the corporation's largest stockholder. He sat on the Board of Directors for 60 years until his death in 1973. It was "Auto's not Apples" that made him one of America's first self-made billionaires!

**"WHAT I AM WORTH IS WHAT I DO FOR OTHER PEOPLE"**

An often quoted comment from Mr. Mott, helps explain his reason for creating the Mott Foundation

In 1926 he created the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation with a \$320,000 endowment. It now has more than \$3 billion in assets and offices in three countries. His subsequent gifts of cash and stock made his foundation one of the largest in the country, and he donated more than \$130 million dollars to organizations in his lifetime.

**"LET US BE KNOWN BY OUR DEEDS"**

Our two stories end with John Krasuski, finding the answers to 215 years of questions, standing in the cemetery next to his house by Zebulon's family gravestones and

Zebulon Mott, a Grandfather, spending valuable time with his Grandson, never imagining the lessons learned by that young boy that created an empire that has become part of our daily lives, and it all happened in "5 Generations".