

Wilson Historical Society

WILSON, NEW YORK 14172

NEWSLETTER

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

LIBRARIAN
WILSON CENTRAL SCHOOL
WILSON, NY 14172

January 1990 Vol.19 No.1
(Coleman Press)

RECOLLECTIONS OF RURAL 1900's:

Those of us who marvel at the accomplishments of our present computerized society, may find it difficult to imagine a day when life moved at a much slower pace.

In reading over the memoirs of the late Anna Karsten, we get a glimpse of a time in rural Wilson when conditions were far different than they are today.

For instance, in the early 1900's there were no improved roads--only dirt ones, and they were kept smooth with the help of a huge scraper pulled by a team of horses.

In the wintertime, cars were jacked up on blocks until the following spring, and the engine, which was started with a magneto, would then be switched over to the battery.

Auto tires were as smooth as a garden hose, and the "honker" horn, which helped clear the way of both farmers and livestock, was operated by an attached balloon-like rubber ball.

Gasoline sold for 13 cents a gallon, but increased three times that amount after World War I started. Most farmers stored gas on their farms in 50 gallon drums.

She noted that their first new car cost the "fabulous sum of five hundred dollars", and though it was probably a marvel at the time, was a far cry from the sleek, shiny, low-slung sports cars of today.

She recalled that "Dad used to drive, but it was a fearsome ordeal for all who rode with him as he sped 5 to 10 miles an hour down the road.

"We made two trips a year--one to the pioneer picnic at Olcott, and the other to the "Old Home Week" celebration in Lockport when the Main Street was roped off for a mid-way that extended over the "Big Bridge".

"The usual farm chores were mostly done by hand and, in the fall, it was customary to make apple butter.

"The neighbors would usually come over and help peel bushels of apples, and a huge kettle was filled with cider and boiled down about half way over an open fire.

"Apples were gradually added and the mixture was constantly stirred, and if it became too thick, more apple cider would be added.

"We used our own apples to make the cider and, in those days, it wasn't necessary to spray them because very few of the apples were wormy.

"One bushel of apples made about 4 gallops of cider, and the juice was squeezed from them by a horse-powered grinder at the cider mill.

"Making the apple butter was a 24 hour job so while some slept, others would keep the fires going and stir the cider and apples continuously.

"Fifty gallons were usually made at a time and stored in earthen crocks, and while the apple butter was being made the smell would fill the air for miles around.

"Sometimes, work and play were combined, and young people especially looked forward to the annual corn-husking bee's.

The husks were pulled from the ears of corn and stuffed into bags and later sold for bed ticks, while the corn was stored in a granary for livestock feeding.

"Around midnight a big meal was served and later, everyone joined in on the barn floor to square dance and have a wonderful time."

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JANUARY MEETING:

On January 15th, our guest speaker will be Ron Haefer of Newfane, Executive Director of Big Brothers and Sisters of Niagara County. His presentation will be "A History of the Big Brothers-Big Sisters Movement".

Incidentally, Rev. Haefer and his wife, Sylvia, are members of the Wilson Historical Society, and it would be nice if we could have a good turn-out to welcome them.

Emma Schrader, Chrm., has announced that she and Shirley Evans will be refreshment hostesses for the evening.

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CALENDAR:

Museum will be closed to visitors during the months of January, February, and March,

Jan. 10th: Board of Director Meeting at the museum; 7:30 PM.

Jan. 15th: Monthly program meeting at museum; 7:30 PM.

No Planning Board meeting is scheduled for January.

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SOUNDINGS: Ever notice that the 2nd baby is not quite as breakable as the first?"

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YANKEE DOODLE DANDY:

It might come as a surprise to some people that the song, "Yankee Doodle" was written during the French and Indian Wars by a British surgeon, Dr. Schukburg, when he was stationed at Fort Craile, now Rensselaer, New York.

The doctor had just watched a company of ragged Americans straggle into the fort while arguing loudly with their officers.

As a joke, the doctor wrote the lyrics to "Yankee Doodle", and gave it to the Americans as a good tune to drill by.

As bedraggled, unkempt Americans marched to its catchy beat, the British soldiers laughed and poked fun at them, however, the tune caught on and soon became a camp favorite.

When the Revolutionary War began and the British were routed at Concord and Lexington, the Minutemen sang the song proudly; and it was played again when Burgoyne surrendered to Gates at Saratoga; and again when Cornwallis surrendered to Washington at Yorktown.

Thus a song that started out as a British joke, became one of the best marching tunes ever written, and helped the American Militiamen and soldiers of the Continental Army defeat the finest professionals Britain could muster.

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RECENT ACQUISITIONS:

Gifts acquired from Frederick "Fritz" Oldenburg of Clifton, NJ, include a large oil painting of a Clipper Ship; also mounted and framed wood carvings of a Northern Pike (1975); Big Mouth Bass; "My First Catch"; and a life sized bust of a Navajo Indian.

John Ginty, Newfane: First handcuffs used by the late Earl Armstrong of Wilson, who later became a Niagara County Deputy Sherrif.

James Brewer, Lockport: Railroad Phone Box originally on a pole where railroad tracks crossed Ontario Street.

Ida Fritz: Teachers Training Class Day Program for Wilson--1910.

Henry Donner, Euclid, Ohio: Soapstone Warmer and Pottery Jog.

Frank Wegener, Newfane: Two quilts (ca.1850) registered under the N.Y. Quilt Project.

Don Croop: Genealogy of Croop family who settled in Clarence, Erie Co., in 1806-1829.

Fred Koeppen: Wicker Baby Carriage and Child's Sled.

Mrs. Marvin (Esther) Myers: Song Book (1927); New Testament used in Home Guard by Earl Carrigan; and early Ladies Watch in Box Postcard.

Jean Capen, Burt: Post Card of Sunset Island; Announcement Program of Peter Porter Regiment Reunion, August 22, 1894.

Eloise Culverwell: Resolutions of Respect in memory of Ida Ereon from Rebekah Lodge #397 dated June 22, 1989.

Edward Allgeier: Grape Press; Silage Cutting Box; and Grape Baskets.

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GOLDEN WEDDING BELLS:

Congratulations to 3 of our historical society couples who were married in 1939 and celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversaries in November.

Chester and Charlotte McArthur were married in Wilson and moved to Winter Haven, Florida, in 1961. They celebrated their anniversary with family and friends at the Grenelefe Country Club in Winter Haven.

William and Margery Ganshaw were married at St.Bartholomew's Rectory in Buffalo on Thanksgiving Day, and Stuart and Ernestine Walpole were married the same day at Exley Methodist Church in Wilson.

Both couples celebrated their 50th anniversaries with family and friends at a reception held at the Rib House Restaurant in Newfane.

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IN FOND MEMORY:

Milburn E. Campbell, 76, a lifelong resident of Wilson, died unexpectedly on Nov. 22, 1989, at Zephyr Hills, FL. He is survived by his wife, Marion Sherman Campbell of Wilson, a daughter, Mrs. Robert (Carolyn) Paton of Irvington, NY; also 3 sisters, Mrs. Lucille Kirchoff of Sanford, FL; Mrs. Wirt (Dora) Wakeman of Wilson; and Mrs. Harold (Esther) Albright, Newfane Health Fac.

Milburn was the former owner and publisher of the Wilson "Star"; and also worked for Moore Business Forms and the Niagara Gazette.

He was a member of Exley United Methodist Church; a veteran of World War II; Past Commander of Martin Jennings American Legion Post of Wilson; Past Master of Masonic Lodge #376; member of Wilson Vol. Fire Co. #1; and former trustee and charter-life member of the Wilson Hist. Soc.

Services were held at Exley United Methodist Church with Rev. Donald Foley officiating, and burial was in Greenwood Cemetery, Wilson.

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John Benedict, 77, died unexpectedly on Dec. 17, 1989, at Inter-Community Hospital, Newfane. He was a native of Wilson, the son of the late John and Dorothy Parsons Benedict.

He was a Navy veteran of World War II, and later worked at Bell Aero Space, Niagara Falls. He also operated a farm on Chestnut Road, Wilson, since 1947, and was active in the Wilson Hist. Soc. where he helped with several buildings and heating projects.

He is survived by his wife, Annabell Duxbury Benedict, at home, and several nieces and nephews. Funeral services were held at the Hamilton & Clark Funeral Chapel in Wilson, and burial was at North Ridge Cemetery with Rev. Donald Foley of Exley Church officiating.

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NEW MEMBERS:

Please welcome Ralph and Vivian Austin of Wilson, and Christine Munch of Niagara Falls.

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FAIR PLANS UNDERWAY:

Betty Stimson reports that the quilt for the 1990 Memorial Day Fair is completed which reminds us: "Old quilters never die, they just go to pieces."

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CURE FOR DIPHTHERIA:

A family growing up in the early 1900's didn't have all the high tech medical knowledge that we have available in the 1990's, and home remedies were very common with Mother often playing the role of doctor and nurse as well as housewife.

In 1915, Sara Berry's grandmother Holmes clipped the following home remedy for diphtheria from the New York Tribune--and we quote:

"We have just received a recipe for the cure of diphtheria from a physician who says that of one thousand cases in which it had been used, not a single patient had been lost.

"The treatment consists in thoroughly swabbing the back of the mouth and throat with a wash made thus: Table salt, 2 dracoms; black pepper (golden seal); nitre of potash, and alum--one dracon each.

"Mix and pulverize and put into a tea cup half full of boiling water, stir well, and then fill up with vinegar.

"Use every half hour--one, two and four hours as recovery progresses. The patient may swallow a little each time.

"Apply one ounce each of spirits of turpentine, sweet oil, and Ayers ammonia, mixed every hour, to the whole of the throat, and to the breast bones every one, two or 4 hrs. keeping flannel to the paste."

(Note: The above "cure" is printed merely as an example of a home remedy used in the early 1900's, and it is suggested that no reader attempt to use such a concoction without first consulting with your physician.)

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BOARD ACTIVITY AND REPORTS:

Two letters were read by Pam Groff, Secy., including one from Harold Mosher, town supervisor, thanking the society for its participation in the opening of this year's "Light up Wilson Celebration". Another letter from the Wilson Free Library offering the society the old barber-shop at 271 Young Street was read, and the secretary was instructed to write the Library a letter of acceptance.

Don Burrows stated that he and Dan King would wait for better weather before getting the buggy donated by Ed and Gertrude Marks.

The Eastern Niagara Chamber of Congress has requested that the society submit visiting hours and dates of future events so that they might be included in the calendar of upcoming activities in the county. Visitation hours will be Sunday afternoons from 2 to 4PM during the months of April through December. The museum will also be open on Saturday afternoons from 2 to 4PM during the months of July and August. The annual Memorial Day Fair will be May 28th. Ollie Clark reported that new railroad ties must be acquired to complete the roadbed for the railroad hand car donated by Don Burrows.

It was proposed that committee chairmen be asked to attend as many Board meetings as their schedules will permit. The Board considers it essential they receive as much input as possible from committee chairmen, and feel that in return they will be able to give the committees more support. Helen Stevens, cor. sec., was asked to notify chairmen of meeting dates.

Motion was approved to have Ollie Clark investigate a suitable type plaque on which to list the names of Wilson's war veterans, for all wars.

Eleanor Myers, Chrm., Barnum Bldg., said that plans are temporarily on hold for putting barbershop in Barnum Building until plan for building acquired from Library are formulated.

Carole Schnoor, Treas., reported that from Nov. 16th through Dec. 12th, expenses were \$2,164.68, and income was \$40.00. The society's income from May 1, 1989 to date was \$15,865.93; Expenses for the same period were \$13,317.21.

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CHRISTMAS PROGRAM:

The Christmas social was real nice--if you missed it, you were the loser. Tables were beautifully decorated by Barbara Mosher and her committee, and a delicious light supper of chowder, fresh rolls, coffe and tea were served.

Trays of Christmas cookies were then placed at each table while guest speaker, Jud Heck, town historian of Newfane, gave an interesting talk and slide presentation on the history of old "St. Nick".

Names for the prize awards were then drawn by Carole Schnoor, and Pam McInerney received the floral display; --- Feigenbaum, the dog; and Jean Swanson, the Christmas Bells.

Harold Mosher and John Myers helped serve the lunch, and Helen Stevens, Eleanor Myers, and Emma Schrader furnished Christmas cookies.

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BY-LAWS COMMITTEE:

The By-Laws committee was set up to revue, update, and make changes as needed or recommended by the Board of Directors and general membership.

Amendments to the by-laws may be made by a written resolution submitted by two or more members to the Board, and passed on by the general membership by a 2/3rds vote one month after the resolution is presented to the Board. (Article X Sec. 3)

The committee presently consists of Don Croop, Chrm., Art Schnoor, 2nd Vice-Pres., and Lois Jennings, curator.

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RECOGNITION EARNED:

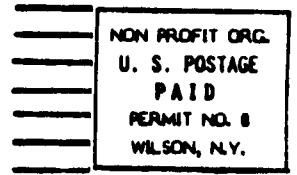
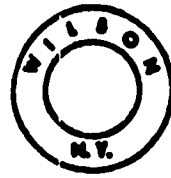
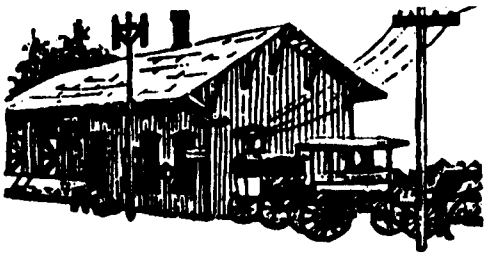
Congratulations to Winnie Fischer of Wilson who was recently awarded a 30 year service pin in recognition of her dedication and leadership in the Niagara County 4-H organization.

TIME FOR ACTION:

With the January Newsletter in the mail, it's time to be thinking "FAIR". Like it or not, the big day is only 4 months away, so even if winter's "got you down", it's time to "Get Back to the Future" and start warming up for our 18th Annual Memorial Day Fair.

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BON MOT: You cannot stop the wind, but you can adjust your sails.



Wilson Historical Society

WILSON, NEW YORK 14172

NEWSLETTER

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

February 1990 Vol. 19 No.2
(Coleman Press)

ELEANOR HYERS, TOWN HISTORIAN
215 LAKE ST.
WILSON, NY 14172

HOME OF THE "LITTLE APPLE":

It is no secret that some of the tastiest, juiciest apples grown anywhere are found right here in Niagara County.

It is also no secret that apples are one of the best, low calorie healthy foods one can eat, with plenty of evidence to back up the old saying, "An apple a day keeps the doctor away."

In view of this, and, considering their abundance in our country, it is hard to believe that the average for the American consumer is 14 lbs. a year, while the Japanese eat 40 lbs. and the Dutch, 100 lbs. a year per person.

We obtained some interesting data about the "common man's fruit" from Mrs. Hazel Salisbury of Wilson, and find that of all the states growing apples, New York is second only to the state of Washington. Moreover, of the 25,000,000 bushels produced last year in our state, 19,000,000 bushels were produced in the lake shore counties of Niagara, Orleans, Monroe, Wayne, and Onandaga.

The apple is believed to have originated in southwest Asia, but was also very common in ancient Greece and Rome, and it was probably the Romans who introduced it into England.

From there, the Colonists brought the seeds to the New World, and as pioneer settlers made their way west, the apple seeds went with them.

In 1818, Daniel and Sally Holmes came from Saratoga to the newly organized town of Wilson, and they brought all their personal effects in a sled drawn by a team of oxen.

Here they settled on 160 acres of land on East Lake Road, (now the home of Floyd and Hazel Salisbury) and Daniel planted his first apple orchard with seeds that Sally had carried in her apron pocket all the way from New England.

The last tree of this orchard, a "Snow" apple, blew down in 1974, and limbs from it were removed by the Wilson Historical Society and made into commemorative plaques by Arthur Schnoor and other interested members.

Most of us have heard the story how the legendary figure, "Johnny Appleseed", carried a pouch of apple seeds and planted them everywhere he went on his western trek through New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Indiana.

Several trees from his original plantings may still be seen just west of the city of Athens, Ohio, where they are identified with a historical marker.

One old favorite, the Rome Beauty, is also native to Ohio, and originated in 1824 on a farm in Rome Township, Athens County.

The first original Red Delicious was grown from a seedling in 1870 on a farm in Iowa, and the Stark Bros. Nursery acquired the propagating rights to it--thus was born the Stark's "Red Delicious" apple.

The Delicious today, is the most widely planted tree in the world, and in 1981 it was reported that 37% of all apples grown in the U.S., came from Delicious strains, of which there are over 100 varieties.

Some other popular apples include the "Granny Smith", "Empire", "Jonnee", "Redman", and "Golden Delicious."

Apples were originally grown on large, tall trees, and maintaining the orchards was difficult work. Today, the trend is toward Dwarf varieties which may be planted closely together and don't require as much space.

Fruit from the dwarf varieties can be picked easily from the ground or with the use of small stepladders, and not only is spraying and trimming much easier, but it is said that the dwarf trees produce larger, more abundant yields at an earlier age.

The fact that the apple exerts such a pronounced effect on the image of New York State can hardly be disputed, especially since its largest city proclaims itself "The Big Apple", while the small village of Wilson has the undisputed claim of being known as "The Little Apple."

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IN FOND MEMORY:

Margaret Wilson, 98, an Honorary member of the society, died Dec. 24, 1989, at the Inter-Community Hospital at Newfane. She was **very active** for her years, and was a member of Our Lady of the Rosary R.C. Church which she helped to establish in the Wilson Community. She also belonged to the Ransomville, Newfane, and Wilson Golden Age Clubs. In her younger days, she and her good friend, Beatrice Salisbury, taught school together for about 20 years.

She was the wife of the late Floyd Wilson, was also pre-deceased by a son, Carl, and a daughter, Jean. She is survived by a son-in-law, John Kress of Wilson and several grandchildren. A burial Mass was conducted in the church by Rev. Paul Burkard, and interment was in Greenwood.

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LIBRARY GOAL WITHIN SIGHT:

The Wilson Free Library has received a total of \$116,000 in contributions and pledges in its drive for funds to renovate and expand the present building. The campaign continues toward a goal of \$177,000 which must be raised before federal and state grants can be sought.

Donations have come not only from the community and the businesses which serve it, but from 18 states, the District of Columbia, and Mexico. One of the two largest single gifts of \$15,000 each was given by a corporation; the other by an individual. Perhaps the most heart-warming contribution was a dollar in coins taped to a card with the message, "This is all I can give, but I want to be a part of the drive."

Paul Pasko of Niagara Falls sent this note with his check: "My introduction to libraries started back approximately around 1915-16 when Arthur Dobbs was librarian at the old library on Pettit Street."

He went on to express his admiration for Mr. Dobbs who functioned so well in spite of a serious physical disability.

A gift from Rebecca Baker Hill and her family was accompanied by a letter stating that she had been a student library page under the late Marie Reynolds, and had gone on to earn a master's degree in library science. "Becky" is now head librarian of the Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library in Fremont, Ohio.

The Class of 1979 from Wilson High sent a check after their 10th reunion last summer "to help in the education of the children and young people of the community in which we were educated during our high school years."

Others have contributed in memory of deceased loved ones and as tributes to friends and relatives on wedding anniversaries, birthdays, Christmas, and on Mother's and Father's Day.

According to Margaret "Peg" Fritton, Library Board Pres., the drive is still going on, and she and other trustees hope that everyone with ties to Wilson will contribute something so that a modern and expanded building can be completed in 1991--the 80th anniversary of the founding of the library. The library board gratefully thanks all who have contributed to date.

(Note: The library has raised over 65% of its projected goal of \$177,000, and within the next few months that goal can be reached if all Wilsonites join together to make it happen. There has been an excellent response from out-of-state members of the Wilson His. Soc., with contributions coming from 18 of the 24 states in which we have members. Why not make it 100%?

If you have given already, there's no law against giving again. Remember, it's another year--1990-- so another tax deductible donation for the library can be a help to you as well as the library. Think about it, and if you like the idea, mail your contributions to the Wilson Free Library, Wilson, NY 14172. See you in the New Library.)

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BACK TO SCHOOL:

About 187 Golden Agers registered to attend the 8th annual Senior Citizen breakfast held recently by the Wilson Teachers Association and Wilson Central School District.

It was a great time for grandparents to see their loved ones in action--and action it was, from the 1st opening remarks in the school auditorium by Supt. Richard Zipp, and John Rodgers, Pres. of the Teachers Association, to the many demonstrations and exhibits held in the library.

Everyone got into the act with a delicious breakfast prepared and served by the 8th grade Home Career students under the direction of Mrs. Slang Cooke; Place settings consisted of small loaves of bread and jars of jellies made by the students; Souvenir oven rack tools made by members of Mr. Fillmore's Technology classes; Napkin rings designed and made by the Resource Room classes of Mrs. Firtz; Math quiz placemats created by the Math Department; Christmas cards made by the 8th grade art students; Menus designed by the Foreign Language Dept.; and a special issue of the "Lakeman Spirit" put out by the newspaper staff.

Some especially fine musical selections were performed by the "Musicales" under the direction of Maureen Moore; the Senior Ensemble directed by Lynda Williams; and the school band directed by Keith Schesel. Holiday solos were also sung by Heather Bradley, Aaron Goodman, Sarah Smith, Stephanie Hayes, and Maggie, Christina, and Missy Faery.

Cheer-leading and wrestling demonstrations were well received by the Senior Citizens, as was a special karate demonstration by Stephanie Hayes. A humorous note was added to the breakfast when a short scene from the Junior-Senior Class play, "The worse High School Play in the World" was presented.

The event was concluded in the library where students exhibited and demonstrated over 30 projects for the benefit of the Senior Citizens--many of whom voiced approval and expressed the hope they would be able to attend again the following year.

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4th GRADERS VISIT MUSEUM:

Fifty youngsters from the 4th grades at Thomas Marks School, visited the museum recently where they were welcomed by Mrs. Lois Jennings, curator.

The students, accompanied by their teachers, Karen Welch and Nancy Nievert, assembled in the Patterson Room where Don Croop spoke to them about the town's founder, Reuben Wilson, and his life from the time of his birth in Spencer, Mass. to the period following the War of 1812 and its effect on Wilson.

Eleanor Myers, town historian, displayed some of the old utensils used in Wilson's apple-growing industry, and pointed out how essential fruit farming has been to the local economy.

Mrs. Jennings talked about Wilson's cobblestone houses and how they were constructed, and, obviously pleased by the students' attention observed, "Having been a school teacher myself, I am impressed by your good behavior."

The youngsters then looked at the exhibits on display, and were allowed to help themselves from a bushel of apples acquired from Ontario Orchards.

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SOUNDINGS:

Maybe kids would eat better if you installed a drive-in window off the kitchen and handed them dinner in a bag.

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PROMINENT SON:

The recent demise of Milburn E. Campbell, native son of Wilson, came as a shock to the community in which he has lived and served for the past 76 years.

He was the son of the late Daniel and Etta (Hatch) Campbell, and was the former owner and publisher of the "Wilson Star". He also had 3 sisters, Lucille (William) Kirchoff; Dora (Wirt) Wakeman; and Esther (Harold) Albright.

During World War II, Milburn sold the newspaper and entered the U.S. Army where he served in the European Theater with the Headquarters Company of the 8th Corps.

He was in the Normandy Invasion, and later fought in the Battle of the Bulge where he received several military honors including the Bronze Star.

After his discharge from the military, he worked at Moore Business Forms, Niagara Falls, for nearly 30 years, and later at the Niagara Gazette from where he retired in 1975.

He married the former Marion Sherman at Elmira Heights, NY, on Aug. 13, 1938, and they had two children, Carolyn (Robert) Payton of Irvington, NY; and the late James C. Campbell who passed away April 12, 1986; also 3 grandchildren, James, Robert, and Andrew Paton.

Milburn was very active in community affairs and, in addition to being a member of Exley Methodist Church for over 50 years, was Past Commander of Martin Jennings American Legion Post of Wilson; Past Master of Ontario Lodge #376 of Wilson; Exempt Fireman of Wilson Vol. Fire Co. #1; and former trustee and charter-life member of the Wilson Historical Society.

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FEBRUARY PROGRAM:

Sgt. Robert Drury of the Drug Task Force, Niagara County Sherrif Department, will be guest speaker at the February 19th meeting at the museum, 7:30PM. The public is welcome. He will address the drug problem in the village and town of Wilson, and will also explain what services are available from the Sherrif's Department.

According to Emma Schrader, Chrm., Donna Fritton and Margaret Fritton will be refreshment hostesses for the evening.

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CALENDAR:

Feb. 1st: Planning Board Meeting; Museum-Library; 7:30 PM.

Feb. 14th: Board of Director Meeting; Museum-Patterson Room; 7:30 PM.

Feb. 19th: Program Meeting; Museum-Patterson Room; 7:30 PM.

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BUDGET FIGURES NEEDED:

Carole Schnoor, treas., has requested that all committee chairmen submit their proposed budgets for May 1st, 1990 to May 1st, 1991 to her prior to March 1st, so that she can submit them to the Board of Directors for action at the March 14th meeting of the Board.

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NEW MEMBERS:

We welcome our latest new members in the Wilson Historical Society, Dr. and Mrs. Rodney Pease of East Grand Rapids, Michigan; also Robert and Mary Savingny, Maple Rd., Wilson.

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BOARD ACTION AND REPORTS:

A motion was approved to establish a deposit fee of \$25 and \$50 for items loaned out by the museum. All items must be returned within two days of event for which they are borrowed--also borrower must sign an agreement to accept liability for any damage.

John Myers, Publicity Chrm., reported on several suggestions submitted by his committee including a Junior Fair or week-end flea market; Wilson Community Calendar; Band Concert and Ice Cream Social; Special week-end exhibits of items such as Doll Houses; Art Work & Paintings; and Antique Cars. Other suggestions are invited from the members.

Lois Jennings reporting for the Memorial and Acquisitions Comm. suggested that pre-printed cards and forms would make their work much easier. She also reported that in 1989, there were a total of 31 Memorial gifts totaling \$750.00; and 394 items acquired from 90 donors.

The Wilson Free Library has requested that a list of the museum's books and other materials be made available to them for public reference.

Carole Schnoor, Treas., reported that the society's income from Dec. 13th to Jan. 10th, was \$282.83, and expenses were \$1,140.50.

From May 1, 1989 to Jan. 10, 1990, the society's income was \$16,148.76 and expenses for the same period was \$14,457.71

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RECENT ACQUISITIONS:

Hazel Benzino: World War II Ration Books enclosed in Leather Folder.

Ransomville Free Library: Two Show Cases.

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THE 49th INFANTRY:

The 49th New York Vol. Infantry was another regiment of the Civil War in which men from Wilson served.

It was organized in Buffalo, and of its complement of 10 companies, one was recruited in Niagara County.

The regiment came under fire for the 1st time at a skirmish in Lewinsville, and in 1862 participated in the Peninsula Campaign under Gen. McClellan. It was in all battles of the Army of the Potomac from 1862 through 1863, but it wasn't until 1864 that the regiment began to suffer severe losses.

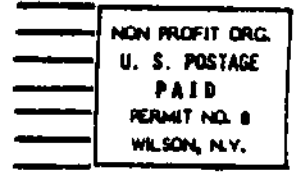
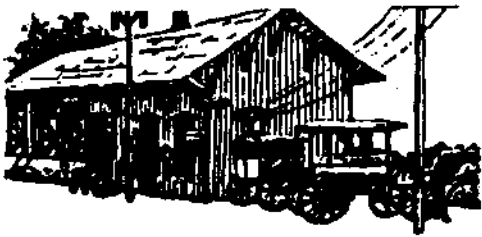
It was determined at the end of the war that the 49th lost 521 men from a total of 1312 enlistees.

Men who served in the 49th from Wilson were Michael Hutchinson; Samuel Johnson; Elias Perry; Egbert Perry; Albert Smith; Robert Taylor; and Rufus Waite.

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BON MOT: Learn to laugh at yourself. You'll have a lifelong source of amusement.

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THE WILSON COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE:

Having received several inquiries from members regarding the old Wilson Collegiate Institute, this might be a good time to review its history for everyone.

The Institute was, in fact, quite famous throughout the area from 1846 to 1869, and was established on January 25, 1845 when local citizens pledged money and labor to build a two story structure on the site of the present Wilson Town Hall.

According to an old document written in 1845, Luther Wilson proposed to his neighbor, Simon Sheldon, "You furnish the land and I'll furnish some money; others will contribute and we'll have an academy of our own for the benefit of our children and upbuilding the town."

Mr. Sheldon was an old bachelor, but he drew up a subscription and subscribed liberally besides donating one half acre of land. The paper was speedily filled by interested citizens, and an amount was raised which was adequate to build a two-story cobblestone school.

Others who signed the document were: Luther Wilson, Stephen Wilson, Nathaniel Davis, Cpt. Morgan Johnson, George Pratt, Alfred Knowles, Otis Tower, David Tower, Enos Hamblin, William Hamblin, John Tower, Alexander Miner, Nathan Ashford, F. Dwight and son, William Scarborough, Sylvester Hosmer, Thomas Farley, William Grout, Simon Case, Volney Farley, Benjamin Sheldon, L.V. Barton, Joseph Tunnicliff, Daniel Bennett, Abram Pettit, J.S. Hamblin, Henry McChesney, Ransom Tunnicliff, Hiram B. Tabor, Andrew Brown, and Jeremiah Leland.

The Academy was incorporated as the Wilson Collegiate Institute on February 19, 1846, and the first school term was held in the fall of 1845.

The building was forty by sixty feet with classrooms and library on the first floor. An auditorium was on the second floor.

There were 333 volumes in the library on literature, history, and philosophy, and a few books dealt with the sciences and agriculture.

The Academy's main source of support came from tuition and some state aid. A sample of the tuition fees paid by students were: English and Philosophy, \$4.00; Languages, \$8.00; Music with use of one instrument, \$10.00; and Painting and Drawing, \$2.50 per term.

The school year was divided into 3 terms of 15 weeks each, and the average student took 3 or 4 courses each term. Male and female students received the same instruction, and school discipline was very strict.

Proper manners and morals had to be displayed by students both inside and outside the classroom, and all were required to be in their rooms by 7:30 each evening. Students could not attend parties without written consent from parents, and all pupils had to attend church.

Public examinations were held at the end of the school year, some written--some oral, and students had to know their subject matter well to pass. Regent exams were introduced in 1868.

The Wilson Collegiate Institute was one of 90 schools in New York State to hold classes for Teachers' Training, and to be eligible, girls had to be 16 and boys 18 years of age. Tuition was free, but the school received \$10.00 per pupil from the state to cover expenses.

Since many students lived too far from Wilson to commute each day, they roomed or boarded with families in the village. A good room rented for 50 to 75 cents a week, and board and room ran between \$1.75 and \$2.25 a week.

"Basket Boarding" was also popular with students who went home on weekends. When they returned the following week, they would bring enough food with them to last to the next weekend.

It was all business at the Institute and, except for two societies, "Alpha Phi", and "Kappa Phi", few extra curricular activities were allowed.

The two societies met bi-monthly for rhetorical improvement under faculty supervision, and their motto was, "The pen is the lever that moves the world."

The first Principal at the Institute was Benjamin Wilcox, Jr., and his salary was \$700 per year. The assistant Principal was David Davis who also taught and received a salary of \$350 a year. Two young women teachers, Miss Elizabeth Merritt and Miss Adelein Nicholson, each received \$180 per year.

In 1869, because of inadequate receipts, the Institute merged with the Wilson Union School District #1, and property held by the Institute was deeded over by the trustees to the Union School District Board of Education.

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APRIL PROGRAM:

A TV show entitled, "Cabin Country" will be presented at the April 16th meeting, 7:30 PM at the museum. A retired minister talks about the many changes he experienced during his lifetime in the Adirondack Mountains. The film was acquired by Dan King, trustee.

Refreshment hostesses for the evening will be Lois Barnum and Mary McCoy.

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LIBRARY CONTRIBUTIONS CONTINUING:

Peg Fritton, Pres. of the Wilson Free Library Board, reports that contributions to the renovation fund are still coming in from many parts of the country proving that even though many persons may move to other areas, love for the little lake-shore community remains in their hearts forever.

Mrs. Lucile Campbell Kirchhoff, for instance, sent a check from Sanford, Florida, and enclosed a note recalling how she, as a little girl, used to go to the library and get books for her grandmother Hatch.

Ashley Gale, Jr., of Charlotte, N.C., who has been away from Wilson since 1952, also made a contribution in memory of his father who, for many years, was President of the Library Board. If Ashley Gale Senior was alive today he would be 102 years old.

Mrs. Fritton said, "It is the generosity of those with warm memories of Wilson who send in donations from all over country, and this gives the present Board of Trustees confidence that a renovated and expanded library will become a reality."

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KITCHEN UTENSILS NEEDED:

Maxine Jones, Chrm. of the Food Committee for this year's Memorial Day Fair, has submitted a list of kitchen utensils which will be needed on Fair Day.

The society should have its own serving equipment, and many of the following utensils might possibly be donated by our members if they knew what was needed. If you can provide any of the following, (in good condition) please notify either Maxine Jones, (751-6678); Eleanor Myers, (751-6053); or Nettie Stimson, (751-6296).

Ladles for serving chili (2); Cooking spoons for chili (2); Pie and cake servers (2); Pie knives for cutting pies (2); Serrated Knife for angel food cake (1); No. 7 Serving spoons for salad (15); 12 inch tongs for serving lettuce (2); No. 103 Tapcoe-64 oz. Metal Water Pitcher (1); Two sets Hot Pad Mitts (over wrist); Pie Marker (1); also 2 large Stainless Steel or Aluminum Bowls for lettuce and rolls. Your help would be appreciated.

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IN MEMORIAM:

Francis Tate, 87, an Honorary member of the society, died January 10, 1990, at the Mt. View Health Facility in Lockport, NY.

He became a resident of Wilson in 1938, and was a former owner of the Wilson House Restaurant; the Wilson Theater; and theaters at Hilton and Phelps. He was also a member of Our Lady of the Rosary R.C. Church and the Wilson Lions Club. In recent years he ran a piano-tuning business at Newfane and, as a contribution to the society, kept the pianos tuned at the Museum.

He is survived by his wife, Lena; a daughter, Linda, also two brothers. Burial was at Greenwood Cemetery, Wilson, with Father Paul Burkard officiating.

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VISITORS WELCOME:

The Wilson Museum will re-open on Sunday afternoon, April 1st, at 2:00PM. Sarah Berry, Hostess Chrm., has submitted the following list of volunteers to greet you April 1st, Don and Wanda Burrows; April 8th, Willie and Bea Rockwood; April 15, (Closed); April 22nd, Kevin and Kelly King; and April 29th, Helen Stevens and Dorothea Marks. The Barnum and Argue Bldgs. are scheduled to be open during June, July, and August.

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RECENT ACQUISITIONS:

Gertrude and Edward Marks have donated an 1890 Buggy that was previously owned by Thomas Alexander Marks and his son, Thomas Marks. Thomas Alexander resided in Fonthill, Canada.

Milton Clark: Metallic Ruler cased in a protective tube advertising "Zabel's Food Products, Inc., Wilson, N.Y."

Jean Argue: A number of photos taken of Wilson Historical Society activities.

Elizabeth Hausman: One 1940 Western Electric Telephone (4 numbers); also One Miniature Fireplace--souvenir of Wilson.

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BOARD ACTION & REPORTS:

A motion was approved at the March meeting to permit the Wilson Branch of Inter-Community Hospital to host an all-branch meeting of the auxiliary in the Wilson Museum on May 27th.

Wally Goodman reported that 3 quarters of the work is finished on the floor of the Argue Building, and work on the 1957 Cadillac Convertible has been completed.

Motion approved to establish a Finance Committee as recommended by the Planning Board. The Directors appointed Dan King to head the committee which will consist of the 1st Vice-Pres., Treasurer, Chrm. of the Planning Board; also 2 members appointed by Finance Chrm. if desired.

Motion approved to accept recommendations of Policy Comm. chaired by Lois Jennings. Society grounds use to be curtailed at sundown; picknickers must use own grills at safe distance from buildings; use of coffee-makers to be permitted inside buildings.

Motion approved to accept loan-receipt format designed by Dan King.

Lois Jennings said that she would appreciate it if all members and their friends sign quest register when visiting museum any time other than on regular visiting hours.

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YOUR DUES ARE IMPORTANT:

Back around 1975, we budgeted \$400 a year to publish and mail the newsletter. This year it is necessary to budget \$1200. Not only has our membership grown from from around 60 to 750 members, all costs have increased--especially those paid to Uncle Sam's Postoffice.

So, your dues are important--especially if you wish to continue getting the Newsletter, and, we hope you do. A membership form is attached to the end of this newsletter--we hope you will return it promptly.

* * * * *

SOUNDINGS:

Closets are places where you hang things after you run out of door knobs.

WHEN THE CIRCUS CAME TO TOWN:

In the mid 1920's, a few little circuses used to tour the country and make stops at some of the smaller villages like Wilson. There was always a lot of excitement when a circus train pulled into a town, and it was fun to watch as wagons, animals, and equipment were unloaded from the flat cars. The circus troupe would usually parade through town before a performance, and no boy or girl who ever saw one, could ever forget the thrill of a real live circus parade.

A large band wagon with noisy brass band usually led the procession followed by colorfully costumed trapeze artists, clowns, and other performers who would smile and wave as they walked by. They would be followed by horse drawn wagons containing wild caged animals, and a row of elephants would plod along behind with each holding the tail of the preceding elephant in his trunk. The raucous wheezing sound of the steam caliope would often signal the end of the parade.

Lester Clark of Hayward, California, recalled that when the circus came to Wilson they used to pitch their tent on the old baseball diamond on the west side of Lake Street. The grounds were almost behind the Clark home, and he remembered how the elephants and other tamer animals came to the well behind his parent's house to drink from it. The well was shallow and water was brought to the surface with a chain wheel drive. Ambitious boys or girls could sometimes earn free passes to the show by carrying water or pitching hay for the elephants.

Laura Clark couldn't remember too much about the circus because she said whenever it came to town she always seemed to be sick. She did recall, however, how mad her father got one time when an elephant broke loose and drank all the water from their well. Then, to make matters worse, the ungrateful pachyderm pulled up all the peanuts that her Dad had planted in their garden.

We asked Ollie Clark if he knew the name of the circus that set up in Wilson, and he said that he believed it was called the Philo Soto Circus.

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NEW LIFE MEMBER:

Donald J. Munch of Irving, NY, has become the 89th person to join the Life Membership Class of the Wilson Historical Society. He is the son of the late Ernest and Evelyn Bardol Munch, and was delivered by Dr. John Burns, August 27, 1934, at the Townline Road home of Evelyn Bickford.

Don attended the old District 7 schoolhouse on Chestnut Road, then taught by Dorothy Swick Halstead, and later went to Wilson when the district joined the Central School system. One of the persons he remembers as having made a great impression on him and his friends was their friendly bus driver, Lee Ward.

He was interested in Scouting and was a charter member of East Wilson B. S. Troop #41 where he became Junior Assistant Scoutmaster and was able to exhibit his natural talent for leadership. After graduation from Wilson Central School in 1952 he worked a short time at Harrison Radiator and Simon Saw & Steel before serving two years with the U. S. Army.

At age 21, Don was accepted in the New York State Troopers where he served for 25 years at various Posts thru out Western New York. At the time of his retirement he was Senior Investigator in charge of the Bureau of Criminal Investigation in Chautauqua County. He is presently employed in the security department of Niagara Mohawk.

Don met and married Retha Bates of South Flymouth, NY, and they have four sons--all of whom reside near them on Lake Shore Road at Irving.

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FOURTH GRADERS VISIT MUSEUM:

Karen Welch, Cindy Uderitz, and 24 pupils from Mrs. Welch's 4th grade class at Thomas Marks School, visited the museum recently where they were greeted by Millie and Don Croop. The students have been studying the local history of their town, and their visit gave them an opportunity to see some of the artifacts and memorabilia that existed in the days of their grandparents.

The class was especially observant and the youngsters asked many questions as they looked at the items on display. Thank you notes were later sent to the historical society including one from Mrs. Welch who made the following observation;

"The class needs to see and hear more than just one voice teaching them about our rich heritage here in Wilson. A special thank you to all the people in the historical society that care enough about the past and present to contribute their time and energy. Reuben Wilson may have gotten Wilson off to a good beginning, but it is all of you that keep it "alive."

* * * * *

RECENT ACQUISITIONS:

Mr. and Mrs. Charles Rignall of Sheridan, NY, have donated 11 cut crystal water glasses; one pressed glass vase; cut glass bowl; and copies of Buffalo Illustrated Express published 4/1/1894 and 5/25/1902.

Lawrence Moss of Buffalo: Street Sign, "Welcome to Wilson", found on the K.C. Building in down town Buffalo in 1986.

Deanna Leggett, Ransomville: 1907 Sunday School Certificate; Child's tea set; tiny teddy bear; child's small basket; and embroidered lambswood hanging.

John Goodrich, Florida: Four large special wrenches; ten smaller wrenches; One pair pliers, all for 1930 Allis Chalmers Tractor; also, 1930 Hardee Spray Gun.

Helen Borngraeber: Box of Photographs.

Harold Argue, Lockport: 1969 Volkswagon Van (Bus)--in good condition.

Mrs. Ellagene Hayes: Old Button Hook.

Henry Perry, Lockport: Family Tree of Henry J. Perry.

Fay Campbell: Photograph of Campbell family taken during the Wilson Centennial in 1958.

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MEMBER IN NEWS:

Congratulations to Walter Moxham, Life Member of the Wilson His. Soc., who has been named Vice-President of the Lockport Bar Association

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CENTENARIAN:

Bessie Crawford, an Honorary-Life Member of the Wilson Historical Society, was only 9 months old when Lake Island Park was opened in Wilson in 1889. Years later, she and her husband, Lou Crawford, spent their lives together on Sunset Island and celebrated their 50th Anniversary there in 1965. Lou died the following year, and Bessie continued to reside on the island until 1982, and is now living with her daughter, Cleo Anne, in St. Petersburg, Florida.

Because of Bessie, we are able to establish that the 1st burial plot in Wilson was on lot #83 on the lakeside and east end of Sunset Island. When she lived there the lot was owned by William and Marie Crandall, and in recent years was purchased by Pat Brady of Boston, Mass.

Bessie, once known as the unofficial historian of Sunset Island is now approaching 102 yrs. of age. She graduated from Wilson High School in 1906, and is probably the only one of the following class members still living: Bessie DeNeau; Mildred Moody; Florence Peterson; Mina Schultze; Jennie Haner; Sinnie LaPort; Edna Hoyt; Lloyd Smith; Bronson Taylor; and Carl Ward.

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FESTIVAL OF TOYS:

The town of Royalton Historical Society will sponsor a "Festival of Toys" on Sunday, May 6th from 1 to 5PM at the Royalton Town Hall, 5316 Royalton Center Rd., Middleport, NY. Refreshments will be available from the local 4-H Club, and the program will be as follows:

- 1 to 1:30 Mr. Tony De Corse--"The Strolling Troubadour."
- 1:30 to 2:00 Indian Puppet Show by Jean Stewart--amusing entertainment for children.
- 2:00 to 2:30 Tony De Corse
- 2:30 to 3:00 Puppet Show--the Erie Canal by Jean Stewart.
- 3:30 to 5:00 "Country Music" by the Niagara Frontier Fiddle Club.

An additional attraction will be "Clown" characterizations and balloons with Eric and Todd Sullivan, grandsons of the late Bill "Rags" Donald.

Exhibitors are welcome. For information please contact Donald Jerge, (772-2974).

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FROM THE MAILBAG:

Charles Buchner did some reminiscing after the last newsletter and wrote that during the 1920's he lived on the German Road, and attended District School #6 at the corner of Wilson-Cambria and Willow Road. The Willow Road at that time was known as the Culver Road--probably named for Frank Culver, an industrious farmer on the road.

Charles was surprised to see the name Burt Lafler on the 1892 list of students who attended District School #4 at East Wilson. He recalled that he could still "see" the sign above their dry goods store at North Ridge---"B. N. Laffler & Son."

He noted that Burt attended the store while Huey was on the road with their Mobile Store, and shortly after five o'clock on Tuesdays, "We'd hear Huey's bell clang as he approached Herb Seeloff's and Clayton Phipp's homes. We pre-teens enjoyed accompanying our mother to get groceries since Huey would always hand each one of us a stick of penny candy."

Mr. Buchner also recalled some interesting history about one of his former school teachers at Wilson High School.

Agnes Styles of Lockport attended Harvard University in the 1920's, and returned to this area with a Masters in Education. She met, married, and later divorced Warren Hull of Gasport, who later became a movie star in Hollywood.

She became a teacher at Wilson where she taught 3rd and 4th year English, and Charles noted that he considered himself fortunate to be in her class for two years.

"She was very capable in her profession", and he recalled that "During four semesters she was never heard to raise her voice, and would always handle distracting students by saying, "Please go right ahead, we'll wait."

Mr. Buchner graduated in 1933, and corresponded with his former teacher until he returned from France after World War II.

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Bea Mensch of Lockport thinks humor is the best medicine, and wants evryone to remember that "Old folks are worth a fortune, with Silver in their hair; Gold in their teeth; Stones in their kidneys; Lead in their feet; and Gas in their stomachs."

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APRIL REMINDERS:

Board of Directors should review all 1990-91 Board appointments at the April meeting. The Nominating Comm. should select chairmen of standing committees to present at the May meeting. Officers and Comm. Chrm. will be voted on at the annual meeting in June.

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.....Detach and Return.....

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

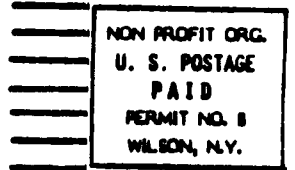
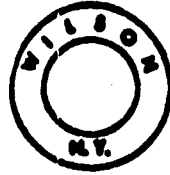
NAME.....PHONE.....

ADDRESS.....

CITY, STATE, ZIP.....

Married Couple	\$5.00	\$.....	<u>Junior Members</u>
Single	\$3.00	\$.....	Name.....Age...
Junior (under 18)	\$1.00	\$.....	Name.....Age...
LIFE MEMBER (Each)	\$100.00	\$.....	Name.....Age...
Honorary (85 & Over)	FREE	Name.....Age...
TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED		\$.....	

Make all checks payable to the WILSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY: Return to DONALD W. CROOP, 4559 Chestnut Road, Wilson, NY 14172



Wilson Historical Society

WILSON, NEW YORK 14172

NEWSLETTER

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

MAY 1990 Vol. 19 No. 4
(Coleman Press)

ELEANOR MYERS, TOWN HISTORIAN
215 LAKE ST.
WILSON, NY 14172

DAYS OF THE 'GRAND OL' OPRY':

Some of the older generation may recall those days of their youth when many communities, both large and small, had their special entertainment centre--generally known as the Opera House. Wilson was no exception.

In the late 1890's, William Albright purchased the former Methodist "Wesley Chapel", (which had been moved to a lot north of the present church) and started up a farm implement business.

A few years later, he decided to remodel the second floor, and that was when the Albright Opera House was born.

The only thing left to indicate the building had been a former church, was the large front decorative window which had been left intact.

An outside stairway was built along the north side of the building to an entranceway on the second floor, and as you entered the theater the first thing you saw was a ticket window where an usher would greet you and take you to your seats.

There was a balcony across the west end of the room which ran parallel to Lake Street, and large kerosene lamps hung from the ceiling for illumination.

The stage was located at the east end of the building with wings projecting from either side. On one wing was a large advertisement for Cuddeback & Cooper, local undertakers, and on the opposite wing a piano and bench plus an advertisement for Rising & Son, local proprietors of a furniture store. Several curtain drops showed scenes of Spring and Fall, and one showed the main street of Holley, NY---hand-painted by an itinerant "floater" in need of cash.

When electricity became available in the village, new lighting was installed throughout the building, and footlights were added to the stage.

During the 25 years that performances were held at the Opra House, many home-talent plays were sponsored by local organizations such as the "Delphic Circle". The Star in their productions was usually Dessie Tugwell, mother of the later politically famous Rex Tugwell.

Another very popular local talent show was a tap-dance act put on by Johnnie and Tommy Costello, sons of a local barber who lived at the corner of Young and Washington Streets.

The late Alma Farrel directed most of the home-talent shows, but the main attractions were the shows put on by traveling circuits booked through a theatrical agency.

One play, "Uncle Tom's Cabin" almost came to disaster one evening when the two Great Danes that were supposed to rescue Little Eva from the floating ice, came up missing. It was only 30 minutes before curtain time when, after a frantic search, the dogs were found down by the Wilson Boathouse.

Harold Albright recalled one time when his father engaged a medicine show to perform, and he used to watch them make their "medicine" at Borngraeber's well. At the time, the Borngraebers lived just south of the Opera House with only the small G.A.R. Hall separating their home from it. The medicine used in the show was called "Katonka", and was highly touted as a cure for all ailments. Harold said the medicine was made by adding a few herbs to a lot of water.

In the 1920's it beame harder to engage traveling shows so Albright decided to close the Opera House. It seems the happiest ones affected by this turn of events were the Albright "Kids" who, up until then, had the task of folding and stacking the 200 chairs each day so the floors could be swept and cleaned.

The Albright Implement Business and Opera House were purchased by Arthur Loomis and Clyde Putnam who operated it for three years, then sold it to Frank Howell of Newfane. He operated a Ford Agency there until the early thirties when the former "Wesley Chapel" was completely destroyed by fire.

(Note: A more detailed account of the "Albright Opera House" is available at the Wilson Museum. Please ask for Publication #10.

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MAY MEETING:

Dorothy Maxfield, a charter member of the Wilson Historical Society, will be the guest speaker at the May 21st meeting when she will show and talk about her interesting collection of salt and pepper shakers.

Refreshment hostesses for the evening will be Bess McKelvey and Sylvia McCuaig.

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MAY HOSTESSES:

Sara Berry, Chrm., has submitted the following list of members who will greet visitors at the museum, Sunday afternoons from 2:00 to 4:00 PM: May 6th, Bob and Ruth Thomas; May 13th, Dan and Judy King; May 20th, Ray and Pam Groff, and May 27th, Sara Berry and Don Croop.

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"COME TO THE FAIR":

The May Newsletter signals the coming of the Wilson Historical Society's 18th annual Memorial Day Fair which will be held at the museum grounds on Rt. 425, May 28th, from 9am. to 5pm. Nettie Stimson and Lois Barnum, co-chrm., are being assisted by the following area chairmen: Antique Cars, Jim Pisello; Balloons, Mark and Julie Smith; Candy, Lois Ward; Chili, Mary Clark; Clean-up, Ed Hastings; Coffee & Donuts, Judy Zauner; Cotton Candy and Ice Cream, Jack and Melinda Hutchison; Dealer Parking, Ron Zauner; Dealer Registration, Nettie Stimson; Depot Kitchen, Pam Groff; Drinks, Sara Berry; Entertainment/Announcements, Clark Stimson; Fish Pond, Bobbie Hull; Food Building, Maxine Jones; Food Supplies, Lois Barnum and Emma Lou Reppentine; Funnel Cakes, Darrell and Sally Smith; Hot Dogs, Art Schnoor; Lemonade & Popcorn, Richard and Sue Schultz; Memberships, Chris Kelman; Museum Exhibits, Lois Jennings & Eleanor Myers; Parking, Dan King; Publications/Newsletter, Don Croop; Publicity, Bill Fritton; Quilt, Betty Stimson; Shuttlebus, Don Burrows; Thank-you notes, Helen Stevens; Treasurer, Carole Schnoor, and Ways and Means, Doris Klees and Betty Stimson.

The first annual fair was held in 1973 to raise funds to renovate and maintain the Wilson Museum. During the past 18 years it has become a community-wide event with many local organizations taking part. Among these are the Wilson Free Library; Wilson Vol. Fire Co. #1; Wilson Youth Baseball League; Music Parents Association; the Niagara County Association for retarded Children; Boy Scout Troop #40; Our Lady of the Rosary Church Youth Group; the United Methodist Womens' Group to Benefit Children; and the Wilson Lions Club.

One of the fair's main attractions will be the "flea market" which attracts over 200 dealers, who will sell a variety of items including antiques, crafts, and collectibles.

Home-cooked foods will be dispensed again this year by society members and will feature Chili, Pies, Baked goods, and Salads. Also available will be Top-Grade Hot Dogs, Funnel Cakes, Cotton Candy, Home-made Candy, Popcorn, hot fudge sundaes, Fruit drinks, Coffee and Donuts.

The Youth Baseball League's Chicken Bar-B-Q will also be serving again this year starting at 12:00 Noon.

Another highlight will be the quilt drawing, and will feature a beautiful early 1900 "Star Quilt" provided by Betty Stimson. Additional items to be awarded will be Two Afghans, one made by Doris Channing of Niagara Falls, and the other by Patricia Stephenson of Lockport. Other prizes will be a hand-embroidered table cloth made by Elma McGrath of Lockport, a quilted antique wall-hanging flag made by Kim Farmer of Ransomville, and a Wilson His. Soc. Cookbook.

The old 1912 Depot-Museum will be open to visitors from 9am to 5pm, and museum displays will be arranged by Lois Jennings, curator, and Eleanor Myers, Chrm. of the Barnum Building.

The society's antique car collection will feature its newly refurbished 1959 Cadillac Convertible as well as a variety of antique and classic cars entered by local car enthusiasts.

There will also be special loom-weaving demonstrations as well as Spinning, Rug-weaving and Wood-carving displays.

Entertainment will be provided by the popular Bison City Stompers, and at 12 Noon the American Legion will hold a short Memorial Service by the flag pole. This will be followed by a concert played by the Wilson High School Band.

As in past years, the society will operate the fair with free admission and parking, and a free shuttle bus service will be provided to an from the village featuring Pat Kalahan's Fire Engine Harbor Shuttle Bus.

First aid will be available from Wilson Vol. Fire Co. #1, and security and safety on the grounds will be monitored by RACES, (Emergency Radio Service.)

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YES, WE COULD USE YOUR HELP:

The annual Memorial Day Fair is the society's one big fund-raising event of the year, and a time when all our members can "pitch in" and give the Wilson Museum a boost.

First and foremost, we need volunteer helpers, so if you're not already signed up, pick out a spot where you'd like to help--contact the chairman, and let them know you're available. Many of our members work from 6am to 5pm, so if you have the pep and energy to do it, please try to assist in more than just one place. We realize a few of our members can not do this, but there are other ways you can help.

You may be called upon to make baked goods or furnish pies--but remember, even though you may be "overlooked", the need is still there. Incidentally, Lois Barnum reports that she has a hundred pie tins available at the museum. You can save buying them by picking up what you need any Sunday afternoon from 2 to 4 pm at the museum.

Maxine Jones had a good response from her request in last month's newsletter for kitchen utensils. She still needs a few things, so perhaps you can help out here. Still needed, 1 pie marker, 2 ladles for chili, 2 pie and cake servers, 2 knives for cutting pies, 1 serrated knife, 15 serving spoons and forks for salads, and 2 lettuce tongs.

And here's still another area where you could provide vital assistance. Lois Ward, home-made candy chrm, would be grateful for cash donations to purchase ingredients. She could also use pure cane sugar, mini-marshmallows, evaporated milk, oleo and walnuts.

Like we said before, we could use your help, and the possibilities are unlimited. Even getting your dues paid up to date, or sending back your quilt ticket stubs will insure that your society stays healthy and strong.

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APPLE BLOSSOM FESTIVAL:

The Newfane Historical Society's "Apple Blossom Festival" will be held at their West Creek Rd. Museum Grounds on Sunday, May 20th, from Noon until 5PM. It's an exciting event, and a great place to spend a sociable afternoon, and help the Newfane group raise funds to restore their historic Van Horn Mansion.

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OCTAGON HOUSE PROMOTION:

The Newstead His. Soc. will have an Indian Artifacts Display at the Masonic Lodge, 63 John St., Akron, NY, on Sun. May 20th from 1 to 5PM. Donations will help restore Akron Octagon House.

* * * * *

BON MOT: Flea Markets are for people who itch to find bargains.

FROM THE MAILBAG:

Franklin Campbell of Libertyville, IL, recently donated a "Documentary History of N.Y. State" to the museum that was published in 1849.

He graduated from Wilson Central and will be remembered as the student chosen to narrate the "Centurama of Progress" presented at Wilson Central School.

Mr. Lee was Frank's teacher, and he worked many hours after school to help Frank polish up on his presentation.

He notes that "We were blessed in Wilson with many dedicated teachers, and one of my favorites was Lydia Sporleder."

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Mary M. Cornell of Quartz Hill, CA, writes that she plans to relocate in the City of Lockport sometime after the middle of May.

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NEW MEMBERS:

We are pleased to announce the following new members: John Cowan of Hamburg, Chester F. Northcott of Buffalo, Barbara Petty of Midlothian, VA; Barbara Miller of Sebring, FL; Alice Thomas of Lockport; Lawrence Ridley of Paia, Maui, Hawaii; Mary Webster of Olcott; Mildred Treacy of Maple Heights, OH; Wayne and Marcia Rivers of Sanborn; Charlene Rohring of Ransomville; Gary and Thomasene Gath of Wilson, and Nancy Tussing of Wilson.

New junior members include Jessica and Julie Aikin, Sarah Catherine Wiepert, and Shawn Tussing, all from Wilson. Sarah Catherine, (6 mos.) is the daughter of Carl and Cathy Wiepert, and currently the youngest member of the Wilson Historical Society.

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MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE DUE:

A membership application is again included at the bottom of this newsletter, and if you haven't renewed your membership for 1990-91, please fill it out and return it promptly. Newsletters will not be sent to delinquent members after the June issue.

Since membership cards are sent out with the newsletter, anyone wishing to have their cards returned immediately should enclose a S.A.S.E with your dues payment.

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IN MEMORIAM:

Raymond H. Allgeier, 74, died at Roswell Park, Buffalo, on April 5, 1990, after a long illness. Ray was a retired salesman for the Matthew & Fields Lumber Co. of Rochester.

He was a member of Exley United Methodist Church; the Senior Citizen Bowling League; and a Life Member of the Wilson Historical Society.

He is survived by his wife, Lorine Kraus Allgeier; a brother, Edward Allgeier of Wilson; and several nieces and nephews.

Services were held at the Hamilton & Clark Funeral Chapel, and burial was in Elmlawn Cemetery, Tonawanda, with the Rev. Donald L. Foley officiating.

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Bernadine Messersmith, 79, died at Inter-Community Hospital, Newfane, on April 16, 1990. She was the daughter of Frank and Margurite O'Neil Daly of Manchester, and moved to Wilson in 1950.

She graduated from the Thompson Memorial School of Nursing at Canandaigua in 1932, and was a substitute nurse at Wilson Central School. She was also a member of Exley United Methodist Church, Women's Society, Fellowship Class, Senior Citizen's Bowling League, and the Wilson Historical Society. She helped organize the Golden Age Club in Wilson.

She is survived by her husband, Charles, and 2 daughters, Joy Perry of Henrietta, and Kim Crawford of Marion; also 2 brothers, Edward Daly of Sanborn, and Doug Daly of St. Catherines.

Memorial Services were held at Exley United Methodist Church, Rev. Don Foley officiating.

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A TIME TO REMEMBER:

Each year we are saddened by the loss of some of our members who helped make the Museum what it is today. On this Memorial Day we pause to gratefully remember:

George Linnabery, Wesley Wilson, Gwen Heidenfeldt, Russell Hurlburt, Ida Ereon; Myra Pease, Lloyd Duxbury, Jean Kress, Merton Evans, Milburn Campbell, John Benedict, Marion Horton, and Margaret Wilson.

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- MAY CALENDAR: May 16th, Board of Director Meeting, Wilson Museum, 7:30 PM.
 - May 21st: Regular Monthly Meeting, Wilson Museum, 7:30 PM.
 - May 28th: WILSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY "MEMORIAL DAY FAIR". 9 AM to 5PM.
- The Planning Board will not meet during the month of May.

1990-1991 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

NAME.....PHONE.....

ADDRESS.....

CITY, STATE, ZIP.....

Married Couple	\$5.00	\$.....	Junior Members
Single	\$3.00	\$.....	Name.....Age.....
Juniors (under 18)	\$1.00	\$.....	Name.....Age.....
LIFE MEMBER (each)	\$100.00	\$.....	Name.....Age.....
Honorary (85 & Over)	FREE	Name.....Age.....
TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED		\$.....	

Make checks payable to the Wilson Historical Society: Return to DONALD W. CROOP, 4559 Chestnut Road, Wilson, NY 14172

NEW LIFE MEMBERS:

Charles Albert Horton and Norris Johnson Horton, have joined the Life Membership Class of the Wilson Historical Society.

Charles, the son of Alfred Ernest Horton and Marion Barker Stevenson, was born Oct. 8, 1919, at Wilson. He graduated from Wilson High School in 1937, and completed his education at King's College in TN, and St. Lawrence University in NY. He spent 3½ years in the U.S. Army, and met his wife, Norris, while both were stationed at Camp Crowdee, MO.

They were married in June, 1946, and their son, Stephen J. Horton, is currently the Ass't. Athletic Director at Virginia Tech, Blackburg, VA.

After the war, the Hortons lived in Erie and Niagara Counties, and he worked for the Telephone Co. for 29 yrs. When he retired to Florida in 1975, he had been Office Manager of the phone Co. in Lockport for 15 years.

His father operated the Horton Hardware on Young Street in Wilson, and his mother, the late Marion B. Horton, was also a Life Member of the Wilson Historical Society.

Charles is a member of the St. Paul United Methodist Church, member of the Telephone Pioneers of America, the United States Power Squadron, and several Model Boat Clubs.

Norris, the daughter of Robert Lee and Lena C. Johnson, was born at Winston-Salem, NC, on September 29, 1919.

She graduated from High School in North Carolina, and joined the WACS during World War II, and served her country for three years.

She is also a member of the St. Paul United Methodist Church, and other activities include Boating Clubs and the Bay Ranch Chorus.

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BOARD REPORTS:

It was announced that a Memorial check was received by the society from Mr. and Mrs. Dennis Clark in memory of Roger Clark who died recently.

A letter was read from Principal Grocki regarding the society's practise of awarding prizes to two graduating seniors who excell in the study of history. Motion was made and seconded that the presentations be made again this year.

Carole Schnoor, Treas. reported that the society's income from March 15th to April 11th was \$5,020.34. Expenses for the same period were \$3,964.28.

Nettie Stimson, 1st Vice-Pres., reminded the Board that some of the Memorial trees were damaged on the grounds, and suggested that they be replaced.

A form made up by Dan King for persons requesting use of the museum grounds and facilities was approved.

John Myers, Pres., announced that Charlotte Pease has accepted an appointment to be Chairman of the Fittro Shop Building.

He also announced that he appointed Ed Allgeier, 'Chrm. of the Nominating Comm., and he will be assisted by Wally Goodman, Norm MacAskill, Martha MacAskill, and Eleanor Myers.

A motion was approved to renew the society's membership in the American Association of State and Local History.

Nettie Stimson is representing the society on the newly formed "Friends of Tuscarora Park". The local organization will act as an advisory group to the N.Y. State Consultants who will try to devise plans for the use and development of the Park.

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RECENT ACQUISITIONS:

Schils Enterprises, Inc. of Wilson has donated a Auto Knitter Hosiery Co. of Buffalo, "Auto Knitter" with various gadgets and parts (ca. 1924). It was used to make hosiery and legs for undergarments; also, one Milk Cooler, and Two Large Mahogany Cases.

Sam & Mary McCoy: Newspaper clipping dated May 13, 1973, regarding the sale of the Wilson Boathouse; also a newspaper picture of the Olcott Hotel as it looked in 1930; also programs for the "Centurama of Progress."

Lincoln Smith: One New York Central Railroad Lantern.

Nettie Stimson: Railroad Engine Mobile.

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FINAL THOUGHT:

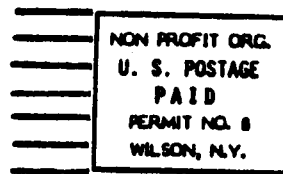
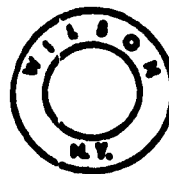
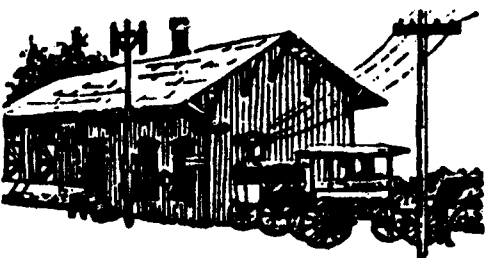
If we appreciate what we have, it always becomes more; if we belittle what we have, it always becomes less.

SOOUNDINGS: The person that has everything usually sits next to you in the doctor's office.

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LAST RENEWAL NOTICE

THERE WILL BE NO NEWSLETTERS SENT TO DELINQUENT MEMBERS AFTER THE JUNE ISSUE.



Wilson Historical Society

WILSON, NEW YORK 14172

NEWSLETTER

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

JULY/AUGUST Vol.19 No.7

(Coleman Press)

LIBRARIAN
WILSON CENTRAL SCHOOL
WILSON, NY 14172

WILSON'S RESORT ERA:

Wilson's protected harbor and well-stocked waters attract many boating and fishing sportsmen today, but if we turn back the clock a hundred years we find that Wilson was also a popular resort area dating back to the 1890's.

It was a time when thousands of vacationers came to the peaceful little lakeshore community to enjoy the many innovations provided at Lake Island Park and Sunset Island. The annual Farmers Picnics alone drew tremendous crowds each year, and one old newspaper clipping stated that "10,000 people could be nicely accomodated in the parks near the village."

Much of the island and park were developed by "Jake" Miller, an electrical engineer from Pittsburg, and, because of his ingenuity, many improvements such as electricity and running water were made available to island residents.

About 1903, "Jake" built a boathouse,(on the site of the present Wilson Boathouse) from where he ferried passengers back and forth to "Miller's Landing" and his hotel on Sunset Island. His first large boat was a steam operated paddle-wheeler named the "Dusquense" (Du-Cane). It was sent to Wilson from Pittsburg and was operated with either wood or coal for fuel. (A picture of this unusual boat may be seen in the society's publication #9, "The Story of Sunset Island." Mr. Miller sold his boathouse and rowboats to Timothy Wilson in 1919.

The mainland part of Lake Island Park, later known as Tuscarora Park, was developed by W.N. Harris, and the beautiful pine grove along 12 Mile Creek had every attraction for visitors including a ball park, dance pavilion, restaurant, water slide, bath house, and boating facilities. An old "clipping" from the late Ruth Stedman's scrapbook described Wilsonas "a pleasant place for a summer resort." The point appears to have been well made as during this era, thousands of tourists crossed the lake from Canada to hold picnics here.

Three-deck steamers like the "Eurydice" unloaded its passengers at the harbor piers, while others like the "Columbus" & "Cambria", with 600 passenger capacity, did so likewise.

Many excursions were booked on the old Rome, Watertown, and Ogdensburg R.R., bringing hundreds of vacationers to Wilson from cities like New York, Pittsburg, and Buffalo. The influx of visitors made it necessary to provide more rooms and soon hotels, boarding houses, and lodges began to spring up around the village.

Mr. Miller erected the 1st hotel on the island, the "Vendome", but it burned soon after and was replaced by the "Glendora". It was then purchased by William Wright of Pittsburg who re-named it the "Pittsburg" hotel. It was a popular resort for vacationers until 1913 when it burned down and never was rebuilt.

In the village, at the southwest corner of Young and Lake Streets, the three-story "Sutherland Hotel" dominated the four-corners from 1895 to 1913. It was built by Benjamin Howe Sutherland on the site of the former "Ontario House" which was erected there by Luther Wilson in 1834.

The "Sutherland" was one of Wilson's finest hotels with steam heat, hot and cold running water in every room, and with large and pleasant sleeping quarters.

The "Tower House" stood where the present St. Paul's Lutheran Church now stands at the corner of Young and McChesney streets, and it was built on the site of the former "Americam Hotel" which burned down in 1895. The "Tower House, sometimes referred to as the "Town Hotel", had all the modern conveniences available at the time. It was opened by Aulden Bowker on June 6, 1896, and he spared no expense on furnishing and other accomodations. This popular hotel, however, was also consumed by flames on August 9, 1908.

The "Hub Hotel" on Young Street was started in the early 1900's when "Hub" Ferrin opened up a barbershop and billiard parlor in the former Emerson property. The business expanded and later became one of the most popular eating establishments--mainly because of Mrs. Ferrin's delicious chicken and biscuit dinners on Sundays. When the old "Hub" burned on Jan. 2, 1980, with it went the last familiar landmark of the early resort period of the 1900's.

The "Huntington Lodge" on Sunset Island was originally built as a private home, but summer guests liked it so well they kept coming back, so it was turned into a summer lodge. Accomodations included large sleeping porches, home cooking, a canvass covered open air dining room with screened in sides, as well as hot and cold running water. Tennis and croquet courts were in the surrounding pine and oak groves, and guests could enjoy music and dancing in the evening.

Other attractions included C.E. Ackerman's hotel near the pier with dining hall, well-stocked bar, boat livery and bait. Also nearby was Fred Haner's boat livery with fishing tackle and bait available.

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SOUNDINGS: There is one good thing about living in the past. It's Cheaper!

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FAIRLY REMARKABLE:

The Wilson Historical Society has sponsored another successful Memorial Day Fair, but it couldn't have been done without the co-operation of our members and friends, and for this we sincerely say, "Thank You."

It should be noted that hundreds of you apparently believe enough in what the society is doing to take part and help out, and each year, with your input and critical assessment, the fair operation slowly improves. As long as this spirit prevails, your historical society can do nothing less but to get better and better.

We lack the space to thank everyone individually in this newsletter, but we do feel that a special note of recognition should be given to Lois Barnum and Nettie Stimson, co-chrm., who "put it all together".

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FAIR HIGHLIGHTS:

This year, we couldn't help notice....Art Schnoor getting the poles and awnings in place..... Sandy Stimson raking "Hojack Park" all by herself.....Ron Zauner getting those 200 dealers in place.....Frank Massing sporting a new "Grounds Watchman" T-Shirt.....how quickly the crowd "attacked" our food concessions.....how quickly the funnel cakes were dispensed this year..... how good those top quality hot dogs smelled.....how well all the fair chairmen were organized...

The happy smiles on youngsters' faces when they got their free balloons.....the little tots with cotton candy all over their face and hands.....the line of people going through the caboose.....the interested people examining exhibits in the depot.....the amused looks of some young people when they examined High School Crests--and the one little girl who was overheard saying, "Daddy, you were cute."

Youngsters trying their hand at Winnie Fischer's loom demonstration.....the great aroma from the Little League Bar-B-Q.....the efficient dispensing of food in the Barnum Building.....the snappy sounds of the Bison City Stompers.....Dan King's exceptionally fine parking lay-out..... the nifty-looking Emporium shuttle and our own crowded shuttle busses.....to say nothing of the wonderful, wonderful weather. All things considered, we had a great year, but can't wind this up without giving a BIG word of thanks to Ed Hastings and a handful of helpers, who stuck it out 2 or 3 hours after 5PM to pick up and clean-up, leaving the grounds in fine shape.

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QUILT AWARDED:

Prizes awarded at the fair were as follows: Star Quilt, Cola Pease of Ransomville; House Afghan, Peter Moot, Wilson; Green Afghan, Clara Marcks, Wilson; Flag Drapery, H. Wollers, Wilson; Handmade Tablecloth, Donna Desso, Wilson; and Cookbook, Gerald Bull of Lockport.

Betty Stimson, Chrm., and all officers of the society wish to thank everyone who helped out.

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MUSEUM ATTENDANTS FOR JULY/AUGUST:

Sun., July 1st, Jeanne and Dick Schmidle; Sat., July 7th, Helen Stevens and Jeanne Swanson; Sun., July 8th, Eleanor and John Myers; Sat., July 14th, Carole Schnoor and Helen Stevens; Sun., July 15th, George and Marge Lederhouse; Sat., July 21st, Pat Stephenson and Marge Goodman; Sun., July 22nd, Elton and June Kropp; Sat., July 28th, Lois Barnum and Marion Campbell; and Sun., July 29th, Clarence and Jean Nablo.

Sat., Aug. 4th, Edgar and Eloise Culverwell; Sun., Aug. 5th, Dick and Sue Schultz; Sat., Aug. 11th, Herbert and Janet Myer; Sun., Aug. 12th, Lois Ward and Sue Schuman; Sat., Aug. 18th, Mickey and Shirley Hunter; Sun., Aug. 19th, Helen Horton and Lorine Allgeier; Sat., Aug. 25th, Ralph and Helen Dinse; and Sunday, Aug. 26th, Kevin and Kelly King.

Note: Without the interest and fine cooperation of our members, it would be almost impossible to have the museum open to visitors on Saturday and Sunday afternoons during the months of July and August. We thank those who have volunteered their time and services--especially Sara Berry, Chrm., who has the amiable capability to provide hostesses when needed.

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RECENT ACQUISITIONS:

From Polly Brown of Washington, (not previously listed): Bolster Cover; Long Baby Flannel Dress; 3 pairs Bootees; Pongee Boy's Suit; Saques; Baby Bib Coverall; Baby Slip, Dress, and Linen Baby Blouse. Two photos of Miller/Brown Store (1941); 2 photos Fireman Fielday (1940); Photo of 1918-29 Wilson Basketball Team; Photo of Naomi and Marion Fitch (1930); Photos of old Hub Hotel and Patterson House.

Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Zauner: Griswall Deep Fat Fryer with baskets.

Mr. and Mrs. Robert Rohring: Ice Chipper; 1920 Garden Tractor with tools; Porcelain Light and Light Socket from Barn on Wilson-Burt Road.

Janet Sporleder: 15 Assorted Teaspoons; TV French Handpainted 3-section serving dish; Hall China Teapot; Covered Sugar and Creamer; Gilt Edge Tumbler; Mexican Silver Pin; Rhinestone Pin; Jadeite Beads; also, Letter signed by Huey P. Long (3/17/1933; Louisiana's Defense Speech by Nuey P. Long before U.S. Senate; the Congressional Record(2/21/1933); and Extract from 2/27/33 Congressional Record concerning the "Long Plan."

Service Cookbook, (1933) "Food for the Family", (1950); A Calendar of Dinners, (1923); Program of 10th Reunion of the Class of 1977; Guide to Tower of London (1917); and Photos of World War I taken on the battlefield.

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NEW MEMBERS:

We welcome the following new members into the Wilson His. Soc: Hans and Frances (Nelson) Hitzeman of Forestville; Dee Simpson of Syracuse; Cheryl Ann DeLaney, Niagara Falls; Linda Hoover, Niagara Falls; Lisa Bellina, Niagara Falls; Mark Smith, Lockport; Stephen Church, Lockport; Arlene Flecksenhaar, Lockport; the future Mrs. Stephen (Gail) Zurenda, Lockport; John and Kimberly Kendall, Ransomville; also Alice Davenport, Herbert and Janet Myer, and Kenneth C. Branch, Jr., all from Wilson; also Arthur & Georgia Bollman, Lorain, Ohio. Also Junior members Jonathon Hoover, Niagara Falls, and Harold Bottrell, Wilson, NY.

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BON MOT: Why do they call it baby sitting when all you do is run after them?

NEW LIFE MEMBERS:

Darrell Grant Smith, son of William and Carol (Croop) Smith, has received a Life Membership in the Wilson Historical Society as a Father's Day gift from his wife, Sally.

He was born in Lockport City Hospital, December 28, 1961, and after attending the elementary schools at Pekin, graduated in 1980 from Niagara-Wheatfield Central High School. He married Sally Murawski of the town of Niagara, and they have one son, Joshua.

Darrell, who is in construction work, lives on Ward Road in Sanborn, and the family attends St. Leo's R.C. Church on Military Road.

He became a junior member of the society in 1973 and has worked on a number of projects at the museum. The last time the depot was painted, he applied most of the paint with a low pressure paint sprayer. He has volunteered for a variety of jobs at the annual fair including showing movies to the children, parking cars, and clean-up. At this year's fair, he and Sally took over the funnel cake concession and, in a further effort to help out, have accepted the offer to be co-chairmen of the 1991 fair.

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Mark Andre Singer, who was born July 2, 1958 at Lockport, NY., has been given a Life Membership in the Wilson Historical Society by his parents, Thomas and Jacqueline Singer of Washington D.C.

He has attended schools in England, France, and Mercersburg Academy, California, and received his B.A. at Hamilton College, and his B.S. at Niagara University. He is a member of the Episcopal church, and during the past year has been teaching English in Luxemburg.

He expects to teach another two years of English at Niger, Africa, under the sponsorship of the Peace Corps. He also expects to be working with foreign English teachers.

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STUDENTS RECOGNIZED:

Miss Susan Jowdy of Church Street, Lockport, and Chin Nguyen of Wilson were this year's recipients of the Wilson Historical Society's awards to the two seniors with the highest average in the study of history. Both students plan to continue their studies at college.

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BOARD ACTION & REPORTS:

The newly revised by-laws were read and explained at the June meeting, and the Board passed a motion to accept them with two minor corrections. They will be presented again at the September meeting for approval of the general membership.

Dan King agreed to take charge of getting a foundation ready for the barbershop acquired from the Wilson Free Library. It was reported that "Red" Clark planned to move the building within the next three or four weeks.

Ollie Clark reported that Harold and Neva Benedict and John Demmin are compiling a list of names for a Veteran's Memorial Plaque. Names and suggestions should be directed to them.

Nettie Stimson reported that some ruts were left on "Hojack" Park after the Fair, and the matter will be referred to the grounds committee.

Lois Jennings, curator, reported that 41 persons in a tour group from the Chautauqua area visited the museum recently. They were greeted by Mrs. Jennings, Eleanor Myers, and Don Croop.

Carole Schnoor, Treas., reported that from May 15th to June 13th, the society's income was \$14,925.96, and expenses for the same period were \$4,713.58.

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MEMBER IN THE NEWS:

Ed Allgeier's "Mr. Ed" fishing team walked off with the \$5,000 first prize in the recent Pro-Am Salmon Team Tournament held at Wilson and Olcott recently.

Ed, who is also chairman of the society's Nominating Committee, displayed some of the same skilful angling when he lined up the slate of officers presented at the Annual Meeting June 18th.

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STUDENTS DONATE QUILT:

A Colonial Quilt made by members of Mrs. Colleen Harvey's class at Thomas Marks School, was given to the museum when they visited it recently. The quilt depicts historic scenes, and Mrs. Jennings, curator, assured the youngsters that it will be put on display in the future.

The children who had a part in making the quilt are Tim LaSaga, Heather Jowdy, Paula Keiper, Mike Grubbs, Megan Faery, Mark Hill, Casey Vallier, Dan Nerber, Joel Barlow, Jodi Zastrenski, Alonzo Rodriguez, and Adam LaRock.

The children visiting the museum were accompanied by their teacher, Mrs. Harvey, teacher's aid, Janet Durham, and Mrs. Nerber. All were given a complete tour of all three buildings and caboose by Mrs. Jennings and Don Croop.

(Note: The museum has been shown to many school children during the past years, and one of their "stock" questions is, "Do you own the museum?" We always try to explain to our future young leaders that everything they see belongs to the town of Wilson so, indirectly, if they are residents of the town it is they and their parents who own the museum. Perhaps by stressing this fact we can instill in them the same pride that our historical society members have in the Wilson Museum.)

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JULY/AUGUST CALENDAR:

There will be no regular program meetings of the society in July and August. Meetings will resume Monday evening, September 17th at 7:30 PM.

July 5th: Planning Board meeting at the depot, Thursday evening, 7:30 PM.

July 11th: Board of Director Meeting, Wednesday evening, 7:30 PM. at depot.

August 5th: Band Concert and Ice Cream Social, museum grounds, 2 PM.

August 15th: Board of Director Meeting at museum, 7:30 PM.

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THE SENIOR CITIZEN:

There are three periods in life: Youth, Middle age, and "How well you look."

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OFFICERS ELECTED:

Officers elected at the annual meeting are: John Myers, President; Don Burrows, 1st Vice-President; Norm MacAskill, 2nd Vice-President; Pam Groff, Secretary; Helen Stevens, Corresponding Secretary; and Carole Schnoor, Treasurer.

Trustees elected to serve until June, 1993 are: Anne Argue Faery; Arthur Schnoor, and Gary Fitch. Nettie Stimson was elected to serve out the term of Don Burrows until June, 1992.

Committee Chairmen selected by the nominating committee are: Lois Jennings, Acquisitions; Don Croop, By-laws; Celeste Crawford, Genealogical; Maryanne Sharpe, Housekeeper; Janet Sporleder, Historical Sites; Celeste Crawford, Library; Darrell and Sally Smith, Memorial Day Fair; Lois Jennings, Memorials; Chris Kelman, Membership; Don Croop, Publications/Newsletter Editor; Barbara Mosher, Programs; Bill Fritton, Publicity; Kenneth Branch, Jr., Photography; Emma Schrader, Refreshments; Saturday/Sunday Hostesses; Sara Berry; and Ways & Means, Dorothy Maxfield and Winnie Fischer.

Board of Director appointments will be reviewed at the July meeting to be effective Aug. 1st. They include Curator, and Chairmen of the Planning Board, Finance Committee, Depot, Barnum Building, Argue Building, Fittro Shop, Caboose, Grounds, Nominating Committee, also the Society's Representative to the Niagara County Federation of Historical Societies, and the Superintendent in charge of Work Details and Construction.

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MEMBERSHIP UPDATE:

As of June 20, 1990, the Wilson Historical Society has a total of 665 members. Thirty-five of that total are Junior members. The bad news is that 35 of our local members have neglected to renew their dues for 1990-91. In our busy world, it's easy to overlook small obligations, but please remember, We need our older members to help us grow--new members to keep us young.

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THUMBNAIL SKETCH:

Samuel Dix Brown, who was born in Wilson in 1870, grew up on his family's farm on Lake Road. He was the grandson of Sally Holmes, who brought apple seeds from New England to plant in Wilson.

In 1903, Sam Brown and Arthur Miller bought the store at the corner of Lake and Young, and operated it for many years under the name of Miller and Brown.

During the winters of 1906, 1907, and 1908, Mr. Brown served in Albany as clerk to Congressman Draper of Niagara Falls. He was also an active member of the Masons and Oddfellows, and served many years on the local school board.

When Miller died, Sam ran the store for awhile with Mrs. Miller who later sold out her interest to Kenneth Welker.

Kenny also bought out Brown's share of the store in 1948, and Sam moved to Bethesda, MD, where he lived with his son, Philip until his death in 1955.

Samuel Brown's wife was Kate Ronan (Carver), who was born on the Irish Road, Wilson, on April 25, 1875. Kate's first husband, Albert Carver, died four years after they were married, and Kate worked for awhile as a telephone operator, bank teller, and school teacher.

She met and married Sam Brown and a year later on July 24, 1914, their son, Philip, was born. One year later they moved into their new home on Lake Street--the present residence of Mrs. Marion Campbell.

Kate became active in the womens' study group, the "Delphic Circle", and was also one of the first directors of the Wilson Free Public Library.

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FAIR REPORT AS OF 6/20/1990:

Income reported for each concession is the balance to date with expenses deducted:

Balloons	6.50	Memberships	122.00
Candy	627.79	Ways & Means	172.90
Coffee and Donuts	334.05	Game	18.21
Cotton Candy	178.60	Quilt	2721.80
Dealers	3349.02	Total	13638.26
Donations	100.00	Additional Expenses:	
Fish Pond	4.61	Supplies	126.83
Funnel Cakes	639.25	Entertainment	400.00
Food	2216.68	Tent Rental	160.00
Hot Dogs	1856.84	Portable Toilets	200.00
Ice Cream	358.30	2 Shuttle Busses	355.00
Lemonade and Popcorn	931.71	Miscellaneous	35.22
		Total	1277.05

Income: \$12,361.21 (subject to change) Submitted by Carole Schnoor, Treasurer.

* * * * *

FROM THE MAILBAG:

It is possible that another Revolutionary War soldier may be buried in Greenwood Cemetery. Alice Nelson of Oriskany writes that her g-grandfather, Pomphrey Nelson, is buried near his son, Benjamin, who fought in the War of 1812. She said that on her last visit to Wilson she visited both her ancestor's graves.

Pomphrey, who fought in the Revolution, came to Wilson after the War of 1812, and lived with Benjamin who settled on about 150 acres of land at the present intersection of Route 425 and Nelson Road.

She notes that the sword carried by Pomphrey is now on loan to the Oriskany, NY, museum.

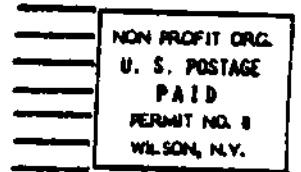
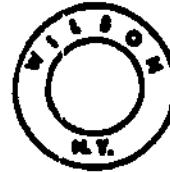
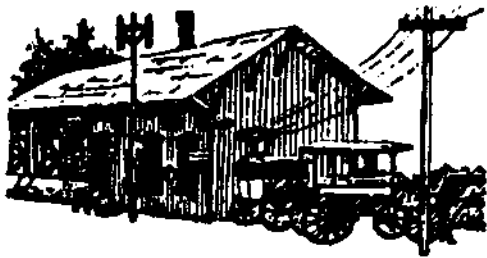
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Did YOU KNOW...Hackett's grocery store burned down on Young Street in March, 1899, and that it was totally destroyed despite all efforts by the "bucket brigade" to save it? A multitude of fires followed but it was 1924 before Wilson Volunteer Fire Co. #1 was organized.

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FINAL THOUGHT: Just about the time you think you can make ends meet, somebody raises their salaries.

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Wilson Historical Society
 WILSON, NEW YORK 14172

NEWSLETTER

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

LIBRARIAN
 WILSON CENTRAL SCHOOL
 WILSON, NY 14172

SEPTEMBER Vol.19 No.8

WILSON'S TONSORIAL PARLORS:

When the Wilson Free Library acquired the property on Young Street in which the late Jim Stephenson operated his barbershop, the Wilson Historical Society proposed moving the building to the museum grounds.

It was recently determined, however, that it wouldn't be feasible to move the structure so alternatives are being discussed.

Interest in the old structure reminds us that Jim opened his barbershop there in 1969, and, in addition to cutting hair, operated a watch-repair business in an adjoining back room.

As far as we are able to determine, Wilson's first barbershop was opened by Frank Slocum in the late 1800's, and it was located next to the Perrigo Hardware store on Young Street.

The shop burned down in the big fire of 1901 and, after the block was rebuilt, a new shop, operated by William Slocum, was opened up in the front of Timothy Wilson's Bowling Alley.

When "Hub" Ferrin moved to Wilson from Springville, he lived on a farm near Plumb's Bridge on East Lake Road. Later, he purchased the Emerson property on Young Street and moved to the village.

He opened a Tonsorial and Billiard Parlor in the two story building, and later expanded it into the "Hub" Hotel and restaurant.

Another barber, Arthur Bundy of Jeddo, came to Wilson in 1914. He was assisted by Ray Nevins who later opened his own shop.

Around this same period from 1914 to 1925, Tom and John Costello also ran a barbershop in Wilson.

Al Toenniessen cut hair in Bill Slocum's shop in 1925, and also worked at different times for Ray Nevins and "Hub" Ferrin.

Ed and Louis Singer of Lockport opened a shop in Wilson around the early thirties, and another well-known barber, Max Ransom, came to Wilson about this time from Ottawa, Canada.

Max worked for "Hub" Ferrin for awhile, then opened his own shop on Lake Street. His small barbershop was later expanded to include a billiard parlor, both of which were located where Lakeside Market now stands.

Jack Perry was probably one of Wilson's best known barbers, and before moving to Wilson lived on the Coomer Road. He cut hair for about 35 years, and was well trained in his profession. Shops that he worked in included Powers of Newfane, Carls in Lockport, the Statler in Buffalo, the Park Hotel at Lockport, and Max's Barbershop in Wilson.

After opening his own shop in Wilson, he cut hair for a number of years before going into the auctioneering business.

The Wilson Museum has acquired a number of artifacts related to the barbering profession, and there is considerable interest in either building or arranging for a display area in which to exhibit the many artifacts collected.

Among these are a barberchair which the society's 1st President, Dr. John Argue, used while cutting hair to raise money to attend the University of Buffalo. There are also two mirrors that came from the old Nevins Barbershop as well as a collection of razors, strops, shaving mugs and other related items donated by members of the Wilson Historical Society.

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NEW LIFE MEMBER:

William J. McLaughlin of Ransomville has been given a Life Membership by the Board of Directors of the Wilson Historical Society in appreciation for his services as a tax consultant since the society was founded in 1972.

Recently retired, he was born in Buffalo in 1927, the son of Edward and Sarah Caldwell McLaughlin. The family moved to a Brayley Road farm in 1932 where he resided until 1954.

Bill attended District School #9, the Wilson Central School, and graduated with a BBA from Niagara University. He and his wife, Bernice, have 5 children, Joanne (Nemacck), John, David, Bruce, and Mary (Evans). Bill, a C.P.A.(retired) served with the U.S. Navy during World War II, and is a member of the Ransomville United Methodist Church.

Other organizations in which he has been active are: Past Pres. of the Lewiston-Queenston Rotary Club; Director of Eastern Niag. Chamber of Commerce; Trustee and Pres. Ransomville Library; Past Pres. Sunset Beach Colony, Wilson; Trustee Lockport Savings Bank; Trustee Nioga Library System; Chrm. town of Porter Planning Board; Chrm. Porter Board of Appeals; and Past Treas. and Commissioner of the Ransomville Fire District.

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SOUNDINGS: A teacher is one who takes many live wires and sees to it that they are well grounded.

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MOTHER OF 4-H:

The New York 4-H Program and Cornell Cooperative Extension have recognized the achievements of local leaders and their families for many years, but perhaps one of the most prominent leaders in this field was Miss Gertrude Warren, who grew up in Niagara County and became a pioneer in the development of the 4-H movement.

Miss Warren was born Nov. 17, 1884, the daughter of Joe and Lillie Andrus Warren of Myer Road, Pendleton, NY. She earned her B.S. and M.A. at Columbia University, and in 1916 while teaching a course in home economics, was asked to add a homemaking course to the 4-H program which had been officially formed by an Act of Congress in 1914.

Agricultural officials were trying to introduce new growing methods to rural families as well as to prevent food poisoning in home canning, and when they decided to do this through farm youngsters, 4-H was born.

In 1917, Miss Warren moved to Washington to join the Department of Agriculture where she devoted 30 years of her life directing the homemaking program while serving on the National 4-H Board of Trustees..

She believed in "learning by doing", and applied this principle to her 4-H work, also through her effort to train volunteer 4-H leaders, she wrote the 1st bulletin on the subject. When she retired in 1952, the 4-H Program which began with about 300,000 persons, had expanded to worldwide proportions.

Although Miss Warren gained national recognition in the 4-H program, she never forgot her roots in Niagara County, and sponsored the annual presentation of the Lillie Warren Silver Tray which is awarded to the outstanding Niagara County 4-H leader of the year.

Miss Warren was also a member of the Capt. Molly Pitcher Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution at Washington, DC., and on Sept. 9th, 1990, the Niagara Falls Chapter of the N.S.D.A.R. will hold a Dedication Service at her gravesite in Bear Ridge Cemetery, Pendleton, to not only commemorate a Daughter of the Revolution, but also the "Mother of 4-H".

Three of the late Miss Warren's relatives who belong to the Niagara Falls Chapter of N.S.D.A.R. plan to attend the dedication service: Mrs. Alma Miller of Pendleton, Mrs. Ruth Kramer of Lockport, and Mrs. Shirley Lindemann, also of Lockport.

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SALISBURY NOTES:

Robert P. Salisbury of South Lake Tahoe, Cal., recently sent the Wilson Museum a detailed copy of his family tree. It may be recalled that Robert is the son of Hollis Perry and Gertrude Patterson Salisbury, who lived in Wilson until their marriage in 1921.

The old Salisbury farm on Maple Road, (now owned by the Elias family) was the birthplace of two brothers, William H.H. Salisbury and Orin Salisbury, both Civil War soldiers. An account of William H.H. Salisbury's war years is described in "Dairy of a Deadman--available at the Wilson Museum.)

Mr. Salisbury also sent a large chart of the male members of the Salisbury family lines dating back to William Salisbury, who settled in Massachusetts in 1648.

Requests for genealogy information should be directed to Celeste Crawford, Chrm.

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NEW MEMBERS:

Jon Robert Upton and Andrew Michael Upton, twin sons of of Mr. and Mrs. Terrence Upton of Appleton, NY, were signed up as junior members of the society when only two weeks old. Daddy joined the society in 1972 and became a Life Member in 1978.

Other new members of the society include Dr. and Mrs. L. Gregory Allen of Raleigh, NC; Rev. and Mrs. Joan Kerrison of Greece, NY; Robin and Colleen (Petty) Slate of Lockport; and Mr. and Mrs. Al Waite, Jr., of Killeen, Texas.

Since the last newsletter, a number of delinquent members have paid their dues increasing our total membership to 705 persons. Many thanks to Winnie Fischer who made this possible by reminding them by telephone.

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RECENT ACQUISITIONS:

Laura Eick of Lakeland, FL, has donated a Hooked Rug made by Mabel Wilson in 1969; a book, "Battle of Lake Erie"; and a Majolica Pitcher and Plate from her grandmother Alvers, also "The Light of Other Days", by Rexford G. Tugwell; and an 1850 Wooden Rolling Pin made by her grandfather Alvers.

Dorothy Maxfield: Wilson High School alumni Banquet Program (1914); Roster (1904-1919) of Wilson Lodge #881, I.O.O.F., also I.O.O.F. Badge for Wilson Lodge #881.

Julie Godfrey, Norwich, CT: 1907 Souvenir of Maple Rd. School, Dist. #12, with picture of Louisa Bickford, teacher; also picture of Hazel (Rutland) and Mary McCormick.

Robert Salisbury: So. Lake Tahoe, CA: Genealogy of the Patterson Family.

Earl & Gerry Swann: Carpenter Apron advertising "Wilson Lumber Co.", also Lock & Key from estate of Walter and Nettie Stoll.

Roger Hillman: Complete American Legion Band Uniform and 6 Books of Music for instruments.

Clifford Collins, Ransomville: Mannequin and dresses, also girl manequinn and dress.

Richard Rutland, Newfane: Halstead School of Music Picture (1940) front of Wilson High School. Althea Halstead taught music and lived at Olcott, NY.

Nettie Stimson: Spatula from Laffler's General Store; also 1879 book, "The Splendid Parlor" from Wilson Prebyterian Church.

Wilson Central School: Class of 1990 T-Shirt with names of Seniors printed on it.

Millie Croop Estate: Personal belongings including a Girl Scout Handbook, 9 Organizational Pins; Patch Jacket; 10 Cup and Saucer Sets; 7 Pieces of Red Glassware; Green Vase; Depression Glass Bowl; Wilson Museum Glass; Cupie Doll; Snowflake Paper Weight and Red, White, and Blue Swirl Vase from Corning Glass, also 2 Pearl hob-nail glass vases.

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BON MOT:

Old age is when you finally know your way around but don't feel like going.

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BOARD ACTION AND REPORTS:

Bill Fritton reported that the grounds have been rolled, and that Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Marks have identified all the trees on the grounds.

Don Burrows announced that he would take care of security lighting, and he and Dan King will repair the cupola on the Argue Building.

Motion made and approved to stop loaning out tent because of its age and fragile condition.

Revised By-Laws approved by Board for September meeting. Article 2 Section 4 will read: "A person must be a member of the society in order to hold office."

Board approved request from retired teachers to tour museum on afternoon of Oct. 11th. Richard and Jeanne Schmidle will attend as hosts. Also approved were requests from the Delphic Circle to hold luncheon in Barnum Building, August 18th, to benefit Wilson Free Library. Permission was also granted for Historians of Zone 8 to meet at depot Sat. PM, October 6th.

Board approved recommendations of Appointment Committee as follows: Curator, Dorothy Maxfield; Planning Board, Bill Fritton; Finance, Dan King; Depot Chrm., Martha MacAskill; Barnum Building, Eleanor Myers; Argue Building, Wally Goodman and Clark Stimson, co-Chrm.; Fittro Shop, Charlotte Pease; Caboose, Ellsworth McKelvey; Grounds, Elton Kropp; Nominating, Ed Allgeier; Plant Supt., Al Waite (Art Schnoor-Ollie Clark); Ways & Means, Lucille Upton, Chrm.

Ollie Clark reported that the Fittro Shop was cleaned out where the blacksmith shop used to be by Ralph Dinse, Sam McCoy, Bob Thomas, Randy Ward, Lloyd Evans, Elton Kropp, Elwin Upton, "Chuck" Messersmith, and Ollie. He suggested the rest of floor be cemented with stone placed under the forge. It is estimated the cost will be \$400 for cement with any unused amounts being placed under the overhead door

Since it was not possible to move the barbershop, the interior furnishings have been brought to the museum for future display after determination by the Planning Board.

Don Burrows, Chrm., reported that over 200 people were served peach, chocolate, and butter-scotch sundaes, also root beer floats, at the recent ice cream social and concert. He thanked his workers, also Dan and Judy King for furnishing a 15 cubic foot freezer, and Jiggs and Kathy Pearce for ordering the ice cream. Fresh peaches were donated by the Burrows.

It was unanimously decided to dedicate the 1903 Caboose in honor of Burt Jennings, and Helen Stevens, Cor. Sec., was instructed to send Burt a card notifying of the Board's decision.

Nettie Stimson suggested that a sign be placed on museum to notify visitors who to contact when museum is closed.

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SEPTEMBER HOSTESSES:

Sarah Berry, Chrm., has selected museum hostesses for Sunday afternoons from 2-4PM to serve as follows: Sept. 9th, Marion Campbell and Alice Davenport; Sept. 16th, Lillian Evans and Lorine Allgeier; Sept. 23rd, Marge and Roger Goodman; and Sept. 30th, John and Jane Demmin.

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SEPTEMBER PROGRAM:

Barbara Mosher, Program Chrm., has announced that Jack Terry has arranged for Wally Goodman to present a program on antique cars at the meeting on September 17th.

The meeting, which starts at 7:30 PM, will be held in the Barnum Building. Refreshments will be served by Dorothy Linnabery and Doris Klees

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IN MEMORIAM:

Harold Albright, 83, a charter member of the Wilson Historical Society, died Monday, Aug. 13, 1990, at home. He was a lifelong resident of Wilson, and graduated from the Wilson High School and Bryant and Stratton Business School at Buffalo.

He worked as Business Manager and Asst. Editor of the former Wilson "Star", and was also a book-keeper for the Harrison Radiator Div. of GMC, Lockport, until 1949 when he became Postmaster at Wilson. He was an active member of Exley United Methodist Church, and a 50 year member of Ontario Lodge No. 376, F&AM of Wilson. He also compiled much of the material used in the society's publication, "Postal Service in the Town of Wilson." He and his wife, Esther, celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary at the Wilson Museum in 1983.

Besides his wife he leaves a son, Col. Daniel Albright of Wichita Falls, Texas, and a daughter, Mrs. Gerald (Cynthia) Townsend of Lewiston; also four grandchildren.

Interment was in Greenwood Cemetery, Wilson, with Rev. Donald Foley officiating.

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SPRUCING UP THE MUSEUM:

Easy access stairs have been built at each end of the caboose, and the depot dock, which was rotting out, has been covered with new plank. Inside the depot, exhibits and display cases have been tastefully arranged thanks to the Jennings, MacAskills, and Dessos.

The Barnum Building, in addition to its shiny new kitchen, now has the old Wilson Postoffice built in, and a new "Country Store" in progress--a real tribute to the Barnum Bldg. Comm.

The Argue Building floor has been painted grey and helps to set off the old cars, while black and white lettering along the walls helps identify some of the models. A start has also been made in displaying some of the antique car memorabilia that has been donated.

It should be noted that many persons contribute hours of their spare time to make all these improvements at the museum, and to mention a few, our hats off to Ed Allgeier, Chuck Bulmer, Ollie Clark, Ralph Pease, Lloyd Evans, Bill Fritton, Ed Hastings, Dan King, Burt Jennings, Elton Kropp, Ellsworth McKelvey, Jack Maxfield, John Myers, Bob Motchenbaugh, Willie Rockwood, Bob Rohring, Art Schnoor, Dudley Secor, Don Smithson, Clark Stimson, Bob Thomas, Elwin Upton, Al Waite, and Tom Walder. (Our apologies if we overlooked someone.)

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DID YOU KNOW...that the recycling center behind the Catholic Church is one of the first to open in Niagara County?

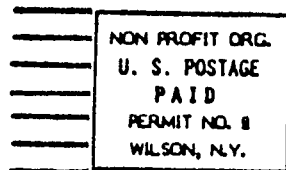
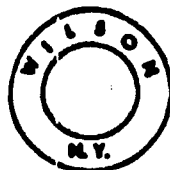
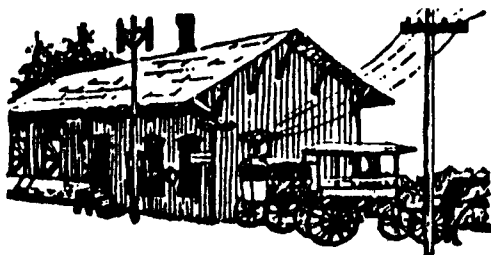
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FINAL THOUGHTS: Man can not live on bread alone, he needs peanut butter too.

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God gave us two ears and one mouth so we'd listen twice as much as we talk.

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Wilson Historical Society

WILSON, NEW YORK 14172

NEWSLETTER

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

OCTOBER 1990 Vol. 19 No.9
(Coleman Press)

LIBRARIAN
WILSON CENTRAL SCHOOL
WILSON, NY 14172

THE WILSON AUTOMOBILE COMPANY:

One of the special attractions at the Wilson Museum are its antique and classic cars--but they probably wouldn't be there today except for the interest and enthusiasm displayed by the society's first president, Dr. John F. Argue.

When the historical society was founded in 1972, the good doctor turned the old "Hojack" depot over to the town of Wilson on condition that it be used as a museum and meeting place for the organization.

Doc used half of the building for storage but as improvements were made, he cleared out his end making the entire depot available to the society. For many years he had been an ardent collector of antique and classic cars, so it wasn't too surprising when he decided to give the museum a 1904 Covert "Chainless" which he had acquired from the Ford Museum at Dearborn, Mich.

The Covert was originally built at Lockport by the B.F. Covert Company, and the model now on display in the Wilson Museum is believed to be the only one of its kind left in the United States. Powered by a 5 horse water cooled engine, the car had the reputation of being a good hill climber, and was formerly owned by the opera star, James Melton.

As Doctor Argue turned more cars over to the museum, it became apparent that a new building would have to be erected to put them in and, in October, 1978, the society approved a proposal by the Planning Board to construct a steel and concrete building.

Funds raised by the society were matched by the town to purchase materials, but the actual erection of the building was done with volunteer labor under the careful supervision of Ed Hastings, Art Schnoor, John Myers, and the late Whit Barnum.

As more and more interest developed in the antique car project, research revealed that but for a strange twist in fate, Wilson might well have been one of the pioneers in the development of the modern automobile.

It was 1900 when the Wilson Automobile Manufacturing Company was started by Stanley Dwight in the Brook's Machine Shop located at the west end of Young Street. A year later, however, when Brooks requested permission from the village board to test drive the new "Niagara" automobile through village streets, his request was denied. He was told that the noisy machine not only scared the horses, but some of the residents as well.

Brooks wouldn't take no for an answer, and won the board over after telling them that many people owned horses that were not properly broken and they should not be allowed on the street, and, he continued, "My automobile obeys every command and is always under control."

The late Fay Campbell remembered the 1st "Niagara" well and recalled that he was given one of the first rides in it when he was a boy. He said that it looked like a buggy seat on a platform with four wheels, and was steered with a handle on a bar attached to the front axle. By 1903, more elaborate models were being produced with a carriage-type body, steering wheel, and kerosene headlamps.

George C. Whiteside was Dwight's chief mechanic, and through his ingenuity developed a couple of innovations on the "Niagara" that were well before their time. In 1903 he designed the first tilt steering wheel, also a transmission that transferred power to the wheels with a drive shaft rather than a sprocket and chain.

The Wilson Automobile Company ran into financial difficulties in 1905, and the firm's assets and equipment were purchased by the newly formed LaSalle-Niagara Automobile Company of Niagara Falls. After the sell-out, George Whiteside left Wilson and took his patents to the E.R. Thomas Motor Company of Buffalo. As an engineer for Thomas, he helped equip stock cars for racing including the "Thomas Flyer", the "Grand Prix Racer". and the "Around the World Car."

In 1982, while on a visit to the antique car museum at Stone Mountain, Georgia, we learned that George Whiteside had later moved to Georgia where he died at the age of ninety-three. Thomas Protsman, curator of the museum, said that he and Whiteside had been good friends--in fact he settled Whiteside's estate when he died.

In 1987, a new, larger building was erected north of the first building to accomodate the increasing number of cars. Dedicated as a Memorial to Dr. John F. Argue, the building is being improved as quickly as funds become available. Wally Goodman and Clark Stimson have recently been appointed by the Board as co-chairmen of the antique car building.

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SOUTH OF THE BORDER:

Just a reminder that our neighbors to the south, the Cambria Historical Society, will hold their annual "Open House" at the Centre on route 425, Sunday, October 21st, from Noon to 5PM.

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BON MOT: The most valuable antiques are old friends.

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LIBRARY GOAL WITHIN REACH:

The Wilson Free Library is making good progress in its on-going drive to reach its goal of \$295,000 for renovation of the present building, and the "temperature" gauge on the thermometer that registers the funds received has climbed over the \$200,000 mark.

The building fund received a special boost recently from two of our state legislators when Senator John Daly obtained a \$33,000 grant for the library, and Assemblyman Joseph Pillittere secured another for \$25,000.

In other fund-raising endeavors, a good response was had from a mailing sent out to 1500 alumni and faculty members of Wilson Central School who attended prior to 1970. One contributor, Bonnie Huguenor Falla, credited Kay Ness, (former school librarian) with helping her "to choose books to read that helped me to grow." Today, Mrs. Falla is a Reference Librarian at Moavia College in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. Another contribution was received from Ed Jedrejek, who taught agriculture and general science from 1950 to 1953.

Several hundred Wilson Historical Society members have also contributed generously to the fund, and their interest and devotion to their old home town is well-expressed in a letter sent in from Lucille Campbell Kirchoff of Sanford, Florida, who wrote, "God willing, I shall be able to contribute each year to the Wilson Free Library."--and she's doing just that.

Sons and daughters of society members now living in Wilson have also sent in donations for the library they used to frequent during their school years, with contributions arriving from all over the country.

The trustees are grateful for these expressions of confidence because it indicates that they recognize how valuable the library is to the community.

The target date for completing the expansion project is still set for 1991--the 80th birthday of the Wilson Free Library.

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FROM THE MAILBAG:

Rex Stacy, former owner of the Stacy Coal and Feed Co. in Wilson, writes that he and "Winnie" are coming along well at Spring, Texas, and that Pat and her husband now live with them. He recently sent some information about his grandfather, William H. Smith, which we share with you.

William was only 12 years old when his father died at Black Rock, and he was sent to live with a sister in Wilson. Later he went to Ohio to live with another sister, and there he learned the Masonry trade.

When the Civil War broke out, he enlisted with Battery M, 1st NY Light Artillery. He really wasn't old enough to join but, as the story goes, he stood on a stump so he'd look taller. When Battery M went into action, it was his job to hold his finger over the air hole on the cannon, and when he removed his finger the cannon would fire. When his enlistment ran out, he returned to Wilson where he re-enlisted in Battery M as veteran Corp. William H. Smith.

Battery M was engaged in most of the major battles of the war, and when it ended the men held a reunion each year. In June, 1896, one was held at Lake Island Park in Wilson where over 50 veterans and their families attended. Many had their dinners in the Park's Dining Hall, with food prepared by Mrs. Harris.

At 1:30PM, Chief Bugler Pratt sounded the assembly call, and the company was called to order by President William H. Holmes. Some of the Wilson veterans present were, Byron Barber, Ryan Furman, Reuben Crawford, George Eggelson, Nicholas Campbell, Harris Wright, and Bennet Robinson.

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Richard Wilson Scott of Dayton, Ohio, wrote recently for information about his ancestor, Luther Wilson. We sent him a few old newsletters, and he was surprised to learn that Luther had figured so prominently in the early development of Wilson.

Mr. Scott is descended from Luther's son, George Wilson, and he is also related to the Campbells through his grandmother, Alice Wilson Scott. She belonged to the D.A.R. because of her revolutionary war ancestor, Moses Campbell--later, Oliver Campbell served in War of 1812.

Richard noted that his Uncle, Frank Scott, has done a lot of work on the family history, and that from 1952 to 1970, he played piano with the Lawrence Welk Orchestra.

He sent copies of photos of Luther Wilson's wife, Sarah Stephens Wilson, also their home after it was turned into the Wilsonian Club. A caption under the picture states that the Club was incorporated in 1916, and was a thoroughly up-to-date club. It had parlors for card playing, a billiard parlor, reception and dining room, also dance hall and bowling alleys. It opened its doors to the Red Cross and Farm Cadets, and had a policy for community betterment.

At the time, Burton L. Gale was President, G. Herbert Swick, Vice President, and Clarence Johnson, Secretary-Treasurer.

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MEMBERS IN THE NEWS:

Jean Argue, 1st Vice President of the ICMH board of directors at Newfane, attended the ceremony held recently near the hospital's front entrance to dedicate a new "Honor Garden" for individuals who gave of their time and talent over the years. The late Dr. John F. Argue, who was the driving force in getting the hospital built at Newfane, was the first to be honored.

Attending the ceremony with Jean were her daughters, Anne Faery and Sue Schearer. All are Life Members of the Wilson Historical Society.

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MUSEUM VISITED:

Julie Santos and about 16 youngsters from the day care center at Olcott, visited the museum on Aug. 27th, and were given a guided tour of the buildings by Lucille Upton, Sara Berry, and Don Croop. The children were very attentive as Mrs. Upton pointed out and talked about the various exhibits. When they visited that antique car building, one little boy spotted the recently renovated '57 Cadillac with its long tail fins and excitedly said, "Gee, that looks just like Batman's car."

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SOUNDINGS:

Be careful if you "live it up" so you don't have to "live it down."

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BOARD ACTION:

Dan King, Finance Chrm., proposed that a new system of account numbers be used to record all sources of income and expenditures. Also, chairmen would receive applications on which projected funds necessary to complete proposed projects would be filled in. These forms would then be submitted to the finance committee for approval. Motion approved to follow plan as outlined.

Dorothy Maxfield, curator, reported on recent meeting attended by Marion Balyszak, Field Service Coordinator for the Western NY Historical Agencies, who will send a written report detailing her suggestions for museum improvements.

Motion passed to grant Wilson Business Association the use of Barnum Building to hold their annual pumpkin contest on Oct. 28th from 2 to 4 PM.

Discussion was held on increased cost of operating the museum and publishing and mailing out the newsletter, and a motion was passed to raise single memberships to \$5 a year; Couples to \$8 a year, with juniors remaining at \$1 per yr. Life memberships will be increased to \$150 per person, and all new rates will become effective on Jan. 1, 1991. It was noted that this is the first increase in membership dues since the society was founded in 1972.

Norm MacAskill stated that it is important that all officers, trustees, and other board mem attend meetings, and a motion was approved that, "Any member who misses 3 consecutive meetings of the Board of Directors, (without valid excuse) may be replaced."

Nettie Stimson reported that only the tables donated to the society by the fire company may be loaned out. She noted that many have been damaged by careless use and handling.

Celeste Crawford reported that she now has a computer listing of all identifiable photographs, and is now working on a way to store newspaper clippings. She also requested permission for a meeting of Delta Kappa Gamma on Dec. 3rd. Permission was granted.

John Myers, Pres., announced that the Eastern Niagara County Chamber of Commerce will have a bus tour for bus tour operators, and each operator will receive a packet of information about interesting places along their route. Motion approved to allocate \$25 for advertising, and to include caboose postcards and other museum brochures in the packet.

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MUSEUM HOSTESSES FOR OCTOBER:

Sara Berry, Chrm., has announced that museum attendants for October on Sunday afternoons from 2 to 4 PM will be: Oct. 7th, Bob and Edna Rose; Oct. 14th, Hoyt and Eleanor Desso; Oct. 21st, Howard and Leona Hunter; and Oct. 28th, Fenton and Bessie Cole.

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OCTOBER PROGRAM:

Another program on recycling will be held at the meeting on October 15th. Refreshments will be served after the meeting by Maxine Jones and Sue Schultz.

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NEW MEMBERS:

Please welcome Robert and Alice Mugele of Cassalberry, FL; Thomas Mugele of Rockhill, SC; and William and Mabs Miller of Wilson.

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BEFEBIT TEA:

A "Benefit Tea" for the expansion fund of the Wilson Free Library will be held at the home of Mrs. Floyd Clark on 1 Shore Drive, Oct. 25th, from 2 to 5 PM. All members of the Wilson Historical Society are cordially invited to attend.

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IN MEMORIAM:

Burt Jennings, 81, died at home, Aug. 23, 1990, after a lingering illness. A native of Wilson, he graduated from Wilson High in 1929, and attended Bryant & Stratton Business School in Buffalo.

He was an active member of Exley Methodist Church where he served as chairman of the Administrative Board, Finance Chrm., and Building Fund Chrman. He also served, any years as Treasurer of the Batavia District Trustees of the Western NY Conference.

He was one of the 1st Presidents of the Wilson PTA, and for 12 years served as a member and president of the School Board. He was also institutional representative of former Boy Scout Troop No. 41 of the Lewiston Trail Council. He was active in the drive to raise funds to build Inter-Community Hospital at Newfane, and also served as a member and president of the Hospital Board for 16 years. Other organizations in which he was active were Tonawanda Lodge #247, F&AM; Past President of the Tonawanda Rotary Club; and Chrm. of the Wilson Zoning Board of Appeals.

In 1972 he became a charter member of the Wilson Historical Society and, as a trustee, worked diligently to help make the Wilson Museum a facility the town can be proud of. He took special pride in restoring the old 1903 New York Central Caboose and, in recognition of this, the Board of Directors has dedicated it to his memory.

Besides his wife, Lois, he leaves a daughter, Mrs. Owen (Wendy) Hayes of Park Ridge, IL; a grandson, and several nieces and nephews; also in-laws, Mr. and Mrs. Edward Struebing, Jr., and Mr. and Mrs. Norman Sentz. Memorial Services were held at Exley United Methodist Church with Rev. Donald Foley officiating.

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Alanson Bigalow, 78, died unexpectedly at Inter Community Hospital, Newfane, after being stricken at home, August 26, 1990.

He was a native of Wilson and a dairy farmer for many years. He attended the Exley United Methodist Church of Wilson, and was also a member of the Masonic Lodge of Wilson.

He is survived by a sister, Leah Bigalow, and several cousins. Memorial Services were held at the Hamilton & Clark Funeral Chapel with Rev. Jacob Denny officiating. Interment was in the North Ridge Cemetery.

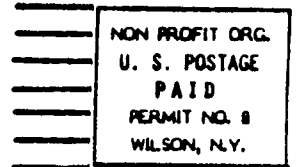
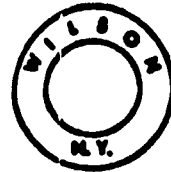
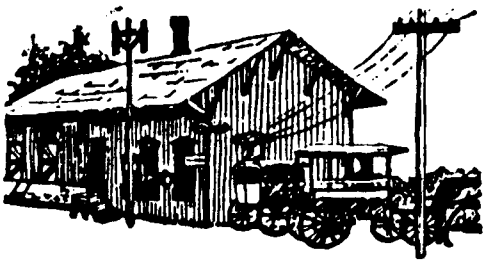
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MEETINGS: October 10th, Board of Directors, Depot, 7:30 PM.
October 15th, Regular monthly meeting, Depot, 7:30 PM.

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BOTTOM LINE: For most children, cleanliness isn't next to Godliness--it's next to impossible.

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Wilson Historical Society
WILSON, NEW YORK 14172

NEWSLETTER

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

November 1990 Vol. 19 No. 10
(Coleman Press)

LIBRARIAN
WILSON CENTRAL SCHOOL
WILSON, NY 14172

MOVIE MEMORIES:

Many persons today may recall those silent movie days of the early 1920's when, for ten cents admission, youngsters could attend the local movie house and watch old favorites like Charlie Chaplin, Harold Lloyd, or Tom Mix.

Movies got their start in Wilson a few years earlier when Timothy Wilson showed "flicks" in the old pavilion at Lake Island Park. Since the pavilion was open on all sides, it was necessary for him to place canvass curtains around the building to shut out light and protect his audience from the weather.

He used a hand-cranked carbon type of projector and his son, Floyd, helped him to operate it. Floy's wife, the late Margaret Wilson, remembered that when ever their arms got tired cranking the projector, the images on the screen would start to appear in slow motion.

Later, Middleton's Hall was used to show movies, and benches were used for seats until folding chairs could be acquired. By 1910, however, the Conant & Bryant Power Co. had ushered in the new age of electricity in Wilson, and Floyd was able to replace the old hand-cranked model projector with an electric one.

Laura Eick, who recently made her home in Florida, recalled that the first movie she saw at Middleton's was the Presidential election of 1912 when the Democratic nominee, Woodrow Wilson, won a three way race between the Republican candidate, William H. Taft, and the "Bull Moose" candidate, "Teddy" Roosevelt.

She also noted that films like Pearl White in "The Perils of Pauline" were eagerly awaited each week, but the biggest thrill of her girlhood years was when Rudolph Valentino appeared in "The Shiek".

In 1920, Seymour Ereon and Henry Giles built a new theater opposite Middleton's Drugstore and Hall which they named the "Gem". The movie equipment at Middletons was purchased and installed in the new building, and Floyd continued to operate it for about a year when Benjamin Stone took over the job.

Elizabeth Duxbury and Ida Ereon sold admission tickets and also dispensed popcorn, proving that this delicacy has been a favorite with movie-goers for a long time.

The new "Gem" was also used for some senior high school plays, and silent movies had an impressive array of pianists who set the mood for the changing scenes on the big screen.

One of the first to play piano there was the late Earl McCormick while other included Marjorie Hurlburt, Frances Hurlburt, Helen Borngraeber, Alice Nelson, Laura Eick, and Florence Partington Porter.

In the 1930's, Ereon and Giles sold the "Gem" to Michael Radigan, and the building stood vacant until Francis Tate moved to Wilson and rented it. He had been in the movie business in Pennsylvania and in 1938, after making some repairs and installing new seats, he purchased the building.

During the next 20 years he ran a very successful movie enterprise in the village, and his wife, Lena, assisted him at the ticket window. A few popular features shown during this time included "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs", "Kiss Me Kate", and "Gone With the Wind."

Wilson lost its popular movie theater in 1960 when the Tates sold the property to Duane Hill, who turned it into a billiard parlor. His business venture disappeared from the Wilson scene when the building was consumed by fire on November 18, 1967.

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BAKE SALE-NOV. 6th:

Lucille Upton, Chrm. of the Ways & Means Comm, has announced that there will be a Wilson Historical Society Bake Sale at the Town Hall on Election Day, November 6th,

Lois Barnum will be in charge of the sale, and would appreciate it if all of our members would get behind the event and try to get their baked goods at the town hall before 10:00AM.

If you have any questions, please call either Lois or Lucille.

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NOVEMBER HOSTESSES:

The following members will greet you at the museum on Sunday afternoons from 2-4PM: Nov. 4th, Harold and Clara Marcks; Nov. 11th, Bill and Maxine Jones; Nov. 18th, Sid and Donna Pettit; and Nov. 25th, George and Marjorie Lederhouse.

If, for some reason, hostesses are unable to be at museum when scheduled, Please notify Sara Berry so a replacement may be found.

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THANKSGIVING: The time of year when one species stops gobbling and another starts.

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LIBRARY DRIVE ON TRACK:

The drive to raise funds to renovate the Wilson Free Library has been very successful to date with the latest figures already topping \$205,000 of the projected goal of \$295,000. The figure takes on added significance when one realizes that the library was started many years ago by a group of local citizens and, because of its unique origin, is not eligible for bond issues or tax monies generally used for most public projects.

With the exception of two grants received from Sen. John Daly and Assemblyman Joseph Pillittere, most of the money raised has been donated through the generosity of Wilson residents and friends--both past and present.

In April, 1988, Mrs. Jean Siddall, who graduated from the University of Buffalo with a Masters in Library Science, accepted the position of Librarian, and her enthusiasm and cooperation with the library board, has been a contributing factor in the present on-going drive.

The Board is making every effort to reach its goal by promoting community events and sending out special mailings to spread the word that everyone's help is needed if the renovation project is to be completed by the end of 1991--the 80th birthday of the Wilson Free Library.

The current library board is under the direction of Margaret Fritton, Pres., Dr. Warren Button, Vice-Pres., Judy Okoniewski, Secy., Christine Kalahan, Treas., also Tom Fare, Tina Elia, Mary Clark, Kay Ness, and Harold "Pat" Partridge.

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NOVEMBER PROGRAM:

Barbara Mosher, Program Chrm., has announced that Miss Lorena Garmezy, Curator of the Niagara County Historical Society Museum, will be our guest speaker at the November 19th meeting of the Wilson society.

Miss Garmezy will present a musical program, "Songs From The Attic" which will include selections from the Victorian Era to the 1920's.

Refreshments will be served following the program by Emma Schrader, Chrm., Margaret Waite, and Jane Sinclair.

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RECENT ACQUISITIONS:

Mildred L. Schnoor has donated a set of child's dishes with knives, forks, and napkins; a Child's Castor Set; a Black Shawl that belonged to her grandmother, Anna Marie Klumpp; an 1890 Map of the Town of Wilson; Folding Automatic Camera originally owned by Ben and Mary Zastrow; Young Ladies embroidered and lace underskirt; World War I Songbook for Sailors and Soldiers; and a Piece of a Buffalo Robe.

Sumner Stacy, Mineola, Texas: 4-Beacon Lights of Literature (1934); Vol. I & II, Niagara County History (1921).

Douglas Smith, Seven Valleys, PA: One Dozen Confederate Battle Flags for marking grave of Civil War Confederate Horse, "Billy Sherman" on Wilson-Burt Road.

Mark Huntington, Lockport: Photo of Wilson Bank employees taken during the Wilson Centennial in 1958. Included in picture, Barbara Lort, Manuela Von Huegal, Millie Croop, Alice Nelson, Eugene Pembroke, Mark Huntington

Carl Wiepert, Jr., Newfane: Newspaper accounts of Pres. John F. Kennedy's Assassination.

Barbara Goupil, N. Tonawanda: Treddle, Singer Sewing Machine.

Carl Cramer, Lockport: 2-Tube Testers, one quite old; also 1-Sparks Signal Tracer.

Rex Stacy, Spring, Texas: Child's Book, "Valentine & Orson" (1890); "Our Little Ones and the Nursery" (1890); Doll's Dressmaker Magazine for Girls (1892); Eight Color Advertising Cards; 1904 Colored Calendar; Merchant's Gargling Oil Almanac (1890); Newspaper picture of Wilson District School #1 & Roster (1892); Four Photos of Wilson; Picture of Wilson High School (1862); and picture of Pettit Rendering & Fertilizer Company.

Betty Hauseman: Two Basketball pictures of Wilson High Team (1938-39). Gordon Hauseman is in pictures; Mobil Oil Can for car museum and Master Plan Map of Wilson.

Janice Grzybowski Sievert: Keystone 8mm Movie Projector with owner manual and splicer, owned by May and Delilah Grzybowski. Also, 1948-49 Umbrella with interesting handle.

Linda Ann Harrad: John Hamilton's "Mother Goose Nursery Ryme Book" (1901)

Nettie Stimson: 1957 Hamilton & Clark Postcard in good condition, also "Pentecostal Hymns" owned by H. Sanford of Wilson.

John Kress: Bed Pan and Medical Instruments.

Don Croop: Audio Tape of Don Ramsdell, former Postmaster, recorded at historical Society meeting. Included on tape are remarks by Norm MacAskill, Whitney Barnum, and former postmaster, Harold Albright; Audio tape of Interview with the late Pearl Leggett of Ransomville on her early experiences in Wilson; Audio Tape of talk by Bill Ganshaw at historical society meeting; also Antique Wrapping Paper Roller for use in society's "Country Store" exhibit.

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FROM THE MAILBAG:

Jan Clark of Beaufort, SC, a cousin of the late Philip Brown, writes that she enjoys getting the Newsletter. She likes to think of Wilson as her old home town even though she was born at Holley, NY, on the Erie Barge Canal.

She wonders if there is anyone left around Wilson who remembers her father, A.A. Housel, who at one time lived with his first wife in the old Albright Homestead on Lake Street in the early 1900's.

She noted that Arthur Archie Housel was the first car salesman to introduce autos to Wilson, and she still has recollections of a 4-door touring car with canvass side curtains. Her father was also an architect, and his reason for coming to Wilson was to draw up plans for the old Wilson State Bank.

Jan said that she had those plans for a long time.

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SOUNDINGS:

Just when you think you have graduated from the school of experience, along comes a whole new course.

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DIARY OF A DEADMAN:

Some persons who visit Wilson are interested in locating the boyhood home of Ira Pettit-- especially if they have read a copy of the Civil War narrative, "Diary of a Deadman." Ira, as many of us know, was raised in the old cobblestone house that was built in 1835 for his father, Clinton Pettit on Maple Road, town of Wilson.

When war broke out, Ira enlisted May 29, 1862 at Lockport, NY, in Co. B, 2nd Bat., 11th Regt., of the 5th Army Corps. He served through three major battles until June, 1864, when he was captured at Gaines' Mill, Virginia, and sent to the infamous Andersonville Stockade at Camp Sumpter, Georgia, where he died and was buried on October 18, 1864.

During the years he served in the Union Army, he kept a diary of his daily activities, and it was from this diary that Jean P. Ray, in 1969, compiled her book, "Diary of a Deadman." Mrs. Ray did extensive research on her book, and while visiting Wilson, attended a meeting of the Wilson Historical Society where she signed and distributed copies of her first edition.

The contents of the book may be of special interest to descendents of early Wilson families, many of whom are mentioned in the Diary as friends or relatives of the Pettit family.

"Diary of a Deadman" is not only available at the Wilson Museum, but also at many outlets of the National Park Service.

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MEMORIAL TREE:

Lorine Allgeier has had a "Sunset Red Maple" planted on the museum grounds in memory of her husband, Ray Allgeier, who was born in 1915 and died in March, 1990. A plaque has been ordered to mark the Memorial Tree and will be put in place by Elwin Upton when it is ready.

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BOARD APPOINTMENTS:

Following several adjustments, it appears the Board appointments for 1990-91 have been established as follows:

Curator, Dorothy Maxfield, Bill Fritton, Planning Board Chrm., Dan King, Finance Chrm., Martha MacAskill, Depot Chrm., Eleanor Myers, Barnum Bldg. Chrm., Wally Goodman and Clark Stimson, Argue Bldg. Chrm., Ellsworth McKelvey, Caboose Chrm., (Pending), Fittro Shop Chrm., Walter Kropp, Grounds Chrm., Al Waite, Plant Supt., Norman MacAskill, Niagara County Federation Representative; and Edward Allgeier, Nominations.

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A BLOOMING IDEA:

Walter Kropp, Grounds Chrm., thinks it would be nice to put in some well-placed flower beds to help beautify the museum grounds. He's looking for a couple of gal's with the "know-how" to help him out, so if any of you "green-thumbers" would like to help, please give him a call, (751-6460). Walter says he can do the digging necessary, but he doesn't know the first thing about planting flowers.

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BOARD ACTION & REPORTS:

Nettie Stimson reported that the Wilson Business Association theme for this year's Christmas celebration will be "Christmas By The Lake." Events will be planned for every Saturday in December, and they would like Wilson Society to have tree-trimming party on Saturday, Dec. 1st.

Newfane will have their annual Tour of Homes on Dec. 2nd, and the Wilson Museum will be open that day should they care to include it on their tour.

Don Burrows demonstrated one of 5 security/evacuation lights, and since he had previous authorization to get the lights, will purchase and install them soon.

Bill Fritton, Planning Chrm., noted that eaves and facing boards behind the eaves are in need of replacement. The finance comm. has requested additional funds from Supervisor Mosher so that necessary repairs can be made to the town's buildings.

Permission was granted to the Delphic Circle to use the Patterson Room for their meeting on November 13th.

A motion was approved to grant the Wilson Senior Citizen Club the use of the society's parking lot for their bus tours. This will facilitate parking for the seniors and eliminate congestion by St. John's Episcopal Church on Lake St.

Lucille Upton, Chrm. of Ways & Means Comm., announced that Lois Barnum will be in charge of the society's Bake Sale on Election Day.

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WILSON HISTORY:

It is probably time to announce that since 1981, your Newsletter Editor has been compiling a history of Wilson from a number of historical items that have been used in the society's newsletter during the past nineteen years.

The book will be called "Wilson Sketchbook", primarily because it is not a chronological history of the town, but rather a series of inter-related historical events and happenings in the town from 1810 to the present.

The Board of Directors have directed me to prepare material for publication, and a copy has already been turned over to Emma Lou Reppentine and Wanda Burrows who volunteered to retype it in publication form. At the present time, many of Wilson's old pictures are being assembled with the copy prior to typing it.

The book will, we hope, satisfy the question raised by many persons, "Why don't we have a history of Wilson?"

Your Editor will keep you informed on our progress, and when the project is completed, (based on the availability of funds to get it printed) you'll be the first to know.

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- MEETING DATES: Nov. 6th, Election Day Bake Sale at Wilson Town Hall
- Nov. 14th Board of Director Meeting, m useum, 7:30 PM
- Nov. 19th, Monthly Meeting, Patterson Room, 7:30 PM

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BON MOT! You can't lose weight by talking about it--you have to keep your mouth shut.

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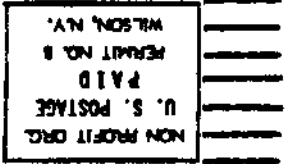
WILSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY
LIBRARY
WILSON CENTRAL SCHOOL
WILSON, NY 12197



December 1990 Vol. 19 No. 11
DONALD W. CROOP, Editor
(Coleman Press)

NEWSLETTER

WILSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY
WILSON, NEW YORK 14172-9763



A CENTURY OF MEMORIES:

An item in an old newspaper suggests that the reason so many people have lived to a ripe old age in Wilson was because of the area's mild, healthy climate. Whether true or not, one has to admit that Wilson has had its share of elderly residents--past and present.

During the past decade, Ida Ereon was honored each year until she reached the remarkable age of 110, and those who knew her will agree she was as healthy and mentally alert as many persons much younger than she.

Ida saw a lot of history unfold in Wilson as did another former Wilsonian, Bessie DeNeau Crawford, who recently celebrated her 102nd birthday on October 4, 1990.

Bessie was 9 months old when Lake Island Park opened up in 1888, and when war broke out with Spain in 1898, she was attending the old cobblestone schoolhouse on Pettit Street. She recalled one time that some of the lower grades temporarily met in the former Free Methodist Church on Washington Street, while some of the 7th and 8th grade students were taught in the old vacant Wilson Creamery.

The Creamery was built in what is now part of the high school parking lot across from where Flaglers used to be. It was closed when most of the local dairy farmers began shipping their cream to Niagara Falls by rail.

The 7th and 8th grades were later transferred from the Creamery to the old Town Hall where some of the high school students were also being taught.

When Bessie graduated in 1906, there were ten seniors in her class and, as far as we can determine, she is the only one still living.

When she was a girl, Bessie attended many of the dances held in the old Pavilion at Lake Island Park, and recalled that the building was open on three sides with a railing around it. A band stand was built in along the south side, and steps across the front or north side, led to the river and boat landing.

It is believed that the 40x70 foot Pavilion was designed by Harrison Albright, a Philadelphia architect, and when first erected was known as the "Garden Opera House." A color lithograph in the Wilson Museum shows how it looked as painted from the artist's memory.

The architecturally beautiful old pavilion with its kerosene lamps was the center of attraction for Park visitors until about 1922 when the Tuscarora Club was built around the original building. In 1979, the "T-Club" was burned down in a controlled fire, and the present home of Floyd and Mary Clark was later built on the site.

Bessie DeNeau married Luther R. Crawford in 1915, and their daughter, Cleo Anne, also graduated from Wilson High School in 1937, and later became a designer for Stangal Potteries.

In a recent letter, Cleo attributes her mother's longevity to the many years she spent "walking and gardening in the clean Wilson air."

Bessie has to use a wheelchair now at her home in St. Petersburg, FL, but Cleo reports that "She's up and at 'em every day in her pastel slacks and T-shirts."

Although Bessie considers herself the last of her generation, she would like to be remembered to all who knew her and "wish them a good up-coming Holiday Season."

We wish to thank Bessie and assure her that all who knew her wish her "A Very Merry 102nd Christmas celebration."

* * * * *

YULETIDE TRIMMING:

Remember when Joe Higgins and Betty Stimson decorated the society's first Christmas tree at the Town Hall in December, 1972? Then, in 1973, when the society acquired use of the depot from the town for a museum and meeting place, tree-trimming parties were held each year.

The first outside decorations consisted of a large evergreen wreath made by Joe Higging and, after his demise, the tradition was carried on by Lois and the late Burt Jennings.

Outside lighting effects have included lights on the large wreath flanked by two large ornamental lanterns which were first put in place by Darrell Smith. Both wreath and lanterns are controlled by a time clock installed by Don Burrows.

Hopefully more outside decorations will be added by our younger, more vibrant members, as they step forward and help the society announce to everyone in town that the Christmas spirit is alive and well at the Wilson Historical Society.

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BON MOT:

The dollar doesn't go very far these days, but what it lacks in distance it makes up for in speed.

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YANKEE DOODLE FITCH:

During the 1976 Bicentennial celebration, many interesting stories were published about the American Revolution, but the one we found most intriguing was the story how America's patriotic song, "Yankee Doodle" originated.

The song takes on added significance to our local area with documented information showing that Gary Fitch of Olcott, had an ancestor, Col. Thomas Fitch of Norwalk, Conn., who was given the sobriquet, "Yankee Doodle", while leading American troops during the French and Indian War.

Col. Fitch was born in 1725 in the Fitch home on East Avenue, Norwalk, Conn., and graduated from Yale College in 1764. In Rev. Sellek's history of Norwalk, he states that Col. Thomas Fitch "figured prominently in the French and Indian Wars from 1754 to 1763....and while his father, Gov. Thomas Fitch, headed the Connecticut Colony, led his troops in the battle of Crown Point."

American volunteers who went into the English service against the French, did so at their own expense so didn't wear the gold-braided uniforms to which the pompous British officers were accustomed.

In 1755, Col. Fitch commanded a regiment of American troops that joined a detachment of British regulars on an expedition to Ticonderoga. On the way they marched into Greenbush, (now Rensselaer) with Col. Fitch at the head of his raw-looking, ragged troops, and causing a "witty" Englishman to exclaim, "So that's your Yankee Doodle" and the nickname was immediately attached to Col. Fitch.

About this time, Dr. Richard Schuckburgh, a surgeon attached to the British army, was so impressed by the uncouth appearance of the provincial soldiers, he composed a song which he called "Yankee Doodle." He turned it over to the motley array of American soldiers, and they adopted it as good martial music to drill by, and the tune became very popular.

Some twenty years later, during the American Revolution, many new verses were added to the song--some about General Washington. The Continental troops adopted it as their favorite marching song, and were very proud to refer to themselves as "Yankees".

Descendents of the Colonial Fitches settled in Wilson in 1829 when Enoch Fitch, Sr., purchased 100 acres of land near what would later be called the Fitch Road.

Fruit-growing eventually became synonymous with the Fitch name, and in 1980, the family celebrated their 150th anniversary of growing apples in Niagara County. Gary Fitch, who operates Ontario Orchards in Wilson, is a trustee of the Wilson Historical Society.

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MAILING NOTE:

In order to keep your newsletter "on track", please notify us when you move for the winter and return in the spring.

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BOOKLETS AVAILABLE:

It has been suggested that a list of the society's booklets be put in the Newsletter along with their price and mailing cost. Since Christmas will soon be here, and they do make reasonable gifts, we think this is a timely suggestion--so here they are:

Tall Tales and Legends, \$2.00; Churches of Wilson, \$2.00; Land of Cobblestones, \$1.25; Valiant Men of Battery M, \$1.75; Postal Service in the Town of Wilson, 50 cents; Recipes from the Wilson Historical Society, \$5.00; Wilson's Vanishing Heritage, 75 cents; The Story of Sunset Island, \$2.00; The Albright Opera House, 75 cents; The Wilson Library, \$1.00; The Story of Billy Sherman, \$1.00; and Wilson's Roads, \$1.25.

Please include 50 cents for each booklet priced less than one dollar, and \$1.00 for each booklet priced one dollar and over, to cover cost of mailer and postage.

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CIVIL WAR WIDOWS:

A recent Associated Press news item stated that on October 16, 1990, Mrs. Daisy Wilson Cave, the last widow of a Confederate soldier was buried at Sumpter, SC., thus ending another chapter of the Civil War story--or so it would seem.

A few days later, we received another Associated Press news item from our granddaughter, Dianne C. Brown of Las Vegas, NV., that appeared in the Las Vegas Review-Journal, October 20th, under the heading, "Confederate soldier's widow says to world, 'I'm Still Here.'"

Indeed she is. It seems that 21 year old Alberta (Martin) married 76 year old William Martin in 1927, He died 5 years later at the age of eighty. Today, Alberta is the lone surviving member of the United Daughters of the Confederacy--and apparently alive and "kicking."

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LIBRARY UPDATE:

The "leaky" roof over the children's room has been repaired, and the demolition of the old barbershop makes way for the planned expansion on that site.

Final plans for the library's renovation have been approved by the board who also hope that the \$90,000 still needed can be raised in time to complete the project in 1991.

Principal Ted Grocki, Gen. Chm., believes that even though the full amount has not yet been raised, the more than \$205,000 already contributed is a remarkable achievement--considering the size of the town.

The library's renovation project is truly a historic undertaking, and, when completed, will be remembered by residents as one of Wilson's "shiniest hours."

It is planned to place contributor's names in a special volume for display, and those who contribute a total of \$1,000 or more will be honored with a plaque. Contributions may be mailed to the library at 265 Young Street, Wilson, NY 14172.

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SALE IS SUCCESS:

The society's Election Day Bake Sale was one of the best held in years and Lois Barnum, Chrm., and Lucille Upton wish to thank everyone who furnished and helped make it a success.

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SOUNDINGS: A government expert is one who can complicate simplicity.

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BOARD ACTION AND REPORTS:

John Myers, Pres., announced that the society's insurance coverage will be approximately the same as last year's.

Changes in the by-laws were approved by the board, and Don Burrows provided copies to be distributed at the regular meeting in November. (approved by membership, Nov. 21st.)

Ed Allgeier, recently appointed chairman of the Fittro Shop, reported that the concrete floor has been poured and the building cleaned. He also noted that siding on the west end of the building is in need of repair. The wood interior is being preserved in its original state, and plans are underway to restore the old blacksmith shop in the east end of building. Donations of blacksmith tools are needed, and the search is on to locate an old anvil and bellows. Please notify Ed if you can help out, and he also wishes to thank the livewire crew that has been working with him: Ollie Clark, Al Waite, Elwin Upton, Willy Rockwood, Elton Kropp & John Myers.

Don Burrows reported that funds will be made available by the town for necessary repairs to its museum buildings, and to publish the society's history of Wilson, "Wilson Sketchbook."

It was announced that the Wilson Business Assoc. has donated a 5 foot ladder to the society in appreciation of holding their successful Pumpkin Contest in the Barnum Bldg. last October.

Eleanor Myers reported that Bus Tour Operators who visited the museum were pleased and interested in the society's facilities--especially the auto building which they feel will appeal to men in their tour groups.

Norm MacAskill, 2nd Vice-Pres. of the Niag. Co. Federation of historical societies, reported that the 1987 "Speaker's Booklet" will be updated soon.

Martha MacAskill, Depot Crm., requested help with the tree trimming party on Sat. afternoon, December 1st. Celeste Crawford and Anne Faery volunteered to take charge of indoor decorations and Don Burrows offered to supervise outside decorations. Refreshments will be handled by Lois Barnum and Wanda Burrows.

A discussion was held on a suggestion to hold regular meetings during Jan., Feb., and March on Sunday afternoons starting at 2:00 PM. Reasons: To save fuel costs, and possibly increase attendance during the cold winter months. Let Board members know how you feel--a decision will be made at the December meeting on the 12th.

A motion was made by Lois Barnum, seconded by Wally Goodman, for the trustees to meet with the town board on the possibility of acquiring the Kudis property next to the museum. Motion was passed. (one no and 4 abstain)

John Myers announced that all chairmen should be prepared, at the Dec. 12th meeting, to submit the names of their vice-chairmen and committee members as well as their budget needs for 1991 to Dan King, Chrm. of the Finance Committee.(Forms are available for budget requests.)

Motion was approved to meet with representative of Lucy Curley Co., professional grant writers and hear their proposal. Pres. Myers would like to hear from anyone who would be willing to work on a grant s comm., or has had any experience with writing grants.

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DECEMBER HOSTS AND HOSTESSES:

Sara Berry, Chrm., has announced that the museum will be open from 2 to 4PM for three Sundays in December. Greeters will be, Dec. 2nd, Darrell and Sally Smith; Dec. 9th, Supervisor Harold and Barbara Mosher; and Dec. 10th, Mayor Charles and Ann Branch.

Please note that the museum will be closed to visitors during January, February, and March. Board meetings and regular meetings will be scheduled as usual. The December Board meeting is on December 12th, and the Regular Meeting will be held on December 17th.

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DECEMBER PROGRAM:

Barbara Mosher has announced that a Christmas Party will be held at the regular meeting on December 17th. Plans are being made and everyone is invited for a sociable evening.

During the past several years, a Christmas raffle has been held at the Dec. meeting, and this year the prizes will be a "Country Afghan", a "Precious Moments Tree-top Angel", and a "Victorian Rose Collection Horse." Also, a Mystery Prize will be an added attraction, and may only be won by someone attending the meeting.

Ticket donations may be made at the Tree-Trimming Party or regular meeting on the 17th, however, if you cannot attend either, send your donations to Carole Schnoor, Treas., P.O. Box 386, Wilson, NY 14172.

Refreshment hostesses will be Emma Schrader, Chrm., Ruth Thomas, and Shirley Hunter.

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IN MEMORIAM:

Richard Reppentine, 49, died unexpectedly at Inter-Community Hospital, Newfane, on Nov. 13th following an attack at home.

Before his retirement in 1984, he worked his way up to become Supt. of Public Works for the village of Wilson. He was also a member of Exley United Methodist Church, the Wilson Historical Society, and an avid collector of antiques.

He is survived by his wife, Emma Lou (Schrader) Reppentine; two children, Kevin and Kristin Reppentine; two sisters, Mrs. Leonard (Mary Jane) Stefanski of Sanborn, and Mrs. Lawrence (Diane) Banks of Wilson; also three brothers, Arthur of Wilson, Leon Jr. of Arizona, and Michael of Niagara Falls, NY.

Services were conducted by Rev. Donald Foley of Exley United Methodist Church, Wilson, and burial was in Greenwood Cemetery, Wilson.

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SEND A BOOK:

Do you have a loved one in the Persian Gulf? Paperback books could help alleviate the monotony of desert life. Historical society booklets would also be easy to mail. The address for a U.S. soldier or airman is Operation Desert Shield, APO New York, NY, 09848-0006; for a U.S. sailor or marine, Operation Desert Shield, FPO New York, NY 09866-0006; They are there for you--

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AN OLD TIMER is a man who's had a lot of interesting experiences--some of them true.