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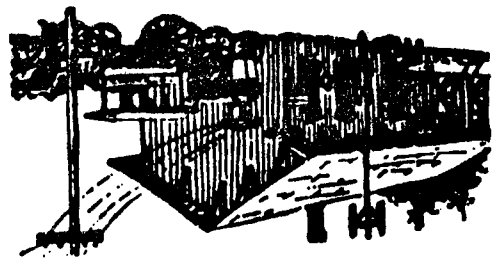
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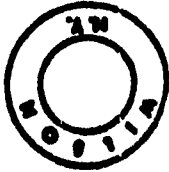
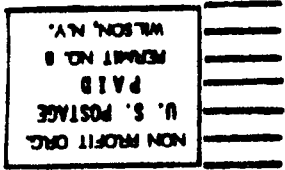
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January 1995 Vol. 24 No. 1

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

NEWSLETTER

Wilson Historical Society
Wilson, New York 14172-9763



January 1995

MANY CHANGES IN WILSON:

Old Timers can recall a time in the early 1900's when there was no organized sports in the Wilson School, but many changes have taken place since the turn of the Century.

Elmer Johnson owned the building next to the former postoffice on Young Street, and he got George Middleton to open up a drugstore there with him. A large building behind the drugstore became known as Middleton's Hall, and it soon became the gathering place for most activities such as school basketball games, roller skating parties, dances, and also the site of the first movies shown in Wilson.

Saturday nights always drew large crowds to the village, and many men looked forward to Saturday evening as a time to get a shave or haircut. Few people took the time to shave themselves and, even though there were a half dozen barber shops in town, there always was a line-up and you had to wait your turn.

The late Fay Campbell once recalled that his folks had wonderful neighbors, and one time when his father was crippled up, the neighbors pitched in and cleaned up a field of cabbage for him. He said it wasn't unusual for neighbors to look out for each other in those days.

It is interesting to note that much of the gravel used to build highways in Wilson came from the lakeshore along "Sunset Island". It was dug out by hand but dynamite was used to break it up. Horse-drawn wagons were used to haul the gravel from the island, but this could only be done in winter when the bay was frozen over. Sometimes a team of horses and loaded wagon would crash through the ice and there'd be a mad scramble to get another team of mules to pull them out. Many years later the huge holes left by the men who loaded the wagons could be seen along the "sunset beach" shoreline.

During the years of World War I, Wilson had a home guard consisting of 108 men. They drilled all winter in grey uniforms furnished by the government, and officers of the guard were Jules Weaver, Capt., "Butch" Bigalow, 1st Lieut., Mark Wilson, 2nd Lieut., and Harry Holden, 3rd Lieut.

Also gone from the Wilson scene are the many skating parties that used to be held on 12 Mile Creek. It is recalled that as many as 200 couples could be seen skating on the ice at once, and Bess and Lou Crawford and Floyd and Margaret Wilson were considered to be two of the most skilful skating couples on the Creek.

During the early 1900's the automobile was still a novelty. Most drivers didn't drive them in the wintertime but instead would jack them up on blocks and remove the battery and tires for storage.

Most transportation was still by horse and sleigh, and horse-drawn wooden plows were used to clean the sidewalks. Many youngsters liked to run after the teams of bobsleds and hitch a ride by standing on the runners and, for those who have experienced it, one of the most pleasant memories of those early years was when a dozen or more people would bundle up in straw-filled bobsleds and, with sleigh bells ringing, drive happily down the road with voices ringing in song.

The early 1900's was also a period when fast talking con artists peddled "cure-alls" such as "Swamp Root" or "Lydia Pinkham's Vegetable Compound" to a gullible public, and many were relieved of their money by medical quacks until the Pure Foods Act was passed in 1907.

The south border of the village was nearly a mile from the present boundary near the depot, and the place where the former "Hojack" tracks crossed Rt. 425 was then known as "Wilson Station"

Businesses located there included the Fredonia Preserving Company, the J.E. Pettit Coal and Grain Business; Singer and Johnson's Fruit House; the J.C. Wright Evaporator; Singer Coal Yard; Pfeister Pickel Company; and the Taggart and Stevens General Merchandizing Store. The store carried a large supply of merchandize such as hardware, tools, wagons, restaurant and meat market. They also had a fruit warehouse just north of the depot on a siding. The Wilson Lumber Co., located there, was then owned by Roland Singer, A.N. Dwight, and Alanson Bigalow.

An item in the 1898 Lockport Journal noted that "Wilson was a very nice and sedate and woe be to the luckless person who might violate any of the village ordinances. Several that caught our eye were: "Persons may not be found intoxicated on the streets; may not use profane language; incite fights; make noise, or discharge firearms on streets unless in self defense."

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JANUARY MEETINGS:

Jan. 8, 1995, Board of Director Meeting. Wilson Museum, 7:30 PM.

Jan. 20, 1995: Monthly Meeting, 7:30 PM at Museum. Guest speaker- Joe Rennie.

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SOUNDINGS: :

Life was more simple back when anyone who could tie a square knot could repair a clothes dryer.

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SCHOOL DAYS RECALLED:

Janet Benedict Welch of Santa Cruz, CA., recalled that in 1921, when she started school at the Randall Road Schoolhouse, her teacher was Marian Cramer, who is now in her nineties and living in St. Petersburg, Florida. Other teachers at the school while she attended were Clara Stoddard and Marian Hamblin.

At the time there were about 30 pupils in grades one through eight, and some of her former classmates were Russell Durfey, Grigson Geartz, Tony LaBarber, Ernestine Reese (Carnike), Ethel Schultz (Strasburg), Alfred Stevens, and Agnes Stoddard.

Janet attended the Randall Road School for six and one half years, then transferred to Wilson High where Lydia Southard was her eighth grade teacher. School always started with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, the Lord's Prayer, and the song, America.

She remembered that one of the fun things they did at the Randall Road School was to have surprise sleigh rides in the winter time. Everyone would pile into a horse-drawn sleigh and drop in at another school for a day of fun. This included getting acquainted, playing cards, or having a spelling bee.

At recess time in good weather they played baseball and other games like Annie, Annie, Over; Follow the Leader; or Tag. The older children always helped out with the younger ones which helped to keep the day going smoothly. If the weather was bad, the children would gather around the old pump organ and sing.

After graduating from Wilson in 1933, Janet attended Buffalo State Teachers College, (SUNY) from where she graduated in 1937. She later earned an M.A. in Early Childhood Education at Columbia University.

Mrs. Welch taught at Appleton (Newfane No.4) one room school for a year, then transferred to Wilson Central School where she taught 1st grade. She continued her career at the University of Pittsburg where she taught at Falk Elementary School and the Graduate School of Education.

In looking back on her long career, Janet writes: "I realize what a rare privilege it was to grow up on a farm and attend this very special school, (Randall Road Schoolhouse).....A most important aspect of any school is the actual learning that takes place.

"Judging from my own experience, I consider this school to be a wonderful example of providing an atmosphere conducive to learning. The fine teachers and cooperative parents gave all of us a good attitude and eagerness to learn."

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RECENT ACQUISITIONS:

Florence Mudge Donner recently donated a number of items including the Birth Certificate of Henry Donner, 1902; Academic Diploma, Wilson, 1921; B.S. Diploma in Engineering at University of Michigan; Master of Science, 1927; and Dr. of Science, 1939. Also, election to Society of Sigma X devoted to reasearch in Science, and Military papers showing appointments to 2nd Lieut. in Army Signal Corps in 1925.

Bessie Cole: Fifteen Schoolbooks from 1885 to 1930; Two Rollo Books, 1855; Bobsey Twins, 1913; Boy Scouts Champion Recruit, 1912; Boy Scout Aviator, 1912; Mupsey Goes to Kindergarten, and Mary Janes Country Home.

Sandra Stimson, Lewiston, NY: Penzoil Oil Can.

Mrs. Gertrude Stehlein: Two copies of U.S. Constitution for use in Randall Rd. Schoolhouse.

Wilson Postoffice (Via Pat Stoltzenburg): Adding Machine that came from old Postoffice.

Lou McLaughlin: Original Depot Sign.

Gretchen Greene, Youngstown, NY: Gaskill Genealogy--formerly the property of Fred Hackett.

Robert Hardiman: Criminal Code and Penal Law, 1958. Clevenger-Gilbert inscription on cover.

Marilyn Allgeier: Invitation to Inauguration, 1/20/73; Rules and Regulations of the Town of Wilson Water Department, 1964; Two Village Ordinances, 1951; Rosters of Officials representing Niagara County in 1982, 1983, and 1984.

Beatrice Salisbury Estate (via Joyce Richards): Graduation Dress, 1913; Framed Diploma, 1913; Invitation to Graduation, 1913; Picture of Graduation Class, 1913; Picture of 1913 Class on Capitol Steps, Washington, DC; Picture of Teachers Training Class, 1914; Report cards and misc. papers, books, and compositions.

Also, Exam scores, Recommendations signed by Prin. McAlroy; Set of Encyclopedia Britannica; "World Book", and New Standard. Teachers Contract, 1914-1915--Salary, \$9 and \$10; Letter from Adj. Gen. Beck of Albany dated 1828 regarding copy of Military Law; Deed, 1898, 1895, and Mortgage, 1888; also Nine Pictures of Elma Farrell.

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IN MEMORIAM:

Arthur J. Ness, 83, died Nov. 18, 1994, at Inter-Community Hospital, Newfane. He retired from the Niagara Power Authority at Lewiston, and was Manager of the Tuscarora Park and Golf Club during the 1930's. He was also a 50 year member of the Wilson Lions Club, and joined the Wilson Historical Society in 1972.

He is survived by his wife, Kathleen Batt Ness, and a sister, Katherine Vitagliano of Palm Springs, Florida.

A Memorial Mass was held at Our Lady of the Rosary R.C. Church in Wilson with the Rev. Paul Burkard officiating.

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NO VISITING HOURS IN WINTER:

The Wilson Museum will be closed to visitors during the months of January, February, and March, 1995. Visiting hours will resume April 2nd, 1995, Sunday afternoon from 2 to 4 pm.

Regular meetings of the society will continue as usual. The Board of Directors meets on the 2nd Wednesday of each month, and Program Meetings are held on the 3rd Monday evening of each month. All meetings start at 7:30 PM.

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BON MOT:

Life is like a taxi--the meter keeps ticking whether you're getting anywhere or not.

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OFFICERS ELECTED:

Arthur Schnoor, Chrm., presented a list of nominees at the December meeting and they were elected to office as follows:

Don Burrows, Pres.; Gary Fitch, 1st Vice-Pres.; Norm MacAskill, 2nd Vice-Pres.; Dick Schmidle, Rec. Sec'y; Jim Waldron, Treas; and Wanda Burrows, Cor. Sec'y.

Committee chairmen are: Lois Jennings, Acquisitions Judy King, By-laws Celeste Crawford, Genealogy; Jan Sporleder, Historical Sites; Marge Lederhouse, Sunday Hostesses; Shirley Evans, Librarian; Anne Faery, Membership; Lois Jennings, Memorials; Miles Linnabery, Programs; Don Croop, Publications; Dorothy Linnabery, Publicity; Norie Desso, Refreshments; and Joyce Richards, Ways & Means.

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NEW MEMBERS:

It is a privilege to welcome the following new members: Muriel Haner of St. Petersburg, FL; Lois Lajolie of Appleton, NY; Mr. and Mrs. David Polasky of Holley, NY; Greg Carter of Lockport; Dr. and Mrs. James Evans of Ransomville; Dr. Paul and Evelyn Evans of Escondido, Cal; also Mrs. Len (Carol Cramer) Jones of Newfane; Tom and Helen Rodgers of Wilson; James Carrigan of Hamburg, NY; Stephen and Cynthia Richards of Chandler, Arizona; and Sharon and Kenneth Dobson of Littleton, Colorado.

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JANUARY MEETINGS:

The Board of Directors will meet at the museum, Wed. evening, Jan. 11th, at 7:30 PM.

The regular program meeting of the society will be held at the museum Jan. 16th, Mon. Eveing at 7:30 PM. Joe Rennie will be the guest speaker, and will show postcards of the Niagara region.

Following the meeting refreshments will be served by Joyce Richards and Kathleen Kraatz.

The public is always invited to attend meetings of the Wilson Historical Society.

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IN MEMORIAM:

Archie D. Petty, a retired Guidance Counselor at Wilson Central School, died suddenly at home, December 11, 1994. He was a member of Exley United Methodist Church; the Veterans of Foreign Wars at Leesburg, FL; and a member of the Wilson Historical Society since 1972. He was also an avid golfer and member of the Frontier Country Club.

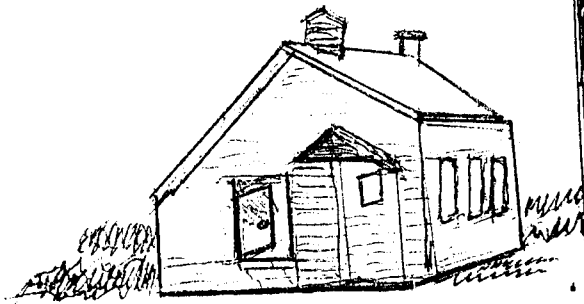
He is survived by his wife, Zilpha, and three daughters, Mrs. Judy (Arden) Kane of Buffalo; Mrs. Colleen (Robin) Slate of Lockport, NY; and Mrs. Pamela (David) Scott of Brockport, NY. Also a sister, Dorothy Townsend of St. Petersburg, Fl; and a sister-in-law, Dorothy Petty of Walworth, NY; also six grandchildren and three nieces.

Services were held at the Hamilton & Clark Funeral Chapel in Wilson, and burial was at Greenwood Cemetery, Wilson, with Rev. Sue Kaiser officiating.

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IMPORTANT NOTICE:

The one room schoolhouse backbone of America's education system.



NEEDED.....REMINISCENCES AND STORIES FROM FORMER STUDENTS AND TEACHERS OF THE RANDALL ROAD SCHOOL, DISTRICT #8, FOR INCLUSION IN A FORTHCOMING BOOK ABOUT THE SCHOOL'S HISTORY.

PLEASE SEND ALL MATERIALS TO: % WILSON TOWN HALL, P.O. Box 537, 375 LAKE STREET, WILSON, NY 14172.
ATTENTION: JEAN FIGURA.

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AROUND THE MUSEUM:

Special thanks to Lois Barnum and Nettie Stimson who cleaned storage area in Barnum Building. also, accolades to Gary Fitch, Elton Kropp, and Don Burrows who got rid of a sizable amount of junk from the museum and grounds.

We can thank Don Burrows and Elton Kropp for the outside lighting over the Holidays, and the beautiful white lighted Christmas tree inside the museum was decorated by Celeste Crawford, Helen Stevens, and Miles Linnabery. Dot Maxfield, curator, added a special treat with an exhibition of her attractive Santa Claus miniatures.

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SENIOR BREAKFAST:

On the morning of Dec. 14th, the popular Senior Breakfast was revived at the Wilson High School by the PTSA, and many of the local senior citizens who attended would probably agree that the food was delicious, the entertainment excellent, and the exhibits outstanding.

A 15 minute concert by the Senior High Band preceeded a welcoming address and remarks by Supt. Richard Zipp, whereupon all Seniors were invited to the school cafeteria.

Nycole Borget chaired the overall student coordination of the entire program, and Mrs. Sweeney and Mrs. Sanders and the Home and Career Skills classes prepared and served breakfast.

Tina Ashford, Amanda Dean, and Mrs. Williams coordinated the entertainment, and Todd Kropp and Amber Lederhouse coordinated exhibits and demonstrations in the Library.

The breakfast provides senior citizens with a first hand look at the many fine programs available to their grandchildren--programs that didn't exist when today's Senior Citizens attended school.

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FINAL THOUGHT: No one should retire from life at any age.

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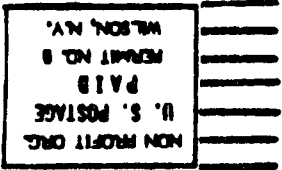
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February 1995 Vol. 24 No. 2

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

NEWSLETTER

WILSON, NEW YORK 14172-9763
Wilson Historical Society



Feb. 1995

JAILHOUSE BLUES:

The late Paul Midleton once told us that if you watched the TV series "Gunsmoke" it would give you a pretty good idea how the village of Wilson looked in the late 1800's--dirt roads, hitching posts, board walks, and even a jail for those ornery cusses who wouldn't obey the village ordinances.

We reckon the former drugstore operator knew what he was talking about because he was born and raised on Young Street, and really could remember what Wilson used to look like.

The village didn't have a Wyatt Earp, but they did have Constable Ben Stone, and Ben made sure there was peace and tranquility in the small lakeshore community.

Ben's jail was located between Sanford's Tile Yard and the old Masonic Building, and it was erected there in 1900 when the old Collegiate Institute was torn down.

The outdoor toilets that were located behind the Institute were fairly large and, rather than destroy them, the village fathers decided to move them to Young Street for use as a jail.

The partition was removed that once separated the girls from the boys, and two barred cells were built into it by Jesse Higgins who operated a blacksmith shop on Catherine Street.

The jail was operated by the village for the next 20 years, then moved next to the old water tower on High Street.

An amusing story was told by the late Earl Armstrong, a former Niagara County Deputy Sheriff, who used to stop at the jail while he was a young man in high school.

One day he walked into one of the cells to look it over, and some one slammed the door shut behind him. Whoever did it, took off, and since Constable William Lort was driving in the country with his horse and buggy, Earl was not only unable to get help but went without any supper. To make matters worse, he had a date with a girl on the "island", and when he didn't show up, "she got mad as hops".

The hapless Earl was unable to get out of the "cooler" until 9:00 PM when Constable Lort returned to the village.

Earl didn't mind his "jail term" as much as he did missing the date with his girl, but she wouldn't have anything to do with him until some of his friends finally told her the truth about what had happened.

The old village lockup was kept in use until about 1932 when an inspection was made by Walter Nickolson, Chrm. of the State Board of Corrections. His report, which was submitted to Fred Bigalow, town supervisor, and A.M. McIlroy, Mayor of the village, read as follows:

"This lockup occupies a small one-story wood building on the village outskirts, and contains onelatticed steel cell and one wooden cell with latticed steel door.

"Cells are equipped with bunks, mattresses, blankets, and comfortables. There are no sanitary facilities what-so-ever but there is an electric light and stove for heating.

" Since the last inspection the lockup has been painted throughout with white enamel paint, and is in good condition. Constable William Lort has stated that detentions are seldom made here, and the lockup is frequently used for lodgers."

The Commissioner's report ended with the recommendation that "when the lockup is used for detention purposes it should be kept under constant and competent supervision as fire risk is extreme by reason of the type of construction, and its location and exposure."

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FINE PROGRAMS:

At the December meeting, the Boatman family of Williamsville, gave an interesting and descriptive talk and demonstration on some of the dress styles and other customs of the Civil War.

During the presentation, Kara Holden was chosen to model the many undergarments that a lady of the 1860 period had to contend with. The final touch was a hoop dress which left Kara standing before the audience looking like a beautiful southern Belle.

The Boatman presentation was just another example of some of the great programs our program chairman, Miles Linnabery, is putting together. Like they say, "you'll never know" if you don't remember to show up on the 3rd Monday evening of each month.

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FEBRUARY MEETINGS:

- Feb. 8th: Board of Director Meeting, Wilson Museum, 7:30 PM
- Feb. 20th: Program Meeting, Museum, 7:30 PM. Chris Carlin, Niag. Co. Sheriff.

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SOUNDINGS:

Cheerful people resist disease better than grumpy ones. The surly bird catches the germ.

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THERE'LL BE SOME CHANGES MADE:

Carol Schnoor has resigned as treasurer of the Wilson Historical Society after serving the organization faithfully for six dependable and trustworthy years. Jim Waldron of East Lake Road, Wilson, was elected to take Carol's position in January, 1995.

George Cruickshank of Newfane also resigned as trustee because of other committments, and Miss Schnoor was elected to serve in his place.

Bobbie Hull resigned as Recording Secretary and Dick Schmidle was elected to fill her position. Bobbie has graciously consented to fill in for Richard while he is in Florida.

Wanda Burrows resigned as Publicity Chairman, and we are happy to announce that Dorothy Linnabery was elected to take her place. We are fortunate that busy Wanda has agreed to continue in the office of Corresponding Secretary.

Other officers who resigned but did a good job in 1994 include Janet Naslund, who has been replaced by Miles Linnabery as Program Chairman; Bess McKelvey, who has been replaced by Shirley Evans as Librarian; and Dick Schmidle, who has been succeeded by Joyce Richards as Chairman of the Ways & Means Committee.

The Board of Directors is composed of the six duly elected officers, nine trustees, three honorary trustees; and the Curator and Planning Board Chairman.

Appointments by the Board of Trustees should be made by March and will be announced then.

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FROM THE MAILBAG:

Out-of-town members often show their interest in the society with brief notes, and one received by Anne Faery recently read: "Dear Anne: I enjoy the Newsletter and the work being done by the volunteers at the historical centre. I return to Wilson each year to enjoy the Country Fair and my good friends." Les Clark, Escondido, California.

Carol Fenn Tabler of Fort Myers, Florida writes, "It has been the late forties since I lived in Wilson. The Newsletter brings back many fond memories of friends made, others who passed on, and social events at the school, churches, and town. Congratulations to all our members who have helped develop such an interesting and eclectic museum--so many items from railroad memorabilia, household, commercial, and farming exhibits as well as the fascinating collection of old automobiles. My husband and I took in your fair and enjoyed it very much."

Paul Harold of Chatham, Va., says that the schoolhouse bell that he donated to the museum a few years ago is similar to the one used on the Randall Rd. Schoolhouse. It came from the former school near the corner of Randall Rd. and Youngstown Road. He recalled that the cupola in which the bell was located was about four feet square.

Jim and "Bea" Hicks are the proud grandparents of "Jim Three" who recently received his "Wings" at the Pensacola Naval Base. After more training he will be stationed in Guam for 3 yrs.

"Bea" was recently installed as President of the San Francisco Chapter of the Colonial Dames--the oldest heritage society in the United States.

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IN MEMORIAM:

Winifred Stacy, 89, a charter member of the Wilson Historical Society, died Dec. 27, 1994 at her home in Spring, Texas, following a long illness.

Winnie came from Canada in 1911 and married Rex Stacy of Wilson in 1926. She was an active member of the 1st Baptist Church of Wilson, and worked as a bookkeeper for her husband's Feed and Coal Business for 38 years.

She is survived by her husband, Rex Stacy, of Spring, Texas; a daughter, Patricia (Lawrence) Harrington of Spring, Texas; and a sister, Ivy Thompson of Newfane, NY.

Services were held at the Hamilton & Clark Funeral Chapel in Wilson, and burial was in Greenwood Cemetery, Wilson, with Rev. Jeffrey Durham officiating.

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DONATION APPRECIATED:

A thank you to Robert and Althea Eastman of Northridge, Ca., for a recent donation to the society's Endowment Fund. Robert is a direct descendent of John Eastman who, with his family, accompanied Reuben Wilson to the shores of what is now Wilson in 1810.

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FAIR TIME AGAIN:

The months roll by quickly. Here we are in February, and the annual Memorial Day Fair is but three months down the road.

Betty Stimson has announced that a beautiful "Around the World" quilt has been completed and is waiting for some lucky person to claim it at this year's fair. Other awards will be similar to last year's and will include a hand-made tablecloth, woodcarving, "Sketchbook", and a couple of the popular Wilson Historical Society Recipe Books.

Watch for future fair announcements and remember, the society needs your support to help keep the Wilson Museum open to the public.

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RECENT ACQUISITION:

Marilyn Conti and Carilyn Warblow of North Tonawanda have donated several items including a 1936 Map of the town of Wilson; Historical Newspaper articles with photo of Dorothy Diez and Lucille Campbell; 1900 Epworth League Membership card of Orlie Van Buren; photo of unidentified church; and photo of house in Wilson constructed by Mudge and Wilcox.

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DID YOU KNOW..... that postcard greetings were very popular in the united States between 1900 and 1910, but the very first Christmas card was created in London in 1843 when businessman Henry Cole didn't have enough time to write personal greetings.

Cole asked artist Jon Horsley to design a card to send to his friends and business acquaintances. The message, "A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to You" is, to this day, the most popular greeting on many Christmas cards.

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BON MOT: God should be our steering wheel, not just our spare tire.

GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN:

The late Beatrice Salisbury, 99, who passed away May 29, 1993, had a remarkable perception of early Wilson and was often contacted by this writer for confirmation of material sometimes used in the Newsletter. She could remember the names of former residents who lived along the lake from Wilson to Olcott, and was very knowledgeable about people and events in the village. One time we asked her to tell us about some of the people she knew who lived in Wilson when she was a young lady, and within a short time she gave us a rather impressive list--considering it was "off the cuff".

She recalled that Dr. John Burns practised medicine in Wilson for over 50 years, and that Dr. Moore was considered a good veterinary surgeon. She also remembered that H. Sanford was a Real Estate Agent and Justice of the Peace. Jake Miller of Sunset Island was also a real estate agent and proprietor of Sunset Beach Park.

Some other early businessmen included Taggart & Stevens who operated a store where Basil's is today. Johnson and Son operated a grocery store on Young Street, and Elmer Johnson was Postmaster from 1897 to 1909. The J.E. Pettit coal, flour, and grain business was located just south of the depot, and across the road to the north Johnson and Singer operated the Wilson Cold Air Storage Plant.

Since farming was one of Wilson's basic industries, H. Treichler sold farm tools and Harvesting machinery. William Albright, another farm implement dealer was located just south of the present Wilson House Restaurant. He sold a large array of farm implements including wagons, buggys, and sleighs.

The Fredonia Preserving Co., where Pfeiffers is today, packed fancy fruit and vegetables, and some people may not be aware that factories were also operated in Fredonia, Silver Creek, and Newfane, NY.

Around the turn of the century, many large fires burned down most of the old buildings in Wilson which made plenty of work for contractors like Henry Giles, Kruger, and Mudge and Wilcox.

Several of Wilson's resort hotels also burned down including one of unusual interest, the Tower Hotel. It was located on the site of the present St. Paul's Lutheran Church, and boasted hot and cold running water supplied by an outside windmill; a long distance Bell Telephone line, and an Automobile Livery Service.

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DO YOU REMEMBER....when the first cafeteria in the old high school was run once a week by the Senior Class to raise funds for their Washington trip? If you do, you are an Old Timer.
* * * * *

PROMINENT PIONEER:

William O. Pettit, son of Samuel and Elizabeth Oliver Pettit, came to Wilson with his mother when he was 2 yrs. old following the death of his father in 1822.

William was born in Broadalbin, Montgomery Co., NY, in 1820, and he grew up in Wilson, one of 14 children. In 1843 he married Nancy Newman of Newfane, and they had 5 children, Harvey, Silas, Emmet, Sarah, and Fred.

William was a farmer, and cultivated the soil when the Wilson area was almost an unbroken forest. His farm was located about a mile east of the Douglas Pease farm on Wilson-Burt Rd. He lived a long and useful life and had a wide circle of friends. His mother, Elizabeth Oliver Pettit, became the third wife of Reuben Wilson after whom the town was named.

William joined the Democratic party but never sought an office, preferring the retired or more peaceful point of view. He was also a member of Ontario Lodge 376 of Wilson and Chapter 511 of the Royal Arch Masons

He was a member of Capt. Luther Wilson's Artillery Company of the State Militia, and was eventually given a commission as First Lieutenant.

He was also an active, prominent member of the 1st Baptist Church of Wilson being one of its constituent members and member of the Board of Trustees for eight years. He died in 1899.

Members of the Pettit family are still living in Wilson including Gary Pettit of Galewood Drive who is a g-g-grandson of William O. Pettit. Ora Pettit of Wilson is the great grandson of William Pettit's brother, Reuben Pettit. The Pettit families are members of the Wil. His. Soc.

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NEEDED: WOODEN SCHOOL DESKS WITH FANCY FILIGREED METAL SIDES. CALL WANDA BURROWS
Reminiscences and stories from former students and teachers of the Randall Road School, Dist. #8, for inclusion in a forthcoming book about the school's history. Please send all material to WILSON TOWN HALL, P.O. Box 537, 375 Lake Street, Wilson, 14172: Att: Jean Figura.

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VIDEO TAPING:

On Monday, Feb. 13th at 1PM, there will be a video taping held in the Conference Room of the Wilson Town Hall. Teachers and students who taught or attended one-room schools are being asked to come and tell about their experiences. CAN YOU DONATE A WOODEN DESK WITH METAL SIDES?

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FAIR COMMITTEE MEETING:

The first meeting of this year's Memorial Day Fair committee will be held at the home of Lois Barnum in the beginning of February. Members of the committee will be advised as to the time and date. The fair committee, which is appointed by the Board of Directors, consists of Lois Barnum, Chrm., Gary Fitch, Daniel King, Darrell Smith, and Nettie Stimson.

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JANUARY MEETING:

Joe Rennie of Buffalo gave an interesting talk about postcards and showed old postcards on the screen during the January meeting. Scenes displayed included ones from old Tonawanda, Wilson, Olcott, and the City of Lockport. Refreshments were served by Joyce Richards and Hoyt Desso.

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FINAL THOUGHT:

It's always easy to tell your station in life. Sooner or later, someone tells you where to get off.

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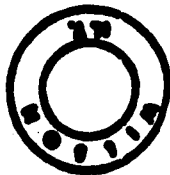
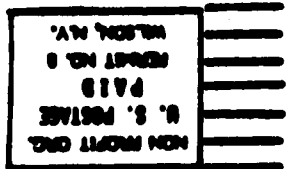
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MARCH 1995 VOL. 24 No. 3

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

NEWSLETTER

Wilson Historical Society
Wilson, New York 14172-9763



March 1995

PIONEER EXPERIENCE:

Except for written accounts and stories handed down, it is pretty hard for anyone today to imagine what it must have been like to come into Wilson 185 years ago to try and carve a home out of an unfriendly wilderness.

Henry Lockwood was probably the first white man to book land from the Holland Land Co. within the present confines of the town of Wilson, and his cabin was located on lot no. 77 in the north east section of the town along the creek that was named for him. His cabin had split slabs for a floor and bark from the trees for a roof.

The first rude cabins were made from logs, and most were built along the lake--usually by Americans who had previously emigrated to Canada. Many settlers built summer shelters with the spacious out-of-doors serving as their kitchens. It generally took about three or four months to erect the cabin and replace the shelter, during which time cooking was done over an open fire in kettles suspended on a pole between two forked sticks.

The first couple years, the settlers were able to obtain provisions from Canada, and by the time they could raise their own grain, they still had to take it to Port Hope or Hamilton in Canada for grinding. One can easily imagine why the settlers rejoiced when Reuben Wilson built the first grist mill in town.

Most of the cabins along the lake were destroyed by the British in the December 24th raid during the War of 1812, and as a result the pioneers suffered great hardship with many moving from the area. When the war ended they returned again and took up the task of rebuilding their homes and improving their lands.

Doctors were in short supply, and many of the pioneers who were subjected to severe weather conditions or illness found life very difficult. Many injuries or sickness had to be cared for by family and friends, and the misguided felling of a tree or slip of an axe might easily result in injury or death.

Living in the wilderness did have some advantages as the streams were unpolluted and provided an abundance of bass, pike, and sturgeon.. Nut trees such as hickory and black walnut also flourished throughout the area, and a variety of wild berries, cherries, and grapes were available for the taking.

The pioneers of the early 1800's would no doubt be amazed to see the changes that have taken place since they first came here with their families in oxen-drawn wagons.

The muddy trails have been replaced by asphalt highways, and the swamps and virgin forest have been cleared to provide thousands of acres of fertile farmlands.

The log cabins that once served as homes, churches, and schools, have all disappeared except for one or two remaining examples. One cabin, in the town of Wilson, is located on Chestnut Road just east of North Road.

It is still in use although the original logs have been covered with siding. It was erected before the Barge Canal was completed through Niagara County, and a marker has been placed beside it by the Wilson Historical Society.

* * * * *

THUMBNAIL SKETCH:

Gary S. Pettit, son of Sidney and Donna Pettit of Wilson, graduated from Wilson Central School in 1968. In 1969 he enlisted with the U.S. Coast Guard and completed his basic training at Cape May, New Jersey.

He was assigned to the U.S.C.G. cutter "Bib", a 327 foot high endurance ship, which sailed out of Boston on weather patrols and search and rescue operations in the North Atlantic. They encountered heavy weather on these ventures which also included cruises to Europe and the Carribean Sea.

In 1971, he was transferred to the base at South Portland, ME, where he became a small boat coxswain and boarding officer. During this hitch he was cited several times for daring rescues off the Maine coast while operating 40 and 44 foot rescue craft.

Gary received his discharge in 1975 as Petty Officer, 1st Class, and received the Coast Guard Good Conduct Medal. After leaving the service, he joined the Harrison Radiator Div. of General Motors at Lockport.

Gary resides in Wilson and is an avid bowler, hunter, fisherman, boater, and stock car racing fan. He attends the 1st Baptist Church of Wilson, and is a Life Member of the Wilson Historical Society. He is the g-g-grandson of W. O. Pettit, one of Wilson's early pioneers.

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BON MOT: Today is a new page in the history of your life.

* * * * *

SOCIETY OBTAINS MORE LAND:

Dr. John Badger, D.V.M. of Lockport, NY, has donated 5 acres of land for the benefit of the Wilson Historical Society. The property lies along the northern boundary of the society's present grounds, and is expected to fulfil any future needs of the society to expand.

This is not the first time that the society has benefitted by the generosity of Dr. George and Rosemary Badger. In the fall of 1978 they donated four and a half acres of land which made it possible for the society to erect the Barnum Building and the Dr. John Argue Memorial Automobile Building.

The land was initially dedicated as "Hojack Park" and a marker erected on the site bearing the names of the donors. The land was later tile drained, seeded, and landscaped. In addition, Memorial trees have been planted on the grounds and identified with plaques.

The latest gift of land will allow the society to expand the site on which the Randall Road Schoolhouse will be placed, but the Planning Board will be responsible for making recommendations to the Board of Directors for use of the remaining acreage.

Doctor Badger, a former resident of Wilson, attended the Veterinary School at Cornell University. He married Rosemary Gafney, a former home economics teacher at Wilson Central School, and they made their home on Lake Street where he started practising his profession in 1935. In 1946, the Badgers moved to Lockport where they now reside.

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1995 QUILT READY:

Quilt tickets for this year's Memorial Day Fair are enclosed with this Newsletter, and we urge all our members and friends to support the society in its effort to raise funds for expenses. Please return your ticket stubs and donations to Betty, Box 162, Wilson, NY 14172.

The beautiful "Around the World" hand-sewn quilt is completed, and the society is grateful to Betty for providing a quilt the last several years. A special "thank you" is also in order to Alma McGrath of Lockport who has made and donated the beautiful hand-sewn tablecloths used for 2nd prize. We understand that, because of arthritic problems, Alma will no longer be able to make any more tablecloths for the society, but the society appreciates her past help.

Bob Schearer of Wilson has carved a distinctive wood carving which the society uses for third prize. We are fortunate to have someone with his talent devote his time and energy for the society. A "Wilson Sketchbook" and two society cookbooks will also be awarded.

Volunteers like Betty, Alma, and Bob, have helped make the annual quilt-drawing unique, but their efforts and the efforts of others would be for naught without the generosity and support of our many members and friends.

* * * * *

NEW LIFE MEMBER:

Glen Peters Wilson, Jr., of Livingston, Texas, has joined the Life Membership Class of the Wilson Historical Society. He was born in Albion, NY in 1929, and is the son of Glen Fred Wilson and Dora Alice Peters of Kuckville, NY.

He had two children by his first wife, Evelyn Kilpatrick; Ricky Glen and Debra Louise of Orange, California. He also had two children by his 2nd wife, Elsie Henshaw; Lynn Wilson of Ogden, Utah, and Christopher Glen Wilson of San Jose, California.

Glen, Jr., is in Aerospace Logistics; a member of the United Methodist Church; the Elks; the "Escapees" RV Club; and the Wilson Historical Society.

He enjoys golf, working with computers, and genealogical research. He joined the Navy after graduating from high school, and served 4 years on the U.S.S Boxer during the Korean War. He received his honorable discharge as an Aviation Metalsmith, 3rd Class (AMS).

Glen is directly descended from Wilson's founder, Reuben Wilson, through Reuben's son, Alexander, who married Catherine Efner. Their son, Valentine Alexander Wilson, married Susan A. Phelps; and their son, Frederick E. Wilson married Lottie D. Fuller. Glen Fred Wilson married Doris Alice Peters, and their son is Glen Peters Wilson, Jr.--our latest Life Member.

* * * * *

FORMER G.S. LEADER HONORED:

The late Mildred E. Croop, who devoted nearly 40 years of her life as a Brownie and Intermediate Girl Scout Leader in Wilson, has been recognized by Nyoda Girl Scout Council, Huron, South Dakota, as a member of the Hall of Fame.

The Hall of Fame was established in 1992 to honor individuals who made a difference in the lives of girls in Scouting through their time and talent.

Mildred was nominated for recognition by a granddaughter in Huron, Donna Huehl, who is also devoting part of her time to Girl Scouting.

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LOOKING FORWARD TO JUNE:

Program Chairman, Miles Linnabery, is already working on a program for the annual dinner meeting in June. He hopes to revive the magic of the 30's by holding a "Mood Indigo" type dinner dance and recreate the "Indigoers", a Wilson dance orchestra that played back then.

The "Indigoers" were organized in the 1930's to help beat the "Depression Blues", and their theme song was the popular hit of the day, "Mood Indigo".

Marjorie Crossman Hurlburt was the rehearsal supervisor, and the band was composed of Ron Hamblin, piano; Larry Pease, saxophone; Richard Loomis, saxophone; Harry Hamblin, trumpet; Pete Burmaster, Bass; and Willie Rockwood, drums.

The "Indigoers" played for dances on "Sunset Island" from 1930 through 1934.

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DID YOU KNOW...THAT THE Salt Battery, (opposite Ft. George at Youngstown) was built of 400 bags of salt?

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SOUNDINGS:

For every person who works hard to lose weight, there are a dozen wishful shrinkers.

* * * * *

BOARD ACTION & REPORTS:

Chairmen appointed by the Board to head-up the various work areas are: Dorothy Maxfield, Curator; Eleanor Myers, Barnum Building; Ed Allgeier, Fittro Shop; Elton Kropp, Grounds; Gary Fitch, Construction; Hoyt & Norie Desso, Depot; Arthur Schnoor, Planning Board; Wally Goodman & Clark Stimson, Dr. John Argue Auto Building; Darrell Smith, Caboose; Arthur Schnoor, Nominations; Micky Hunter, Breezeway & Shelter; and Wanda Burrows, Schoolhouse.

Motion was approved to hold the Ice Cream Social and Band Concert on the museum grounds, August 6, 1995, from 2:00 to 4:00 PM.

Wanda Burrows announced that a good response is being had to the request for school desks for the Randall Road Schoolhouse, More are needed, however, so any donations of wooden school desks with filigree metal sides would be appreciated. Call 751-6704 if you can help.

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IN MEMORIAM:

Willis E. Rockwood, 77, died February 5, 1995, at Inter Community Hospital at Newfane. He was a native of Wilson, and the son of Edward and Agnes Scheffler Rockwood.

He retired from the Lockport Felt Co. Newfane, in 1977 where he was employed as a weaver. He was a member of Exley United Methodist Church; the Wilson Historical Society; and a former member of the Wilson Yacht Club; the Lions Club; and the "Indigoer's Band". He is survived by his wife, Beatrice Hahn Rockwood; two daughters, Lynn Spina of Ransomville; and Kathy Yerdon of Wilson; also two grandsons, several nieces, and cousins.

Burial was in the North Ridge Cemetery, Cambria, with Rev. Sue Kaiser officiating.

* * * * *

FAIR IS MAY 29TH:

This year, the society's Memorial Day Fair will be held on May 29th, 1995, from 10 to 5PM. Main attractions will be large Flea Market; Quilt Drawing; Antique Cars; and popular Chicken Bar-B-Que by Chiavetta. A variety of foods will include Beef on Weck; Hot Dogs; Home-made Pie; Funnel Cakes; and Soft Drinks.

Visitors will be able to take advantage of Free Parking and free Shuttle Bus service between the village and museum grounds. The town's brave war veterans will be honored at noon.

Mark your calendars now and plan to spend a care free, fun-filled Memorial Day in Wilson.

* * * * *

FROM THE MAILBAG:

Robert Salisbury and his wife, Edith, plan to celebrate their 50th Wedding Anniversary on May 13, 1995. Bob lives in So. Lake Tahoe, CA., and would like to try and fly here for the dedication of the Randall Road Schoolhouse, if that comes about. He is a nephew of Hazel Salisbury of Wilson.

* * * * *

EARN'S RECOGNITION:

Joshua Smith, a Junior member of the society and 4th grade pupil at Thomas Marks School, was recently awarded a "Magnificent Work" certificate by his teacher, Miss Andritz, for being the most valuable student in his class for a 20 week period. Josh is the son of Darrell and Sally Smith of Wilson.

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WANTED.....ALIVE:

Schoolteachers or students who attended the Randall Road Schoolhouse--we'd like to get your names on the school register. Stories about your school days are needed. Send any information you have to P.O. Box 537, Att: Jean Figura, or call Wanda Burrows, (751-6704).

* * * * *

MARCH MEETINGS:

A meeting of the fair committee will be held at Lois Barnum's on March 2nd at 7:00PM. The Board of Directors will meet at the museum, March 8th at 7:30 PM.

On March 20th, Bill Rose will be guest speaker at the monthly meeting. The subject for Bill's talk will be "Back Door to Camp David."

Refreshment hostesses for the evening will be Donna Fritton and Sandy Evans.

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RECENT ACQUISITIONS:

Ruth Dent of Wilson has donated a 46 star flag; Child's book of Poetry (1892); Song Book (1915); Petersons Magazine (1883); Little Helpers (1884); Agricultural Almanac (1893); Lockport Daily Union (1887); Deposit Seed Catalog (1919); Rally Day Programs (1901,1906,1907, 1913,1914); Easter Program (1908); White Sewing Machine Co. Ad; Our National Songs (1897); Lockport Furniture Journal (1886); and Price List "Russells Designs" (1884-5).

* * * * *

KNOW YOUR BY-LAWS:

PURPOSE: The purpose of the Wilson Historical Society shall be to preserve for posterity the historical records and memorabilia of the town of Wilson.

MEMBERSHIP: The membership shall consist of persons 18 yrs. or older who are interested in the history of the town.

Any person under 18 yrs. of age may become a Junior Member without voting privilege.

A Life Membership shall be available to any person who tenders the prescribed dues.

Officers and Chairman must be members of the society.

Any active member, 85 yrs. or older, becomes an Honorary member.

DUES: Annual dues for married couples, single persons, and juniors, shall be determined by the Board of Directors. (Current dues are: Couples, \$8.00; Singles, \$5.00;& Juniors, \$1.00.)

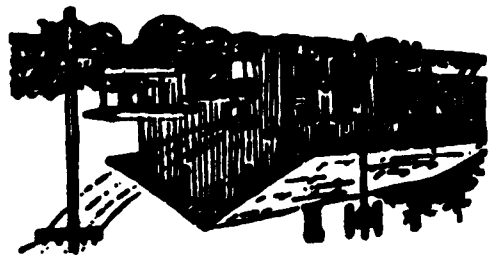
Life membership fees are currently \$150 per person unless otherwise determined by the Board.

Annual dues shall be payable by January 1st, and any member in arrears on February 1st shall no longer be considered an active member.

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FINAL THOUGHT: If you tell the truth, you never have to remember what you said.

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(Coleman Printing)

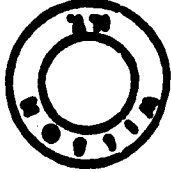
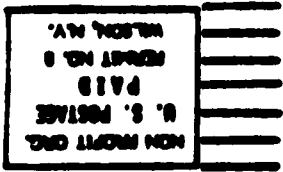
April 1995 VOL. 24 NO. 4

DONALD W. CROOK, Editor

NEWSLETTER

Wilson Historical Society
Wilson, New York 14172-9763

April 1995



BUILDING A HOME IN THE WILDERNESS:

An interesting newspaper article written in 1909 by one of Ransomville's early pioneers, Hannah Baker, deals with some of the hardships many of them had to cope with in the 1820's. Ransomville lies partly within Wilson at the southwest corner of the town. Some excerpts from her account follow:

"About 1822, my father was living in Canandaigua and decided to join some friends in the 'far west', and took out an article for land from the Holland Land Company.

'Preparations were made for a journey of 100 miles in wagons, and everything in the way of household necessities such as dried fruit and vegetable and flower seeds were included.

'The trip along the Ridge to Averill's Corners, where we struck the North Woods, was delightful, but the land from that point on was swampy, so we had to abandon our wagons and repack our goods on queer-looking sleds.

'A place was hollowed out for the children, and my mother followed along behind weeping at the prospect of having a home in such dismal surroundings. Great care had to be used to prevent the sleds being overturned in the mud and water as we made our way over stumps and roots of trees.

'Near the site of the present village of Ransomville, we received a hearty welcome at the home of my father's sister, Mrs. Newton Phelps. A few trees were felled and a house was built on the site. (1971 location of the Ransomville Fire Station)

'It was a regulation log house. The chinks were filled with mud, and the shingles were home-made and fastened to the rafters by pegs and poles in the absence of nails.

'When the chimney reached the chamber floor, (2nd. story loft) a big pole was placed across to support a chain from which a kettle was hung. The pole started out as a green log, but sometimes the roaring fire burned it in two and away went our dinner.

'The chimney was made of sticks laid up cob-fashion, and plastered with mud, of which there was plenty. At the doorway a blanket was hung until a door with wooden hinges could be made. This was the only protection between wolves and babies, yet I never heard of a house being entered by a wild beast.

'A greased paper served for a glass until one could be procured. The house had no partitions and in one corner was the bed under which was placed the childrens' trundle bed. A home-made table and chairs completed the furnishings.

'In front of the house stood a large stump which my father fashioned into a baking oven. He leveled it and covered it with mud then laid a conical pile of wood upon the mud mortar leaving a doorway in front. A round stick coated with mud was inserted in the back near the stump, and the pile was then coated with mud within and without and fired, making a clay oven. The stick that was inserted being burned out formed the draft.

'Since space was needed for the corn, wheat, flax, and orchard, those grand trees were felled and burned. We cried "shame" and "waste", but what those pioneers needed was space, not wood.

'The drinking water was obtained from shallow holes near the house which, when filled with water and leaves, became a breeding place for infusoria and disease. Fever and ague seized the early settlers with a fiendish grasp and shook them till their teeth chattered and their bones ached. Then followed a burning fever, accompanied by wracking pains in the head and back and melancholy.

'The people got well, the clearings increased in size, grain glistened in the sun, and in the slashings luscious blackberries ripened. Prosperity turned her smiling face toward the little colony.

'In early days the settlers paid \$1.25 to \$2.50 an acre for land with one tenth down and the remainder in easy payments. It was not uncommon for men to walk to Batavia to make their payments, sometimes taking their last horse or team of oxen for that purpose."

* * * * *

MEETINGS:

The Board of Directors will meet April 12th, 7:30 PM at the museum.

Bob Kobler of Buffalo will speak on Buffalo Breweries, regular meeting on April 17th, 7:30PM. Refreshment Hostesses, April 17th: Anne Rohring and Sandie Wilson.

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SOUNDINGS:

You must admit grumblers are hard workers--they never take a day off.

* * * * *

CANAL HELPED OPEN FRONTIER:

Many of the villages and cities within Niagara County owe their very existence and growth to the completion of the Erie Canal in 1825, and some of Wilson's early families made their way into the area by using it.

At one time the Canal was jokingly referred to as "Clinton's Ditch", but it is interesting to note that Jesse Hawley was one of the principle players contributing to its being built.

Referred to by some historians as the "Father of the Erie Canal", Hawley began to promote the idea as early as 1805. Some of his articles attracted the attention of Governor Clinton who realized that such a Canal would open up a wide new area of New York State.

The Governor used his influence to back the plan, and when the Canal officially opened on October 26, 1825, the governor was accompanied by Hawley on the "Seneca Chief"--the first boat to transverse the full length of the canal. A keg of water from Lake Erie was also transported from Buffalo to Sandy Hook where it was ceremoniously poured into Atlantic waters.

Hawley acquired land north of the canal between Transit and Prospect Streets in Lockport, but it was 1836 before he permanently moved to the Lock City. Hawley Street was named after him in recognition of his many achievements--the foremost being, perhaps, his championing of the Erie Canal. He died in 1842 at age 69, and was laid to rest in Cold Spring Cemetery.

* * * * *

SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT HISTORY;

Christopher J. Carlin, an Investigator with the Niagara County Sheriff's Department, recently gave an interesting talk about the department at a recent meeting of the Society.

Chris, a member of the society, has just released a newly published history on the Niagara County Sheriff Department, "protecting Niagara--a History of the Niag. Co. Sheriff Office."

The book chronicles the lives of Niagara County Sheriffs from 1808 to the present, and includes the evolution of the department; histories of the jails; and stories of major events involving Sheriffs of the times.

Among these are headline murders and assaults; detailed events that took place during Prohibition; and the resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan. Finally, some of the major jail escapes are described.

The book is available by contacting Chris Carlin at 2644 West Lake Road, Ransomville, 14131, or call 791-3070. The cost is \$10 per book plus \$3 shipping. This is a limited and numbered first edition printing of 750 books.

Special Note: If anyone has any items pertaining to the Niagara County Sheriff's Department, and would be willing to either donate them to the department or allow Chris Carlin to document them, please contact him at 791-3070.

Investigator Carlin has noted that it is hoped to eventually set-up a historical display at the Sheriff Department, and that is why they are interested in obtaining anything that would pertain to the Department such as uniforms, badges, photographs, etc.

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THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

The Board of Directors of the Wilson Historical Society is composed of the following officers: Donald Burrows, President; Gary Fitch, Vice-President; Norman MacAskill, 2nd Vice-President; Richard Schmidle, Recording Secretary; Wanda Burrows, Corresponding Secretary; James Waldron, Treasurer; Dorothy Maxfield, Curator; Art Schnoor, Planning Board Chrm., and trustee; Milton "Ollie" Clark, trustee; Floyd (Red) Clark, trustee; Wally Goodman, trustee; Anne Faery, trustee; Darrell Smith, trustee; Nettie Stimson, trustee; Carole Schnoor, trustee; and Lois Barnum, trustee. Also, Honorary Trustees, Walter Evans, Town Supervisor; Eleanor Myers, Town Historian; and Don Croop, Past-President.

* * * * *

IN MEMORIAM:

Esther Albright, 87, died on March 6, 1995, at the Newfane Health Facility following a long illness. She was a native of Wilson and the daughter of Daniel and Etta Hatch Campbell. She was a lifelong member of the Exley United Methodist Church of Wilson; a former Matron of the Wilson Chapter of the Eastern Star; and Honorary Member of the Wilson Historical Society.

She graduated from Wilson High School in 1926, and continued her education at Bryant and Stratton Business School. She worked several years as a secretary for Dupont Research in Buffalo, and retired in 1970 from the Wilson Central School.

She is survived by a son, Col. Daniel Albright of Wichita Falls, TX; a daughter, Cynthia (gerald) Townsend of Youngstown; two sister, Lucille (William) Kirchoff of Sanford, FL; and Dora Wakeman of Wilson.

Services were held at Exley United Methodist Church and burial was in Greenwood Cemetery with Rev. Sue Kaiser officiating.

* * * * *

AGRICULTURAL FAMILY:

John Goodrich of Columbus Heights, MN, a former Niagara County Agent for 14 years and one of Niagara's top fruit growers, wrote recently that he was glad to hear that his former Lake Road home has been purchased by a couple who are painting and rehabilitating it.

John's son, Phil Goodrich, also has an interest in agriculture. He earned a Masters degree in Agricultural Engineering at Cornell University, and a P.H.D. from Purdue University. He is currently a professor in his field at the University of Minnesota.

Phil's son also graduated from Purdue and holds down a job in Agricultural Engineering at Harrisburg, PA.

John's late wife, Marion Downes, was a former teacher at Lockport High School.

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DID YOU KNOW.....that the 1st steam railway on the Niagara Frontier ran between Buffalo and Niagara Falls in 1836?

* * * * *

BON MOT:

If it weren't for the last minute, a lot of things wouldn't get done.

* * * * *

1995 FEDERATION MEETING:

The Niagara County Federation of Historical Societies will meet at the Niagara County Museum on April 29th with registration at 9:00 AM (Coffee and Donuts). Lunch will be at Wagner's Restaurant. (Beef on weck or gravy, fresh fruit plate, chicken a la King)

Program starts: 9:30 AM with a Welcome address by Eunice Hernberger, Pres. of the Niagara County Federation. At 9:45 AM, Anne Marie Brogan will speak on "The Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural National Historic Site."; At 10:30 AM Patricia Hamm will speak on "preservation of Paper Documents."

At 1:15 PM, Dennis Farmer will give an "Update on Fort Niagara."; At 2:00 PM, Jay Clause will talk about the "Tuscarora Wampum Belts."; at 2:45, Lance Speer will speak on "Lite Impressions of Rochester, New York."

Reservations should be made with Barbara Hathaway, 7030 Colonial Drive, Niagara Falls, NY, 14305 no later than April 17th. Fee, \$12.00 per person. The Federation Representative for the Wilson Historical Society is, Norman MacAskill, 2nd Vice-President.

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MUSEUM TO REOPEN:

The Wilson Museum will reopen to visitors on Sunday afternoon, April 2, 1995, from 2 to 4PM. As has been the custom, a member of the Board of Directors will be present each Sunday to open and close the museum at 2 and 4 PM. Prospective hostesses will be contacted by Marjory Lederhouse, Chrm., about a date on which to volunteer to greet visitors. Directors* and Hostesses who will serve in April are as follows:

April 2nd, Lois Barnum*, Janice and Randall Zahno; April 9th, Donald Burrows*, Neva and Harold Benedict; April 16th, EASTER- museum closed; April 23rd, Floyd Clark*, Celeste Crawford and Helen Horton; April 30th, "Ollie" Clark*, Lorine Allgeier and Jeanne Nablo.

Please Note: If an emergency arises and a Director* is unable to open the museum on their designated Sunday, Please notify either Don Burrows, Pres., or Gary Fitch, Vice-Pres., so that a replacement may be provided.

* * * * *

SPECIAL REMINDER:

The regular monthly meetings of the Wilson Historical Society are held on the 3rd Monday evening each month starting at 7:30 PM. No program meetings are held in July or August.

The Board of Director meetings are held on the 2nd Wednesday of each month, January through December, starting at 7:30 PM. It is essential that all directors attend all meetings so that the society's business may be conducted in a proper manner.

* * * * *

NEW MEMBERS:

Welcome our latest new members, Paul and Sharon Pettit of Georgetown, Texas. You can keep your membership roll up to date by adding their names now.

The names of the following members should also be added to your roll: Dennis Meier 751-9132; Mildred Schoultz, 751-6723; Mark and Julie Smith, 433-6086; and William Munch, Gibsonton, FL.

* * * * *

THE LIFE MEMBERSHIP CLASS;

This is a reminder that all members and friends of the Wilson Historical Society may join the Life Membership Class by making a one-time payment of \$150 dollars. There are several good reasons to do so.

In addition to receiving all privileges of membership plus the monthly Newsletter, you will no longer pay annual dues as long as you live.

Your donation will be deposited in the Endowment Fund where it will provide the society with a greater income than if you were an annual member. 40% of the interest earned by your gift will remain in the fund to help it grow, while 60% may be used for everyday expenses. Also, your money will continue to earn interest for the historical society long after you are gone.

When you join the Life Membership Class you actually create a living memorial, as your name is engraved on a brass plate and attached to a plaque on the museum wall.

Perhaps being a Life Member is one of the best ways you can help to insure the future of the historical society in Wilson. Since the program was initiated, 137 persons have become Life Members of the Wilson Historical Society.

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BOARD REPORTS:

Motion approved to grant request by Carol Hartwig of the Wilson Business Association to hold an Easter egg hunt on the museum grounds, April 15th, at noon.

A work detail was announced to do clean-up work at the museum Saturday morning, March 11th. The following members reported: Don Burrows, Gary Fitch, Elton Kropp, Paul Holden, Dan & Kevin King & D. Croop. Darrell Smith donated an upright vacuum cleaner for use in the Barnum Building.

Pres. Burrows announced that two important meetings of the Planning Board and Finance Comm's should be held promptly. Jim Waldren, Treas., reported that expenses to date have been \$1927.53

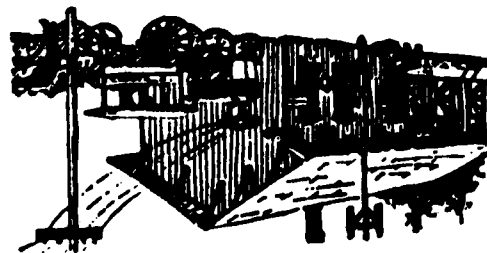
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FAIR UPDATE:

A new attraction at this year's fair will be the Niagara Experience Players who will present a musical review, "The Beat Goes On" featuring music from the 1950's through the 1990's. There will be two one-hour performances on the museum grounds at 1:00 and 3:00 PM.

Area Chairmen who will have charge of this year's fair will be: Shirley Linneback & Shirley Hunter, chicken bar-b-que; Melinda Hutchison, cotton candy; Sara Berry, coffee & drinks; Pam Groff, pies; Althea Montgomery, beef on weck; Dale Schlyer, hot dogs; Dick & Sue Schultz, popcorn; Jim & Linda Moran, sno cones; Bob & Mary Savigny, pepsi booth; Darrell & Sally Smith, Funnel Cakes; Lois Barnum & Nettie Stimson, Supplies; Nettie Stimson, Vendors; Ron Zauner, Vendor Parking; Clark Stimson & Wally Goodman, Antique Cars; Frank Massing, Night Watchman; Don Burrows, Shuttlebusses; Gary Fitch, Tickets; Winnie Fischer, Loom; Betty Stimson, Quilt; Norma Ward, Publicity; and Judy Zauner, Coffee & Donuts.

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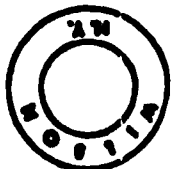
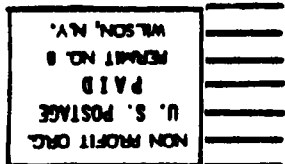


May 1995 Vol. 24 No. 5
(Coleman Printing)

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

NEWSLETTER

Wilson Historical Society
Wilson, New York 14172-9763



May 1995

MEMORIAL DAY FAIR:

One of the main attractions in Wilson this spring will be the Memorial Day Fair which will be held on the museum grounds on Rt. 425, May 29, 1995, from 9:00 to 5:00 PM.

Three of the fair's principle attractions are the Flea Market, Chiavetta Chicken Bar-B-Que, and the Quilt Raffle.

Flea Market Vendors may arrive at 6AM and are expected to be set-up by 9AM. Those with signed contracts will be accepted first, but others will be permitted to enter the grounds if space is available. For more dealer information, please phone Nettie Stimson, 754-7815.

The Chiavetta Chicken Bar-B-Que will start serving about 11AM and will continue to 4PM, or until sold out. Shirley Hunter and Shirley Linnenbank will be in charge and, under their supervision, meals are expected to be served quickly and efficiently.

Beef on Weck will be a popular substitute for those who prefer red meat over chicken, and this concession was first started by Charlotte Pease two years ago. This year it will be under the supervision of Althea Montgomery.

For many years the Funnel Cakes, which are made from an old Dutch Country recipe, were cooked slowly because it was hard to maintain a constant heat. When long lines formed, the society decided to correct the problem and invested in new automatic, heat-controlled cookers, making it possible to dispense the funnel cakes more quickly. This busy concession is chaired by Sally and Darrell Smith.

Other food snacks available will be cotton candy, Melinda Hutchison; Coffee and Donuts, Judy Zauner; Homemade pies, Pam Groff; Coffee and soft drinks, Sara Berry; Hot dogs, Dale Schlyer; Popcorn, Dick and Sue Schultz; Sno Cones, Jim and Linda Moran; and Pepsi, Bob and Ruth Savigny.

New fair attractions this year will include the Niagara Experience Players who will put on two one-hour performances at 1PM and 3PM, featuring review, "The Beat Goes On"-music from 50-90's.

The fair committee has also arranged to have the Frontier Sky-Divers, featuring the "Mighty Taco Sky-Diving Team", make one or possibly two jumps during the fair at about 11AM or 2PM--depending on weather conditions. The Divers will display banners and smoke streams when jumping and a display booth will be set-up on the grounds to demonstrate how parachutes are packed.

Since Memorial Day is a National Holiday set aside each year to honor the servicemen and women who gave their lives for their Country, a short Memorial Service will be conducted by Wilson's American Legion Post commanded by John Demmin. This tribute to Wilson's war heroes will be held at noon by the Flagpole and Servicemens' Monument, just east of the old Depot.

There will be some musical entertainment provided by Jim Waldron at the piano; and selections by the Wilson Central High School Band, and new high school Barber Shop Quartet.

Exhibits will be on display in the museum, and the society's antique cars will also be shown. There will be no registration required of area antique car owners who would like to exhibit their cars--a small donation is expected. Each guest will receive a plaque for their car.

Another regular attraction will feature the handi-work of Winnie Fischer, an expert on the hand and foot-powered loom. What makes her exhibition more remarkable, Winnie is confined to a wheel chair, yet has been able to master the loom and enjoys demonstrating how one works.

Mary Mawhiney will be in charge of some of the games for children which will include a Duck game, Lollipop game, and Fish Pond. Free balloons will also be available for the children. There will also be several childrens' games conducted by Wilson's Webelos and Boy Scout troops who will be trying to earn a little money for their camping fund.

Another special attraction for the children will be a Petting Farm and Pony Rides provided by Ken and Dorie Hill of Sanborn, NY.

Free Shuttle Bus service will again be provided for visitors between the village and museum grounds during fair hours, and Traffic Control will be provided by the Niagara County Emergency Services.

We will also be honored to again have Dave Marmon of WLVL, Lockport, broadcasting from the grounds with timely comments and adroit interviews with the fair-going public.

The Wilson Historical Society has always been deeply grateful to the general public for supporting our very essential Memorial Day Fair. We hope you will decide to spend Memorial Day in Wilson--you'll probably be glad you did.

* * * * *

BON MOT:

The years bring you wisdom whether you like it or not.

* * * * *

HISTORIC LANDMARK:

Perhaps one of Wilson's best known landmarks is the Luther Wilson House which was built on the southeast corner of Lake and Young streets in 1844.

The stately residence, now converted to a restaurant and Inn, is owned by Norm and Patricia O'Brien of Williamsville, NY, who made extensive improvements to the historic house in 1989. Incidentally, that same year, Norm and Pat became members of the Wilson Historical Society, and have been members ever since.

The house was originally built on the site of the first log schoolhouse in the village of Wilson, and the impressive dwelling was maintained as a home by the Wilson family until the early 1900's.

After Luther and his son, Reuben F. Wilson passed away, the house stood neglected until the early 1900's. It is interesting to note that in 1890, the double funeral of Capt. Luther Wilson, 92, and his son, Reuben F. Wilson, 68, was held in the house, and in referring to the double funeral the Wilson "Star" noted, "Never in the history of the oldest inhabitants has such a thing occurred in Wilson."

In 1916, a local group of businessmen purchased the house and organized the "Wilsonian Club" which was incorporated that same year. This exclusively male organization met regularly at the Club in which they installed three bowling alleys.

On the southerly extension of the second floor there was an expansive banquet hall, but in 1955 this room was converted into four guest rooms.

When the Wilsonian Club disbanded, the Wilson House was in sad need of repairs and almost became an eyesore amid its surroundings.

In 1947, at considerable expense, the old landmark was restored by its new owners, Dwight and Viola Wilson, and a grand opening of the newly restored facility was held April 25, 1948.

The popular new bar and restaurant was later acquired by Howard and Dorothy Fitzgerald. Dorothy had a natural talent for interior decorating, and soon the entire restaurant and hotel benefitted from her artistic ability.

The dining room was bright and cheery and capable of handling 85 guests, while upstairs the black and gold bedroom was an excellent example of her artistic planning.

The Fitzgeralds retired from the restaurant business in 1976 and the old house, recently remodeled and enlarged by Norm and Patricia O'Brien, may now be considered one of the finest restaurants in the area.

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MAY PROGRAM:

Attorney Walter Moxham of Wilson will be the guest speaker at the May 15th meeting of the historical society. The subject of his talk will be "Law in Wilson."

Walter graduated from Wilson Central School in 1964, and is a practising attorney in Lockport. He is also a Life Member of the society and has been a member since 1975.

Refreshment hostesses for the evening will be Mary Lenihan and Anne Horton.

* * * * *

Bill Rose was the guest speaker at the March meeting and his talk on Camp David was well received. He is a retired Army Sgt. Major, and served at the White House and Camp David under several presidents. Bill is also a Wilson boy, the son of Edna Rose and the late Willard Rose.

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SCOUTING ON THE MOVE IN WILSON:

Cub Scouts from Wilson's Pack 21 and Boy Scouts from Troop 67 are combining forces to make a showing at the historical society's Memorial Day Fair. Scoutmaster of troop 67 is Pete Rademacher, and Jim Schultz is Cubmaster of Pack 21.

The Scouts plan to enter 3 childrens' games on fair day which will include a ping pong ball toss, soccer ball kick, and game of skill.

It appears that Scouting is on the move again in Wilson, and the Historical Society is glad to make it possible for worthy young Wilson youngsters to participate in the fair.

* * * * *

Cub Master, James Schultz, has been a Leader of Pack 21 in Wilson for two years, and Ass't. Pack Master for a year prior to that. Aside from Scouting, Jim is active in the Alabama Hunt Club where he is a board member and former Vice-President. For the past 4 years, he has been President of the Genessee County Federation of Sportsmen.

Locally, Jim has coached soccer in the Wilson Youth Soccer League for the past six years. He is employed as a supervisor at Mead Supply in Buffalo, and he and his wife, the former Mary Fenn have two children, ages ten and eleven.

* * * * *

Scoutmaster, Pete Rademacher, has been Scoutmaster of Troop 67 since February, 1995. Pete has had extensive Scouting experience which began when he was a Cub Scout and progressed to an Eagle Scout in 1974. He has been an Asst. Scoutmaster in both Tennessee and San Diego, Cal., and assisted with the Scouting program in Hawaii as a Committee Chairman and Webelos Leader.

Pete recently retired from the U.S. Army following 20 years service. He is a high school teacher in the Buffalo area and also teaches high school ROTC.

He and his wife, the former Susan Rick of Ransomville, have three children ages 11,7, and 4.

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HAPPY BIRTHDAY, WILSON:

In case you forgot, the village of Wilson will have its 137th birthday on May 11, 1995. The village received its official blessing from the state legislature in 1858. At the time, there were only 715 people living in the village, and Luther Wilson was 1st President of the Board.

Ontario Lodge 376, F&AM, was 3 yrs. old, and Dan Farley was Niagara Co. Sheriff. The 1st Baptist Church's new minister, Rev. Pattengill, received \$500 a year. Shipbuilding was taking hold at the harbor and the schooner, "Josephine" had just been launched.

* * * * *

SOUNDINGS:

Good teachers are the ones who can challenge little minds without losing their own.

* * * * *

IN MEMORIAM:

Jerauld Brydges, 59, of Niagara Falls, NY, died at Mount St. Mary's Hospital, Lewiston, on March 27, 1995. He was the son of the late Sen. Earl and Eleanor Mahoney Brydges, Sr., of Wilson, and graduated from the Wilson Central School in 1953.

He worked for the Niagara Gazette for 35 years where he served in the capacity of police and crime reporter; Assistant City Editor; Columnist; and Editor of the Editorial Page. In 1984 he was cited for excellence by the state Publisher's Association.

He was a member of St. Mary's of the Cataract Church; the Niagara University Boosters; and the Wilson Historical Society since 1986.

He is survived by his wife, Janet Zimmer Brydges; two sons, Peter of New York City, Jerauld Jr. of Queens, a daughter, Mary of Niagara Falls; also four brothers, Earl W., Jr., of Lewiston, Thomas E. of Buffalo; Dennis, Jr. of Reston, VA; and William H. of Ballston Spa; also two sisters, Mary Lynn Bardon of Watertown, NY; and Margaret Kelly of San Diego, CA.

Services were conducted at St. Mary's, and interment was in Gate of Heaven Cemetery, Lewiston.

* * * * *

Flossie Lortz, 96, an Honorary, Charter/Life Member of the Wilson Historical Society, died March 29, 1995, at the Newfane Health Facility after a long illness.

She was born in Buffalo and graduated from the old Buffalo Normal School in 1919. She taught in School No. 69 in Buffalo, and retired in 1963. In 1964, she moved to Wilson where she was active in the Delphic Circle, Wilson Free Library, and Wilson Historical Society.

In 1972-73 she was a trustee and member of the Board of Directors, and served as Cor. Sec'y. of the Society from 1978 through 1985. Private Funeral Services were held.

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FROM THE MAILBAG:

One of the nicest by-products of writing the Newsletter are the letters we receive from out-of-state members who write comments about Wilson and how it effected their lives.

One received from Carol Cramer Jones of Falls Church, Va., notes: "I enjoy learning about the history of my birthplace and the people who settled there. After going through our local Fairfax County School System with my boys, I feel I was most fortunate to attend the Wilson Central School for my education. I'm sorry my boys weren't able to do that also."

* * * * *

MEMBERSHIP NEWS:

We welcome the following new members: Dave Evans of Wilson; Christy C. Johnson (751-9683); and Jr. Member Kathleen S. Johnson (751-9683) and Jr. Susan Johnson (751-9683) and Jr. Member, Joey Evans. Also add Robert J. Mugele, Casselberry, Florida.

You may also bring your membership roll up to date by adding Bill and Judy Rose (751-3771), Heather Rose (751-3771); Jennie Rose (751-3771) Norma Ward (751-9887) Tom and Gail Walder, (751-9679); Jonathon Walder, Argyle, Texas; Steve and Karen (Walder) Mendes, Glastonburg, CT; and Tom and Gail (Pettit) Jeacock, Fort Erie, Canada. Dick Southard (433-6794)

Corrections in spelling: Thomas E. Marks, and Neal and Donna Wixson. Sid Pettit, (751-6756)

* * * * *

HOSTESS WITH THE MOSTESS:

Neva and Harold Benedict found visitation a little slow on their Sunday to greet visitors at the museum but, undaunted, they proceeded to make good use of their time. All the ornaments used on the Christmas tree were neatly boxed up and put away.

We thank the Benedicts and hope they set a good example for others to follow. (It sure would have been embarassing to the Easter Bunny to visit the museum and see a lot of Christmas decorations still up.)

* * * * *

STRAWBERRY SOCIAL:

If you've been there before, you probably will want to put this date on your calendar. The Niagara County Historical Society will hold their 12th annual Strawberry Social and Chicken Bar-B-Que at the museum grounds on Niagara Street, Lockport, June 3, 1995.

* * * * *

DON'T FORGET YOUR QUILT TICKETS:

If you haven't already done so, now is the time to return your quilt ticket stubs to Betty Stimson, Box 162, Wilson, NY 14172. The drawing for the "Around the World Quilt" and five other nice prizes will take place at the Memorial Day Fair, May 29th, prior to 5:00PM. Like they say, "you never know, and you can't win if you don't enter."

* * * * *

WILSON'S COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE:

One hundred fifty years ago, the Wilson Collegiate Institute opened for its first term in the fall of 1845. The cobblestone building, which stood on the site of the present Wilson Town Hall, was built and furnished by the citizens of Wilson, but the school was wholly supported by money received from tuition and from distribution of the state literary fund when, in 1869, four districts united to form the Union Free School District No. 1 of Wilson.

In 1895, the Collegiate Institute celebrated its 50th anniversary, but today, nothing remains on the school's site to show residents where the school once stood except for an historical marker placed by the Historical Society near the entrance to the Wilson Town Hall.

* * * * *

MUSEUM GREETERS FOR MAY:

May 7th, Gary Fitch*, Sandra and Lloyd Evans; May 14th, Art Schnoor*, John and Jane Demmin; May 21st, Walter Evans*, Jean Richards, Melva Bull; May 28th, Wanda Burrows*, June and Elton Kropp. Directors open and close museum at 2 & 4PM. In an emergency, please call either Don Burrows, Pres., or Gary Fitch, Vice-Pres.

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FINAL THOUGHT:

If all your problems are behind you, you must be a schoolbus driver.

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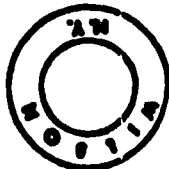
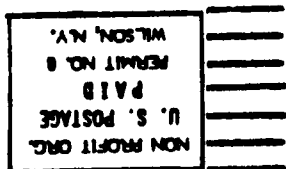


(Coleman Printing)
June 1995 Vol. 24 No. 6

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

NEWSLETTER

WILSON, NEW YORK 14172-9763
Wilson Historical Society



June 1995

JOB OPPORTUNITIES IN WILSON:

There is some reason to believe that Wilson prospered over the years because of the individual initiative and nature of the people who lived in and around the town, and we need but look back to the Depression years of the 30's to remember how well Wilsonians were able to cope under great difficulties.

The make-up of the community was far different than it is today, and during those trying times, farms provided most of the jobs for fruit-pickers, day laborers, or tenant families. Farm lands were used mostly to supply household needs or the demand for produce in the local area, and many of the jobs available were farm related such as cider mills, canning factories, drying houses, or packing sheds where local fruit was prepared for shipment to larger markets.

During the war years of the 40's, area factories like Bell, Hooker, Dupont, Carborundum, and Harrisons, began to expand and provide more jobs for local residents who commuted back and forth. Farms also became larger and the demand for labor grew as young men and women were called to serve their country in the armed forces.

Many of the jobs provided by defense industries were lost after the war, but some construction opportunities opened up with the building of the Robert Moses Power Plant.

The housing and auto industries also began to pick up following their decline in the war years.

Some of the larger farm-related businesses included the Wilson Cold Storage run by Art Loomis; Hinchliffe's Cider and Vinegar Mill; Hurlburt Brothers Canning and Preserving Co; Ackerman's Dairy and Home Delivery; Swann Bakery; Dan Carter Baskets; Roy Ward Auto Dealership; and Don Flagler's Welding and Equipment Repair Shop.

Up to the 1960's farming became more mechanized and some of the larger operations included Larry Pease's Dairy and Apple-producing farm; Al Burrows, Apples and Fruit; Fay Campbell, Apples and Peaches; Alonzo Swick, Berries; and the Bill Kirchoff Gladiola Farms.

Wilson's steady growth and expansion is also supported by some other attractive features which makes it a pleasant place to live such as her natural setting along the lake, and a growing tourist industry supported by fishing derbies, boating, craft shows, and other local events such as the Memorial Day Fair, Ice Cream Socials, Labor Day Flea Market, and Band Concerts.

The town has also developed a wide range of public services such as water lines, gas lines, and Cable TV Network.

Wilson is also considered a religious community with 6 denominational churches serving the populace including the First Baptist; Concordia Lutheran; Exley United Methodist; Our Lady of The Rosary R.C.Church; St. John's Episcopal; and St. Paul's Lutheran.

Wilson's cultural institutions such as Wilson Central School, Wilson Free Library, Wilson Historical Society, Delphic Circle, and Gnostic Guild compare favorably with the best, and organizations such as the Masons, PTA, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts and 4-H Clubs abound.

Fire protection in town is capably handled by the South Wilson Fire Company, Wilson Volunteer Fire Company #1, and their efficient Volunteer Ambulance Service.

Wilson has always been able to manage pretty well on its own, but in this changing world its future might well depend on the outcome of government policies.

Ventures into some ideological reforms such as NAFTA or GAF have already seen some of America's industrial base move to foreign shores where wage standards are much lower than those enjoyed here. This trend toward one-world free markets might also be the beginning of one-world wage policies which could result in America's once-envied high standard of living being reduced to the low wage levels prevailing in competing countries.

Only time and the future will tell.

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IN MEMORIAM:

Mary A. McCoy, 75, who served on the Board of Elections for 35 years, died April 21, 1995, at Inter-Community Hospital at Newfane, following a short illness.

She was a member of the Exley United Methodist Church, the Girl Scouts, the Gnostic Guild, Lockport Senior Citizens, Women Elks, Friends of the Wilson Free Library, and Wilson His. Society.

She is survived by a son, David, of Wilson, 2 daughters, Deborah Tallman, and Julie (David) Godfrey, both of Norwich, CT.

A Memorial Service was held with Rev. Sue Kaiser officiating. Burial was in Greenwood Cem'y.

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BON MOT: Love reduces friction to a fraction.

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MONUMENT DEDICATION:

On July 7, 1899, the Holland Land Company surveyors, under the direction of Joseph Ellicot, began to establish the west transit meridian across the "Purchase", and at the north and southern end of the meridian line, 2'x3' engraved stones marked the start and finish of the survey.

The monument at the north end was saved from lake erosion several years ago and put on display in the Newfane Historical Society Museum. The monument near the Pennsylvania line was recovered in May, 1993, and will be permanently displayed in the Red House Museum at Allegheny State Park.

The monument will be dedicated June 10, 1995, by the Niagara Frontier Land Surveyor Assoc.

* * * * *

FROM THE MAILBAG:

Clifford E. Loomis, 88, of Erie, Pa., may have arthritis in his hands, but he writes a very legible letter. He also appears to have a great attitude toward life as he notes, "If I can't write a pleasant letter, I don't."

A few excerpts from his family genealogy reveals that his ancestor, Joseph Loomis, settled in Windsor, CT. in 1639, and the Loomis Institute (College) was founded in 1874.

Clifford (1907), Vincent (1913), and Richard (1819) were the sons of Arthur Loomis of Wilson. Clifford's g-grandfather, G.W. Loomis, came to this area by boat along Lake Ontario, and lived under the boat until his cabin was built. His nearest neighbor lived seven miles away through the woods.

* * * * *

HOSTS & HOSTESSES FOR JUNE:

The following list of volunteers has been submitted to us by Marge Lederhouse, Hostess Chrm., and please note that the starred (*) officer is responsible for opening and closing the museum.

June 4th, Floyd Clark*, Fenton and Bessie Cole; June 11th, Wally Goodman*, Ruth and Claude Lampman; June 18th, Norman MacAskill*, Alice Davenport and Marion Campbell; and June 25th, Dorothy Maxfield*, Sandra Holden and Charlotte Pease.

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IN MEMORIAM:

Father Paul Burkard, 62, rector of Our Lady of the Rosary R.C. Church since 1979, died unexpectedly on Sunday, April 30, 1995, at Millard Fillmore Hospital, Buffalo.

Father Burkard attended the Diocesan Preparatory Seminary and Christ The King Seminary at St. Bonaventure, and was ordained March 1, 1958.

He was a member of the KNights of St. John; Chaplain of Eggertsville Hose and Wilson Fire Company #1 of Wilson; member of the Marriage Tribunal of the Buffalo Diocese; and Member of the Wilson Historical Society since 1985.

He is survived by three sisters, Maryanne (Bernard) Fox of Lavonia, MI; Janet (Bernard) Baszak of Williamsville, NY; Kathleen (John) Marsherrall of Kenmore, NY; and a brother, David (Patricia) Burkard of Tampa, FL.

A parish Mass was celebrated by Msgr. Robert C. Wurtz, and a Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated by Bishop Head. Burial was in St. Michael's Cemetery, Williamsville, NY.

* * * * *

Florence Wattengel Gath, 89, died April 29, 1995, at Kenmore Mercy Hospital, after a long illness. She was a member of Redeemer Lutheran Church, North Tonawanda,; G.C. Murphy's Retiree Club; and an Honorary Member of the Wilson Historical Society.

She is survived by her son, Gary Gath of Wilson, and several step grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Burial was in Elmlawn Cemetery with Rev. David Beutel officiating.

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GOOD EGGS:

The Easter egg hunt sponsored by the Wilson Business Association at the Museum was a huge success. Over 300 children, accompanied by parents and friends, converged on the grounds making this year's event the best ever.

A word of thanks to Ollie Clark and Elton Kropp who represented the historical society at the happy occasion.

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FOOL'S GOLD:

Wilson, like many other areas of our Nation, has its stories about buried treasure, and a couple such tales have been passed down over the years to substantiate this.

One story which caused some excitement in town, claimed that gold had been discovered on a small hill along 12 Mile Creek known as Prospect Point. It appears some eager fortune hunters did manage to dig up some gold-appearing rock there which, unfortunately, turned out to be "Fool's Gold". Earl Armstrong, who lived near the site, reported that when he was a boy he also used to dig up some of the gold-colored rock found there.

Another legend is based on an incident that occurred during the War of 1812. It seems that three American soldiers had the payroll for the troops fighting in the Niagara region, and when British launched a raid along the Lake Ontario shore they decided to hide the payroll in a marshy section of 12 Mile Creek.

They selected a spot west of Greenwood Cemetery where the creek winds through the lowlands and concealed the money in a spot after picking three landmarks to designate the site.

According to the late Earl Armstrong, the landmarks formed a triangle consisting of three boulders and two "blazed" white oaks, one of which was on "Indian Hill". The payroll could be found by the soldiers by pacing off a certain number of steps from each landmark. Unfortunately, the soldiers were said to have been killed before they could return for the payroll.

Oldtimers may recall that in the mid-1930's it was still possible to locate the three boulders along the creek shore, also one of the oak trees with a blaze mark still on it

* * * * *

SOUNDINGS: Nothing is ever lost. It's just where it doesn't belong.

* * * * *

TRI-TOWN CLAN AWARDED TREE:

A historic Gettysburg Sycamore tree was recently awarded to the Tri-Town Clan 4-H Club of Ransomville, who planted it on the Wilson Historical Society museum grounds May 6, 1995.

When the Randall Road Schoolhouse is moved to its proposed site on the museum grounds the Club will re-plant the tree permanently in the planned schoolyard.

The historic tree was started from a seed from one of the three American Sycamore trees that lined President Lincoln's route to the cemetery to give his Gettysburg address.

Club members also planted a Royalty Crabapple tree on the grounds west of the Barnum Building. Both trees are identified with markers in honor of Arbor Day 1995.

4-H Club members attending the planting ceremonies were Shirley P. Harper, leader, and nine of the club's 18 members: Matthew Lorenz; Kimberly Lorenz; Dennis Kuntz; Clara Kuntz; Alicia Zeitz; Shawn Staselanage; Amy Harm; Nathan Dold; and Jenny Reed, also 13 adults.

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JUNE ACTIVITIES:

- June 14th: Board of Director meeting, Wilson Museum, 7:30 pm.
- June 16th: Lake Ontario Pro-Am Salmon Team Tournament.
- June 17th: 5K Salmon Run and One Mile Fun Run (751-6704).
- June 17th: Kid's Fishing Derby sponsored by Wilson Conservation Club.
- June 19th: Old-Fashioned Dinner Dance. Music by "Mood Indigo" Public invited, Barnum Building, Wilson Historical Society, 6:00p.m.

* * * * *

SALMON RUN SCHEDULED:

The 5K, U.S.A. Track and Field-sanctioned Salmon Run and Fun Run, Saturday, June 17th, and the Fun Run will begin at 4:30p.m. Pre-entry race fees for the 5K are \$8.00, \$5.00 for Fun Run.

The proceeds from this year's event will benefit the Randall Road Schoolhouse Project; the Niagara Hospice; and the Wilson Youth Baseball Expansion Project.

Niagara Hospice will use their portion of funds allotted to help erect a new facility which will be built on Sunset Drive, Lockport, this spring.

The Wilson Youth Baseball organization is planning to add another baseball diamond at Krueger Park, and though most of the work will be on a volunteer basis, funds will be needed to buy necessary supplies and materials such as fencing, etc.

The Randall Road Schoolhouse project is also in need of funds for renovation of the school after it is moved to the proposed museum site. Funds promised to move the school are still on hold pending a decision by the State Legislature to pass a long-overdue budget.

Approximately 400 youngsters participate in the Salmon Run races each year which are sponsored by Milk For Health on the Niagara Frontier; Marine Midland Bank; the town of Wilson; M.H. White, Siding and Roofing; Wilson's Lakeside Market; Seaway Insurance Brokerage Assoc's; McIntosh and McIntosh PC and CYRK of Gloucester, MA; and Walter E. Moxham, Attorney-at-Law.

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JUNE MEETING:

Miles Linnabery, Program Chrm., has announced that a dinner dance will be held at the museum on June 19, 1995. Janet Sporleder will be chairman of the event and the public is invited.

A chicken and biscuit dinner will be served including mashed potatoes, carrots, coffee, and apple pie. The price for the dinner, which will be served at 6:30 PM, will be \$5 per person, and reservations must be made. You may notify or call either Janet Sporleder (751-9924); Eleanor Myers (751-6053) or Miles Linnabery (751-6567).

The Mood Indigo band will provide music for the dance, and will play selections from the 1925-1935 era. The dinner will be reminiscent of the the ones that used to be served at the old "Hub Hotel".

The original Mood Indigo Band played for dances on Sunset Island in the early 30's, and members of the original group were: Ron Hamblin, piano; Larry Pease, Saxophone; Richard Loomis, saxophone; Harry Hamblin, trumpet; Pete Burmaster, Bass; and Willie Rockwood, drums.

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CLASS NIGHT:

Dick Schmidle, Chrm., assisted by Wally Goodman, Celeste Crawford and Mrs. Carpenter, Guidance Councillor at the high school, have presented a new criteria for selecting the senior boy or girl to receive the Historical Society awards on Class Night.

Applicants will be expected to have at least an 85 average in Social Studies, and Community Service will also figure prominently in selecting the candidates chosen. The Seniors will also be given one year memberships in the Wilson Historical Society.

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LIFE MEMBERSHIP UPDATE:

At the April meeting of the Board of Directors, a motion was approved to reduce Life Memberships for married couples to \$250 dollars. Single Life Memberships will continue to be \$150.00.

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MEMORIAL TREE:

Elton Kropp, grounds chairman, announced that a memorial tree for Flossie Lortz is being planted on the museum grounds by the Swick Lawn Service.

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RECENT ACQUISITIONS:

Chris Carlin has donated a copy of his book, "Protecting Niagara", a History of the Niagara County Sheriff's Office, for use in the Museum Library.

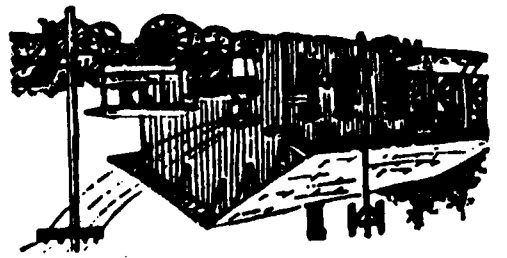
Nettie Stimson, Lewiston: 1940 Calendar of former Rex Stacy Store, Wonderland of Niagara Banner.

Robert Hedrich, Newfane: Teacher's Schoolbell; Picture of George Washington, and a small Slate Board.

Joyce Richards: Fourteen volumes of books for the Randall Road Scholhouse.

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FINAL THOUGHT: The best way to spread most news is to disguise it as a secret.



(Coleman Printing)

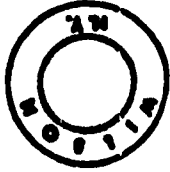
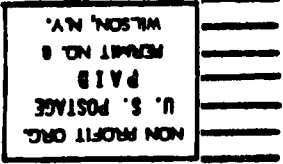
JULY/AUGUST 1995 VOL. 24 NO. 7

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

NEWSLETTER

WILSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY
WILSON, NEW YORK 14172-9763

July/August 1995



GREENWOOD "LOOKIN' GOOD":

Anyone driving by or visiting Greenwood Cemetery in Wilson may notice the many improvements that have been made to beautify the premises.

A lot of credit for this facelifting job should be given to the Greenwood Cemetery Advisory Committee who have been one of the guiding factors in improving and fixing up the property.

Memorial trees have been planted in memory of loved ones, both privately and through donations to the committee. An attractive rail fence has been erected along the front of the premises, and in the spring hundreds of bright daffodills accentuate it in keeping with Niagara County's Festival of Gold program.

Another popular project started by the committee during the past couple winters is the Christmas Wreath program which allows persons to purchase pretty pine wreaths with red bows which are placed on stands next to the graves of participating families. Wreaths are available for \$25 each, and they are put in place, and taken down in the spring by the committee.

The recent installation of attractive lane signs permit persons to more easily locate burial sites and, thanks to the Wilson Lions Club, a wood box will be placed near the entranceway with maps of the grounds.

Water lines are strategically placed around the cemetery making it easier for persons to water plants and shrubs, and trash barrels are conveniently located so that everyone can help keep the grounds beautiful and free from debris.

We need but go back to the early days of the old Cemetery Association to discover that conditions in the old burial site were not always the best. In fact, in 1894 a Canadian reporter on the boat "Garden City", (which made two trips daily between Toronto and Wilson) wrote an item for the "Toronto Journal" on which he described various attractions in the resort town of Wilson.

Among his notations was the comment that "Greenwood Cemetery wasn't kept up as well as it might have been", and the dry observation that "It might look better if they just turned it over to a flock of sheep."

The Greenwood Cemetery first came into existence on October 28, 1850 when, at a meeting held on the lower floor of the old Seminary, citizens of the town approved a motion by H.B. Tabor to accept a parcel of land from Luther Wilson and form the Wilson Cemetery Association.

The cemetery was enclosed with a white board fence, and an arch over the entrance had "Greenwood" on it. Committees were appointed to paint, repair fences, trim trees, and take care of paths, driveways, and tools, and under this arrangement the cemetery was cared for until the early 1900's.

About that time conditions began to deteriorate so it was decided to try and improve the Association and make it a more worthwhile organization.

On July 2, 1923, the Association was re-organized and incorporated, but, because of rising costs and inadequate financing, it was impossible to maintain the graves or grounds properly.

A few years later, in 1957, the residents voted in a general election to place the cemetery under the care of the town of Wilson, and during the next few years the general appearance of the cemetery began to improve.

In 1982, Harold Mosher, town supervisor, appointed a Cemetery Advisory Committee to work with town officials on all matters pertaining to the care and upkeep of the cemetery, and the results of this joint venture have been outstanding.

Members of the committee who have helped make Greenwood a cemetery the community can be proud of are: Barbara Mosher, Chairman, Don Luff, Donna Fritton, Shirley Evans, Molly Martin, Dorothy Linnabery, and Eleanor Myers, town historian.

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MUSEUM HOSTS & HOSTESSES:

The following officers and hostesses have been selected by Marge Lederhouse to serve during the months of July and August as attendants at the museum, Sunday afternoons from 2 to 4PM.

July 2nd, Eleanor Myers*, Don and Wanda Burrows; July 9th, Dick Schmidle*, Hoyt and Norie Desso.; July 16th, Art Schnoor*, Gus and David Bradley; July 23rd, Carole Schnoor*, Donna and Sid Pettit; and July 30, Darrell Smith*, Howard and Dorothy Parker.

August 6th, Nettie Stimson*, Virginia and Gordon Strablow; August 13th, Anne Faery*, Sara Berry and Zilpha Petty; Aug. 20th, Don Croop*, Winifred and Jack Terry; and Aug. 27th, Wanda Burrows*, Bill and Margaret Fritton.

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SOUNDINGS:

If you see a young man open a car door for a girl, either the car is new or the girlfriend is.

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CLUB VISITS PFEIFFERS:

One nice thing about belonging to the Newfane Golden Age Club is that people get to see and do things they never would have done if they weren't members of the Club.

When Wanda Manhardt, the energetic director of the Club, arranged to include a stop at Pfeiffers on an all-day "Festival of Gold" tour of Niagara County, we jumped at the chance to join the group. After all, Pfeiffers has been a substantial part of Wilson for 38 years and, in our opinion, makes some of the best salad dressings in this good old U.S. of A.

When our bus pulled up to the front entrance, we were greeted by several young ladies who escorted our group through the plant, and described the various processes used to make and bottle the product.

We slowly walked by large vats in which food components are mixed with vinegar, oil, and spices to produce the tasty salad dressings we can buy in all our local stores.

Kelly, the guide for our group, explained that approximately 200 recipes for various salads are used and, as we watched in amazement, clattering bottles on fast-moving conveyors were automatically filled, capped, labeled, and neatly packed and sealed in cardboard cartons.

Sanitary conditions appear immaculate, and all employees, for safety reasons, wear white caps over their heads. In fact, all visitors were also required to wear one.

Kelly informed us that approximately 50 to 60 thousand bottles of salad dressings are produced each day by over 185 employees working six days a week on two shifts.

When Pfeiffers first opened in Wilson it was totally owned by them. It later changed hands and is now operated by the Marzetti Company. Mazetti, however, kept the Pfeiffer name because the salad dressings have become so popular with the consumer.

Most of the northeast stretching to the Mississippi is served by the Pfeiffer label which is reported to be the third largest salad dressing company in the northeast. The Marzetti Company also services most of the area in the south and southwest United States.

When our tour bus left the Wilson Plant about an hour later, forty happy Newfane Golden Agers held a bottle of Pfeiffer's popular "Garden Ranch" dressing in their hands--a gift from Marzetti.

* * * * *

WELCOME HOME:

Mark Andre Singer, grandson of Grace Singer of Wilson, has returned to the United States after serving several years in the Peace Corps.

Mark is a Life Member of the Wilson Historical Society, and has been stationed at Zinder, West Africa; Mauritanea; and Istanbul, Turkey. His present address is Buffalo.

* * * * *

WORTHY CAUSE:

The Wilson Chapter of S.A.D.D. held its 2nd annual Senior Citizen Dance at the high school cafeteria on May 24th, and the sociable event featured delicious refreshments and music from the 1940-50 era. Seniors who attended strongly support the young people in their effort to discourage Students Against Driving Drunk. As part of their program to emphasize the dangers of driving under the influence of alcohol, one of their slogans, "Friends don't let friends drive drunk", is prominently displayed in front of the High School on Lake Street.

Matt Teal and Robin Polloch headed up the club's steering committee, and were capably assisted by Amanda Kreuzsch, Tony Vescio, Christina Ashford, Mike Gardener, Melanie Wagner, Kim Pettit, Liz Ball, Amanda Bach, Anne Henry, Khriissy Murphy, and Michelle Figura. Mrs. Mary Moley Palascios is in charge of the group.

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NIAGARA U.S.A.:

Niagara County's new County Visitor Guide is perhaps one of the best publications to come out in recent years. Put together by the Niagara County Tourism Comm., it covers every facet of Niagara County attractions from history and entertainment to maps, accomodations, and savings coupons. No corner of the county has been left out.

To the visitor or tourist who might think Niagara Falls is the only attraction in the County, a look at "Niagara U.S.A." will quickly change their minds.

* * * * *

MEETINGS:

There will be no monthly program meetings during July and August, however, the Board of Directors will meet on the evenings of July 19th and August 16th, 7:30 pm. at the museum.

On July 15-16, the Youth Soccer Tournament will be held; On July 16th a Chiavetta Chicken Bar-B-Que will be held at Exley United Methodist Church from Noon to 3PM. On August 6th, the annual Ice Cream Social will be held at the museum grounds featuring the "Bar Room Buzzards" from 2 to 4 PM.

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BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION:

Fourth graders at Thomas Marks School celebrated the 137th birthday of the village of Wilson with a party in the school cafeteria, May 30, 1995. The children have been studying the history of Wilson during the past year and the party was held to show relatives and friends what they have learned. Approximately 2 dozen adults attended besides the 4th grade classes.

The Class taught by Miss Johanna Andritz presented an alphabet "history" of Wilson as each child held up a poster, (from A-Z) and told interesting facts about Wilson starting with their letter. Following the program, Mr. Walter Evans, town supervisor, presented the class with a framed map of the town of Wilson, and Don Croop, representing the Wilson Historical Society, gave the children souvenirs from the town of Wilson Museum.

A birthday cake and punch were served by the youngsters who each shook hands with the invited guests and thanked them for coming.

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STUDENTS SELECTED:

Dick Schmidle, Chrm., announced that the students to receive the Historical Society Awards on Class Night are Craig Henry and Summer Hughs.

* * * * *

BON MOT: Bigger, brighter, more history...

SUCCESSFUL FAIR:

Wilson's 23rd Memorial Day Fair has taken its place in history, and thanks to the many members and friends who pitched in to prepare the grounds and buildings, things were in pretty good shape by fair time.

Local Boy Scout Troop #67 with Pete Rademacher, Scoutmaster, and Darrell Smith, fair committee member, placed trash containers around the grounds and erected concession booths, (in the pouring rain). Scouts who helped were Chris Schultz, Peter Koszelak, Andy Fritz, Ben Gramm, Arthur Diez, Chris Rademacher, David Hoover, and Robert Eiler. Also working where needed were Alicia Zeitz and Chris Murawski.

Some vendors didn't show because of threatening weather, but those who came did well. Overall the fair did very good and we thank the fair committee for their fine direction: Lois Barnum, Gary Fitch, Dan King, Darrell Smith, and Nettie Stimson.

Food concessions did well including the chicken bar-b-que supervised by Shirley Hunter and Shirley Linnenbank; Coffee and donuts, Judy Zauner; Hot Dogs and Pepsi, Dale Schlyer; Popcorn, Dick & Sue Schultz; Roast Beef on Weck, Althea Montgomery; Pepsi & Coffee, Sara Berry; Homemade Pies, Pam Groff; Funnel Cakes, Sally Smith; Sno Cones, Joe & Linda Moran; Don and Linda Laurie, Cotton Candy; and Bob and Mary Savigny, Pepsi.

Other successful ventures were handled by Betty Stimson, Quilt; Dick Schmidle, Booklets and Souvenirs; and Mary Mawhiney, Games.

The "Sky Divers" were grounded by windy weather, but good entertainment was provided by Jim Waldron at the piano; the Wilson High School Band, and the snappy musical routines by the "Niagara Experience Players."

Museum exhibits featured an interesting school display in the Patterson Room prepared by Eleanor Myers, town historian; a Loom-weaving demonstration by Winifred Fischer in the Arthur Schnoor Room; and an antique car display by Clark Stimson and Wally Goodman in the Dr. John Argue Memorial Building.

At noon, a good crowd gathered around the flagpole and Clark Veteran's Memorial Monument, where members of the Wilson American Legion, Devil Dog Marines from Lockport, and the Niagara Squadron of the Civil Air Patrol Cadets conducted a Memorial Service for all the veterans who gave their lives for our Country. Taps were sounded by Clark Stimson.

The popular quilt-drawing was held at 4 PM, and for the first time in 23 years, all prizes were awarded to Wilson residents. The drawing was conducted by Dick Schmidle and Sgt. Robert Hull, Jr., of the Civil Air Patrol Cadets.

The quilt was won by Don Held; the tablecloth went to Joy Perry; the wood carving was won by Maxine Jones; Grace Singer was awarded a "Wilson Sketchbook" History of Wilson; and Marge Ganshaw and Maryanne Sharpe each received copies of the Wilson Hist. Soc. Recipe Books.

Community support and good cooperation was received from the Wilson Central School; Town of Wilson; Exley United Methodist Church; Our Lady of the Rosary R.C. Church; Town and Village Constables; Wilson Ambulance Service; and "Skip Hagen and Larry Kiefler, State Dept. of Transportation. Help from D.O.T. made it possible to keep traffic moving ~~slowly~~ on Lake Street.

Other groups to which we owe thanks are the Pfeiffer/Marzetti Company; Rohring Garden Center; the Basil Company; American Legion Post of Wilson; Wilson High School Band, and all our friends and non-members who helped make this year's fair a success.

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Annual Dinner:

It was ca. 1913 when "Hub" Ferrin decided to hire Bill Mudge to enlarge his building in the old Emerson Block, and opened up a restaurant. His wife, Ida, ran the place and it soon became known as a good place to eat. Her specialty was Chicken & Biscuit on Sunday, and it was said that people came many miles to stand in line to get a taste of her famous dinners.

On June 19th, Miles Linnabery, Program Chrm., decided to recreate one of Ida's chicken dinners, and enlisted the aid of Janet Sporleder to prepare the meal. Assisting her was Miles Linnabery, Barbara Mosher, Emily McAvoy, Shirley Evans, Lucille Upton, Janet Naslund, Dorothy Linnabery, Mary Lenihan, and Marge Williams. Of interest is the fact that Marge Williams and Barbara Mosher used to wait on table at the "Hub" when they were in high school.

A sit-down dinner was served to 76 persons starting with a chef salad and the "Hubs" special French dressing. This was followed with "Mrs. Ferrin's" Chicken & Biscuit Plate with mashed potatoes, peas, relish try, coffee & Iced Tea, and fresh strawberry shortcake & whipped cream.

Clark Stimson put together a nine piece orchestra from the Sanborn Band to play as the old "Indigoers", a Wilson group that played for dances in the early thirties. It is also interesting to note that Yvonne Dukesbury Smithson, who used to sing with the Mood Indigoers, was present at the dinner. In view of the warm evening, we especially wish to thank the ladies who worked.

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MEMBERS IN THE NEWS:

Neva Benedict of Wilson was recently installed as Regent of the Niagara Falls Chapter, DAR, and installation services were conducted at the Wilson House Inn in Wilson.

Betty Stimson was recently honored at the "Moving Up Day" exercises held in the Wilson High School. The 1995 issue of the "Crest" was dedicated to her in recognition of her many accomplishments on behalf of the town of Wilson.

* * * * *

NEW MEMBERS:

Please welcome the following new members: William Curtis of Tonawanda, NY; Joe and Sandy Jastrzemski of Ransomville, NY; Bronwen Sprung of Lockport, NY; Michael and Ray Dunn of Wilson, NY; Debra and Mike Dukette of Lewiston, NY; Mr. and Mrs. Albert E. Johnson of Fillmore, NY; also Crai Henry and Summer Hughs, recipients of the Class Night Awards from the His. Society.

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RECENT ACQUISITIONS:

The Argue Trust, Anne Faery, trustee, has donated a Pierce-Arrow Car with Registration. Terry & Mitch Stevenson, 4 Middleton Drugster bottles, 6 books, & Heart-shaped pillow. Marilyn Affinger: 9 large scrap book pages. Articles about World War II

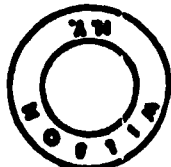
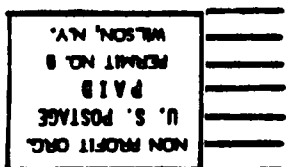


September 1995 Vol. 24 No. 8
(Coleman Printing)

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

NEWSLETTER

Wilson Historical Society
14172-9763 New York



Sept. 1995

TROLLEY CAR MEMORIES:

As a young boy, one of our occasional entertaining past times was to place pennies on the tracks of the old trolley line, then digging them off as souvenirs after the car's wheels flattened them out. The motormen didn't seem to mind too much, but it was a different story around the 4th of July when we placed small "torpedoes" on the tracks.

The sharp explosions when the trolley's wheels passed over was exciting, but often caused some of the motormen to clench their fists and yell "loving" epithets at us.

We believe it was around 1919-21 when the Lockport, Buffalo, and Rochester line was operating in its hey-day, and it was about that time that the line began running high speed cars from Buffalo to Lockport with the right to use the International tracks to Niagara Falls and Olcott Beach.

Riding on the Rochester and Lockport trolley was an experience one could never forget and, to a youngster, it seemed like riding on a roller coaster as the lumbering car swayed back and forth over the uneven rails.

The running time between Rochester and Lockport was about two hours and, at the time, the trolley was an asset to Lockport because cars were generally loaded with people and produce when they came to the Lock City. The trolley line did run through a very prosperous fruit and vegetable producing area, and annual shipments of produce were said to be close to several millions of dollars.

We recall that most of the cars on the old inter-urban line were painted green, and the car itself was divided into a baggage section, smoker area, and coach which seated approximately fifty people.

Many of the cars operated individually, but when hard pressed to accommodate passengers, two-car trains were put in operation. It was said that some of the car "trains" could reach a speed of 80 miles an hour, but we were never on one that did.

When we rode the trolley, our favorite seat was directly back of the door to the motor man's compartment. There you could see far ahead, and we used to marvel how the swaying, speedy car was able to stay on the tracks.

There apparently weren't too many accidents when the trolley line began to operate around 1908, but hearsay has it that by 1916 it was a different story. By then, wider use of the automobile meant that every grade crossing was a site for a potential accident, and, from what we've read, many did occur.

Perhaps one of the best known branches of the International Railroad connected Olcott with Lockport, and thousands of summer visitors were attracted to the resort each year. Many elderly residents living today may no doubt recall the old Olcott Beach trolley depot.

An old newspaper clipping describes a 70 mile an hour gale that swept through Western New York in 1916 causing considerable damage to the Lockport-Olcott Division of the railroad. No cars could be operated over the line for 36 hours because miles of poles and wires were down.

One of the early innovations of the trolley days were the so called "Toronto Specials". They were very popular for awhile, and the first "boat trains" originated in Rochester, NY. and departed from the Court Street Station.

The special trains ran to Lockport where International crews took the trolleys to the Olcott Piers. There the passengers walked out on the piers and boarded the Toronto steamers. Some of the ships operating at that time were the "Olcott", "Argyle" and "Chicora".

When motor busses began to replace the trolley in the 1930's, they were hailed as a great improvement over the trolley car. Never-the-less, old timers who used to ride those pollution free trolleys probably miss the convenience and fun of riding the rails through city and countryside.

Olcott's beautiful lakeside park has always been a popular site for family and Sunday school picnics, and thousands of persons have enjoyed its beautiful pine groves over the years. Even to this day, it continues to be a popular place for public gatherings and, if projected plans for future development of the park and waterfront are realized, Olcott may once again become one of the biggest attractions in Western New York.

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SOUNDINGS:

The reason volunteers aren't paid is not because they are worthless, but because they are priceless.

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EXLEY VAULT:

Thanks to Pastor Sue Kaiser of Exley United Methodist Church, a little information has been revealed on how the Exley family vault came to be built in Greenwood Cemetery.

William Holmes, treasurer of the Cemetery Association, reported that prior to 1887, Thomas and Charlotte Exley purchased lot #40, Sec. A, in the cemetery for \$40.00 dollars.

They received a deed for the lot but later told the trustees they wished to build a vault but that lot #40 was inadequate for that purpose.

The cemetery Board agreed to exchange it for lot #158, Sec. D, on the Creek bank, and that was where the vault was later built.

The Exley family lived on the Maple Road, and they made several large donations to the Methodist-Episcopal Society. One gift made it possible to build the original brick church on Lake Street in 1884.

* * * * *

VISITS HOME TOWN:

Bea Hicks visited her hometown recently while enroute to New York City as a representative of Chapter V, San Francisco Chapter of the Colonial Dames of America.

Returning to Wilson she dedicated several stones to be placed in Greenwood Cemetery on the Stockwell family plot. Following the dedication, she and her husband, Lt. Col. Floyd Hicks, U.S.Army, retired, hosted a dinner at the Wilson House Inn for family members.

Beas's ancestor, Stephen Stockwell, settled in Somerset in 1824, and moved to Wilson in 1834. Stephen's son, Edwin, died at Point Lookout during the Civil War, and one of his two sons, Edwin E. Stockwell, was a long time resident of the town of Wilson.

His farmhouse stood where the Wilson Central School is today. It was later moved on rollers to a new location. Beas's grandparents lived in the house while it was being moved and reported that the movers didn't even break a dish.

Bea is President of the San Francisco Chapter V, Colonial Dames of America, and also holds important positions in several other Heritage Organizations.

Two of Beas's sisters, Mildred Schoultz & Marion Winger, reside in Wilson, and another sister, Marty Harvey, lives in Olcott.

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FROM THE MAILBAG:

Thomas E. Singer of Washington, DC, notes that he has lived in a number of places like New York City, Casablanca, London, Birmingham (UK), Paris, and San Francisco, but he thinks he has spent more time in Wilson than any of the above.

Tom believes that most people like to focus on their roots, and suggests that this may be the reason the Wilson Historical Society is so popular with out-of-state members.

He wishes to congratulate Don Burrows, Gary Fitch, and all other leaders of the society for doing such a good job.

He is optimistic about the future of America, and believes our Country and the Town of Wilson will prosper as long as we continue to produce bright, inovative, and energetic sons and daughters.

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IN MEMORIAM:

Lillian Lauer, 86, a former Wilson florist, died July 14, 1995, at Inter-Community Hospital, Newfane, She was a long time member of the Eastern Star, No. 268 of Wilson, and an Honorary Member of the Wilson Historical Society.

She was the widow of Frank Lauer, and is survived by a son, Frank E. (Jean) Lauer of Amherst; and a daughter, Cynthia Wilson of Wilson; also a sister, Dorothy McCaluley of Austin, Texas; and a sister-in-law, Marie Getman of Wilson.

Funeral arrangements were made by the Hamilton & Clark Funeral Chapple of Wilson.

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LIFE IN THE OLD BOYS YET:

The society still has a few volunteers who know how to get things done, and Micky Hunter, Chrm. of the Breezeway/Shelter Comm., doesn't have to have a fire built under him to get things started. For two years the society has been "kicking" around the idea of putting a carpet in the Breezeway. Micky decided it was time for action and not only purchased the carpet, but drove to "Value" in Lockport and picked it up. He then engaged Carl Bodie of the Daniel's Rd., Ransomville, who did a beautiful job of laying it down.

Chuck Messersmith has also been doing a great job of keeping the windmill in good working order ever since 1984 when he took charge of having it erected. Noting that the upper platform was rotting out, Chuck got "Red" Clark to lower the upper structure to the ground with his crane; Art Schnoor was able to replace the wood platform; and "Chuck" was able to check everything over and make necessary repairs. Others who lent a hand moving materials, scrubbing floors, etc., were Dick Schmidle, Don Burrows, Gary Fitch, and Elton Kropp.

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INTRIGUING THOUGHT:

Julie Creasy of Virginia Beach, VA., entertains an interesting theory about the former settlement on "Sunset Island" in Wilson.

Some of the people, she believes, who used to "summer" at the South Fork Fishing and Hunting Club at Johnstown, PA., may have left there after the great Johnstown Flood of 1889, and came to "Sunset Island" in Wilson.

She may be right because it is a known fact that people from the Pittsburg area spent their summers on the "island" in the 1890's. Amongst them were Jake Miller who was foremost in developing the "island", and William Wright who owned the Pittsburg Hotel.

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BON MOT:

You know you live in a small town when you miss a Sunday at Church and receive two get well cards.

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ICE CREAM SOCIAL:

The annual ice cream social was held at the museum Sunday afternoon, August 6th, and entertainment was provided by the popular "Bar Room Buzzards, courtesy of the Wilson Tourism Comm.

Sally Smith was in charge of refreshments which consisted of generous portions of ice cream sundaes; root beer floats; and Pepsi. A delicious variety of toppings were available including fresh Niagara County peaches donated by Don and Wanda Burrows. Ice cream was from the local Lakeside Market.

Persons who helped the society put on the social were, Sally Smith, Chrm., Don and Wanda Burrows, Darrell and Joshua Smith; Lois Barnum and Jenna Andrews; Susan and Scott Sobiegray; and Mary and Holly Schultz. Dan King and Darrell Smith helped with the "set-up".

Virginia and Gordon Strablow were host and hostess at the depot from 2 to 4Pm, and Don Croop greeted visitors at the Dr. Argue Car Building. Skip Randall, Coomer, Rd., repaired society's tent

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EASTMANS VISIT MUSEUM:

Robert and Althea Eastman of Northridge, Ca., visited the museum recently. Robert's g-great grandfather, John Eastman, came to Wilson with Reuben Wilson in 1810, and like Reuben, signed articles with the Holland Land Co. for 100 acres of land.

Gilbert Purdy, who came with the Eastman and Wilson families, helped them erect cabins.

John Eastman's first wife was Polly Purdy who he married in Canada and his second wife was Clarissa Hamblin who he married after arriving in Wilson.

The Eastman property was on lot #82, but in 1818 he traded the land to James Cole of Hartland. Shortly after, he moved his family to Chautauqua County where he resided until 1850.

In the 1850 U.S. Census, John Eastman is recorded as being 78 yrs. of age and living with two sons in Freehold Township, Warren Co., Pa. His wife, Clarissa Hamblin Eastman, is buried in Villenova, Chautauqua Co., N.Y.

Robert Eastman's g-grandfather, Henry, was born in Wilson.

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THANK YOU:

We wish to thank Gail Pettit Jeacock of Fort Erie, Canada; Julie Creasy of Virginia Beach; and J.E. and Alice Fritton McCarthy of Camcria, Ca., for their recent donations to the society's Endowment Fund.

* * * * *

THUMBNAIL SKETCH:

Ora Pettit of Galewood Drive, Wilson, was born in Wilson in 1906, and graduated from the Wilson High School in 1924. He married Marion Wilson, and they had two children, Gail (Jeacock) 1937; and Paul O. Pettit (1942).

Ora has been a familiar figure around Wilson for many years, and once owned and operated the Pettit Electric Shop on Young Street for 40 years. He has also been an active member of the 1st Baptist Church for 50 years, and a member of the Masonic Lodge for 60 years.

He is a charter member of the Wilson Yacht Club, and has been a "Ham" Radio Operator for many years.

Ora and Marion are both Honorary members of the Wilson His. Soc. which they joined in 1972.

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RECENT ACQUISITIONS:

Lester Clark of Hayward, California, has donated a Block & Tackle, Bale Hook, Monkey Wrench, Ruler, and Calipers.

Paul Harold Family, Chatham, VA: Standard Oil Co. of America "Practical Lubrication for the Automobile" Copywrite 1923; Master No. Map, Niag. Co; 1873 Handbook of Herbs; Farmer Almanac.

Mrs. Robert (Jean) Martin of Pittsburg, Pa: Typed History of "Sunset Island" by the late Bessie Crawford; Maps of Maple Grove Park, Wilson; 17 Photos of "Sunset Island" and Harbor; Two of Niagara Falls; and three large Photos of "Sunset Island".

Mrs. Myron Moyer, Wilson: Twenty-six pieces of Sheet Music, early 1900's; Early Two Piece Wool Bathing Suit.

Don Croop: Old leather change purse; Pamphlet "Smiles" for ICMH patients; Framed Print of 1880 Freight Locomotive; Parchment Copies Gettysburg Address, Bill of Rights, Gettysburg Battlefield Map; Union Sun & Journal 3/15/1945; Original collection of sketches for "Wilson Sketchbook"; Recordings of Greenwood Cemetery; 4 Old Pens for Randall Rd. Schoolhouse; Two Lady's Hair Combs; French Nail Buffer (Lady's); Austrian Hone; and Large Clip advertising late Stan Borngraeber's Potato Service in Wilson.

* * * * *

BOARD ACTION & REPORTS:

The Board of Directors has accepted, with regret, the resignation of Marge Lederhouse, Sunday Hostess Chairman, Mrs. Winnie Fischer has agreed to take her place starting in October.

Lois Barnum reported that she has asked Merrit Thilk to do some necessary wiring in the museum.

Jan Sporleder sent a letter to the Board stating that it is difficult to put on dinners under present conditions. She suggested that the society consider purchasing dishes and silver before holding any future events.

A motion was made and unanimously approved to erect a new storage building on the museum grounds. The Wilson Town Board gave its approval at its meeting on August 14th.

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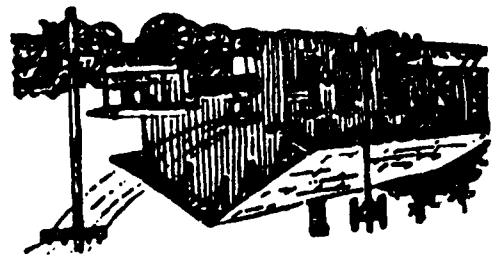
SEPTEMBER GREETERS:

Because no hostesses were provided for September, the following Directors are asked to provide someone to stay with them at the museum: Sept. 3rd, Dorothy Maxfield; Sept. 10th, Anne Faery; Sept. 17th, Nettie Stimson; and Sept. 24th, Lois Barnum.

Directors will meet September 13th; Regular meeting, Sept. 18th. Museum, 7:30 PM.

* * * * *

FINAL THOUGHT: The trouble with doing nothing is you can't stop to rest.

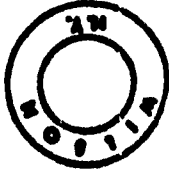
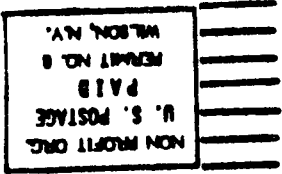


(Coleman Printing)
October 1995 Vol. 24 No. 6

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

NEWSLETTER

WILSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY
WILSON, NEW YORK 14172-9763



October 1995

VOLUNTEERS HOLD FIELD DAY:

This year's Fireman Field Day was held in Wilson on Aug. 25-26, reminding us that the Wilson Volunteers have been holding field days for the past 72 years.

The Company was formally organized on Sept. 17, 1923, and the fledgling organization started with Ernest Horton as the first President. Meetings were held above Horton's Hardware store or Biggin's Blacksmith Shop, and later in the small cobblestone building that once served as Luther Wilson's office.

The new company was pretty hard-up for funds, and at weekly meetings the men used orange crates for seats. The first fire equipment was a pair of hose carts borrowed from the Newfane Fire Company.

In order to raise funds, the volunteers held a number of money-making events, the first being a balloon dance in the old Middleton Hall on Young Street. Interest in the dance was kindled by launching balloons into the air--some with dollar bills attached, and anyone finding one was given free admission to the dance.

The fire company's first fire truck was purchased March 14, 1925--a LaFrance Pumper. It is still in good running condition and is often referred to as "Old Betsy". The late Bill Scheffler was one of its first drivers.

Some of the first volunteer firemen signed notes to raise the \$12,000 needed to purchase the truck. Prices were comparatively lower in the early 1920's when a fireman's uniform, for instance, cost as little as \$2.50 for hat, trousers, and shirt.

Charter members of the company were Ernest Horton, Charles Crawford, James Wilson, Lee Ward, Bill Lashner, Merle Wilson, Roy DeNeau, Harry Holden, Henry Stockwell, Herman Smith, and Harry Biggins.

The first annual Field Day was held Aug. 30, 1924, and it featured many activities such as "Free-for-all" horse and pony races with \$20 cash prizes for the winners.

A parade was held at 1:00 PM, and many other field day events followed including running races, tug-of-wars, three legged races, honeymoon races and sack races. There were also penny scrambles for the kids, peanut races, and quoit-pitching contests.

The popular old field days of yesteryear have disappeared and been replaced by other attractions such as Carnival rides, however, a few of the popular old favorites like Chicken Chowder, homemade foods, and Bingo have been retained by the firemen.

This year's event was held on Friday and Saturday, and a 5K run and Midway were featured on Friday. Saturday's events included Chicken Chowder, food stands, and flea market also a huge firemen's parade at 5:00PM. In addition, the annual Crafts Show was held from 9AM to 5PM.

The parade, which lasted over an hour and a half, featured many fire companies, musical groups, floats, and old cars.

The Historical Society entree in the parade was the late Dr. John Argue's 1934 Pierce Arrow with which he won four National Championships. Don Burrows drove the car while Don Croop watched the temperature gauge. Sara Berry and Zilpha Petty, charter members of the society, rode in the back seat.

* * * * *

SUNDAY HOSTS & HOSTESSES-OCTOBER:

List prepared by Winnie Fischer, Chrm: Oct. 1st, Jim Waldron(*), Marion Campbell and Alice Davenport; Oct. 8th, Ollie Clark(*), Helen Horton and Lorine Allgeier; Oct. 15th, Jean and Richard Schmidle(*); Oct. 22nd, Judy and Daniel King(*); Oct. 29th, Floyd Clark(*), William and Maxine Jones. (*) denotes person responsible for opening and closing museum.

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NEW WAYS & MEANS CHAIRMAN:

Mary F. Schultz of Ransomville has been appointed Chairman of the Ways & Means Committee. Mary will replace Dick Schmidle who resigned to take on the duties of Secretary.

* * * * *

OCTOBER MEETINGS:

Oct. 10th: Board of Directors. Museum, at 7:30 PM.

Oct. 15th, Regular Meeting Museum, 7:30 PM. Program to be announced.

* * * * *

HAVE YOU NOTICED ?

How everything is further away than it used to be...stairs are steeper than they were when we were young...everyone speaks so low you can hardly hear them...even newspaper print is smaller

When combing our hair the other day we saw our reflection and decided they don't even make mirrors like they did in the old days.

* * * * *

BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE:

The Wilson Historical Society is a non-profit organization chartered by the New York State Board of Regents at Albany. It was organized by a group of Wilson residents interested in preserving memorabilia and artifacts significant to Wilson's heritage. Through their efforts a museum facility was established in Wilson that will be, if preserved, a cultural "gold mine" and historic point of interest for future generations.

During the past few years the society has been operating under difficulty because of the lack of storage space in which to keep all the materials and supplies acquired. Thanks to Bill Fritton, the situation was somewhat helped when he allowed the society to use his barn on Lake Road, but whenever materials are needed it means a 5 or 6 mile trip back and forth to the museum.

The Board of Directors finally decided to face up to the situation, and unanimously approved a motion to erect, pending Town approval, a new storage building on the museum grounds. That decision was approved by the Wilson Town Board at their regular meeting in August.

The projected 40x80 foot storage facility will have a ten foot overhang along the south wall to permit display of old farm machinery--once so common to the Wilson farming community.

The new building will also make it easier for our hard-working volunteers--especially around Memorial Day when they set-up for the annual fair.

Storage of equipment which now clutters up essential display areas includes such items as lumber, old cars, lawn mowers, funnel cake equipment, cotton candy machine, trash barrels, tent and awnings, ticket booths, tables and chairs, also a variety of other supplies.

One Bay in the Fittro Shop, (barn) has been kept so full of storage materials it has been impossible for Ed Allgeier, Chrm., to exhibit old tools and construct a Blacksmith Shop.

The Breezeway and Argue Car Building have both been used to store things making it impossible to properly exhibit the antique cars and put up display cases. The Breezeway has also been cluttered up with materials making it difficult to fix it up as a carriage room for wagons, buggies, and etc. Even the shed at the west end of the Depot is piled to the ceiling with chairs. These are just a few examples of conditions that can be eliminated with a new storage building.

Now never before, since the historical society was organized in 1972, has the Board of Directors ever authorized a direct appeal to the membership, town, and village boards, for financial assistance, but after an offer was made by a couple society members to donate toward the project, it was suggested that others might also donate if the need for funds were known.

Ollie Clark, Project Engineer, has determined that the completed building may approach \$30,000, and according to Dan King, Finance Chrm., the society can, at this time, come up with two thirds of that figure.

Since we have over 600 members both locally and throughout the United States, it has been suggested that if most would contribute even \$5 or \$10 dollars, it would substantially help to "close the gap". Of course larger amounts would be welcome and gratefully accepted.

Naturally we have no way of knowing if our members and friends will respond to this appeal, but as the old saying goes, "Nothing ventured, nothing gained."

As you should be aware, all lands acquired by the His. Soc. have been accepted by the Town Board, but we should also keep in mind that if it wasn't for the Historical Society, the Town would not own the old Depot, Fittro Barn, Barnum Building, Dr. Argue Car Building, Shelter, new storage building and the twelve acres of land on which they are standing.

If one takes the time to think about it, you may be surprised at what the historical society has acquired for the town and village of Wilson. Now, with a little help, the society can continue to be an active, vital part of the community.

If you agree, and wish to help out, please send your contribution to Jim Waldron, treas., Box 88, 4239 East Lake Road, Wilson, NY 14172. Any checks should be made out to the Wilson Historical Society, and designated ~~to~~ the Building Fund. Thank you.

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BIRTHDAY BASH:

John Goodrich of Columbus Heights, MN, celebrated his 90th birthday, Sept. 14, 1995. at an open house held for him by his children, Jean Patchin, Philip Goodrich, and Barbara Phillips.

Many of us remember John as an active member of Exley United Church and the Wilson Historical Society. He was also a Niagara County Fruit Agent for 14 years and one of Niagara's top fruit growers. He was a member of the Horticultural Society, Farm Bureau, Cornell Extension Service, and former Chrm. of the Wilson Town Zoning Board of Appeals.

John might be interested in knowing that some of his friends and former acquaintances also celebrate their birthdays in September: Shelly Andrews, Sara Berry, Ed Culverwell, Don Croop, Lois Jennings, and Jack Linnenbank.

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PERSEVERANCE PLUS:

A regular attraction at the annual Fair has been the weaving demonstrations put on by Winnie Fischer. She began weaving as a hobby in 1970, and always welcomes the opportunity to demonstrate her skills to young mothers and their children who attend the fair. She encourages youngsters to try their hand at the loom and, according to her, "Before you know it, they don't want to stop weaving."

In 1988, Winnie suffered a massive stroke which initially left her paralyzed, however, she was able to miraculously recover and rebuild her life. With great tenacity she again mastered her ability to operate the foot and hand-powered loom which, she admits, is far more complex than learning to operate a walker and wheelchair.

This year, Winnie provided a notebook for visitors to sign their names, and of the 350 who did, 12 of our local towns were represented, also Amherst, East Amherst, N. Tonawanda, Tonawanda, Lockport, Akron, Lancaster, Belmont, Medina, Lyndonville, Rochester, Grand Island, Buffalo, West Seneca, Chautauqua, the states of Conn., Mass., and Province of Ontario, Canada.

* * * * *

SOUNDINGS: Forget yourself and think of others--you'll quickly find joy in your life.

* * * * *

WREATHS AGAIN AVAILABLE:

The Cemetary Advisory Comm. will again offer 24 inch Douglas Fir wreaths with large bows and sturdy stands to be placed at headstones in Greenwood Cemetary. Wreaths will be placed by the comm. in early December and removed in the Spring.

The entire cost for the wreaths and service will be \$25, and orders must be placed no later than Thursday, November 31st. More information may be had by either calling Donna Fritton, 751-9624 or the Town Clerk's Office, 751-6704. Make checks payable to the Town of Wilson.

State number of wreaths wanted and names of family members where wreaths are to be placed. Members of the Advisory Comm. are Barbara Mosher, Chrm., Maureen Bryer, Jean Figura, Donna Fritton, Dorothy Linnabery, Don Luff, Molly & Ronald Martin, Rena Rohring, Floyd Clark, Shirley Evans, and Eleanor Myers.

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IN MEMORIAM:

Virginia Crossman Moot, 77, died August 24, 1995 at St. George, WV. Shewas a member of the Wilson Historical Society since 1989.

She is survived by her husband, Seward A. Moot, Jr., of Tampa, FL; two sons, Gerrit (Linda) Moot of Wilson; and Dana Moot of Buffalo; a daughter, Nancy (Donald) Hunt of St. George, WV; and two sisters, Marjorie C. Hurlburt of Bronxville, NY; and Frances Miller of Newport Beach, CA.

A Memorial Service was held at St. John's Episcopal Church, Wilson, and interment was in Greenwood Cemetery, Wilson, NY.

* * * * *

Bess A. McKelvey, 74, a native of Nuagara Falls, died Aug. 31, 1995, at Mt. Saint Mary's Hospital, Lewiston. She attended the Niagara Falls Schools and enjoyed hiking at traveling. She and her husband ran the McKelvey Jewelry Store on Niagara Street, and she joined the Wilson Historical Society in 1989, where she held the office of Librarian 1993-1994.

She is survived by her husband, Ellsworth McKelvey of Niag. Falls; a son Eric McKelvey of Rochester; a daughter, Joanne DeLand of Williamsport, PA; and a sister, Doris Farley of N. Ton.

Services were held at the Peter Wilson Funeral Chapel on Military Rd., with Rev. Brese officiating. Burial was in Arcadia Park Cemetery, Pendleton.

* * * * *

Helen Pease Sayer, 92, an Honorary/Charter Member of the Wilson His. Soc., died at Inter-Community Hospital, Newfane, Aug. 12, 1995, after a brief illness. Mrs. Sayer graduated from Wilson High School in 1922, and from Bowling Green College of Commerce in 1933.

She was a teacher in both the Lockport and Wilson school systems, and retired from Wilson in 1972. She also was a member of the Delphic Circle in Wilson and Hospital Auxiliary.

She is survived by a daughter, Jessica (Frederick) Dold of Wilson, and a sister-in-law, Charlotte O. Pease of Wilson.

A Memorial Service was held at Exley United Methodist Church with Rev. Sue Kaiser officiating, and burial was in Greenwood Cemetery, Wilson.

* * * * *

Kathryn Butz, 83, of Lockport, died Sept. 4, 1995, at Lockport Memorial Hospital. She worked at Harrison-Delphi for 31 years and retired in 1974.

She was an avid bowler; volunteer in the Lkpt. Soup Kitchen; member of Lockport Eagles Honor Guard; Sgt.-at-arms U.A.W. Travel Club; Lockport Sr. Citizens; and Wilson His. Society.

She is survived by daughters Brenda (Ray) Drier and Bette (Thomas Nicholas) Nuhfer, both of Lockport; and a sister, Florence Anthony of Lockport.

Services were conducted at the Rutland/Corwin Funeral Home in Newfane, and burial was in Glenwood Cemetery, Lockport.

* * * * *

Florence Mudge Donner, 93, an Honorary/Life Member of the Wilson Hist. Soc., died Sept. 1, '95, at Cleveland, Ohio. Florence was a native of Wilson and graduated from Wilson High School in 1920--also the Teachers' Training Class.

After teaching in the Wilson area, she and her husband, Henry, who predeceased her, traveled extensively in Africa. Many of the artifacts they collected were given to the Wilson Museum, as well as the "Donner Loom" which is on display in the Arthur Schnoor Room.

She is survived by several nieces and nephews, and services were held at the Hamilton & Clark Funeral Chapel in Wilson. Burial was in the family plot at North Ridge Cemetery.

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NONAGENARIANS:

Jane Wilson, wife of the late Merle Wilson, celebrated her 91st birthday on Sept. 7, 1995. We wish to congratulate Jane, and also congratulate a few other Honorary Members who celebrated or will celebrate 90 plus birthdays during this year:

Grace Singer, Mable Burrows, Frank Fenn, Marietta Goodman, Cora Gushee, Lucile Kerchoff, Frances Landy, Gertrude Marks, Marion Pettit, Emma Schrader, Lydia Southard, Rex Stacy, John Goodrich, Dora Wakeman, Hazel Salisbury, Chris Kelman, and Ora Pettit.

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NEW MEMBERS:

We are pleased to welcome the following new members: Bill Loeschke of Wilson; Marge Williams of Wilson; Mary Schultz of Ransomville; and Ken and Marcia Wishau of Rochester, NY.

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CHARTER FISHING:

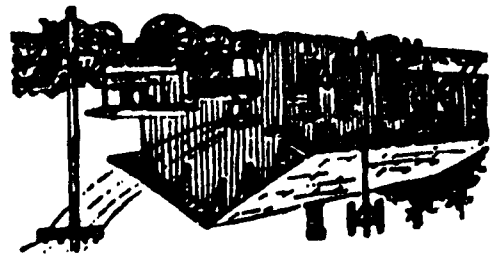
The Niag. Co. Fishing Assoc. was started in 1983 to promote sportsfishing in Lake Ontario. Early members were Bob Phillips, Phil Toenniessen, Dick Mazinski, Paul Masten, Walter Miller and Lavelle Douglas. First meetings were held in members' homes but as the group became larger, they met in places like the Buckboard Restaurant or Hub Hotel in Wilson.

The current President is Harry Tolli, and the group continues to take an active part in the fishing industry of Lake Ontario and other Niag. Co. waters.

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FINAL THOUGHT: An expert is anyone who has guessed right more than once.

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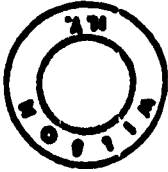
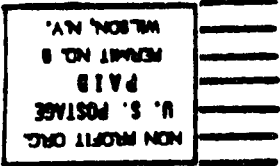
November 1995 Vol. 24 No. 7
(Coleman Printing)

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

NEWSLETTER

Wilson Historical Society
Wilson, New York 14172-9763

November 1935



BAY HIGHLIGHTS:

Lake Island Park, later known as Tuscarora Park, was acquired in the late 1800's by W. N. Harris and Dr. T.C. Walton. The park which then consisted of 100 acres of beautiful pine groves bordering 12 Mile Creek, was managed by Harris.

The old Harris Boarding House, later known as the Tugwell Cottage, was famous as the "place to go" for summer vacationists, and stood along the south shore of the bay near the present Clark Marina.

The park was popular as a picnic area and included a water slide, bath house, and row boats. In 1899, Mr. Harris completed a 40 x 70 building which was called the Garden Opera House. It was also said that Harris catered to a special clientele and allowed no liquor sales, desecration of the Sabbath, profanity, or bad conduct of any kind.

The leisurely slow-paced activities of the late 1890's had little resemblance to those enjoyed at the Wilson harbor today.

In 1904, Charles Snider, former editor of the Toronto Telegram, described a trip he and his brothers took to "Wilson Creek" when they were boys. When they sailed in the harbor between the old wooden piers, the sun was setting in the west, and they noticed that the piers which were made of timbers, were sunken and decayed forming a line of sagged and humped stone-filled cribs. They apparently had been set on sand, and when storm waves sucked the support from under them, they slowly sank beneath the water.

The Harris Hotel commanded a prominent place across from the channel so the boys proceeded to sail their boat to the landing float of the pretty hotel where Mr. Harris stood on the dock to greet them. There they made arrangements to get supper, a room for the night, and breakfast the next morning--all for seventy-five cents.

Strangely enough, in 1904, nobody they talked to seemed to know much about the history of the harbor. They did learn, however, that after the Americans captured Fort George in 1813, U. S. supply ships were chased into the Wilson and Olcott harbors where they were captured by vessels of the British fleet.

Although Wilson was a small settlement following the War of 1812, an 1817 survey made by Commodor Owen of the British fleet, only marked Wilson as "12 Mile Creek" and showed no houses at all.

Actually, there was a lot of activity at the harbor between the War of 1812 and the 1900's. In 1846, Luther Wilson built the 1st set of wooden piers at the channel extending 200 feet into Lake Ontario--the same year that Wilson was made a Port of Entry. Much food and grain was stored in the Wilson warehouse and shipped out to other lake ports such as Oswego.

The "R.F. Wilson" named for Luther's son, was the 1st two masted schooner built at the harbor. This was followed by twenty other schooners built at the bay.

Always an attraction to both fishermen and boaters, Wilson became a popular resort area at the turn of the century, and in 1900, William Wilson and his sons, Merle and Fred, started a commercial fishing business--setting nets as far as six miles out in Lake Ontario.

It was this same year that Clarence Tugwell moved to Wilson and established the Fredonia Canning Company on the present site of the Pfeiffer/Marzetti Company.

The enterprising Tugwell was not only instrumental in having electricity brought into the village but also, through his efforts, had the first water line laid along Lake Street to his canning company at the southern outskirts of the village.

The Tugwells had a modest home on Lake Street, (current residence of Roger Mawhiney) and also acquired the Harris House at the harbor.

Today, very little is left to remind one of the days when Wilson attracted thousands of summer visitors to its shores. It is interesting to note, however, that during the prohibition era, the favorite spot for rum runners to drop off their booze, was behind "Wintergreen Island" where the Harris Boarding House once stood.

* * * * *

NOVEMBER CALENDAR:

- Nov. 8th; Board of Director Meeting, Wilson Museum, 7:30 PM.
- Nov. 20th; Historical Society Meeting, Wilson Museum, 7:30 PM. Program, Guest speaker from the Carousel Society, Tonawanda, NY.
- Nov. 29th; Cantabile Quartet with guest clarinetist. Holiday Concert sponsored by the Friends of the Wilson Free Library. 7:30 PM at the Wilson Museum.

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BON MOT: If you can't think of anything to be thankful for, then you have a poor memory.

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INTERESTING PLACE TO VISIT:

There are many interesting places to visit within short driving distance of Wilson, and one we had the pleasure of seeing recently was the Herschell Carousel Museum in North Tonawanda.

The Carousel Society of the Niagara Frontier was organized in 1979 to acquire and return a 1916 Carousel that had originally been built by Allen Herschell.

Operation of the Carousel for the public began in 1983, and a couple years later, in 1985, the society was able to purchase the old Herschell Factory Complex. Today it is completely open to the public, and the factory facility is under an on-going restoration project.

Admission to the museum includes a ride on the Carousel, and visitors may also see a woodcarver at work, or learn the history of the various merry-go-round animals on display.

Additional rides on the Carousel may be had for 25 cents, making it a great place to spend an afternoon with the small fry.

* * * * *

CEMETERY WREATHS:

This is to remind you that orders for Christmas Wreaths for the Greenwood Cemetery will be accepted until Thursday, November 31st.

The 24" Douglas Fir Wreaths, complete with bright red ribbons and stands, will be placed by family headstones in early December by members of the advisory committee, and removal will be in the spring.

The entire cost for the wreaths and service will be \$25, and checks should be made payable to the Town of Wilson. More information may be had by calling Donna Fritton, (751-9624) or the Town Clerk's Office, (751-6704).

Be sure to state the number of wreaths wanted, and the names of the family members where they are to be placed.

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RECENT ACQUISITIONS:

Clark and Nettie Stimson of Lewiston have donated a large old framed picture of George Washington for use in the Randall Road Schoolhouse, also a pill box from the Wilson Pharmacy, (1942); and a Dr. Burns prescription to the Bieda Pharmacy.

M. Kram, Upper Mt. Rd., Sanborn: Paging Bell Box from old schoolhouse; also Rod for opening windows in schoolhouse.

Robert & Nancy Jacobs, Ridge Road: Child's fur coat and hat, also pink dress worn by Robert Jacob's mother.

John D. Fittro, Vally CA: Photo of Bruce Fittro in his blacksmith shop with two employees.

Winnie Fischer: Materials for weaving demonstrations at Fair. Completed Mats, (1990 to 1995).

Wilson Middle School, via Wallace Goodman, principal: 1994 Wilson "Crest".

Dorothy Maxfield: Buggy Whip Holder.

* * * * *

Lois Jennings, Acquisitions Chrm., would like to remind persons that the society appreciates receiving their donations, but suggests that everyone make sure that all gifts left at the museum have the name and address of the donor on them. Your cooperation will make it easier to acknowledge and record all acquisitions in the transmission book.

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OUTSTANDING PERSONALITY:

Betty Stimson has been an outstanding member of the Wilson Community since she and her family moved here in 1963, but it wasn't until 1995 that her dedication to public service was recognized in the 1995 edition of the Wilson High School "Crest".

She and her husband, Glenn, had three children, Paul, Jill, and Clark, and from 1955 to 1969 she was an employee in the school cafeteria. In 1968 she began 25 years service with the Niagara County Migrant and Rural Ministries.

She is also an active member of the Democratic Comm., and served 6 years as a Village Trustee from 1987 to 1993. In 1981 she established the Wilson Tree Comm., and through her determined efforts, deterred the State from removing the beautiful trees on Lake Street during a recent road widening project.

Betty is a charter member of the Wilson Historical Society, and has been responsible for the society's popular quilt-drawing on Memorial Day. She is, in fact, an expert quilter, and several of the quilts awarded have been entirely sewn and quilted by her.

She has also been active in other historical activities and served as the first program chairman in 1972. In 1978 she became Housekeeping Chrm., and also served in 1983 as Refreshment Chrm., In 1972 she was elected to the Board of Trustees and served in that capacity through 1983. In her spare time she loves to read and enjoys bowling with the Retiree League at Wilson Townline Bowl.

Betty is forthright and honest and, in our opinion, especially deserving of the recognition given her in the 1995 Wilson High School "Crest".

* * * * *

NOVEMBER HOSTS & HOSTESSES:

As prepared by Winnie Fischer, Chrm. Nov. 5th, Don Croop(*), Tom and Helen Rodgers; Nov. 12th, Ollie(*) and Helen Clark; Nov. 19th, Don Burrows(*) Edward and Melva Bull; and Nov. 26th, Garry Fitch(*), John and Jane Demmin.

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NOVEMBER REFRESHMENT HOSTESSES:

Lucille Upton and Barbara Mosher will be in charge of refreshments at the monthly meeting of the society on November 20th at 7:30 PM. Norrie Desso, Refreshment Chrm.

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SOUNDINGS:

If you think being a politician is easy, try straddling a fence while keeping both ears at the ground at the same time.

* * * * *

RENEWAL TIME:

It is time to renew your membership in the Wilson Historical Society---all annual dues expire on December 31, 1995.

A 1996 renewal application is attached to the bottom of this page, and your prompt response will make record keeping much easier for membership chairman, Anne Faery.

Please return your application and dues to Anne Faery, P.O. Box 731, Wilson, NY 14172.

* * * * *

HOME COMING:

Tom and Gail Walder held a family celebration in October at the South Wilson Fire Hall so friends and family could meet their newly married children, Jon and Karen. Jon, who lives in Texas, was married to Valerie Silverberg on Oct. 23, 1993, and Karen, who lives in Connecticut, married Steve Mendes on May 5, 1995.

All members of the Walder family are members of the Wilson Historical Society.

* * * * *

HARD WORK PAYS OFF:

Sandy Stimson, daughter of Clark and Nettie Stimson of Lewiston, graduated from Yale University with her Master's Degree in Music in May, 1995. She is now enrolled at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester where she will continue her musical career.

When Sandy was growing up in Wilson, she was one of the hardest working junior members in the Historical Society. Way to go, Sandy.

* * * * *

IN MEMORIAM:

Beatrice McCabe, 63, a native of Wilson, died at home Sept. 6, 1995. She was a graduate of Wilson Central School and Buffalo State College.

She taught in a one room school on Saunders Settlement Rd., Lockport, and after her marriage to Robert McCabe moved to Marilla where she taught Sunday School for over 40 years.

She is survived by her husband, Robert and three sons, Thomas (Susan) of Olympia, WA; Bennett (Carol) of Los Angeles, CA; and Scott (Benny) of Syracuse, NY; also a daughter, Kathleen (Mark) Allen of Rochester, NY; a brother, LaMont (Tullia) Ridley of Albion, NY; and two sister, Alice (Preston) Thomas of Lockport, and Barbara (Pharas) Miller of Sebring, FL.

Memorial Services were held at her church.

* * * * *

Charles Buchner, 80, formerly of Ransomville, died Sept. 12, 1995, at the Veteran's Administration Medical Center at Buffalo.

Charles attended high school in Wilson and during World War II was in the Normandy Invasion. He served with the 702nd Tank Div. of the 2nd Army Armored Div. He worked 20 years with the U.S. Postal Service and 8 months with the N.Y. State Police. He was a member of the American Legion and Disabled American Veterans.

He is survived by 3 sisters, Helen Pletcher of Newfane; Florence Lampman of Lakeland, FL; and Patricia Pfohl of Charlotte, NC.

Services were held at Arcadia Park Cemetery, Pendleton, with VA Chaplain David Braumer.

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BUILDING FUND:

The initial response to the request for Building Fund donations has been good. The society wishes to thank all who have contributed to date.

There is a place on the 1996 Application renewal form where members may still make a donation if they so desire. In 3 months, an announcement will be made revealing how many members contributed to the Building Fund, also the total amount given.

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BAKE GOODS NEEDED:

The society's annual Bake Sale will be held at the Wilson Town Hall on Election Day, Nov. 7th, starting at 9:00AM--until sold out. Ways & Means Chairman, Mary Fenn Schultz, would appreciate it if all contributing members will bring their baked goods to the town hall between 8 & 9AM--if possible. Assisting Mary will be Sally Smith, Lucille Upton, and Lois Barnum.

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WILSON "DETECTIVES" JOIN SOCIETY:

When visiting the museum recently, 23 members of Miss Andritz 4th grade at Thomas Marks were given 1 yr. junior memberships in the society. A Newsletter will be sent each month to the "detective's" class. New Junior Members are: David Winguist, Steve Andrasik, Hollie Batt, Richard Boyc, Veronica Campbell, Peter Clark, James Collin, Connie Devlin, Curtis Duxbury, Kyle Grace, Jack Heinz, Joshua Hold, Stacey Hicks, Laura Houser, Candace Kaminski, Kevin Lort, Caitlyn Lynch, Casey McHenry, Chris Michel, Caitlin Pfeil, Julia Titterington, Michael Voelker, and Timothy Voss.

* * * * *

1996.....MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION.....1996

NAME..... Ph: ()..... NEW..... RENEWAL.....

ADDRESS..... P.O. Box..... CITY..... ZIP.....

COUPLE \$8.00..... SINGLE \$5.00..... JR. under 18 \$1.00..... LIFE \$150.....

LIFE (COUPLE) \$250..... ENDOWMENT FUND \$..... BUILDING FUND \$..... HONORARY (FREE).....

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED \$..... 85 YRS.+

Please make all checks payable to the Wilson Historical Society and return to:

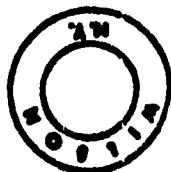
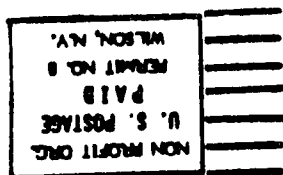
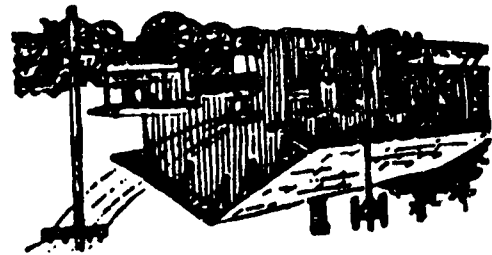
ANNE A. FAERY P.O. BOX 731 WILSON, NEW YORK 14172

December 1995 Vol. 24 No. 11
(Coleman Printing)

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

NEWSLETTER

WILSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY
WILSON, NEW YORK 14172-9763



December 1995

BICENTENNIAL RECALLED:

Twenty-five years ago in March, 1975, the Wilson Historical Society was designated by the village and town Boards to act in their behalf in all planning or activities related to the celebration of our Nation's Bicentennial Year of 1976.

Dr. John F. Argue, Pres., appointed the following members to serve on the Bicentennial Committee: Dorothy Thilk, Chrm., Eleanor Myers, Don Croop, Millie Croop, Whitney Barnum, Lois Barnum, Harold Mosher, Barbara Mosher, Gerry Swann, Rex Stacey, Winnie Stacy, Marion Campbell, Janet Sporleder, and Helen Borngraeber.

An application outlining a proposed program to celebrate the Bicentennial in Wilson was submitted to the New York State American Revolution Bicentennial Commission in Albany, and an answer was received forthwith by the committee confirming that the Town and Village of Wilson were approved as an official Bicentennial Community.

Russel Parker, Niagara County Legislator, presented the Bicentennial Flag and official certificate to the town at the March meeting of the Historical Society, and Whitney Barnum, town supervisor, accepted the recognition.

In the fall of 1975, two prizes were awarded by the committee for the best floats in the Fireman Fieldday parade depicting the best theme for the Bicentennial. The Wilson Ally Cats 4-H Club received the first prize of \$25, and Cub Pack #21 was awarded the \$15 second prize.

In February, 1976, the Wilson Lions Club sponsored a Bicentennial Dance at the Elk's Club in Lockport, with Don Keller playing for dancing from 9 to 1PM. One hundred fifty couples from Wilson attended the dinner dance.

Another successful event that month was the South Wilson Fire Co. "Folk Dance" which was held at the firehall and very well attended.

The village and town boards took action to make the Forsythia Bush the Community's official flowering shrub and, in response to this action, the committee purchased 100 bushes from the Mark's Nursery and planted them in locations around town like the Museum, Town Hall, Crueger Park, and Greenwood Cemetery.

Mrs. Marv (Esther) Myers, leader of the Wilson Lakemen 4-H Club, conducted a search to find the largest trees in the township, and signs were provided by the committee to mark the trees chosen. The largest tree was a Popular on the property of Robert Waite, McChesney Street, and was found to measure 17 feet 6 inches in circumference. A Box Elder on the Robert Smith farm at Maple and Nelson roads measured 14 feet 7 inches, and the largest Maple Tree was on the property of Herman Thilk, Chestnut Road, which measured thirteen feet, four inches. All measurements were made three feet above ground level.

A Bicentennial Quilt, which was made by ladies of the historical society, was awarded at the Memorial Day Fair to Mrs. Angeline Rice Wood, former home economics teacher at Wilson Central School. The quilt featured blocks for each state in the Union, date of entry, and state flower.

The Tabor Bridge and the 1823 Log Cabin in East Wilson were also dedicated and marked, and a "Liberty" Flagpole donated by the Hathaway Family was erected on the museum grounds.

A "Liberty Tree" was planted on the museum grounds by the Wilson Conservation Club and marked and dedicated at the 1976 Fair.

The Committee purchased and placed brass markers on the 13 fieldstone and cobblestone houses within the township, and the Cobblestone Trail was layed out and brochures made up to identify the houses on the trail. A ribbon-cutting ceremony was also held to open the historic Niagara Trail through Wilson.

The Brownie, Intermediate, and Cadet Girl Scouts of Wilson combined efforts to make a Bicentennial Quilt which contained blocks depicting places of interest in Wilson. The quilt was presented to the historical society and is on display in the museum.

The four Womens' Clubs in Wilson held a Fashion Show in the High School featuring costumes of "Now and Then", and the event was preserved on film.

The Committee also participated in the burial of the "Time Capsule" at the Courthouse in Lockport, and donated several copies of society booklets for inclusion in the capsule. The time capsule is scheduled to be opened in the year 2076.

Looking back, 1976 was a good year, and many projects sponsored by Wilson organizations remain with us today as symbols of our past.

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DID YOU KNOW....that in 1821, wolves were such a menace that bounties were leveled at \$10 to \$90 per pelt. The four legged marauders were eliminated from the frontier by 1900, but the two legged variety are still with us.

* * * * *

BON MOT: Reputations are made in minutes--characters are built in a lifetime.

RESORT HOTEL:

In 1902, one of the most interesting and popular hotels in Wilson was the Pittsburg Hotel built by J.J. Miller. It was first managed by a Mr. Walters who called it the "Glendora" after his daughter.

Later, Joseph Wright bought the hotel from Mr. Miller and changed the name to "Pittsburg" hotel, and it was managed by Wright's son, Will.

The Pittsburg attracted visitors from all over, and was noted for its fine foods and basement bar. Directly across the street from it was a dance pavilion, tennis courts, water toboggan, and fine boating and swimming facilities.

Each morning a ceremony was held when the American and Hotel flags were raised which included the firing of a small cannon.

In 1913, when most of the guests were out for a ride on the ferry "O-So-Easy", a spectacular fire broke out about 7:00PM. Someone from Roosevelt Beach saw the fire burning at the top of the building, and called the telephone operator in the village. The telephone office was located in the building that later housed the old Diebold Store.

The operator gave the alarm and everyone who could headed for Sunset Island. The fire, however, was burning beyond control and there was little anyone could do.

The unfortunate guests who returned from their boatripe were soon loading the phone lines with frantic calls for clothes, money, or a place to sleep.

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CORRECTION:

We mistakenly referred to Charles Tugwell as "Clarence" in the last newsletter. We thank Miss Helen Stevens for calling it to our attention.

* * * * *

BOARD ACTION AND REPORTS:

Eleanor Myers, Chrm. of the Barnum Building, reported a need for various repairs to the building, and would like to see display cases built in on the east wall.

Gary Fitch arranged for the Soil Conservation Service, Dep't. of Agriculture, to study drainage problems on the newly acquired 5 acres of land received from Dr. George Badger of Lockport. To adequately drain the property, 6 lines of tile totaling 4150 feet will be needed. Cost would be approximately \$2,000.

Pres. Burrows reported that the Basil property which has been offered to the society along the south side of the depot has not yet been resolved. At issue is a parcel of land that crosses route 425. It is hoped the matter will be cleared up soon as this land could be one of the most important parcels of land acquired to date.

Ollie Clark reported that the new storage building is completed, but an approach to the building must be graded to make it easier to move things in and out. He would like a few volunteers to give him a hand while the weather is good.

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SUCCESSFUL BAKE SALE:

Mary F. Schultz, Chrm. of the Ways and Means Comm., thanks every one who donated baked goods and helped out at the Bake Sale on Election Day. \$150 dollars was cleared.

* * * * *

NOVEMBER ELECTIONS:

Robert Botzer of Chestnut Rd., Wilson, won the race in last month's election for Wilson Justice of the Peace.

Several other Historical Society members were also returned to office unopposed including Walter Evans, Town Supervisor; Marilyn Allgeier, Town Clerk; and Don Luff, Town Councilman.

Merton Wiepert of Ransomville was returned to office as Councilman, Town of Porter.

With elections over, we note that the right to vote is one of our most cherished democratic privileges, and even if you don't vote, you are still responsible for the men and women who are elected to office.

* * * * *

MEMORIAL TREES PLANTED:

Three trees have been donated and planted on the museum grounds by Mark's Nursery in honor of Gertrude and the late Edward Marks; Charlotte and the late Lawrence Pease; and Marion and the late Leonard Tabor. The Mark's Tree is a Little Leaf Linden; the Pease tree is a Crimson King Maple; and the Tabor tree is a Shademaster Locust.

The Memorial trees are a gift from the Mark's Nursery of Wilson, and Tom Marks hopes that they will further enhance the beauty of the Museum grounds.

* * * * *

NEW MEMBERS:

It is a pleasure to welcome the following new members: Larry Bryer of Wilson; Robert Cramer of Rio Rancho, NM; Gordon Cramer of Oklahoma City, OK; Patricia Goodin Lukeville, AZ; Daniel and Leann Murphy of New Cumberland, PA; also junior members, Matthew Dominic Murphy, 4, and Sara Julie Murphy, 3.

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DECEMBER MEETING:

Charlie Schmidthe, a member of the Sweedish Lutheran Church of Tonawanda, will give a talk on the Saint Lucia at the December 18th meeting of the Wilson Historical Society.

Following the program, refreshments will be served by Patricia Fitch and Cathy Ferris.

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DECEMBER CALENDAR:

Dec. 13th: Board of Director Meeting, 7:30 PM at museum.

Dec. 18th: Monthly Meeting, 7:30 PM at museum. Guest speaker, Charlie Schmidthe.

Dec. 25th: MERRY CHRISTMAS.

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SOUNDINGS:

Have you ever noticed that some TV commentators talk because they have something to say, while others appear to talk because they have to say something.

* * * * *

CHRISTMAS PAST:

It's a little hard to imagine a time in America when Christmas wasn't a legal holiday, yet it was 1890 before all states had accepted Christmas as a National Holiday.

Christmas was celebrated in the early 1800's ,however, and such classics as Charles Dicken's "Christmas Carol" was published in 1843, and 'Twas the Night Before Christmas was very popular in the 1860's.

"Dressing" the Christmas tree in the late 1800's and early 1900's saw the tree's branches covered with bonbons, baskets of sweetmeats and fancy cakes, red apples, gingerbread, painted eggs, paper ornaments and strings of popcorn.

Trees were lighted with real candles and, needless to say, many caught fire with disastrous results. Candles were usually lit to show off the tree, then quickly blown out.

Around the late 1860's, very few trees were set up in private homes, but were mainly placed in churches or other public places.

Gifts were g enerally homemade and highly prized, and many consisted of things like doilies, jewelry, scarfs, gloves, sleds, tool boxes, dolls, and clothing.

Turkey or roast goose was the main course of an 1860 dinner, but stuffed ham or stewed oysters might also be included. The popular dessert was fruit cake, also plum pudding or cranberry, mince, or apple pie.

During the Civil War period, Christmas cards were usually hand-made, and it wasn't until the late 1800's that mass printing of cards became popular. Today it is estimated that Americans mail out over 2.5 billion Christmas cards to relatives and friends. While we're on the subject,

" A Merry Christmas to everyone from your Newsletter Staff, Anne A. Faery and Don Croop."

* * * * *

MUSEUM GREETERS FOR DECEMBER:

Submitted by Winnie Fischer,Chrm: December 3rd, Wanda Burrows(*), Harold and Neva Benedict; December 10th, Elton(*) and June Kropp; December 17th, Wallace(*) and Chris Goodman.

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There will be no museum visitation during the months of January, February, and March, 1996. We thank Claude and Ruth Lampman for substituting as "greeters" on October 15th.

* * * * *

PROJECT STALLED:

We often hear the question, "Why hasn't the Randall Road Schoolhouse been moved?" The only answer we have to date is a letter from Assemblyman Joseph Pillittere who stated:

"I have been informed.....that contracts and funding for 1994 and 1995 member items are being with held by the Division of the Budget at the request of the Governor."

If anything new develops, we'll pass the information along to you.

* * * * *

TREE DECORATED:

In early November, a beautifully decorated Christmas tree was put up by Jané Demmin and Celeste Crawford by the parlor exhibit in Patterson Room. It was nice that the girls had the foresight and iniative to decorate the tree in time for holiday programs scheduled for November and December.

* * * * *

RECENT ACQUISITIONS:

- Edgar and Eloise Culverwell: One school desk for Randall Road Schoolhouse Project.
- Annabelle Freatman, Lockport: One School Desk for Randall Road School project.
- Dianne Albright, Newfane: One wastbasket for Randall Road Schoolhouse project.
- Roger G. Nelson Family, Lockport: Four Schooldesks for Randall Road Schoolhouse project.
- Floyd Van Buren, Lockport: Maple Syrup Hydrometer.
- Floyd Clark: Four Buoy Markers; Railroad Yard Lamp; Brass Water Pump for Boat.
- Jack Derringer via Floyd Van Buren: Original Photo and copy of Jesse Smith,Sr. Home.

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IN MEMORIAM:

Mildred S. Schoultz, 82, of Autumnview Drive, Wilson, died at her home, Oct. 20, 1995. She was a member of the United Methodist Church and the Wilson Historical Society since 1976.

She is survived by a daughter, Jeanette (Anthony) Pillano of East Rochester, NY; Three sisters, Marian Winger of Wilson; Beatrice (James) Hicks of S. San Francisco, CA; and Martha (Alfred) Harvey of Olcott, NY; also a sister-in-law Eleanor Canfield of Wilson.

A Memorial Service was held at the Hamilton & CLark Funeral Chaple in Wilson, and burial was in Greenwood Cemetery with Rev. Sue Kaiser officiating.

* * * * *

SOUNDINGS: An old timer is one who remembers when you did not start to shop for Christmas until after Thanksgiving.

1996.....MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION.....1996

NAME..... Ph: ()..... NEW..... RENEWAL.....

ADDRESS..... P.O. BOX..... CITY..... ZIP.....

COUPLE \$8.00..... SINGLE \$5.00..... JR.(under 18) \$1.00..... LIFE \$150.00.....

LIFE (COUPLE) \$250.00..... ENDOWMENT FUND \$..... BUILDING FUND \$..... HONORARY (85+) FREE.....

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED \$.....

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ANNE A, FAERY P.O. BOX 731 WILSON, NEW YORK 14172

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