

HISTORY OF WILSON

Old Letters (Benj. Wilcox 1850)	1/83
Senior Citizens breakfast at school	1/83
Wilson's first librarian	4/83
Puppeteers	4&5 /83
Tree Tavern	5/83
Happy Anniversary Village	5/83
Stranger than fiction (cemetery)	6/83
Village Blacksmiths	10/83
Schooner Days 11&12/83	1&2/84
Unusual accident near depot	12/83
Pioneer Stock (Fitch)	12/83
Rare Singer Planter	1/84
Harbor development	3/84
Little red schoolhouse Townline Road	4/84
Drugstore	6/84
Fleetwood Log Book	9/84
Reugen Wilson family history	11/84
League Champions	11/84
Donner Loom	12/84

CHURCHES

1st church in Wilson (Presbyterian)	3/83
Free Methodist Church	6/83
Exley Milestone	2/84
Religious Heritage	9/84
1st Baptist Church	10/84

HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Windmill is up

MISCELLANEOUS

"Sweet House" painting	4/83
Hardy Pioneers open West. NY	9/83
Can you believe (Fair)	7&8 83
Firemen's convention	9/83
Happy Birthday, Ida	2/84
Coomer postoffice	3/84
Tuscaroras	3/84
Sutherland Sisters	4/84
Community service (Hospital)	5/84
Wilson is Alright	6/84
End of Caboose	9/84
Covert Chainless	10/84
1890 Christmas	12/84

REMINISCING

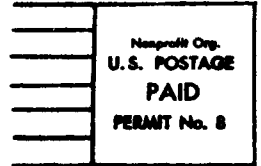
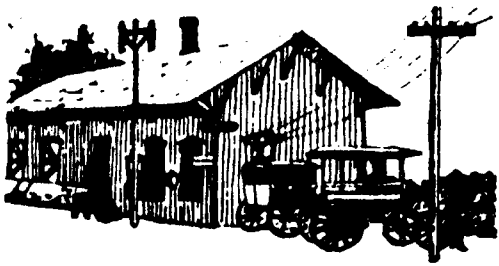
Lewis Schrader	1/83
Touring in the Good old days	2/83
Sutherland Hotel	2/83
Strike in Wilson Fizzles	4/83
George Swick & Oregon Trail	5/83
Remarkable Journey (Barmum)	6/83
Senior Class Trip	10/83
Merle Wilson, fisherman	11/83
Friendly Fisherman	11/83
Fay Campbell	3 & 4/84
Letter from Phil Brown	3/84
John Eastman	6/84
From the Mailbag (Phil Brown)	6/84
Pioneer Lady (Phoebe Campbell)	9/84
95 & counting (Louis Swick)	11/84

THUMBNAIL SKETCHES

Native son (Corliss Armstrong)	3&6/83
Vana, Bessie Clark	4/83
Collins, Gerald	5/83
Bigalow, Jennie Haner	12/83
Hurlburt, Mary Lou (Mrs. Young)	3/84
Mensch, Charles	4/84
Marks, Edward	5/84
Fazio, Edward	6/84
Donner, Harold	11/84

MILITARY

Saga of Billy Sherman	4/83
Civil War Firsts	12/83
Saga of a home horse	2/84
Enoch Pettit	10/84



Wilson Historical Society

WILSON, NEW YORK 14172

NEWSLETTER

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

January 1983 Vol. 12 No. 1
(Coleman Press)

LEWIS SCHRADER, PUBLIC SERVANT:

(Editor's note: We had the privilege of interviewing Lewis Schrader three weeks before he passed away, and we would like to share some of his comments with you.)

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Lewis Schrader recalled that it was ca. 1916 when he went to work for Vic Berlin at the Elberta Cooperage. He became Vic's right hand man and had nothing but praise for the man who would later become Supervisor of the Town of Wilson. "Vic was a great guy and he really had a big heart."

The cooperage was located across the street from the Towers Bros. farm, and Ray Eddy was the head cooper. Sometimes four coopers were employed in the shop, and making barrels was a pretty tricky business. A hoop was put in place first, then bevelled staves were placed around it. It was hard getting the staves to stay in place, but once a hoop was placed on top, the barrel would be set on a machine to shape it. When Lou was first learning, Vic walked in just as he got a barrel set up, and when he stepped back and said, "Now I'm satisfied," Vic walked over and kicked the staves with his foot. Everything collapsed, and Vic laughed and said, "What are you satisfied about, you haven't made a barrel yet."

The staves came in by train and always had to be paid for with cash. Lou would take the train to Wilson to get the money which usually amounted to \$250 dollars. He would walk back to Elberta alone so Vic thought he should have some protection and bought him a pearl handle revolver. Lou told him he'd probably shoot himself if he carried one of those dang things. When the fruit season was over, Vic sent Lou to the Kelly Business Institute in the Falls and also paid his way through.

There was a station at Elberta, and Lou recalled there was always a lot of traffic on the old "Hojack". He distinctly remembered the two "flyers" that used to roar by the corners as well as the milk train, mail trains, and numerous freight trains. The Bass store was just south of the corners, and a fruit dryer stood behind it along the railroad tracks. The dried fruit was packed in boxes and shipped out by rail. Bill Wilson operated the dryer which had 7 peeling machines and another for coring apples. All were operated by girls.

Lou's first job was on his Dad's Randall Road farm, and he also worked one year for Ray Fitch. When he married Emma Duxbury, their home was in the Hamilton-Clark house on the corner across from Hibbard's. They next moved to their home on McChesney Street which formerly housed the bakery of Andrew Betts.

Lou was village clerk for 37 years and town assessor for 7, along with Seymour Erion. Seymour was also water superintendent and when he quit, Lou took over his job. On his very first day, the lines plugged up and Lou had to drag a 600' 4" hose out beyond the ice bank on Lake Ontario to unplug the line so the village could have water. It was zero out that day, and to make matters worse, Lou fell into the ice water up to his neck. Later, he decided one year on that job was enough. A smile lit up his face when he recalled the time Mrs. Erion asked Harold Albright to call the pumping station to tell them the water wasn't fit to drink.

Lou was very proud of his grandchildren and enjoyed having Kristin visit or spend the night. "The girl works all the time", he said "and bakes delicious cookies and does beautiful macrame work." He pointed to a sample of her handiwork hanging in the front window, then added, "Her brother, Kevin, is also a good worker and keeps the lawns mowed."

Lou said that he enjoyed his life in Wilson and was able to look back on many happy memories. He never had any aches or pains and couldn't remember ever having had a doctor until last September when his eyes began to give him trouble.

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JOIN THE CLUB:

Golden Agers would probably be the first to acknowledge that one of the handicaps of growing older is the tendency on the part of some to forget or misplace useful items such as rubbers, coats, glasses or even bowling balls. "Chuck" Campbell added another one to the list recently when he "misplaced" his wife at Tachi's Restaurant in Newfane. It seems the Campbell Clan decided to eat out one evening after bowling, and after dinner, Marion paid a visit to the powder room. "Chuck", not seeing her about, thought she had left with other members of the family so hopped into his car and drove to Wilson. Later, he got concerned when she didn't come home so called the Albrights in an effort to find her. Harold informed him she wasn't there, and as you may well imagine, got a big kick out of the situation.

"Chuck" was unable to phone Tachi's so decided to drive back to the Newfane eatery--and guess what, There Was Marion! If there's more to the story, "Chuck" isn't saying.

The Campbells are now spending the winter in sunny Florida. We hope "Chuck" makes sure Marion is in the car before they head north in the spring.

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REFLECTIONS FOR THE NEW YEAR:

As our nation starts another New Year, the hopes and dreams of many are clouded with the trauma of 11 million unemployed, the scandalous behavior of some public figures, the apparent inability of law-enforcing agencies to cope with crime and drug abuse, and the mind-boggling fear of nuclear war. Disturbing as these things may be, we can take heart in the realization that America still has a lot going for it.

We are protected by our Constitution and Bill of Rights; we can travel freely around the country or move from one community to another; we have the right to discuss issues, go to church, and elect our public officials; we can even criticize our leaders from the President down to the local dog catcher. Moreover, we are blessed with great traditions and a good caring people who rise quickly to meet any threat to our democracy.

Sometimes, our values are confused by a media that tends to place more emphasis on sensationalism or the wrong doing of delinquents, but the accomplishments of the great majority should not be brushed aside lightly.

Millions of Americans acknowledge and share their resources with the needy of the world; most judges make decisions honestly and fairly; doctors and nurses devote their lives to healing the sick; policemen and firemen risk their lives willingly for others; most teachers do have concern for our children; ministers strive to instill moral values within us; lawyers battle for our civil rights; and millions of volunteers work with hundreds of organizations to make the world a better place for all of us.

1983 could be a Happy New Year for everyone if we could emulate the words from an old Bing Crosby song, "Accentuate the positive, eliminate the negative, latch on to the affirmative, and don't mess with Mr. In-between."

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VACUUM CLEANER-ANYONE?:

The museum's vacuum cleaner has gone kaput. Betty Stimson, Housekeeper, would be happy to hear from anyone having one they no longer use. "Let's Make A Deal."

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MEMBERSHIP ROLL-1983:

We are trying to hold down publication costs so there will be no general mailing of the new 1983 Membership Roll. Any member, however, may receive a copy by requesting it, but if you wish to have it mailed, please give or send a 20¢ stamp to Millie Croop.

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NEW MEMBERS:

It is a pleasure to usher in the New Year by welcoming the following new members: T. Jack Teague, Northridge, Cal.; Frank Fenn, Ransomville; Gavin Robinson, Newfane; Anthony and Theresa Moley, Newfane; Michael and Bridget Moley, Newfane; and Bill and Lois Davis, Wilson.

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PROGRAM FOR JANUARY:

This is to remind you that the museum will be closed to Sunday afternoon visitors during the months of January, February, and March. Program meetings will continue as always.

The January 17th meeting may prove to be one of the most interesting of the year when Jean Argue, assisted by a member panel, will have as her topic, "What in the world was happening when Wilson was young?" Participating with Jean will be Marietta Goodman, Lois Davis, Helen French, Peg Fritton, Sylvia McCuaig, Dorothy Lort, and Helen Stevens.

Following the program, refreshments will be served by Leona Beutel, Chrm., Gertrude Schnoor, and Carole Schnoor.

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IN MEMORIAM:

Ruth A. Stedman, 86, passed away at Inter-Community Hospital at Newfane, December 15, 1982. She was the daughter of William and Myrtela Henderson Mudge of Newfane, and is survived by her daughter, Mrs. (Lois) Whitney Barnum of Wilson, and William L. Stedman of Saunterstown, RI; also 8 grandchildren, Mrs. Lawrence (Shelley) Andrews, Roger Mawhiney, and Melanie Barnum, all of Wilson; and William Stedman, Jr., Jeffrey Stedman, Lori Stedman, Timothy Stedman, and Mathew Stedman of Sauntertown, RI. She is also survived by 3 great grandchildren.

Ruth was a familiar figure in the village having worked at various times in the Smith Clothing Store and the Wilson and Timkey grocery stores. Her father was a building contractor and assistant to Assemblyman Draper in Albany, and her grandfather, Adelbert Mudge, was the last surviving Civil War veteran in Wilson.

She was a member of Exley United Methodist Church, and the Wilson Historical Society since 1972. Interment was at Greenwood Cemetery with Rev. Rae Brothers officiating.

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BOARD SEEKS HELP:

The town's Cemetery Advisory Board is looking for persons who might be interested in "digging up" information on persons buried in the old section of Greenwood. If you can help in anyway at all, please contact Barbara Mosher, Chrm., or Dorothy Linnabery, the society's representative on the board.

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MUSEUM PROJECTS:

There are a number of projects pending at the museum that only await an offer from some interested member to get them started and off the "some day we'll do it" list. During the past 10 years, many of the renovation projects were initiated and completed because of the interest and devotion of Art Schnoor. Now Art, like many of us, is beginning to feel the pressure of advancing years. It would benefit the society immensely if more members would follow the example of Burt Jennings who adopted the caboose as a personal project. We have several other "jobs" in need of a good superintendent, perhaps one is just right for you. Why not check with Art--he'd be glad to fill you in.

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OPTIONS FOR THE NEW YEAR:

You can be positive or negative; hopeful or cynical; joyful or miserable--take your pick.

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LETTER DATES OLD EVENTS:

Old letters sometimes contain comments that reveal activities of that day and one written by Benjamin Wilcox, Jr., to Timothy Wetmore of East Wilson on November 7, 1850 is a good example. We quote some excerpts from it:

"Our little village is as busy as an ant hill. We are now laying out a new cemetery for our town and village down by the pine grove by the creek. Capt. Luther Wilson gives the site--6 acres--and it was surveyed out today. There is much interest in the matter. Five hundred dollars will be expended upon it in the fall and winter."

"John Crosby has put up a very high 3 story building adjoining Warren's Shop. It is really a fine building, and adds much to the appearance of the 'corners'."

"Henry Johnson has also raised his brick building near the Post Office another story and bettered its appearance much."

"Gilbert Adams is building a good dwelling on Seminary Street-- Jonas Brown has raised his house opposite Eggleston's Shop-- Mr. Seely has new-vamped his residence, so you can see we are a progressive people."

"No deaths to report but plenty of births and more in progress. In this last list our friend, D. H. Davis, is figuring conspicuously."

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SENIOR CITIZENS FETED BY SCHOOL:

History was made on December 16, 1982, when nearly 100 Senior Citizens from the Wilson Central School District were invited by the Teacher's Association to attend a special breakfast at the school and have an opportunity to get acquainted with activities there. The group was welcomed in the school auditorium by John Rodgers, Pres. of WTA, and Richard Zipp, Supt. of Schools. Following a Christmas concert by the Senior Band under the direction of Wes Johnson, the guests were ushered to the school cafeteria and served a delicious breakfast by students of the Home Economics department. Place setting souvenirs consisted of Christmas cards designed by members of the French classes, and "Eye of God" tree ornaments made by members of the Spanish classes. During breakfast, selections were sung by members of the Junior and Senior chorus under the direction of Lynda Williams and Maureen Moore. After breakfast, the cast of the Junior Class play, "Ten Little Indians", by Agathie Christie, performed the climatic conclusion of their recent stage production. Members of the Wilson "Olympics of the Minds" team, who recently won the State Championship and placed fourth in National Competition, also gave a short program outlining their program and achievements.

The Senior Citizens were then divided into small groups and escorted throughout the school by student guides. The tour included a short bus ride to the Industrial Arts building where everyone recived a plastic "corn holder" made and packaged by the students.

The program was well planned and presented and a credit to the school administration, teachers, and pupils. All Senior Citizens left the school with a better understanding of its programs, facilities, and accomplishments.

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OH TANNENBAUM:

Over 20 persons turned out to decorate the museum Christmas tree in December and joyfully trimmed the beautiful spruce while munching on "goodies" from a generous relish tray provided by Edna Robinson. Singing of Christmas carols, with Lois Jennings at the piano, followed and provided a cheerful background for visitors who stopped by to see the monthly display of old toys and games. Flossie Lortz, Chrm., wishes to thank everyone who came out to help.

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TRUCKS ACQUIRED BY SOCIETY:

Two antique trucks that have been stored in the transportation building for several months, were donated to the society in December by Dr. John F. Argue, Pres., and duly accepted by the Board of Trustees. The vehicles are in fine condition and consist of a 1 ton 1923 Chevrolet and 1919 TT Ford. Other antique cars given the society by Dr. Argue include a 1904 Covert, 1907 Metz, 1928 Reo, 1957 Lincoln, and 1959 Cadillac. Cars have also been presented to the society by Marion Sheelar, Nancy Kent, George Linnabery, Norman Thilk, Stephen Sacca, and Dr. Edwin Gates.

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DECEMBER MEETING:

The meeting in December was well worth it for the hardy souls who braved the elements to be there. The guest speaker, Theresa Moley, picked a bad time to have laryngitis but her daughter, Mary, filled in and did a fine job. The subject of her talk was based on the traditions of a Polish Christmas Eve which was preceeded by hurrying and scurrying about in the daylight hours. When evening came, everyone went home and the streets were deserted. Families dressed in their Sunday best and would sit together in the dining room, and among other things, partake of 12 fish dinners representing the 12 Apostles. A loaf of unleavened bread would then be brought to the table by the mother of the household and shared in forgiveness and love.

In keeping with the tradition, Mrs. Moley passed out pieces of "opatek" to members of the audience who broke bread, shook hands, and wished eachother a Merry Christmas. A special Polish butter and coffe cake called "placzek" was served after the meeting along with other Christmas delicacies prepared by hostesses, Diane Albright, Cheryl Brown, and Julia Bulmer.

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THE MAILBAG:

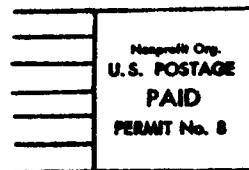
John and Marion Goodrich recently visited Cedar Key off the Florida coast where the manufacture of whisk brooms and pencils once flourished. The Key now caters mostly to oystering, fishing, and tourism. They expect to meet other Wilsonians as they travel through the State.

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IMPORTANT DATES:

- Jan. 3rd, 10:00AM: Dismantle Christmas tree and re-arrange exhibits.
- Jan. 19th, 8:00PM: Meeting of Officers, trustees, and Comm. Chrm., at Dr. Argue's Office.
- Jan. 24th, 7:30PM: Program meeting. Guest speaker, Jean Argue, assisted by panel.

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Wilson Historical Society

WILSON, NEW YORK 14172

NEWSLETTER

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

FEBRUARY 1983 Vol.12 No. 2

(Coleman Press)

TOURING IN THE GOOD OLD DAYS:

In the early 1900's the gasoline carriage was being perfected, and many persons like the late George Whiteside of Wilson were starting to get their hands greasy. George worked for the Wilson Automobile Manufacturing Co. and helped build the rather primitive "Niagara", a 5hp two-seater runabout steered with a right hand tiller. He apparently had unusual mechanical ability, and a special Power Transmission Gearing Box which he designed and built was patented by him, December 8, 1903. The patent rights were acquired by a Buffalo firm, and when the Wilson Auto Co. went out of business, George became head mechanic and trouble shooter for the E. R. Thomas Company in Buffalo.

This company built the Thomas "Grand Prix Racer" and "Around the World Car", and the first prize trophy awarded for the race was displayed with the car in the Thomas showroom in Buffalo. The winning car was a stock model off the production line and it was equipped for the race by George Whiteside. The Thomas Co. also made other popular models ca. 1908 known as the "Thomas Flyer" and "Thomas Forty".

In the early days of motoring, automobiles were road tested and often driven to the homes of their new owners. There the purchaser received instructions on how to operate and maintain it. A letter kept with Mr. Whiteside's personal effects describes a trip from Kansas City to St. Louis in a Limousine Tonneau, and we quote excerpts from it because of its interesting portrayal of road conditions and problems faced by early motorists.

"I guess you must have thought I was crazy to start out all alone, but I got to St. Louis alright though I had a hard time. I got to Higginsville the first night and made 61 miles from 2:30 to 6:00PM. I kept my car in a livery stable overnight and when I left the next morning the roads were very muddy from recent rains and had deep ruts with slush in the bottom. At Slater, on the river bottoms, I nearly got stuck and had to use four mud hooks all afternoon. The car was in mud to its axles and I didn't take it out of low gear for four hours. I ran out of gas and had to walk four miles to the Missouri River, then took a ferry across to Glasgow where I managed to find some gasoline.

When I started out again I came to a real bad place where a farmer stood by his front gate and smiled as we chugged along to our doom. Later he came by with a team of horses figuring he'd have to pull me out of the mud. I got through without his help, however, and he told me I was the only person to make it without help from a team. The pan under the foot boards was a solid mass of wet sand with just enough space left for the flywheel to spin, and everytime the engine turned over the cleated fingers tore through the sand and sent it through the floor boards into my face. The road was really bad from Glasgow to Mexico and I was only able to cover about 67 miles that day.

I left Mexico at 8:30AM on Sunday morning and arrived in St. Louis at 6:30PM--a distance of about 127 miles. Maybe you think I wasn't happy. The best part of it was, I didn't have to change one spark plug all the way from Kansas City."

The Limousine was delivered to a Mr. Parks in St. Louis, and the driver remained there for two weeks to show him how to operate and maintain the car.

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NEW QUILT STARTED:

When Florence Schultz sharpens up her quilting needles, you can be sure the 1983 "Country Fair" is just around the corner. She says the new quilt will be the "Love Ring" design and it will be finished in two shades of blue. Florence didn't receive the quilt materials until early January so it wasn't possible to announce the project started on Jan. 11th. There may still be time to help, however, so if interested give her a ring.

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GROUNDS IMPROVED:

Things looked pretty bad around the museum after the railroad tracks were removed, but Art Schnoor and Ray Allgeier decided to do something about it. Thanks to them the unsightly mess was cleaned up, and it is hoped some fill can be brought in to level off the site.

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FILE IMPROVED:

Celeste Crawford, Genealogy Chrm., reports that a new card index filing system will be available for museum visitors who might wish to check on their family genealogy. There are about 100 surnames on file and more added as they are received.

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THREE KINDS OF PEOPLE:

Those who make things happen; those who watch things happen; and those who wonder what happened.

SUTHERLAND RECOLLECTIONS:

The Sutherland Hotel was opened in Wilson April 14, 1895, at the southwest corner of Lake and Young streets, and was built by Benjamin Sutherland, a lifelong resident of Niagara Co. He married Helen Aldrich of Lewiston in 1861 and they had five children, Mrs. Clinton (Sarah) Sanborn; Mrs. John (Grace) Diez; Mrs. Roy (Edna) Hewitt; Miss Minnie Sutherland; and Benjamin Sutherland, Jr. At the time of his death he had 13 grandchildren, and two of them were Mrs. Mildred Middleton of Wilson, and Mr. J. Paul Hewitt of Lewiston.

The name Sutherland brings to mind an incident that occurred at the "Country Fair" several years ago. While admiring a photographic exhibit arranged by the late Dorothy Thilk, we noticed a gentleman gazing intently at a picture of the old Sutherland Hotel. He introduced himself as Mr. Hewitt and remarked that his grandfather had built the building. He further went on to say that he would like very much to have a picture like the one displayed.

In keeping with the society's policy of accomodating visitors whenever possible, we offered to have a copy made up for him, and in a couple weeks sent him one. A few days later we received a nice 'thank you' note from J. Paul and Mary Hewitt with this interesting notation:

"The Sutherland Hotel was certainly a large and imposing building. For those who might wish they could have seen it, there is a very similar old frame hotel called the "Riverside Inn" at Cambridge Springs, Pa., about 125 miles from Wilson. There is a golf course near by and we stayed at the hotel while on a little golfing trip. It was a very quiet and lovely place with no rock music, or jets, or truck routes nearby."

Those with an urge to travel next summer might find this a historic place to visit.

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NEW HISTORIAN:

Eleanor Myers has been appointed Town Historian by Harold Mosher, Supervisor, to replace Don Croop who resigned from the position in December for personal reasons.

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NEW MEMBERS:

A welcome for the society's most recent new members, James P. Harold of Detroit, Michigan; and Corliss and LaVerne Armstrong of Pontiac, Michigan.

Extra copies of the membership roll are at the museum. Help yourself.

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ACQUISITIONS:

Donald Wiltse has contributed a variety of items including a set of radio repair tools; capacitor analyzer; tube checker; ohmeter; 5-tube Aragain Radio made in Niagara Falls and still in original box with extra tube. Also, a 1928 Victor Victrola that belonged to his grandfather Fisher; 6 record albums; "King's Court" game that belonged to his grandfather Foster; 2 men's umbrellas; and wooden handles carved ca. 1880; a keystone hand-operated 16mm movie projector and 4 films. Also parts for a 1928 Dodge including a pair of headlights, 4 hubcaps, 2 hubcap wrenches, and a radiator thermostat.

Mrs. Marjorie Whitt, Carolina, RI (via Dora Wakeman): Collection of assorted books; early gentleman's vest; Challis embroidered basque; 2 white ladie's bonnets; Ransomville Sesquicentennial pin (1817-1967); Beaded purse with beaded coin purse; 1912 Directory of RFD Service; and miscellaneous old postcards.

Wilson Central School: "Crests" for years 1970, '71, '72, '73, '78, '79, '80, and 1981.

Orin Woodcock, Warrens Corners: Illustrated History of Niagara County given in memory of Dorothy Thilk and in tribute to Dr. John F. Argue.

Gilbert Thompson, Buffalo: News items from Bessie Crawford's former home on Sunset Island.

Betty Stimson: Milk box from the former Wilson Dairy.

Dr. Edward Eschner, West Seneca: 1966 Volvo, 2dr sedan, Model P-1800.

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FEBRUARY MEETINGS:

Feb. 15th: Delphic Circle at museum, Tuesday evening, 8PM.

Feb. 16th: Officers, trustees, Comm. Chrm., at Dr. Argue's office, Wed. evening, 8PM.

Feb. 21st: Monthly Meeting at museum, Monday evening, 7:30PM.

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FEBRUARY PROGRAM:

Clark and Nettie Stimson will be in charge of the program on February 21st which will feature the "Unspoken Language of Fans, Handkerchiefs, and Gloves.

Ruth Phillips, Chrm., has announced that the refreshment hostesses for the evening will be Lois Barnum, Chrm., Shelley Andrews, Julie Bulmer, and Nancy Berryman.

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SUMMER TRIP PROPOSED:

There has been some discussion about visiting the Strong Museum in Rochester. If enough interest is expressed a Grand Island bus tour may be arranged, and the estimated cost might be around \$12 per person. This should include transportation and admission. Restaurants are available in a nearby Mall. If such a trip would appeal to you, let our tour chairman, Eleanor Myers know how you feel about it. It would probably be on a Saturday next summer.

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EARLY GROWTH ENUMERATED:

The world didn't stop turning while Wilson was 'growing up', and this point was well made at the January 17th meeting when Jean Argue and a skilled panel outlined man's accomplishments in the early 1800's. The panel, composed of Peg Fritton, Lois Davis, Marietta Goodman, Sylvia McCuaig, Helen French, Dorothy Lort, and Helen Stevens, discussed a wide range of topics including the industrial revolution, music, personalities, literature, art, and war.

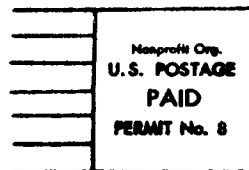
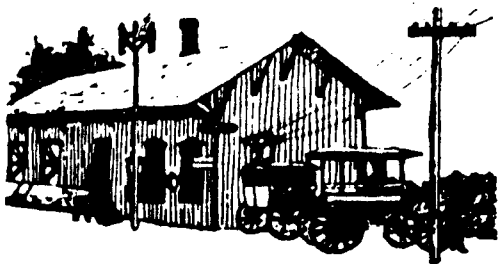
The museum committee has put a number of hand-made 'thank you' cards on display which were received from third graders at the Thomas Marks School. Classes represented in the exhibit are taught by Mrs. Mary Budde, Mrs. Mary Lash, and Mrs. Sue Cruickshank.

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DIETER'S LAMENT:

I'm on a "Seafood Diet".....the more I see the more I eat.

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Wilson Historical Society

WILSON, NEW YORK 14172

NEWSLETTER

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

MARCH 1983 Vol.12 No. 3

(Coleman Press)

FIRST CHURCH IN WILSON:

The Presbyterian Church was the first church in Wilson, and was organized January 18, 1819 through the efforts of John Holmes, son Daniel, and the Rev. David M. Smith of Lewiston. The Sunday School was formed in 1820, and the Womens Missionary Society became known as one of the oldest groups in the state.

In 1834, Reuben Wilson gave property on Lake Street, next to the present Lakeside Market, for a public house of worship and a frame church was erected in 1834-35. On July 10, 1894, the Ontario Hotel, which stood at the four corners, burned to the ground and took the church with it. In 1896, the church was built of brick and stone and continued in operation until 1930 when the congregation was dissolved by the Niagara Presbytery. The historic edifice was purchased by the Catholic congregation in 1931 and is now the sanctuary of Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic Church.

The Presbyterian Church was unique in that it emphasized the importance of religious training for children and established schools throughout the town for that purpose. The first one was organized in 1820 in the schoolhouse built on the Reuben Wilson property on East Lake Road--later known as the Sayre farm. Another Sabbath School was started in a school on the Townline Road on property later known as the Harvey N. Johnson farm. In 1828, a religious revival in the township resulted in the systematic organization of Presbyterian Sabbath schools in every district of the township. When the Presbyterian Church was built in the village in 1834-35, all district Sabbath Schools were merged into a central school.

Donald Loker, Local History Specialist at the Earl W. Brydges Library in Niagara Falls, sent us an interesting item that appeared in the "Niagara County News", Youngstown, on June 13, 1884. It is a revealing commentary of that day:

"Wilson, N.Y: The Presbyterian church was tastefully decorated with flowers, ferns, house plants, and evergreens last Sunday, and upwards of a dozen canary birds, hanging in different parts of the church, added much to the effectiveness of the display; and also joined their voices in song with those of the children. The exercises were opened with singing, and next in order came the baptism of children, when four were baptized. Then followed responsive readings by the pastor and congregation, singing, responsive reading by the Superintendent and classes of the Sabbath school, interspersed with recitations, all of which passed off in very good order. The church was filled with an attentive audience, and in the evening the minister preached a sermon for the children. Exercises of a similar nature were held in the Baptist church."

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GENEALOGY ACQUISITION:

The Duxbury "Family Tree" has recently been added to the genealogical files in the museum. It traces the family of John James Duxbury, son of William Duxbury and Amelia Logan.

John James Duxbury was born in Hagersville, Ontario, and his wife, Lottie Evans, was born in Nanticoke, Ontario. Their two eldest children, Harvey and Lloyd, were also born in Canada, but their other 9 children were born in Wilson. Their marriage produced 11 children, 22 grandchildren, 55 great grandchildren, and 14 great great grandchildren.

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NEW MEMBERS:

It is a pleasure to welcome Dr. and Mrs. Richard Schmidle into the Wilson Historical Society. They decided to join after Ella Mae Peters showed them some old copies of the "Newsletter". The Schmidles report that they spend their winters in Leesburg, Florida, and their summers in Middlesex, N.Y., but often recall the 18 happy years they lived in Wilson.

In 1953, Dick taught Senior High English at Wilson Central, and was faculty advisor for the "Crest". He also served as President and Trustee of the Wilson Free Library Association and, along with Mrs. Leslie Beukema, headed up the "Friends of the Library Group". We thought Dick might be interested in knowing that some of his co-workers in the school that year are also members of the society including, Marion Campbell, Walter Hutchison, Christine Hutchison, Ralph Young, Helen Stevens, Grace Singer, Helen Borngraeber, Kathleen Ness, Fayelista Barrows, Dorothy Lort, Janet Sporleder, Elizabeth Cole, and Gertrude Schnoor.

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WILSON CENTENARIANS:

Bert Israel, Brayley Rd. Wilson, has been given an honorary membership in the society after celebrating his one hundredth birthday. Ida Ereon, who celebrated her 104th birthday on Feb. 18th, was given a honorary membership 4 years ago.

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BON MOT: "If God shuts one door, H e opens another." --Irish Proverb

NATIVE SON:

It is said, "You can't keep a good man down." A good case in point is Corliss Armstrong of Pontiac, Michigan, who was born and raised in Wilson, and later rose to prominence as an executive with the Pontiac Division of General Motors Corporation. He began his career at Buick in 1931 as a budget clerk, and during World War II became statistician to the Asst. General Manager. He was promoted to Budget Manager in 1947, and his name is listed in the "Who's Who among Automotive Executives."

Young Armstrong grew up on the family farm on West Lake Road--better known today as the site of the Daisy Barn Campsite. He graduated from Wilson High School in 1923 and members of his class included Marjorie Crossman (Hurlburt); Edith Wilson (Cable); Helen Singer (Idle); Emily Dennis (Linck); Dorothy Diez (Kirkland); Grace Evans; Alice Nelson (Nelson); Duane Stacey; Jane Stoddard (Wilson); and Hazel Demmin (Salisbury). He continued his education at the University of Michigan where he graduated 3rd highest in his class with a B.S. in economics with honors and a master's degree in Business Administration.

Corliss is a grandson of Byron B. Barber who enlisted from Wilson in the Civil War. He was a member of Wilson's "Valiant Men of Battery M" who saw action in most of the decisive battles of the war. In a letter written to Norman Thilk, Mr. Armstrong offered to give the Wilson Museum two wool blankets and discharge papers received by his grandfather during the war.

Mr. Armstrong retired in December 1969, and lives with his wife, LaVerne, at Pontiac. They enjoy traveling, photography, and oil painting, and have two married children, Robert Armstrong and Mrs. Leo (Kathie) Voelke.

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IN MEMORIAM:

Edward E. Johnson, 84, a lifelong resident of Wilson, died at his Dox Avenue home, February 9, 1983. He was the son of Walter and Rose Wolff Johnson and husband of the late Gertrude Sayers. He is survived by two daughters, Mrs. Gerald (Irene) Smith, and Mrs. Laura Mae Schonback; also two grandsons, Stephen and Gerald Smith, Jr., all of Wilson.

Ed was a self-employed well digger, and member of the 1st Baptist Church of Wilson and Wilson Historical Society. Interment was at Greenwood Cemetery with the Rev. Joseph Wadsworth officiating.

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QUILT TICKETS NOW AVAILABLE:

Betty Stimson has announced that tickets for the 1983 "Love Ring" quilt, which will be given to some lucky person at the "Country Fair", are now available. Three other prizes will also be awarded including an Indian pattern Afghan, Raggedy Andy Doll, and Society Cookbook.

This year, out-of-state members of the society will be given an opportunity to enter their names in the drawing and be eligible to win the beautiful "collector's item" spread.

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MARCH MEETING:

A good time may be expected at the March meeting when Mrs. Faye Pisello, assisted by her family, will present the program, "Medicine Shows", including a live demonstration. Faye is a member of the society and Chairman of the Library Committee.

Ruth Phillips has announced that the refreshment committee will consist of Mabel Burrows, Jane Demmin, Marlene Dinse, and Helen Dinse. Date of meeting--March 21st

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MUSEUM COMMITTEE:

There will be a meeting of the museum committee on Tuesday, March 22nd at 10:00AM to plan the re-opening of the museum in April. A new exhibit will be on display in April, May, and June, and all interested members are asked to participate. Trustees meet at Doc's on 16th.

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"NETTIE'S PARLOR"

Those who attended the regular meeting on Feb. 21st were treated to a glimpse at life in the Victorian era of 1837-1901. Narrated and cleverly acted out by Clark and Nettie Stimson along with daughters Sandra and Susan and grandma Betty Stimson, they showed what 'not to do' when paying a visit at "Nettie's Parlor". Much of the program was narrated by Clark and Nettie who spoke of the days when men ruled the roost and woman's place was in the home. A cute demonstration on the "language of gloves and handkerchiefs" was enjoyed by all.

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QUILT TO BE DISPLAYED:

The Wilson Historical Society "Love Ring" quilt will be shown at the Summit Park Mall antique show on March 17th through the 20th. You may be asked to help out.

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DON'T BE LEFT BEHIND:

Sign up with Eleanor Myers to go to the Strong Museum in Rochester. We will go by Grand Island bus on either the 14th or 16th of July. Leave museum at 8AM, return at 6:30 PM. Price, approximately \$10, limit 41. You'll really be sorry if you pass this trip by.

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MUSEUM ACQUISITIONS:

Eloise Culverwell has donated 23 photographs of Wilsonites and a large photo of Miranda Gifford Smith, grandmother of Clarence Johnson.

Carol Croop Smith, Sanborn: Small advertising screw driver from the former Stockwell and Blacklock Shop in East Wilson.

Margaret Wilson: 2 quart Mason canning jar dated November 30, 1858.

Flossie Lortz: Bi-centennial reproduction of the Liberty Bell. (hand bell)

Florence Hillman, Newfane: 1887 German Bible and 1901 German songbook that belonged to Minnie Hillman.

Millie and Mark Raymond: Official Program of Lockport's "Old Home Coming Week" July 19-25, 1925; also early Noah's Ark sales catalog.

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LAST WORD: It doesn't hurt to be optimistic. You can always cry later.

PIONEER STOCK:

The Fitch family got its start in the town of Wilson in 1829 when Enoch Fitch, Sr., bought 100 acres of land on what is now the Fitch Road. There, for 17 years, Enoch and his wife lived in a log cabin where they raised eleven children and eventually built a new home.

After his father's death, son Enoch continued farming until 1905 when he also passed away. During those years he became well known for his cheese making ability. In 1906, his wife, Helen, bought a 100 acre farm on the Randall Road--the Fitch Homestead-- which was operated for her by her son, Ray. In 1916, Ray Fitch bought the farm from his mother and by 1952 had acquired additional lands bringing the total acreage to three hundred.

In 1957, Ray's son, Dudley, assumed ownership of the farm, and in 1976 John Fitch, son of Dudley bought the farm and operates it to the present day.

The story of the Fitches is a story of hard work and perseverance, and like other pioneers in those early days, they had to cut and burn the trees in order to clear the land for crops. Potash was made from the ashes, barreled, and shipped from the Wilson port to Oswego where it eventually reached its destination--New York City. After the land was cleared, it was planted to farm produce, grain, and fruit trees.

Fruit growing has become synonymous with the Fitch name, not only in Wilson but the surrounding area as well, and Ontario Orchards, managed by Gary Fitch, is known throughout western New York.

Ray S. Fitch was a member of the Wilson School Board and a Justice of the Peace for many years. He married Mabel Wright and they had six children:

Eunice Fitch, (m. Russel Morris) One son, Michael, died at birth.

Russel Fitch, (m. Dorothy Cornell) Children, Wendy, Russell, Sandra, and Michael.

Maxine Fitch, (m. James Gnage) One daughter, Karen.

Naomi Fitch (m. Clark Donovan) Children, Gail and Ted.

Dudley Fitch, (m. Elsie Burrows) Children, Joyce, Gary, Ray Dudley, Jr., Joel, and John.

Lowell Fitch, (m. Elinore Haines) Children, Lowell, Alan, Stephen, and James.

In 1980, the Fitch family celebrated their 150th Anniversary of growing apples in Niagara County. Today, many of the descendents of Enoch, Sr., live in other parts of the country.

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MEETING LOCATION CHANGED:

The December meeting of the officers, trustees, and committee chairmen will be held at Dr. Argue's office on Lake Street, Monday evening, December 12th, at 8PM.

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DECEMBER MEETING:

"Taste of Victorian Christmas" is the topic for the December 19th meeting at the museum at 7:30PM. The program will be given by Miles Linnabery and Sue Herrold of Laramie, WY. Both are active in the Wyoming Frontier Army Living History Society, a group working to "recreate accurately Victorian Period atmosphere through appropriate dress, furnishings, and music." Miles and Sue will be in costume, and it would be fun if members having clothes of that period would either wear them or bring them to the meeting.

Following the program, refreshments will be served by Peg Fritton, Eloise Culverwell, and Leona Hunter.

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SANTA'S REINDEER:



Most of us remember those wonderful childhood years and...

"The night before Christmas When all through the house, not a creature was stirring--not even a mouse.....

And there to my wondering eyes did appear, a miniature sleigh and eight tiny reindeer."

The most famous of Santa's reindeer did not become popular until 1949 when Gene Autry, the singing cowboy, recorded "Rudolph, the red-nosed Reindeer", his biggest selling record. According to the composer of the song, the original names for the reindeer were Rollo and Reginald.

The "Rudolph" story started in 1939 when Montgomery Ward wanted an unusual theme for Christmas. They contacted Robert May, an advertising copywriter, who proposed having a reindeer with a shiny nose who'd help Santa deliver his presents each year.

The idea didn't catch on at first until May wrote the poem, and it was printed up in booklet form and handed out by all the Ward store Santas. It was such a likeable theme, the words were put to music by Johnny Marks, and "Rudolph" leaped to popularity when Autry recorded the song in 1949.

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CALENDAR DATES:

Dec. 4th: Tree decorating party at museum, 1PM.

Dec. 6th: "Country Fair" planning meeting, Rene Rohring's, 7:30PM.

Dec 7th: Delta Kappa Gamma meeting in museum Wednesday evening.

Dec. 12th: Trustee meeting at Doc Argue's office, 8PM, Monday.

Dec. 19th: Regular monthly meeting, 7:30PM at museum.

Dec. 25th: Merry Christmas from the "Newsletter" staff, Millie and Don Croop.

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BON MOT:

When I no longer thrill to the first snow of the season, I'll know I am growing old.

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RECENT ACQUISITIONS:

Doris Cornell has donated a quilt made by Mrs. Byron (Elizabeth) Smith, mother of Gertrude Plumb Smith. The quilt is over 100 years old; also a Teeny Manufacturing Co. Vacuum Cleaner (1914), that belonged to Alta Cornell, and was used by her mother, Mr. A.W. Broecker before the days of electricity; also a Fork advertising the Niag. Co. National Trust Co. at Lockport. Debbie Cobb: 10th Reunion Booklet, Wilson Central School, Class of 1973-July 16, 1983. Wirt Wakeman: Wooden Sign, "Tuscarora Country Club." Thelma Patterson: Photo of Wilson Bank--people unidentified. Nettie Stimson: Niagara Falls Telephone Directories for 1957, 1958, 1949 and 1950. Jennie Schultz, Ridge Rd. Lockport: 75 Year Old Corn Schredder donated by the family in memory of Leonard W. Schultz. Gwenn Heidenfeldt: Centennial Dress worn by Jennie Bigalow; 1907 Slip and Apron worn by Gwenn's grandmother; 1918 Sunbonnet worn by Gwenn's mother, Mrs. Butler; also souvenir pen marked, "Merry Christmas--Anna Mae and Nevie"; also Courier Express (10/30/44) "Jap Defeat". Gerry Swann: "Blue Beard" Stropper for double edge blades; "Kriss-Kross Blade Stropper ca. 1927; Basic Aircraft Construction Book-1943; Guest Register of Walter and Nettie Stoll, also photographs of Walter and Nettie Stoll. Don Croop: Three Cassette Tapes, (1) Interview with Lou Schrader and copy of Schmide interview with Merle Wilson; (2) Copy of 75th Anniversary of Delphic Circle with Alma Farrel; Dorothy Shanks radio interviews with Jan Sporleder and Carol C. Smith; (3) Marker Dedications at Larry Pease home and George Badger's "Hojack Park"; Interview with Jennie Bigalow.

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CIVIL WAR FIRSTS:

The first man drafted from Wilson in the Civil War was Hugh Gleason. He was mustered into Co. A., 140th N.Y. Volunteers, on July 29, 1863. He was also the first substitute soldier from East Wilson. (Note: Under the enrollment bill passed by Congress on March 3, 1863, a drafted man could hire a substitute or buy exemption for \$300.)

The first Civil War soldier from Wilson to die in action was Daniel H. Davis, who enlisted in the 28th N.Y. Infantry. He is buried in Greenwood Cemetery in Wilson.

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WAYS & MEANS SPONSORS EVENTS:

The society participated in the Rainbow Mall Bazaar which was held in the Rainbow Centre recently, and considerable interest was shown by visitors--many of whom had never heard of the Wilson village before. Goodwill ambassadors who represented the society were Winnie Fischer, Chrm., Nora Casens of Calgary, John and Eleanor Myers, Marion and "Chuck" Campbell, Betty Stinson, Millie Lonsbery, Shelley Andrews, Lois Barnum, and Don and Millie Croop.

A Cake Sale was held at the town hall on election day when voters were able to take advantage of a large selection of choice home-baked foods. One person was heard to remark that it was easier selecting a pie or cake than it was choosing a candidate for office.

The sale was conducted by Winnie Fischer, Lois Barnum, Shelley Andrews, Chris Goodman, and Nettie Stimson, and they wish to thank all who donated and furnished. Approximately \$225 was realized from the two events.

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NEW MEMBERS:

We are pleased to welcome Carole and James Cornell, Jr., of Boston, Mass., also the 4 yr. old son of Dick and Sue Schultz, Christopher Schultz of Newfane.

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MUSEUM MAINTENANCE:

One of the real problems faced by the society is the ever-pressing need to keep maintenance costs at a minimum. The depot is old, and hard to heat economically so every effort must be made to keep thermostats on low except when needed.

Dr. Argue has helped to hold costs down by permitting the trustees to meet at his office during winter months, and in a further effort to reduce costs, the trustees voted to close the museum to visitors during January, February, and March. In spite of these economies, last year's heating and utilities cost the society \$1981.41--and that was a mild winter.

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MUSEUM GREETERS FOR DECEMBER:

The museum will be open for three Sundays only during December, and will not re-open to Sunday afternoon visitors until April 1, 1984. Marietta Goodman has announced that greeters for December will be, Dec. 4th, Harold and Barbara Mosher; Dec. 11th, Floyd and Mary Clark; and Dec. 18th, Charles and Mary Gamble.

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IN MEMORIAM:

The Wilson Historical Society extends its condolences to the family of Ruth Pasko Mahar of Niagara Falls who passed away in October, 1983. Mrs. Pasko joined the society in 1981 and was the sister of Paul J. Pasko, also of Niagara Falls. The Paskos resided in Wilson when their father, the Rev. Judson Pasko, was pastor of the 1st Baptist Church of Wilson in 1915.

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Joyce Buell of Niagara Falls, a member of the society since 1980, passed away in October, 1983, and the society extends its sympathies to her husband, Halsey Buell, who survives her. The Buells spent their summers in Wilson at their summer home on Shore Drive.

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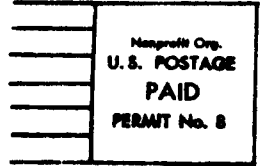
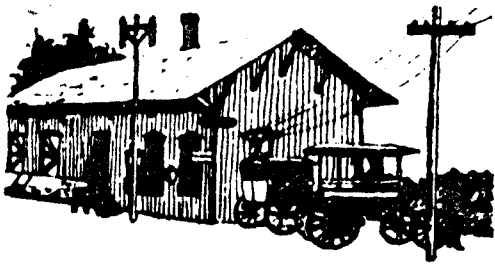
CHRISTMAS PARTY:

A Christmas tree decorating party will be held at the museum on Sunday, December 4th, from one o'clock on. Miss Flossie Lortz will be in charge of decorations, and everyone is invited to come and get into the Christmas spirit. The tree will be donated by Carol and Bill Smith.

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LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT is easy to understand. It's when two people have been looking at each for years that it becomes a miracle. --Sam Levenson

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Wilson Historical Society

WILSON, NEW YORK 14172

NEWSLETTER

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

APRIL 1983 Vol. 12 No. 4
(Coleman Press)

WILSON'S FIRST LIBRARIAN:

Mr. Arthur Dobbs, son of Albert and Aggie Pettit Dobbs, was born in Somerset in 1872, and came to Wilson with his parents when he was about 3 years old. After graduating from Wilson High School, he taught for several years and was appointed Librarian when the Wilson Free Library was organized in 1909.

Although confined to a wheelchair for 34 years, he was never despondent and is remembered for his exceptional fortitude and active interest in everything around him. He had a special automobile built in which he managed to get around, and an old newspaper clipping describes the manner in which he got into it: "A short runway extended from the floor of his front porch to a point beside the driveway on the level with the floor of his car. When he went for a spin in the country, his driver would park beside the "gangplank", and Mr. Dobbs would whirl down the incline into the rear seat of the car without having to leave the wheelchair."

Arthur Dobbs served as librarian until 1919 when the library was moved from his home on Pettit Street to rented rooms on the 2nd floor of the Blake Block. When he died in 1935, he had also held the position of Town Clerk for a period of twenty-five years.

A new booklet on the history of the Wilson Free Library is being published by the society and will be available soon. It will be the 11th publication related to subjects of local historical interest. Material used in the booklet was compiled by Mrs. Eloise Culverwell, and it was prepared for publication by your Newsletter editor. The 20 page booklet will include 6 photographs and will sell for \$1.00 and be available at either the museum, "Country Barn Shop", or "Wilson Free Library". Mail orders should include an extra 50¢ to help with postage.

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PUPPETEERS KEEP BUSY:

The activities engaged in by some local volunteer groups reminds us that history is being made every day, and it isn't always necessary to dig back into the 1800's to find interesting topics to write about.

Our attention is focused today on the "Puppeteers" of the Wilson Branch of Inter-Community Hospital, and we note that over the past 18 years this small dedicated group of volunteers have provided literally thousands of "puppets" for hospitalized children in the facility.

The idea of making the "puppets" originated with Mrs. Dorothy Kirkland of Florida, and the program was initiated locally by her good friend, the late Dorothy Thilk of Wilson. The little dolls were an instant hit and have since brought smiles to the faces of many convalescent children. Some of the ladies who originally helped Mrs. Thilk were Ruth Gale, Doris Tarr, Ethel Dikeman, Betty Cornell, Ruth Gates, and Lois Jennings.

When Mrs. Thilk passed away in 1981, the program was continued under the direction of Lois Jennings and over 250 "puppets" were delivered to the hospital during 1982. Although over 50 "puppets" have been made so far this year, a production crisis arose after Christmas when the supply ran out. The emergency was quickly met by the "Puppeteers", however, who meet every Monday morning at 10AM in the Exley United Methodist Church.

Their production line could be the envy of General Motors or even Toyota. The dress patterns are cut out by Helen French; Lois Jennings sews them together; "Dude" Schnoor stuffs the heads; and Maryanne Sharpe, Hildred Brothers, Millie Croop, Rose McDermott, Sherrie Biggs and Lucy Monroe sew the dolls together. Myra Pease also makes puppets at her home, and Mandy Hule cuts up the stockings used for stuffing the heads.

The lives of hundreds of children are brightened each year in the hospital because of this worthy volunteer operation, and donations from any interested persons are gratefully received. Heads for the "puppets" are purchased by the group at the current cost of \$32 a gross, and old discarded nylon stockings or panty hose are always in demand. If you really wish to light up the faces of the "puppeteers", however, just give them some pieces of new cloth remnants.

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MEMBER HONORED:

Mrs. Diane Albright has been awarded a Life Membership in the PTA in recognition of her valuable contribution to young people in the community. Diane, a teacher at Thomas Marks school, has been a 4H leader and Sunday School teacher for a number of years and has also served on the village and town recreation commission.

The presentation was made at a recent Founder's Day program by Mrs. Susan Cruickshank, also a teacher at Thomas Marks school. Mr. Nicholas Ordian is Principal. Diane and Sue are both Charter members of the Wilson Historical Society.

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BON MOT: The fragrance always stays in the hand that gives the rose.

THE SAGA OF "BILLY SHERMAN" CONTINUES:

In 1973, the Wilson Society published its first historical booklet, "The Story of Billy Sherman." It was compiled when the late Dorothy Thilk, town historian, revealed how a Confederate horse had been captured at Chattanooga, Tenn., by a Wilson soldier, Pvt. Lorenzo Pratt, Chief Bugler for Battery M, 1st Regt., New York Light Artillery.

Pvt. Pratt named his horse "Billy Sherman" after Gen. William Sherman under whose command the Battery fought from "Atlanta to the Sea." When the war was over, Pratt brought Billy back to his farm in Wilson, and after many years the old war horse was buried there with military honors.

The society's little booklet sold out quickly, and the story attracted much attention and publicity throughout Western New York. It also received special attention in the Chattanooga papers through the offices of the late historian, Charles Peacock, of Chickamauga, Ga. His sister, Margaret, is still a member of the society and you may have tried two of her delicious recipes in the society cookbook, "Carrot-Pineapple Coconut Salad" or "Chocolate-Custard Pie."

The story of Billy Sherman popped up again a few weeks ago at the Rapid City High School in South Dakota, when members of the Junior Class were given English assignments to conduct "interviews" with famous Civil War personalities. Our granddaughter, Denise Croop, decided to hold her interview with Pvt. Lorenzo Pratt, because in her words, "anyone could have an interview with Pres. Lincoln or Generals Lee and Grant."

So, posing as a reporter for the London Times, she "visited" Pvt. Pratt at his Wilson home on June 2, 1890, and following her "interview" wrote an article about Pratt and his horse Billy that earned her a top grade for her effort. Needless to say, her classmates were quite excited to learn about a Confederate war horse buried in the small town of Wilson, N.Y.

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A MATTER OF CONCERN:

The Wilson Historical Society has donated \$100 from its treasury to support the work of the Niagara County Historical Society. The Lockport organization recently had its budget cut by the Niagara County Legislature, and many services have had to be cut. The museum at Lockport is one of the best in Western New York and every effort should be made to preserve it and support it. The Wilson Society is happy to follow the example set by Cambria, and hope that by doing so, a trend will be established that others will follow.

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"COUNTRY FAIR" REMINDERS:

The annual "Old Fashioned Country Fair" will be held at the Wilson-depot museum grounds on Memorial Day Monday, May 30th, from 10:00 to 5:00PM. Nettie Stimson, Gen. Chrm., reports that things appear to be shaping up well and expects that there will be over 100 Dealers on hand again this year. There will also be performances by Vocal and Instrumental groups as well as live demonstrations and displays on the grounds. Clowns will mingle with the crowd and balloons and movies will be available for the youngsters.

The Little League Chicken Barbecue will be serving from 1:00 to 5:00, and this will also be supplemented by a good supply of foods including hot dogs, funnel cakes, candy and cheese.

Edna Rose suggests that it would be helpful if "fleas" could be dropped off at her home on Wilcox St., but they may also be left at the museum on Sunday afternoons. Those planning to start plants for the plant booth should also be thinking about it. Lucy Monroe would also appreciate getting donations of sugar, nuts, or cash for the candy concession.

Burt Jennings has acquired a new 24x24 foot tent for the society's use through Jack Perry, and John Myers suggests that volunteers will be needed this spring to get things ready for the Fair. Both he and Art Schnoor would be pleased to see some of our younger members step forward and offer to help out.

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MEDICINE SHOW VISITS WILSON:

After the wonderful winter weather it was a little hard to believe that, on the first day of spring, members would be battling snow drifts in the museum parking lot to attend the March meeting of the Wilson Hist. Society. For those who made it, however, it was well worth the effort.

Faye Pisello gave a brief history on medicine shows in America around the turn of the century. It was a period when fast talking con-artists peddled their medical concoctions to a gullible public and featured such cure-alls as "Swamp Root" or Lydia Pinkham's "Vegetable Compound." The medical show era declined rapidly when the Pure Food Act was passed by the federal government in 1907.

A humorous enactment by "Professor Pisello's" traveling medicine show followed complete with dancing girls from Nice, France. The Can Can and skits were performed by Kirsten Szantor, Tracey Palm, Heidi Dehlinger, and Jina and Gloria Pisello; while John and Jim Pisello peddled Professor Pisello's "Pure-Cure Pills" to the audience. Connie Bartz provided the recorded music.

Following the meeting, refreshments were served by Carole Schnoor, Gertrude Schnoor, and Millie Croop.

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HISTORICAL FACTS:

In 1800 the Town of North Hampton included all the present day counties of Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, Genesee, Niagara, Orleans, Wyoming, and the western parts of Allegheny and Monroe counties. The U.S. census listed only 152 persons in the town of N. Hampton that year bearing out the fact Western New York was a vast wilderness at the time.

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DID YOU KNOW that in 1870 the town's population consisted of 2,438 natives and 474 foreigners, and that 2,904 of the total number were white and 8 were colored?

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SUBMITTED BY A MEMBER: "Never miss an opportunity to make others happy, even if you have to leave them alone in order to do it."

STRIKE IN WILSON FIZZLES:

David Young, writing in the Suspension Bridge Journal, November 14, 1885, made some interesting observations about a strike that took place in the Haner dry-house in Wilson. We quote:

"A laughable strike took place here last Saturday morning in Haner's dry-house. The girls employed there were receiving 50¢ a day, but on that morning they refused to go to work unless they got 60¢ a day. This Mr. Haner refused and kindly invited the girls up to his desk to get what was owing them. This the girls declined, saying they did not want their pay, but simply an increase of 10 cents. But Mr. Haner could not be prevailed upon to do this and after due reflection and the loss of one hour's time, they, with three exceptions, returned to their work as happy as could be over their first experience in a strike."

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"SWEET HOUSE" PAINTING:

Ella Mae Peters, who resides in Leesburg, Florida, has presented the museum with an artistic oil painting of an old house that once stood on 212 Washington Street in the village of Wilson. It was burned down in a controlled fire by the Wilson Volunteer Fire Co. in 1971, and Ella Mae lit the torch that started the blaze. Very little is known about the house except that it was referred to as the "Sweet House" for many years and was owned by a Sisson family in 1957. If anyone reading this newsletter can shed more light on its history or the people who lived in it, we would appreciate hearing from you.

Mrs. Peters, the former Ella Mae Baker, also lived on Washington Street and many of her friends will remember her as an active worker in the Exley Methodist Church and Corresponding Secy. for the Wilson Hist. Society. She was also employed for many years as secretary to Dr. John F. Argue. Since retiring to Florida, Ella Mae has pursued her talent as an artist, and we are told she also conducts painting classes in her studio.

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NEW MEMBER:

We are happy to welcome Teresa L. Lasher of Niagara Falls as a member in the society. She is considered an expert in the architectural field of period homes, and is active in the programs of the Town of Niagara Hist. Society and Societies of North German Settlements.

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GOOD RESPONSE:

Betty Stimson, Chrm., reports that the idea of including quilt tickets with the last newsletter was a good one. Many stubs have already been returned by our out-of-town members, and the fine response is gratefully appreciated. The quilt was also on display for four days at the Rainbow Centre, and Betty said much interest was generated for our upcoming May Fair.

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APRIL MEETING:

Everyone is interested in the house where they live, so whether your home is historic, Victorian, or of the latest modern design, you'll want to attend the April 18th meeting when Mrs. Leslie Beukema will speak on the subject, "This Old House", and perhaps you can learn what your old house can reveal to you.

Mrs. Ruth Phillips, Chrm., has submitted the names of the following persons to serve refreshments that evening: Sandy Evans, Kathryn Frericks, Eleanor Douglas, and Eleanor Canfield.

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MUSEUM TO RE-OPEN IN APRIL:

On Easter Sunday, April 3rd, the museum will again be open to Sunday afternoon visitors. Marietta Goodman, Chrm., has arranged for the following persons to serve as greeters:

April 3rd, Bob and Edna Rose; April 10th, Roger and Marge Goodman; April 17th, John and Jean Kress; and April 24th, Phyllis Hurst and Helen Horton.

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THUMBNAIL SKETCH:

Bessie Clark Vana was born in Wilson on October 4, 1897, and was educated in the old Wilson High School. She married Joseph Vana of Youngstown in 1921 and they had 3 children, Shirley Vana Hollister, Joyce Vana Westadt, and Joann Vana Rose. They also have 8 grandchildren including Susan, Laura, and William Westadt; Joann and Christa Rose; Jeffery and Gregory Bradley; and David Hollister; also nine great grandchildren.

Bessie's father, Chatford Clark, was born in Wilson and was a farmer and livery stable operator. Her mother, Sarah Albright, was born in Holland. Bessie's brother, Ray Clark and LaMont Hamilton, founded the Hamilton and Clark Furniture and Undertaking Parlor in Wilson.

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TRUSTEES:

The April 13th meeting of the officers, trustees, and comm. chairmen, will be held in the museum, Wed. evening at 8:00 PM. In view of the upcoming Fair, all officers should make a special effort to attend the meetings in April as well as May.

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LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD:

All non-profit organizations should be concerned over a recent proposal by the federal office of Management and Budget to greatly increase the rate of third-class non-profit bulk mailing from 5.2 to 10.9 cents in 1984. If approved, the proposal would nearly double the cost of mailing for religious groups, hospitals, and other cultural organizations. A letter to your Congressman might help.

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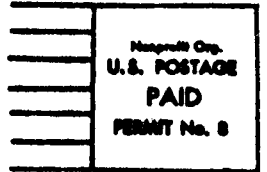
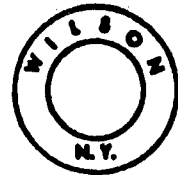
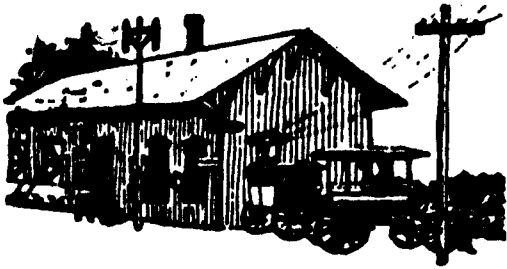
WAYS & MEANS COMM. "ON BALL":

Winnie Fischer, Chrm., reports that depleted stocks of pens, pencils, patches, and T shirts are being replenished. An innovative plan to make up inventory cards for use by Sunday hostesses will permit easy "check off" of items sold and thus enable committee to know what's moving.

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LAST WORD: When a man lets the rest of the world go by, he is driving at the legal speed.

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Wilson Historical Society

WILSON, NEW YORK 14172

NEWSLETTER

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

MAY 1983 Vol. 12 No. 5
(Coleman Press)

GEORGE SWICK & THE OREGON TRAIL:

One of Wilson's tough old G.A.R. veterans, George Swick, not only survived the Civil War but the Oregon gold rush as well. He was born in Tompkins County, NY, and came to Wilson with his parents when he was eight years old. The family home at the corner of Chestnut and Town Line roads was known for many years as the William Rohring farm.

George joined the Union Army when he was twenty, and served in Co. B of the 28th New York Volunteer Infantry. His embattled regiment, the pride of Niagara County, suffered severe losses at Antietam and other engagements in the Shenandoah Campaign. The Regiment had left New York in 1861 with 798 men; when mustered out two years later in May, 1863, only 418 remained.

One year later, George married Martha Rodgers, and they had one daughter, Mrs. Frank Smith, who gave them two grandchildren, Lloyd Smith and Mrs. Herman Schultz. When gold was discovered in Oregon, one of George's neighbors talked him into going west, however, Martha remained in Wilson.

They started their journey the same year Lincoln was assassinated, and their equipment included a covered wagon and three saddle horses. The small party were well stocked with provisions and, though Mr. Swick was strictly temperate, they bought 10 gallons of whiskey, 5 gallons of gin, and 5 gallons of wine before leaving Lockport.

Their wagon train took 3 months to cross 14 states to their destination, and it was usually a chore to find suitable places to stay overnight where fuel and water could be obtained. When they attempted to cross the Mississippi on a horse boat, they became entangled with a large tree which carried their boat, horses, and wagons downstream in what nearly proved to be a disaster. It took them all day and night to get back on the trail again.

Their wagon train mostly followed the Overland Stage route, and in some places they could see where rebels had torn up the railroad tracks along the way. They met many tribes of Indians but fortunately had no trouble with them. In Idaho they realized they had misjudged their financial needs, but the problem was solved when Mr. Swick was able to borrow a thousand dollars from a Brother Mason. Finally, upon reaching Oregon, they settled on the Snake River.

George and his partner bought a cabin for \$30 and immediately set about searching for gold. At the time, gold was the article of exchange and nothing could be purchased without it. In the opinion of most westerners, greenbacks were worthless--a rather prophetic observation. The gold was panned or dug with pick and shovel and looked like yellow sand. It was weighed up on small scales and sold for \$20 an ounce. George would have remained in Oregon if his wife had gone with him, but after two years he decided to return to Wilson.

His journey home was nearly as dangerous as the one out there. The first leg of his trip was 160 miles by stagecoach to the Columbia River where he caught a boat for Portland. From there he took a steamer to San Francisco where he boarded another ship for Panama. Since the Canal was not yet built, he endured the oppressive heat and crossed the isthmus by mule train. On the Gulf side he boarded a small boat for the Atlantic coast, and it was nearly sunk in a bad storm off North Carolina. They drifted helplessly for 30 hours but finally made it to shore where George was able to complete his trip home by train.

George Swick never revealed how much gold he had dug while in Oregon; he said he never told anyone because he saw too many people get robbed when they flashed their gold around.

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KEEPING IN TOUCH BY RADIO:

Ham radio operators play an important part in America's communication system, and we often hear how some of them serve the public in times of emergency or national disaster. Sometimes their radio conversations lead to new friendships or the renewing of old. Recently, George Page of Wilson talked over the air with Dr. Gerald Collins of Duncansville, Pa. We heard, indirectly, that Dr. Collins was interested in Wilson so we were prompted to write him and send him some historical brochures. We received a nice letter in reply:

His parents, Mr. and Mrs. Charles O. Collins, moved to Wilson in 1925 when Gerald was a dental student at the University of Pittsburg. Charles worked for the Niagara County Preserving Company, (on the site of the present Pfeiffer Corp.) and Gerald also worked there during summer vacations. He graduated from dental school in 1930 and then opened a private practise in Altoona, Pa. He and his wife were married in Wilson the following year and they had two daughters. The last time Gerald was in Wilson was in 1952 when his parents moved to Uniontown.

Dr. Collins was accepted in the U.S. Army Dental Corps and served as a dental officer until Oct. 1, 1961, when he was retired with the rank of Colonel. He still has an interest in his former hometown, and indicates he may visit here this summer to see how things have changed. We think he will be surprised--a number of familiar landmarks have disappeared in 30 years.

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THE TREE TAVERN:

It has been recorded that the first frame Presbyterian Church was erected in the village in 1834-35 at a cost of \$2,550, and that the bell for the tower was brought here by sleigh from Troy, N.Y. Perhaps not so well known was the fact that Brandy flowed freely while the church was being constructed because in those early days one bushel of corn would pay for six quarts of whiskey.

It was considered a long trip from Wilson to the Ridge, so some enterprising individuals formed a company and placed a jug of whiskey in a tree about midway between the two communities. Each member was allowed to help himself when he passed by, and when the jug was empty would take turns refilling it. The popular rest-stop soon became known as the "Tree Tavern".

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RECENT ACQUISITIONS:

A number of items have been donated to the museum by the Wilson Free Library including 34 bound books of the "Wilson Star"; framed portraits of Col. Peter Porter, Jeanette Parsons, Lincoln family, Milan Cathedral, Declaration of Independence, and several others.

Norman Thilk: Two Fireplace Tools from Rex Tugwell's study, originally in the Tugwell log cabin; Ice cream table and chairs once used in the Middleton Drugstore in Wilson.

Christian Eberhard of Orlando, Fla.: Miscellaneous collection of R.R. Memorabilia.

Mrs. Earl J. McCormick, Oceanside, Cal.: Photos and other items from estate of late husband including Phone Clip to clean telephone mouthpieces, pins and banners.

Albert & Mildred Toenniessen: Shepp's "World Fair Photographs"-(Columbia Exposition 1893)

Dr. John Argue: 1981-1983 Calendars featuring antique cars--suitable for framing.

Bessie Clark Vana of Lewiston: Marriage certificate of her grandparents, Anthony Clark and Mary Bagley; also photograph album given her by Pearl Leggett.

Nettie Stimson: Ironstone Balance Scale Plate found in her home in 1968; also newspaper picture of Wilson Harbor taken in may, 1970.

Hazel Thilk: Collection of 1933-34 newspaper clippings with interesting stories related to Wilson's history. (The Swick story in this Newsletter was compiled from one).

Edward Lester, Ransomville: Campaign card for Rep. Candidate for Sheriff, Fred Bigalow.

Corliss Armstrong, Pontiac, Mich.: Two Civil War blankets issued to his grandfather, Byron B. Barber of Wilson; also Copy of Document issued by Peter Porter Post, G.A.R. detailing Barber's Service Record and Discharge Date.

Bessie Cole: Souvenir booklets U.S. Soldier's home, Washington, DC; 31st National Encampment of G.A.R. in Buffalo, 1897; Pan American Expo; and Standard Guide to Washington, 1924.

Sandy Evans: Wreath of Praise Songbook, 1879; Male Voice Glee Book, 1876, and 78RPM record albums of "Debussy" by Rubenstein, "The Snow Goose" narrated by Herbert Marshall in 1948, and 9 pieces of sheet music for piano (1910-1919).

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NEW MEMBERS:

The society extends a welcome to its most recent new members: Virginia Coe Pursell, Williamsville, NY; Barclay and Marjorie Stockwell Ivanek, Stuart, FL; Frank and Norma Stockwell English, Lantana, FL; Sally Murawski, Niagara Falls, NY; Bonnie Gasior, Lockport, NY; Dr. Gerald and Helen Collins, Duncansville, PA; Tom and Gail Walder, Newfane, NY; and Junior members Karen and Jon Walder, Newfane, NY. and Charles and Beatrice Mensch, Mesa, AZ.

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PROGRAM FOR MAY:

Nominations for officers, trustees, and committee chairmen for 1983-84 are to be presented at the regular meeting on May 16th. Whitney Barnum is chairman of the nominating committee. Elections will be held at the annual meeting on June 20th.

Mrs. Charles Profrock, Pres. of the Carousel Society, will be our guest speaker and will discuss the Herschell Carousels of Tonawanda.

Ruth Phillips has announced that the refreshment committee for the evening will consist of Lucille Upton, Mary Gamble, and Sara Berry.

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"FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH?":

Doc Argue, following a two week vacation, is back at the helm looking fit and trim. The first leg of his trip found him at the College of Medicine, University of Tennessee, where he attended 8-hour classes all week reviewing the requirements necessary to renew his family practise license--an obligation he must fulfil every seven years.

In Phoenix, Arizona, he and Jean enjoyed the relaxed atmosphere of the "Sun City Colony", but they took time out to fly to Lincoln, Nebraska to visit Anne and John, Jr. The only discord encountered on the entire journey was when he and Jean were forced to sit in their plane on a runway for 4 hours to wait out a bad snowstorm.

Though Doc might deny it, he gives the appearance that somewhere along the way he may have found the "Fountain of Youth".

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MUSEUM GREETERS FOR MAY:

There will be 5 big Sundays in May for visitors to see the museum and some of the memorabilia associated with the development of the village of Wilson since its incorporation on May 11, 1858--125 years ago. Marietta Goodman, Chrm., has arranged for the following to be present to greet visitors from two to four: May 1st, Mabel Burrows and Ada Giles; May 8th, Dudley and Elsie Fitch; May 15th, Leonard and Mary Tabor; May 22nd, "Chuck" and Bernie Messersmith; and May 29th, Albert and Marty Harvey.

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MAY MEETINGS:

Trustees: Wednesday, May 11th, 8:00PM, at museum.

Monthly meeting: Monday, May 16th, 7:30PM, at museum.

"COUNTRY FAIR": Monday, May 30th, 10:00AM to 5:00PM, at museum grounds.

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A HUSBAND should always treat his wife as if she were a voter and he a candidate.

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY--VILLAGE OF WILSON:

On May 11, 1983, the village of Wilson will be 125 years old. When it was incorporated by an act of the state legislature on May 11, 1858, the little hamlet encompassed 416 acres and had a population of 715 inhabitants. Luther Wilson was the 1st President of the Board and John Hosmer was the village clerk.

In 1858 there were 3 dry goods stores, 3 groceries, and several mechanic shops. Larger business establishments included the Barnum Foundry, the J.E. McCarty Lumber Yard, the F. E. Moore Sash and Door Co., and the H. Sanford Coal Yard.

Spiritual needs in the community were influenced by the 1st Presbyterian Church, the 1st Baptist Church, and the Methodist-Episcopal Society. Children attended the two-story cobblestone school on Pettit Street, and higher educational needs were met by the Collegiate Institute on Lake St. where the Town Hall now stands.

The cobblestone "Ontario Hotel" at the corner of Lake and Young streets was operated by Richard Chesier, and the recently organized Masonic Lodge met on the present site at Young and Catherine streets.

During the months of May and June, the Wilson Historical Society museum exhibit will feature memorabilia from many of Wilson's early business establishments that operated in the village since its incorporation on May 11, 1858.

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"PUPPETEER" OMISSION:

As a result of the "puppeteer" item in last month's newsletter, we have learned that participation in the hospital group was greater than previously noted. Since no records were kept prior to 1979, the names of some ladies were understandably omitted.

For example, Frances Landy of Bellvue, Washington, was formerly one of the most active "puppeteers" in the group, and is reported to have made as many as 13 "puppets" in one day. Several other ladies who were unintentionally overlooked were Christine Kelman, Eleanor Brydges, Eleanor Myers, and the late Marguerite Perry and Mrs. Gates, mother of Zilpha Petty.

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MUSEUM ACTIVITIES:

The 1903 NY Central Caboose is finally ready to take its place as an additional exhibit area for the Wilson museum. Much of the early work was done by Bill, Doug, and Darrell Smith who repaired and covered the roof; Bob Rose, who replaced many of the windows and extracted nails after plywood was removed as well as repairing and replacing caboose steps. The first paint job was completed by Bob Rose assisted by the Smiths, Croops, and Dinseys, and the NY Central insignia on the sides of the caboose were stenciled and painted by Harold Fitzsimmonds. Burt Jennings was appointed chairman a year ago and has carefully repaired and painted both the exterior and interior. The caboose stove was installed, shelves erected, and a new beam was drilled and erected at the west end. Elwin Upton has been working with Burt on the project as has John Myers who installed all the electrical wiring.

A new stairway has been built in the Wick barn making access to the 2nd floor easier. The general cleanup of the barn is underway thanks to Art Schnoor, Elwin Upton, Ron Zauner, "Chuck" Messersmith, Ralph Dinse, Wally Beutel, Ed Allgeier, Larry Bulmer, and sons, Jeffrey and Christopher Bulmer. Use of the village truck was helpful, thanks to Jess Woodard, and Clark Stimson also helped out with his pickup.

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NEW LIFE MEMBER:

Rebecca Baker Hill is now the 49th Life Member of the Wilson Historical Society, a birthday present from her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Edward Peters of Leesburg, Florida.

Becky was a 1966 graduate of Wilson Central School, and very active during her school years. She majored in Science and Math, was a member of the Biology Club, and also a member of the Student Council. Other activities included the School Band, Senior Play, "Inklings" Staff, and Crest Staff. She also belonged to the Reuben Wilson "Yorkers" for 4 years and received the "Who's Who Among Yorkers Award." During those years she wrote an excellent history of the United Methodist Church where she was a member.

Mrs. Hill now resides in Tiffin, Ohio, and specializes in genealogical research. She has earned her B.A. in American Studies and English and a M.A. in Library Science. From all your friends in Wilson, "Happy Birthday, Becky."

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FROM THE MAILBAG:

Bea Hicks, S. San Francisco, CA, will attend the Continental Congress of the DAR in Washington, DC. She is Cal. State Chrm. of Genealogy Records. Bea's son, Scott, recently received the "Golden Mike Award" for best TV Sports Announcer in the Los Angeles area.

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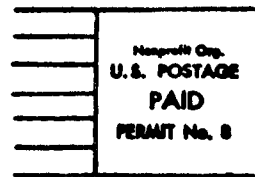
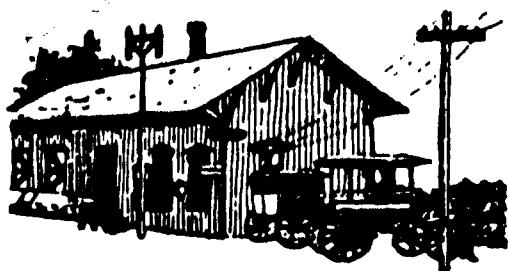
SUPPORT YOUR "COUNTRY FAIR":

Nettie Stirson, Gen. Chrm., has announced that the following persons will be chairmen of various fair activities: Advertising, Millie Croop; Antique Cars, Doc Argue & Bob Rose; Audio & Electric, John Myers; Coffee & Donuts, Judy Zauner; Balloons, Julie Bulmer; Candy, Lucy Monroe; Cashier, Betty Stimson; Chili, Jan Sporleder; Cleanup, Ed Hastings; Dealers, Nettie Stimson; Fish Pond, Diane Albright; Flea Market, Edna Rose; Food Set-up, Gwen Heidenfeldt; Food tables & Cleanup, Betty Stimson; Funnel Cakes, Carol Smith; Genealogical Display, Celeste Crawford; Hot Dogs, Art Schnoor; Membership & Guest Register, Chris Kelman; Museum Display, Lois Jennings; Movies, Darrell Smith; Patterson Room, Eleanor Myers; Pie Contest, Faye Pisello; Plant Booth, Charlotte Pease; Popcorn & Lemonade, Sue Schultz; Posters and Announcements, Don Croop; Publicity, Dorothy Linnabery; Quilt, Florence Schultz; Space Assignments, "Chuck" Campbell; Tickets, Betty Stimson; Ways & Means, Winnie Fischer.

Edna Rose says, "Save your fleas", and take them to her home. Another new wrinkle this year will see the use of a shuttle bus service between the Wilson High School parking lot, the Town Hall, and the museum grounds.

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ONLY IN AMERICA...does it take more brains to make out the income tax return than it does to make the income.



Wilson Historical Society
WILSON, NEW YORK 14172

NEWSLETTER

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

JUNE 1983 Vol. 12 No. 6
(Coleman Press)

"COUNTRY FAIR", MAY 30th:

It's that time of year again and every member of the society can help make the upcoming Fair a big success by donating pies, baked goods, and salads. Our supply usually sells out early so please be generous. Money raised by the Fair insures continued operation of the museum as well as needed repairs and improvements. It also helps to maintain the membership dues at the same low level they've been since 1972.

A pie contest will be featured this year under the direction of Faye Pisello, and applications have been distributed to 4H Clubs, Scout Troops, and others who might like to enter. There will be a senior division for ages 14-19 and a junior division for ages 9 through 13, and \$10, \$5, and \$3 cash prizes will be awarded the winners in each division. Pies entered will become the property of the society and sold during the fair.

More "flea market" items are needed so if you haven't turned any in, this is your last opportunity to do so. Edna Rose will accept them at her home, but you may drop them off at the museum if you prefer.

Charlotte Pease is in charge of the Plant Booth this year. Please drop off the ones you've started, the day before the fair, or early the next morning.

It is hoped that many will try to stop by on the Saturday and Sunday before the fair when most of the "setting-up" will be done. Your help would truly be appreciated.

Whit Barnum will be in charge of parking, and arrangements have been made for a shuttle service between the school parking lot and the museum. It will run 10AM to 5PM or as needed. Village residents as well as visitors are encouraged to use it.

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NEW PUBLICATION IS "HOT ITEM":

The history of "The Wilson Free Library", by Eloise Culverwell, is selling well and copies have already been mailed to several of our out-of-town members. Among them are Merton D. Conrad of N. Tonawanda whose daughter, Lillian Ulrich of Florida, notes that her father often spoke about Arthur Dobbs, 1st Librarian, and read most of the books in the library when he was growing up. Booklet sells for \$1.00 but mail orders should include 50c for postage & mailer.

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FROM THE MAILBAG:

Corliss E. Armstrong of Pontiac, Mich., has forwarded an 8x12 copy of a picture of his grandfather, Byron B. Armstrong, along with genealogical records of the Armstrong and Barber families. The records date back to the early 1800's and it's interesting to note that at least 5 doctors are in the Armstrong line and that the late Earl Armstrong and Arthur Dobbs were cousins of Corliss.

His brother, Elton Armstrong, operated a gas station on the north east corner of Young and Lake streets and used to service Dr. Argue's automobile. Corliss wonders if Doc remembers how Elton's wife, Doris, used to give him coffee and cookies when he stopped by for a tuneup.

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NEW MEMBERS:

It is a pleasure to welcome several more new members into the Wilson Historical Society: Howard Pease of California; Frank Massing, Rochester, NY; Richard and Joanna Southard, Lockport, NY; James Pisello, Wilson; Esther Wilson, Wilson; and Junior Members, John, James, Gina, and Gloria Pisello, also of Wilson; also David Blemaster of Yucca Valley, California.

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STRANGER THAN FICTION:

When the Lake Ontario Shore Railroad was surveyed through Wilson, the route passed through the center of a two acre cemetery located on the Nathaniel Davis farm across the road from the present depot-museum. The bodies had to be removed to make way for the new railroad, and during the process it was discovered that Mrs. Eunice Wilson, (who had been buried there 12 years earlier) had become petrified and weighed over 400 pounds.

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SUMMARY OF YEAR END REPORT TO IRS:

General Museum and Operating Fund	\$ 6,947.15
Life Membership Trust Fund (only interest can be used)	4,902.56
Balance on hand 5/1/83	11,849.71

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BON MOT:

Whether or not a dollar goes a long way depends on how far you live from Washington.

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REMARKABLE JOURNEY:

The song, "Over the River and through the woods to Grandfather's house we go" took on special meaning in the year 1889 when two young boys from Kansas City made a train trip to New York to visit their grandfather in Wilson. Their journey was via St. Louis, Chicago, and Niagara Falls where they took the R. W. & O. (Hojack) to Wilson. An item in the June 1, 1889 edition of the "Suspension Bridge Journal" noted:

"Charles Haynes, aged 12 years and his brother Daniel Haynes, aged 3½ years, made the trip from Kansas City to Wilson alone for the purpose of visiting their grandfather, Mr. D. L. Barnum. They were on the road 3 days and 2 nights and arrived safely."

David L. Barnum was a prominent businessman in the village and operated the Barnum Foundry, Manufacturers of Farm Implements. One of the Barnum plows is on display in the Museum.

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AUTO MAKER HELPS AMERICANS:

The recent GM-UAW "Care and Share" program was a phenomenal success according to Roger B. Smith, Chrm., who stated that employees and retirees donated 4 million cans of food and \$1,340,000 in cash with GM providing matching funds of \$3,310,000 for a total of \$4,650,000. This joint effort by Americans for Americans clearly demonstrates the importance of supporting American workers and American Industry.

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RECENT ACQUISITIONS:

Herberta Schultz has donated Navy Uniforms, Caps, and Puttees in very good condition.

Flossie Lortz: Fan from Middleton Drugstore and Old Metal Scoop found by Frank Lauer in his W. Lake Rd. barn in 1945.

Bill and Judy Rose, Virginia: Railway Express Agency Pigeon-holed Filing Cupboard, also assorted Shipping Labels and Forms.

Thomas Marks School: 25th Anniversary Yearbook.

Wilson Free Library: 2 Oak 2 Shelf Cabinets.

Millie Croop: One 9 cubic foot upright Freezer in good working condition.

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NEW LIFE MEMBERS:

Three more Life Members have signed up this month making a grand total of 52 persons to join this classification. The \$100 Life Membership fee is placed in a Trust Fund from which only the interest is used.

Millie Croop, Chrm., has announced that a new Life Membership plaque has been ordered in memory of the late Justice Jane B. Moxham. When it arrives, the names of Bob and Edna Rose will be the 1st ones on it. The name of Miss Flossie Lortz will complete the first plaque.

Miss Flossie Lortz taught school in Buffalo and spent much of her free time with her good friends, the Frank Lauers, who ran a Florist Shop on W. Lake Rd. Miss Lortz is a charter member of the society and served for two years as a member of the first Board of Trustees. She is currently Corresponding Secretary and has held the position since 1979.

A. Willard (Bob) Rose was born at his grandfather Rose's home east of the Pease farm on Wilson-Burt Rd. He attended the elementary school in Wilson and transferred from the 4th grade to Youngstown where he later graduated. He attended Trott Vocational and then served in the U.S. Airforce. In 1949 he married Edna Gratz of Youngstown and they moved to their present home on Wilcox Street. Bob was employed by the State Highway Dept., and outside interests included the local Cub Pack where he served as Awards Chairman. When the Little League started he was one of the prime movers in getting the grounds cleaned up and also served on the refreshment committee. He has always enjoyed "tinkering" with machinery and automobiles and fittingly serves as the current chairman of the Antique Car Museum.

Edna Gratz Rose attended the Buffalo schools as a youngster, also Kenmore High. She moved to Youngstown at age 16 and later met and married Bob Rose. They settled in their present home in Wilson where they've resided for 35 years. Edna served 13 years as village Clerk-Treasurer. She is an honorary member of the Wilson Volunteer Fire Co. Auxiliary and active supporter of the Wilson Historical Society. She is currently serving as Flea Market Chrm. for the Fair.

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AROUND THE MUSEUM:

Activity is picking up at the museum. The Town has levelled off and spread stone along the former railroad tracks; spread stone on the parking lot and around the transportation building; and also supplied stone for the floors of the Wick Barn. (This year the society's foods as well as the chicken bar-b-q will be served in the transportation building.) The 2nd floor of the Wick Barn has been cleaned up, benches installed, carpeting laid, and other preparations made for showing movies at the fair.

Paint and Sealer have been purchased for the Depot, Transportation Bldg., and Wick Barn for \$918.00, and every effort is being made to complete most of the work before Fair Day. Art Schnoor, Don Croop, and Darrell Smith are providing the necessary supervision, and Whit Barnum made arrangements with Louis Scozzafava, Comm. of Social Services, to provide men for the scraping and painting.

"Chuck" Messersmith has taken charge of the windmill erection project which is real good news as "Chuck" has a reputation for finishing what he starts. He has already solved the problem of the wind pump, a very ingenious piece of machinery, and with fine co-operation from Harold Mosher has had it steam cleaned and made ready for assembly. Since this machinery is so tricky, "Chuck" has written down a diagram or explanation of how it works so there will be a copy available in the museum for future generations. John Myers is getting all the electrical work done, with help from Ron Zauner, and is installing audio equipment including four outside speakers which were given as a memorial to Daniel Wiepert. Burt Jennings has installed plank flooring at each end of the caboose, and our tree expert, John Goodrich, has loosened the soil around our ornamental trees and covered with peat moss. Men helping not previously mentioned include Jim Conrad, Fenton Cole, and Joe Geiser.

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THE SECRET of getting ahead is getting started.

BIRTH OF THE FREE METHODIST CHURCH:

In August, 1860, a group of laymen and ministers, dissatisfied with the policies of the Pekin Methodist Church, met in an apple grove at Sanborn, NY, and founded the Free Methodist Church. Some of the controversial issues that led to the formation of the new church were slavery, the rental of pew space, and biblical doctrine. Rev. B. T. Roberts, who was to have pastored the Pekin Church, became the 1st pastor of the new church, and later founded the Roberts Wesleyan College near Rochester. Today a plaque in his honor stands on a boulder in Centenary Park in Sanborn on the site where those first camp meetings were held.

In the winters of 1860 and 1861, a Class was formed in Wilson for persons interested in the Free Methodist Society, and meetings were held in a building at the corner of Lake and Mechanics streets--which later became the home of A. N. Dwight. Some of the members were John Billings, leader, Albert A. Dailey, William Robinson, John Robinson, and John Colbath.

On December 16, 1868, Fred Marquette and Robert Morrison conducted a meeting at which the following trustees were elected: J. C. Markle, William Hurlburt, George Johnson, Edwin Vosburg, and Fred Marquette, and the Class was named "The First Free Methodist Society of Wilson".

A permanent place of worship was desired so in 1874, William Allen, William Doyle, Ira Wilcox, and William Parish, (members of the Porter Church) bought a lot on Washington Street in the village of Wilson for \$800. On it were a dwelling, believed to have been built ca. 1830, and a large building that had been originally used for a wagon and blacksmith shop. The shop was remodeled and converted into a meeting house and dedicated in June, 1874, by Rev. B. T. Roberts, who was now living in Rochester.

Free use of the building was donated to the society by the owners, and for the 1st time, the Free Methodists of Wilson had a meeting place of their own. The first ministers, who also pastored at the Porter Church, were Rev. Messrs. Freeland, Curry, Jones, Burnet, and William Cooley. Rev. Cooley resided in Wilson. After 1872, the church was regularly supplied with ministers of the denomination. Rev. Partridge was the first and he preached 2 years in connection with the Porter Church. He was followed in 1874 by Rev. William Jackson who also remained for two years. In 1876, Rev. Manning of the Lockport Church assumed pastoral charge, and in 1877, the Wilson Church became part of the Lockport-Newfane Circuit. The properties of the church were ultimately conveyed to the trustees by deed on January 25, 1881.

Other duly organized churches that no longer operate in the Town of Wilson are the Christian Evangelical Church organized prior to 1870 on the southwest corner of Beebe and Smoyer (Nelson) Roads; The East Wilson Methodist-Episcopal Church, Chestnut Road, incorporated March 13, 1871; St. Peter's German Evangelical Lutheran Church, built on land deeded by David Nelson, August 30, 1876; and the Presbyterian Church, Lake Street, organized January 18, 1819.

* * * * *

OFFICERS NOMINATED:

Whitney Barnum, Chrm., presented the following list of officers to be voted on at the June meeting: Officers to June, 1984, President, Dr. John Argue; 1st Vice-Pres., Art Schnoor; 2nd Vice Pres., Norm MacAskill; Secretary, Judy Zauner; Cor. Sec., Flossie Lortz, and Treasurer, Millie Croop. Trustees to June, 1986, John Myers, Nettie Stimson, and George Linnabery. All Comm. Chrp. will remain the same except for Rene Rohring, "Country Fair"; "Tours", Shelly Andrews; "Refreshments", Betty Stimson; and "Nominations", Millie Croop.

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JUNE MEETING:

Dorothy Linnabery, Chrm., has announced that "Eat at the Midway" will be the theme for the annual meeting on June 20th. Dinner will be served at 6PM for \$3.00 per person. Menu will consist of Italian sausage and hot dogs with trimmings, potato salad, tomatoes, pickles etc., ice cream on a stick and beverages. Those who furnish or serve will receive free tickets, and volunteers are needed to move tables and chairs (cars if weather is bad), persons to prepare relish trays, 2 people to cook hot dogs, 2 to cook sausage, also people to serve salads and beverages. Please contact Dorothy Linnabery to volunteer.

Dinner will be followed by brief annual committee reports, election of officers. We also have it on good authority that Prof. Pisello's "sure-cure" Medicine Show will be back in town and will pay us another visit that evening.

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IN MEMORIAM:

Mildred S. Faraday, 84, died May 11, 1983, at Community Hospital, Newfane, following an extended illness. She was the wife of the late Laurence Yingling and George Faraday, and mother of Robert Yingling, Newfane, Mrs. Marilyn Krumm, N. Tonawanda, and Robert Faraday, California. She leaves 18 grandchildren and 29 great grandchildren. She graduated from Buffalo Normal and taught grade school in Lockport. She was a member of Exley Methodist Church, DAR, American Legion Aux., Newfane Hospt. Aux., and charter member of the Wilson Hist. Soc. Burial was in North Ridge Cemetery with the Rev. Rae Brothers officiating.

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MUSEUM HOSTESSES:

Greeters at the museum on Sunday afternoons from 2-4PM will be: June 5th, Leroy and Gwen Heidenfeldt; June 12th, Ralph and Helen Dinse; June 19th, Clo Reid and Marietta Goodman; June 26th, Dudley and Elsie Fitch.

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ANNIVERSARIES OBSERVED:

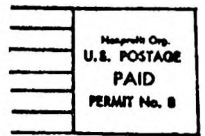
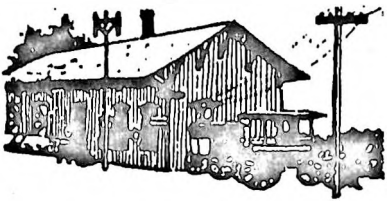
Two happy couples are celebrating their Golden Wedding Anniversaries during the months of May and June. Millie and Don Croop, married May 20, 1933, will observe the event in July so that out-of-state family members can attend.

Esther and Harold Albright plan to hold a reception at the Wilson Museum Sunday afternoon, June 12th, from 2 to 4PM.

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GOLDEN WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES are joyful occasions because the happy couple is usually out of debt by then.

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Wilson Historical Society

WILSON, NEW YORK 14172

NEWSLETTER

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

JULY-AUGUST 1983 Vol.12-No.7

(Coleman Press)

A "THANK YOU" FROM NETTIE & CLARK:

"Everyone in the Wilson Historical Society should be General Chairman just once. It gives you a chance to see what a great group of people are involved with the fair. During the preparation for this years event, everyone was more than willing to do anything asked of them. On the day of the fair all chairmen and their committees gave that extra effort which made everything run smoothly. We would like to thank all who made the fair enjoyable and successful. We couldn't have done it without you."

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FAIR TOPS ALL OTHERS:

The 11th annual "Country Fair" was a great success thanks to our committees, the support of our members, and the beautiful weather which drew a large crowd. Several new innovations were introduced this year including a shuttle bus service from downtown parking lots; an entertainment tent featuring acts by several musical groups; and a variety of youth activities centered around the old red barn. All foods were dispensed from the Transportation Building, and special mention must be given to all who baked, served food, and cleared tables. The well advertised fair attracted visitors from all over western New York, and this was a ptly pointed out by one local resident who remarked, "I never saw so many people in Wilson I didn't know."

Treasurer, Millie Croop, submitted the following report after deducting approximately \$2,000 in expenses:

Balloons	\$ 69.15	Gandy	\$ 357.54	Cheese	\$ 161.70
Coffee & Donuts	234.10	Dealers	1040.19	Donations	55.00
Fish Pond	52.00	Flea Market	374.10	Food Building	1164.92
Funnel Cakes	214.00	Games	22.65	Hot Dogs	821.41
Lemonade-Popcorn	81.23	Memberships	94.00	Miscellaneous	88.35
Plants	253.00	Quilt	1775.40	Ways & Means	219.05

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The "Country Fair", brainchild of Anna Mae Nevins and Joe Higgins, was started in 1973 as a way of raising funds to operate the historical society and museum. All activities, however, are not scheduled to make money. For example, Commander John Demmin and members of Wilson's American Legion, Martin Jennings Post, raised the American Flag at noon after a fitting tribute to Wilson's departed veterans. The ceremony was followed by a 30 minute band concert by the Wilson High School band conducted by Keith Schessl.

Doc Argue and Bob Rose arranged for a fine display of antique cars which included "Old Betsey", the 1925 pride and joy of Wilson Volunteer Fire Co. No. One.

The entertainment tent featured the trained voices of Wilson's Junior High School Chorus under the direction of Maureen Moore; Dave Edgerton's "singing saw"; a Frances Goldthorpe Sing-along; the Sweet Adeline Singers from Newfane; and Old time tunes by Monty Stimson, Al Gawye, and Clark Stimson on the fiddle, banjo, and accordian.

Other interesting attractions included free movies supplied by the Wilson Free Library and projected by Darrell Smith; a museum display of old pictures commemorating the 125th anniversary of the village assembled by Lois Jennings and the museum committee; a Victorian Parlour arranged by Eleanor Myers, Town Historian, which depicted an "early resident and his wife" dressed to attend a night out at the old Albright Opera House; also a visitors registration table chaired by Chris Kelman at which 11 new members were signed up in the society.

In summing it all up we might suggest the "Country Fair" is getting bigger and better.

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YOUNG PEOPLE DISPLAY CULINARY EXPERTISE:

Twenty six young people from local 4H, Scout troops, and school Home Economics Department entered this years pie contest which was chaired by Faye Pisello. The senior division, ages 14-19, was judged by Esther Myers who awarded 1st prize (\$10) to Sharon Schotz; 2nd prize, (\$5) was given to Kyle Yousett; and 3rd prize (\$3) was received by Carol Woods.

The junior division, ages 9-13, was judged by Marlene Schotz who awarded 1st prize (\$10) to Ann Zastrow; 2nd prize (\$5) to Terry Cassick; and 3rd prize (\$3) to Sandy Stimson.

Pies entered by all contestants were identified by numbers only.

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GREEN THUMBS BUSY AT MUSEUM:

The Beutel Greenhouse in South Wilson donated the geraniums and flowering plants that look so nice along the museum's east walk. The project was initiated by one of our society "angels" with an assist from Millie Croop. John and Marion Goodrich planted the 35 evergreen trees donated from another source.

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CAN YOU BELIEVE.....

Doc Argue actually shoving antique cars around the fair grounds.....Judy Zauner pulling into the grounds at 5:00AM to make coffee for Dealers--and having 5 of them pull in right after her.....Carol Smith spending hours making up funnel cake batter--then having a lady say to her, "If you're all out, why don't you send out for more".....Lucy Monroe making candy all week--then seeing it all sold out in 3 or 4 hours.....Sara Berry and her helpers engaged in cutting, wrapping, and pricing cheese on Sunday.....Nettie Stimson mailing out 200 contracts, living next to the telephone, and trying to keep everyone happy.....Jan Sporleder's delicious chili recipe being cooked by 9 different ladies--yet still worth the price.....the look on Art Schnoor's face when 200 pounds of hot dogs ran out at 2:30PM--and he thought he'd ordered too many.....Sue Schultz weighing up 50 lbs. of peanuts in 25¢ packages--all by her self.....Charlotte Pease contacting local nurseries for plant donations--and doing a super job her first year.....Florence Schultz and her "pricked finger brigade" making that beautiful "Love Ring Quilt"--one of the fair's main attractions.....Millie Croop taking her annual trek around town to get donations from businessmen--to help advertise the fair.....Winnie Fischer's wide selection of souvenirs acquired.....Chuck and Julie Bulmer lugging that heavy gas equipment back and forth from Strate Welding--so the children could have balloons.....Edna Rose's expression when Kenny Welker sent over two truckloads of "fleas" the day before the fair--just when Edna thought she had everything marked and organized.....Lois Jennings spending hours arranging an exhibit commemorating the 125th anniversary of the village.....Eleanor Myer's clever Victorian Parlour set up in the Patterson Room.....Darrell Smith and Art Schnoor building a movie theater in the old red barn.....Whit Barnum nailing up parking signs along Lake Street.....John Myers working all week on the electrical wiring and audio system....."Chuck" Campbell and Howard Hunter laying out all those Dealer spaces.....Gary Fitch getting the area by Ontario Orchards cleared out to provide fair parking.....Jack Perry trying to show Burt Jennings and Don Croop how to put up a tent with no grommet holes in it.....Bob Rose wondering if he'll ever be able to survive 20 more car washes.....Ed Hastings and his crew trucking tables and chairs back and forth from the fire company as well as cleaning up the grounds afterwards.....OR Dorothy Linnabery arranging for fair publicity.

WE can believe, because we were there, and we thought you might like to know about some of the behind the scene activities that go into putting on our annual "Country Fair".

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WILSON RESIDENT WINS QUILT:

Helen Rodgers, W. Youngstown Rd., was the winner of the "Love Ring Quilt". The ticket was drawn by Dr. John Argue, Pres., who also drew the names of Jean Furgal, Lewiston, for the Afghan; Dot Knight of N. Tonawanda for the Raggedy Andy Doll; Ann Parke of Lockport for the Cookbook; and Jean Simonson, Lewiston, who received the cheese cutting board. The donation raffle was supervised by Betty Stimson.

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NEW LIFE MEMBER:

One nice thing about editing the "Newsletter" is being able to share in some of the thoughtful things done by our members. For instance, Jim Campbell of Atlanta recently phoned to say he and his sister, Carolyn, wished to surprise their father, Milburn, with a Life Membership on Father's Day. We expect this will be one gift "Chuck" will never forget, especially since he will be reminded of it when he walks by the new plaque in the museum and sees his name inscribed upon it.

Milburn E. "Chuck" Campbell is descended from one of Wilson's early families, and also was a nephew of Mrs. Dora Hatch Honeywell, editor-publisher of the "Wilson Star". When Mrs. Honeywell died in 1936, the "Star" was willed to Milburn who continued publication until 1943. He joined the U.S. armed forces and sold the paper to John Bieda. He later worked as a pressman for the Niagara Falls Gazette where he remained until his retirement.

"Chuck" has been very active in the society and up to this past month served on the Board of Trustees. He is also a member of Ekley United Methodist Church, Martin Jennings American Legion Post, Wilson, and Ontario Lodge No. 376, F. & A. M. He now spends his winters in the sunny south, and during Wilson's better days, resides at his home on Lake Street. His wife, Marion, is well remembered as a former social studies teacher at Wilson Central School.

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BILLY SHERMAN MEMORIAL:

The Billy Sherman marker on Wilson-Burt Rd was spruced up for Memorial Day with several large potted geraniums and two American flags donated by Mary Bartz of Wilson. Flags were placed on each side of the stone, and a Confederate battle flag was placed on the grave 100 feet north of the marker. The Zauner family have kept the site neatly mowed and weeded making it a fit Memorial to Wilson's unusual Confederate war horse. Billy was given a military burial by members of Peter Porter Post, GAR, 96 years ago, and Iris planted on the grave are still blooming each spring.

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MEMBERSHIP INCREASING:

We welcome these new members who signed up during the past month: Jane Pease, N.Y. City; Kenneth & Marcia Wishau, Rochester; Mr. & Mrs. Randall Dickerson, Middleport; Henry Keyes, Gasport; Lee Bickford, Niagara Falls; Dr. Mary Margaret Weiler, Ransomville; Robert and Margaret Robinson, Newfane; Roger and Sandie Wilson, Newfane; Gloria O. Bryant, Newfane; Gary and Joanne Seefeldt, Wilson; Robert and Bobbie Hull, Wilson; Rev. John Paul Boyer, Wilson; Douglas and Ellen Golde, Wilson; also junior members, Maren and Bradley Robinson, Newfane; and Kristen Wilson, Newfane. We also welcome Mayor Kenneth Welker of Wilson.

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IT REALLY ISN'T THAT BAD:

Betty Stimson remarked at a recent fair committee meeting that the only way to get out of a chairman job is to die. Well Betty, we all hope you live forever!

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NEWSLETTER MAILINGS:

If there is a "Star" stamped next to your mailing address, it indicates your dues are not paid and you are no longer eligible to receive the monthly "Newsletter".

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CABOOSE ATTRACTED FAIR VISITORS:

We were amazed by the constant flow of people who visited the newly re-furbished caboose. Even Burt Jennings hasn't quite gotten over it yet.

We believe the caboose project may be one of the society's most glowing achievements to date. Its value as a historic link to Wilson's past will increase as the years go by, and it will be a symbol of that vital period from 1876 to the 1930's when the "Hojack Line" was such an integral part of Wilson's economy and cultural heritage.

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GETTING A NEW LOOK:

The museum is getting a new look this summer, and as the saying goes, "A new roof and a coat of paint makes her look like what she ain't." Well, the "lifetime roof" is hardly new since it was put on in 1912, but it was patched recently and is probably good for another 100 years.

The roof overhang and most of the siding has been spray painted by Darrell Smith who also painted the south and east sides of the Wick Barn. Some of our members who scraped and wielded paint brushes in easier-to-reach areas included Art Schnoor, George Linnabery, Elwin Upton, Joe Geiser, John Goodrich, Fenton Cole, and Don Croop. Rex Stacy led the way on the white trim which is yet to be finished. It is hoped a few more volunteers will pitch in to complete the job as the white really sets off the red depot.

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AMERICAN HISTORY AWARD:

Theodore Figura is the recipient of this year's award by the Wilson Historical Society to the outstanding history student at Wilson Central School. The winner is selected by the school and the \$25 award is presented at Class Night.

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STRONG MUSEUM TOUR:

There have been many bus tours from this area to the Strong Museum in Rochester--which may be why so few society members signed up for the proposed trip. In view of this, it has been proposed that interested persons may make up car pools for the July 14th trek to Rochester. Eleanor Myers, Chrm., may be contacted for further information.

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SOCIETY "FLEA MARKET":

Norm MacAskill will be in charge of this summer's "flea market" for bona-fide members of the society. As in past years, members will be permitted to "set-up" a table for which there will be no charge other than sharing in advertising costs. The "flea market" will be held on Sunday, August 7th, from 10 to 5PM, and if you plan to attend, please call Norm. (751-6090)

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NOW IT'S OFFICIAL:

All nominees submitted by the nominating comm. were elected at the June meeting and the following officers will serve next year: Dr. John Argue, Pres; Arthur Schnoor, Vice-Pres; Norm MacAskill, 2nd Vice-Pres; Millie Croop, Treas; Rec. Sec., Judy Zauner; Cor. Sec., Miss Flossie Lortz.

Trustees to June, 1984, Whit Barnum, Ed Hastings, and Burt Jennings. To June, 1985, Elwin Upton, Karl Wright, and Helen Borngraeber. To June, 1986, John Myers, Nettie Stimson, and George Linnabery.

Comm. Chrm. to June, 1984, Acquisitions, Lois Jennings; Antique Cars, Bob Rose; By-Laws, Karl Wright; Caboose, Burt Jennings; Country Fair, Rena Rohring; Genealogy, Celeste Crawford; Grounds, Elwin Upton; Historical Sites, Jan Sporleder; Tours, Shelly Andrews; Housekeeping, Maryanne Sharpe; Library, Faye Pisello; Membership, Chris Kelman; Memorial, Millie Croop; Museum, Lois Jennings; Nominations, Millie Croop; Planning, Art Schnoor; Program, Dorothy Linnabery; Publications, Don Croop; Publicity, Dorothy Linnabery; Quilt, Florence Schultz; Refreshments, Betty Stimson; Hostesses, Marietta Goodman; Ways & Means, Winifred Fischer.

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FAMILY PICNIC:

The society will hold a family picnic at the grounds on Sunday, Aug. 14th, starting at noon.. Please bring card tables, chairs, table service, and a dish to pass. Gwen Heidenfeldt will be in charge and you may call her for further information.

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ACQUISITIONS:

William Ganshaw has given the museum two Wilson Volunteer uniforms. One is orange and blue from the 1930 period, and the other is orange and black from the 1950's.

Eloise Culverwell: 1932 Wilson High Class Reunion Program; also copies of 1932 Commencement & Class Day programs, Class Song, and 1932 Newspaper account of Commencement.

Clark Stimson: 2 Post Card Folders; 3 postcards to be used in car museum.

Virginia & Rodney Conrad, Lockport: Woven Indian basket and Foot Form Darner and 4 thimbles that belonged to Carrie Martin. Basket always was placed on top of Carrie's desk.

Melvin Chausse, Florida: 1935 white satin wedding gown with jacket and belt. Given by granddaughter, Carol Woods.

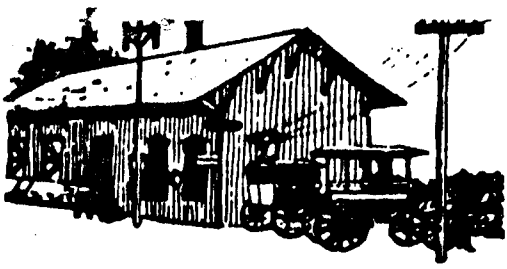
Iva Swick, Presbyterian Home, Lockport: Darned Net Apron that belonged to her grandmother, Sophia Hewitt--presented by Mabel Wilson.

Nettie Stimson: 8x12 picture of Jennie Bigalow and Shot Glass Container from estate, also 1920 ladies shoes and two pair of Chinese shoes.

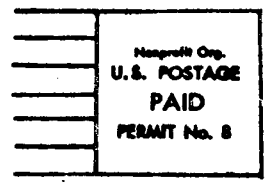
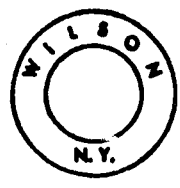
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BON MOT:

Old age is when you don't care where you go at night as long as you're home by 9:30.



F. Wilson



Wilson Historical Society
WILSON, NEW YORK 14172

NEWSLETTER

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

LIBRARIAN
WILSON CENTRAL SCHOOL
WILSON, NY 14172

SEPTEMBER 1983 Vol.12 No.8
(Coleman Press)

HARDY PIONEERS OPENED WESTERN NEW YORK:

The pioneers who found their way into western New York endured severe hardships in their efforts to carve homes out of the wilderness. Very few had the time or inclination to record their experiences on paper, but one who did was Asa Sanford of Barre Center, Orleans County.

A rare document written by Asa in 1861 is in the possession of Rex Stacy who is descended from the Sanfords on his mother's side. Rex, a well known former businessman in Wilson, once operated the R.E. Stacy Coal and Feed Mill south of the depot-museum.

In his writings Asa described the hardships endured by his parents, brothers, and sisters as they worked their way west in 1806 from Farmington, Conn., to Tioga County, N.Y. The 300 mile journey took 12 days and was accomplished with a pair of oxen and horse-drawn sled. The country along the Susquehanna and Chemung Rivers was thinly settled at the time, and dense forests stretched back for 30 miles on either side.

Asa's parents decided to make their home about 18 miles from present Ithaca, and later, on a trip to that settlement to purchase salt, Asa described the community as a most gloomy and desolate place. The roads were covered with mud up to the oxen's knees, and one of the few establishments, a small tavern, was filled with the roughest company he'd ever seen.

When Asa was 19, he met a group of young men who spoke of a great new country west of the Genesee where the land was level and the soil rich. It wasn't long after that he and two companions packed their knapsacks, left the paternal home, and headed for the famed Genesee Country. Crossing the river at Avon, they followed the Great Western Genesee Turnpike to Batavia where they visited the land Office of the Holland Company. At first they received little satisfaction but later, while spending the night in the old Pioneer Tavern, they learned of a new settlement called Barre in Orleans County. Interested, they went back to the Holland Office where they chose their lands and had the agent "book" them in their names.

During the next two years young Sanford not only cleared and improved his wilderness home, but also found himself a wife. They soon discovered that even though pioneers in a new land are subjected to many hardships, there were also many things to enjoy. Aristocracy was unknown and the people were friendly and kindly disposed. If one became sick before planting season, the neighbors would turn out and put the crops in and care for them as long as necessary. If one became lost in the woods, everyone would join in the search and no sleep was had until the lost one was found.

In summation Asa wrote, "If there is any society where men fulfil the Divine Injunction, 'love thy neighbor as thyself', it is among the early settlers of a new country. The present generation now enjoying the luxuries derived from highly cultivated fields, orchards, and gardens, can never fully appreciate the suffering and hardships of their mothers and fathers."

According to Rex, all the Sanfords of Wilson were related, and some who left their mark on the town included Charles Sanford, who enlisted in 1861 as a member of Niagara County's famous Light Artillery Unit, Battery M. His name is listed in the society's publication, "The Valiant Men of Battery M", which also includes the names of over 100 Wilson Volunteers who served with the Battery during the Civil War.

Henry Sanford is recorded as having been a member of the 1st Board of Education in 1869 when the Collegiate Institute was merged with the 4 school districts comprising Union School District No. 1.

Hervey Sanford located in the village in 1866. He opened a lumber yard and coal business and was also President of the Wilson Creamery. He served as President of the Village Board for 10 terms and for several years was Chairman of Wilson Union Free School District No. 1.

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FEDERATION STAGES FIRST EXHIBIT:

Persons who attended this year's annual Farm and Home Days Fair were able to visit a display prepared by members representing the various historical societies of the Niagara County Federation. Mrs. Jean Voepel of Newfane was in charge of the exhibit which was assembled in a trailer on the fair grounds. Norm and Martha Mac Askill set up the Wilson display which featured artifacts related to early businesses in Wilson.

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NEW MEMBERS:

We welcome these recent new members: Dorothy Knight, N. Tonawanda; William and Carel (Lederhouse) Gaillard, Hoesick Falls; Marlene Schotz, Wilson; Fred and Lois Schultz, Ransomville; and George and Marjory Lederhouse, Ransomville.

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ISN'T IT STRANGE? The same people who laugh at gypsy fortunetellers take economists seriously.

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IN MEMORIAM:

Phyllis A. Hurst, 76, passed away at Inter-Community Hospital, Newfane, on July 9, 1983. She was the wife of the late S. Joseph Hurst and is survived by three children, Mrs. James (Dolores) Barrows, Chillicothe, Ohio; Mrs. Gary (Judith) Hacker, Wilson; and Joseph J. Hurst, Houston, Texas; also 10 grandchildren and 2 great grandchildren.

Mrs. Hurst was a registered nurse and was employed by Dr. John F. Argue for about 25 years. She was a member of St. John's Episcopal Church, a Charter member of the Wilson Hist. Society, Inter-Community Memorial Hospital Guild, and Gnostic Guild of Wilson.

Interment was at Greenwood Cemetery, Wilson, with the Rev. John Boyer of St. John's Episcopal Church officiating.

* * * * *

G. Harold Caldwell, 79, died after a short illness at Inter-Community Hospital, Newfane, on Thursday, July 28, 1983. He is survived by three daughters, Mrs. Charles (Viola) Qualiano, Lockport; Mrs. Joseph (Sharon) Stranges, Medina; and Mrs. William (Colleen) Harvey, Wilson; also six grandchildren.

Mr. Caldwell became a member of the Wilson Hist. Society in 1979, and was a retired employee of the Carborundum Co., Niagara Falls. He was also a member of Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic Church in Wilson and Exempt member of Wilson Volunteer Fire Company #1.

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated by Rev. Paul Burkart of Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic Church, and burial was at the Millville Cemetery in Medina.

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THE MAILBAG:

Kathy Horton of Kathmandu, Nepal, notes that life is much different there than it was while she was growing up in Wilson. A standard meal, for instance, consists of daal (lentils), bhlat (cooked rice), and a vegetable compound called tarkari. There are no desserts, however there is a supply of fresh fruit. Life for youngsters is hard but family oriented with much attention given to younger family members by older sisters. They are spontaneous and honest, and like American children, like to squabble and argue over going to bed.

Kathy, who is devoting her life to teaching and missionary work, will undoubtedly have many interesting experiences to talk about when she returns to America.

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COMMITTEES PROVIDE VALUABLE SERVICE:

Every committee is important because each provides a service necessary for the smooth operation of the society. Members who serve on the Sunday Hostess group are a good example for without them it would be impossible to open the museum to the public. Marietta Goodman is chairman of this important committee, and it is hoped that everyone will give her the same fine co-operation that was given to her predecessor, Mrs. Margaret Wilson.

Sunday hostesses for July and August were omitted from the last Newsletter, however, this didn't stop those who had volunteered from being present when scheduled. In recognition of their dedication, we believe a "tip-of-the-hat" is in order for Fenton and Elizabeth Cole, Art and Kay Ness, John and Jane Demmin, Fred and Sara Berry, John and Marion Goodrich, Maryanne Sharpe and Lucy Monroe, Chis Kelman and Harry Rohring, Harold and Esther Albright, and Helen Borngraeber and Janet Sporleder.

* * * * *

MUSEUM HOSTESSES FOR SEPTEMBER:

September 4th, Helen Stevens and Marietta Goodman; September 11th, Celeste Crawford and Edna Robinson; September 18th, Betty Stimson and Nancy Berryman; September 25th, Don and Jane Sinclair.

* * * * *

LIKE TO FISH?

Possibly one of the most historic events taking place during the past few years has been the re-birth of the fishing industry in Lake Ontario and its tributaries. Hundreds of thousands of Chinook, Coho, Rainbow, Brown, and Lake Trout have been stocked in these waters by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation with help from sportsmen of the Niagara County Federation of Conservation Clubs. In 1983, at Wilson alone, over 10,000 Rainbow and 31,000 Brown Trout were released, and the impact of the stocking program on local business and tourism should not be under-estimated.

On September 16-25th, the 6th annual Niagara County Trout and Salmon Fishing Derby will get under way with many valuable prizes to be awarded to winners in both junior and senior divisions. Thousands of persons are expected to participate, and in order to be eligible for prizes an entrance fee of \$10 is required for adults and \$1 for juniors.

But then, if you're one who just likes to spend some time outdoors with family and friends, all you really need is a pole, reel and line, and a worm. And if the little buggers don't bite, you can always enjoy looking at the birds in the sky or just relax and enjoy the sound of the waves breaking along the shoreline.

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ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATED:

The Village of Wilson has quietly observed its 125th anniversary with some attention being generated through the Newsletter and exhibits of the Wilson Hist. Society. The museum display from May through August featured artifacts from old businesses--a theme further emphasized in Wilson's entry in the Federation exhibit at the Farm & Home Days held in Lockport.

A Victorian Living Room, assembled by Eleanor Myers, was also featured at the museum, and in addition to pieces furnished by her, included a Victorian Fixture from Kay Ness; Victorian Table from Nettie's Barn Shop; Lampshade loaned by Donald Steen of Newfane; Phonograph donated by Dorothy Lort; and East Lake pieces including chair and settee donated by Leah Bigalow in honor of Jennie Bigalow. The exhibit was later entered in the Fireman Fielday parade--further emphasizing Wilson's 125th year as an incorporated village.

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BON MOT: It is difficult to be a fisherman in a political campaign year when nobody pays any attention to lies.

FIREMEN INVADE WILSON:

The normally quiet little village of Wilson was bursting at the seams on July 27-30th when approximately 10,000 firemen and visitors from all over western New York assembled in this community to attend the 84th annual Convention of the New York State Volunteer Firemen's Association. The event was not without the customary pranks and activities associated with a competitive fun-loving group of firemen, but to their credit, a minimum of damage or unruly behavior was reported.

A tent city on the historical society grounds served as home for most of the visiting firemen, and scheduled activities included a Queens Pageant and First Aid and Rescue competitions held in the high school, as well as a number of other exciting events to test the skills of the participants. A giant parade on Saturday at 3PM wound up the affair when nearly 100 units of bands, drill teams, and fire trucks marched from Little League Park to "Hojack" Park.

A variety of foods were available at tent city during the 3 day affair including breakfasts, chicken bar-b-q, beef on weck, etc. The historical society also had a refreshments stand under the supervision of Art Schnoor. Ray Allgeier, Ralph Dinse, and Joe Geiser, put in many long hours supplying firemen and their families with delicious hamburgs, hot dogs, and french fries, while others who helped with the stand included "Chuck" Messersmith, Bob Dinse, Julie Bulmer, George Linnabery, Don and Millie Croop, Harold and Esther Albright, Willis and Bea Rockwood, Ron and Judy Zauner, Wally and Leona Buetel, Celeste Crawford, Lorine Allgeier, Doc Argue, Edna Robinson, Carole and Gertrude Schnoor, and Kathi Rein Croop.

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IN MEMORIAM:

Herbert S. Kahler, 81, died Saturday, August 13th, at Inter-Community Hospital, Newfane. He is survived by a daughter, Mrs. Paul (Kathie) Boesel of Rochester; a brother, William Kahler of Appleton, and several nieces and nephews. He retired from Harrison Radiator Div. of GMC in 1965 and was a member of St. Andrews Episcopal Church. He joined the Wilson Society in 1978 and became a Life Member in 1979. He donated many valuable artifacts to the museum including the beautiful grand piano which stands in the Patterson Room. Burial was at Hartland Central Cemetery with the Rev. J. Robert Jackson officiating.

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HISTORY RE-LIVED AT FORT:

At the mouth of the Niagara River, merely 12 miles from Wilson, stands one of the most important bastions in our Nation's history--Old Fort Niagara. It was first established by the French in 1678 as Fort Conti, and became a permanent fortification in 1726 when the French Castle was erected. The fort controlled the Niagara Frontier and guarded the water route to New France until it was lost to the British in 1759 during the French and Indian Wars. The British flag flew over the Fort until 1796 when it was surrendered to the United States by treaty. In 1813 it was re-captured by the British, but was returned to America in 1815 following the War of 1812.

Today, history is being re-lived at the fort each weekend with colorful military displays and pageantry under the auspices of the Old Fort Niagara Association. On September 10th and 11th there will be tinsmithing demonstrations by Jim Witkowski, and the Lewiston Spinners will perform on September 18th from 1:30 to 5PM.

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THERE OUGHTA BE A CLUB:

Gordon and Ellagene Hayes of Maple Road, Wilson, are the 3rd couple in the Wilson Hist. Soc. to celebrate their Golden Wedding Anniversary this year. The Hayes joined the society in 1976, and since their retirement, divide their time between Wilson and Pomano Beach, Florida.

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MEETINGS AND PROGRAMS:

Monthly meetings of Officers, Trustees, and Committee chairmen will resume at the museum wednesday evening, September 14th, at 8:00 o'clock.

A real treat is in store for the first program meeting to be held at the museum Monday evening, September 19th, at 7:30 PM when Miss Anna Mandel, the Umbrella Lady, will exhibit her collection and talk about "Parasols and Umbrella". The program has been arranged by Dorothy Linnabery, Program Chrm., who expects to announce the upcoming year's schedule soon.

Betty Stinson, Re freshment Chairman, has announced that Bessie Cole, Alice Davenport, and Martha MacAskill will be hostesses following the program.

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RECENT ACQUISITIONS:

Leonard Tabor has donated an 1847 Bible that belonged to his grandmother, Isabel Dwight, (Mrs. Fred Tabor). It has a good source of family records dating back to 1778. Names mentioned are Dwight, Nichols, Read, Filkins, and Bartow.

Kathleen Ness: Wilson "Crests" (1972-1974); Wilson Centennial Art Park Dedication Program, (1976); and "Good Bye" Edition of the Buffalo Courier Express.

Eleanor and John Myers: Fanning Mill, Large Grindstone, and part of Apple Grader.

David Homjack, West Seneca: Assortment of 6V Auto Bulbs.

Helen Borngraeber: Pink Georgette (ca. 1930); Peach Moire (ca. 1930); 4 hats (ca. 1950-60).

Millie Croop: Set of Nutpickers in wooden case; Set of Rosette Irons; and 1904 "Alice in Wonderland" book.

Claribel Coffey: 1972 Ford 2 dr. sedan roadster.

Rex Stacy: Wilson High program, "Riding Down the Sky"; Wilson "Star", 12/8/1949.

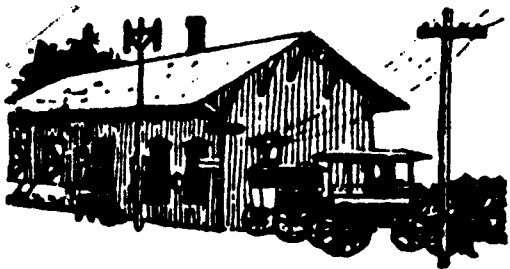
John Grieg, Niagara Falls: The Dalseman 1981 Railway Calendar, and 1981 S. Pacific Calendar.

Hazel Thilk: Brass packing box stencils used by B. Woodcock, Chestnut Rd; also R. Staats, East Wilson. Variety of apple stencils made by F.G. Stone, Lockport; "Stars" for 12/7/51, 1952, Calendar prints of 6 early cars; N.Y. State License Plate, 1960; World's Fair, 1939.

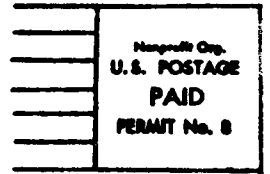
Judith Okoniewski: Summer Girl Scout Uniform, ca. 1946.

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REAL CHARITY doesn't care if it's tax deductible or not: --Dan Bennett



WF - Wilson



Wilson Historical Society

WILSON, NEW YORK 14172

NEWSLETTER

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

OCTOBER 1983 Vol.12 No.9
(Coleman Press)

LIBRARIAN
WILSON CENTRAL SCHOOL
WILSON, NY 14172

SENIOR CLASS TRIP REMEMBERED:

For many years it was a tradition for Wilson High School seniors to take a trip to Washington to see the sights and round out their education. About 1954 the policy was discontinued, but for the many who had gone it was an experience few would ever forget. Sixty years ago Corliss E. Armstrong, a retired GMC executive from Pontiac, Mich., visited our nation's capitol with the Class of 1923. He kept a diary of his daily experiences, and we believe some of them would be of interest to other members.

The trip began on March 30th, and Corliss noted that it was clear and cold at 5:30 that morning as walked to the Singer residence. The Singers drove Helen and Corliss to the Lehigh Valley station in Buffalo where they joined their classmates and picked up their tickets. The train pulled out at 8:31AM and it took them 14 hours to get to Washington. The time was broken up by playing cards, and a birthday party was held for Emily Dennis--complete with cake. When they arrived in the city they were assigned to rooms in a boarding house.

Some of the sites that seemed to impress young Corliss were the Union Station where, "at night one cannot see a light, but it is light enough to read in any part of it." He also noted that the Continental Hall of the DAR had several rooms furnished by different states with objects of interest such as, "a table of William Penn, a chest of Paul Jones, and a room decorated with wood from a ship that had been underwater for 125 years." He especially remembered the visit to the Treasury Building where he "held a million dollars in bills in my hand, also \$5,000,000 in gold." Another highlight was when Duane Stacy, Grace Evans, Emily Dennis and Corliss went to the Metropolitan Theater and saw Jackie Cooper in "Daddy".

The class visited just about every historical place possible while in Washington including the Washington and Lincoln Memorials, Smithsonian Institute, Naval Building, and White House. While there they saw an egg rolling contest on the President's private lawn, saw President and Mrs. Harding, and heard the Marine Band play. Many of the students had their meals at the Child's Restaurant, and in between sightseeing trips attended theaters or purchased gifts to take home. In fact, they visited so many places Dorothy Diez asked Mr. Johnson, "when do we go home?", and he replied, "When we can't go anywhere else."

Part of the memorable trip was spent in Philadelphia where the group had their first experience with automats. The automats dispensed food and looked like "the lock boxes in the Wilson Postoffice." You would place one, two, or three nickels in the slot, turn a knob to unlock it, then remove the food of your choice. Jane Stoddard put one nickel in when she should have inserted two. "There, she said, "I knew it wouldn't work."

Some of the points of interest visited in Philadelphia were the U. S. Mint, Benjamin Franklin's grave, and the Betsey Ross house where the first American Flag was made. Other historic sites included Independence Hall, the Liberty Bell, and the room where Jefferson drafted the Declaration of Independence.

Amusing incidents on the trip were the time Alice Nelson knocked on the door of the hotel room while Jane Stoddard was taking a bath. Jane jumped into bed soaking wet and Emily Dennis crawled under it while Grace Evans went to the door and opened it. Then there was the time Duane Stacy turned a summersault in the middle of the street and ripped open his pants. Another time, Jane Stoddard called Mr. Johnson at 6:30 in the morning to ask him where she could buy flowers.

On April 10th, the class returned home via the Black Diamond Express and arrived in Buffalo at 8PM. Ralph Evans drove some of the young people back to Wilson and, except for Grace Evans traveling bag falling off in a ditch, there were no further incidents.

Chaperones for the happy occasion were Clarence Johnson, Mrs. J. W. Nelson, Mrs. Roland Singer, Mrs. Joseph DeNeau, and Mary Benedict.

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COMMUNICATIONS:

Harriet Landy Nolan has been elected President of the Northern Gila County Genealogical Society at Payson, Arizona. She recently mailed a copy of their first Newsletter for the Wilson museum library.

Jim Harold of Detroit, Michigan, phoned to inquire about Wilson. He has been away for 12 years and hopes the village is still the nice little place he envisioned as a boy. He wishes to be remembered to all his friends.

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DO YOU REMEMBER--

The first cafeteria in the old high school which was run once a week by the senior class to raise funds for their trip to Washington? If you do, you are an "Old Timer".

* * * * *

THE VILLAGE BLACKSMITH:

"Under the spreading Chestnut tree, the Village Smithy stands.....toiling,-rejoicing,-sorrowing, onward through life he goes." Who could ever forget those stirring lines by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. But how many can remember the village smithys that were once prevalent in Wilson?

Through the years shops were operated by Bonsteel on north Lake Street; William Bell had one on Catherine Street; Jed Biggins place was back of the Albright home on Wilcox Street; and his son, Jesse Biggins, was located on Catherine Street. Bruce Fittro had a shop on Lake Street near the depot, and Elwyn Flagler plied his trade on High Street.

Other blacksmith shops in the vicinity were run by George Upton at Alberta, and Daniel Woodcock and Hub Stockwell had shops in East Wilson. Others whos names might "ring a bell" in your memories were Charles Birdsall, John Stoddard, Jacob Treichler, Pat Drewes, and Samuel McClellan. Sam was Marietta Goodman's uncle, and he learned the blacksmith trade in Appleton.

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FINANCIAL REPORT:

Millie Croop, treas., has prepared a financial report encompassing the year June 20, 1982 through June 20, 1983 to keep our members informed on yearly receipts and expenditures.

RECEIPTS		EXPENSES (Continued)	
Dues	1,226.00	Paint for buildings	1,249.84
Wireless Association	25.00	Labor	350.00
Niag. Falls Sr. Citizens	5.00	Airless sprayer rental	50.00
Loan of antique car	100.00	Antique car maintenance	126.42
John Goodrich	20.00	Niag. Co. Federation-State dues	60.00
Daughters-American Revolution	25.00	Niag. Co. Hist. Soc. donation	100.00
Thilk-Hazen Agency	25.00	Wilson Vol. Fire Co. donation	100.00
Delphic Circle	10.00	Library, Quill Misc. supplies	374.35
Town of Wilson	500.00	Audio equipment	270.64
Wireless Association	35.00	Repair Victrola	50.00
For research	15.00	Horton Hardware (supplies)	162.86
Annual Country Fair	9,919.53	Farm & Garden supplies	20.78
Country Barn Shop	61.50	Kitchen supplies	14.40
Ways & Means	516.10	History award to Wilson Senior	25.00
Memorials	110.00	Zerox historical documents	9.15
Interest	965.95	Lawn swing	40.00
Bake Sale	182.40	Vanity set	50.00
Programs	280.95	Booklet-Wilson Free Library	250.00
Total Yearly Income	<u>14,022.43</u>	Ways & Means souvenir items	1,248.82
		Life Membership plaque-plates	172.20
		Xmas tree skirt	12.83
		Hoover vacuum cleaner	89.99
		Tent for Country Fair	400.00
		Ropes for tent	24.59
		Total Yearly Expenses	<u>12,696.05</u>
		Balance on hand 6/20/82	8,524.83
		Receipts	<u>14,022.43</u>
			22,547.26
		Expenditures	<u>12,696.05</u>
		Balance on hand 6/20/83	<u>9,851.21</u>

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WILSON MUSEUM SPARKLES:

The white trim on the museum has been painted making the old red and white depot stand out as an imposing attraction at the southern approach to the village. Persons who wielded paint brushes to get the job done were Ralph and Helen Dinse, George Linnabery, Rex Stacy, and Don and Millie Croop.

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HOSPITAL AUXILIARY TO MEET IN MUSEUM:

The All-Branch quarterly meeting of the Inter-Community Hospital Auxiliary will be held at the Wilson museum, Monday evening, October 24th, at 8PM. The speaker will be Dr. Edward O'Keefe, and his topic will be "Holistic Health". The public is invited to attend.

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ATTENTION! OFFICERS & TRUSTEES:

It has been decided to hold all future meetings of the officers, trustees, and committee chairmen on the 2nd Monday of each month. Next meeting will be October 10th at 8PM.

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1800 FOX HUNT:

On Feb. 9, 1889, an exciting fox hunt took place in the town of Wilson in which about 40 "sports" of the day participated. All dogs in the community, as well as some outside canines, took part in the chase as hunters wended their way through the woods, climbed fences, and jumped over ditches. Several foxes were seen and numerous shots were fired, but no trophies were collected that day. It was reported, however, that several hunters were seriously injured by stray shots, one calf was killed, and a young colt wounded. Fox hounds were reported to be a drug on the market that year and sold for 25¢ each, while ordinary guns could be purchased for \$1.50 each.

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BON MOT: What would life be if we had no courage to attempt anything? --Vincent van Gogh

WILSON GRADUATES HOLD REUNION:

Graduates of Wilson Union School, Class of 1933, met recently at Pembroke Meadows in Lockport to celebrate the 50th reunion of their class. Attending were Janet (Benedict) Welch who gave the blessing, and President William Fritton who offered a toast to the assembled guests. After dinner, the alumni and their spouses recalled many happy memories from their former schoolyears.

Mrs. Welch and her husband, Bill, came the greatest distance from Santa Cruz, California, and Frank and Betty Oldenburg traveled here from Greensborough, North Carolina. Others who attended the happy occasion were Ernestine (Dietrick) Walpole, valedictorian, and Ruth Upton (Tenneyson) and Leah Bigalow who co-chaired the event. Maxine (Fitch) Gnage, class advior, and her husband, James, also attended. The Class of '33 graduated 29 members of which 23 are alive today. Sixteen of them attended the reunion.

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ANNUAL BAKE SALE COMING UP:

The society's annual Bake Sale will be held at the Town Hall on Election Day, November 8th, from 10AM until sold out. Please plan to bake or contribute, and it would be appreciated if everyone would get their "goodies" to the hall between 9 and 10AM.

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WHO LEFT THE "BUMBERSHOOT":

Lois Jennings, Museum Chrm., reports that two umbrellas were left in the museum library, and she will be unable to credit them unless the donor identifies herself.

Lois says that additional members would be welcome on the museum committee, so if you think you might be interested, please call her. (751-9783)

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CARD PARTY SCHEDULED AT MUSEUM:

Start making plans now to attend the annual Hospital Auxiliary card party which will be sponsored by the Wilson Branch at the museum on October 5, 1983, at 7:00PM. The Wednesday night affair will feature money tree and door prizes, and dessert will be served. Donations are \$1.25 per person.

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PIONEER DAYS AT CAMBRIA:

The Cambria Hist. Soc. will celebrate the 175th anniversary of the foundation of the town of Cambria at their 12th annual Pioneer Days Open House, Sunday, Oct. 16th, at the Cambria Community Center from Noon until 6PM. The theme, "the history of the Niagara Frontier", will be presented by local historical societies, also the Holland Land Grant Museum at Batavia, the Old Fort Niagara Association, and several Erie County societies. Let's all turn out and give a boost to our friends "south of the border".

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NEW MEMBERS:

Welcome to our most recent new members, Sherman and Mary Elizabeth Allgeier of Naples, FL, and the youngest, 1 yr. old Anthony Gurski, son of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Gurski, Pensacola, FL. Also, Mrs. Beatrice Rignel, Punta Gorda, FL.

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HOSTESSES FOR OCTOBER:

Marietta Goodman has announced that museum greeters on Sunday afternoons from 2 to 4PM will be: Oct. 2nd, Ruth Rawlings and Clo Reid; Oct. 9th, Ronnie and Bernice Swick; Oct. 16th, Milton and Helen Clark; Oct. 23rd, "Chuck" and Marion Campbell; and Oct. 30th, Berne and Nancy Kent.

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OCTOBER PROGRAM:

Mr. Leslie Beukema is scheduled to be the guest speaker at the regular meeting, Oct. 17th at 7:30PM, and his topic will be "Old Houses." Following the meeting, refreshments will be served by Diane Albright, Sue Cruickshank, and Celeste Crawford.

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ACQUISITIONS:

Howard Croop, Rapid City, SD., has donated the 1st button issued by Wilson Conservation Club; Wilson High Booster Club Black and Gold Tie; Cub Scout Cap; Program presented by Wilson Variety Club (1954-55); Memory Calendar, Norman Rockwell Prints (1948) Various books; and ribbons won for entrees in the 1951 State Fair and 4H Club.

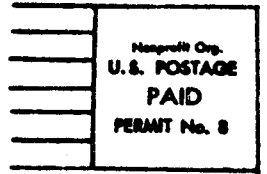
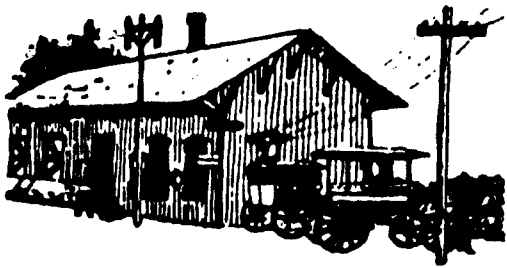
- John Plain, Phoenix, AZ: Two Tooth Extractors used by Dr. Plain of Ransomville.
- Sandra Davis Staat, Huston, Texas: Hamilton Family Album, also photos of LaMont, Silas, and John Hamilton.
- Virgil Singer Scott, Houston, Texas: Mourning Shawl-Challis that belonged to Beatrice Singer's grandmother ca. 1848.
- Grace Singer: Mourning Bonnet and Veil (ca.1888) that belonged to her grandmother.
- Eleanor Gabbey: Statements from Wilson Businessmen to the late Ethel Dikeman.
- Helen Borngraeber: Air Raid Warden's Handbook-WWII; 2 Crocheted Handbags, ca. 1900-1920; and 2 Moire Dress Sashes.
- Merritt Thilk: 1940 Operator's License issued to Dr. John A. Burns.
- Warren Harrington: Photo of Holloween young people-Oct 1982; Advertising notebook from the B.L.Gale Co.; Veneer-Plywood calendar 1928-29.
- Clarence Monroe: July 1953 issue of McCall's featuring Exley Methodist project of "Talents"
- Mayor Kenneth Welker: 40lb. Metrometer Counter Scale given in memory of Mary C. Miller and Samuel D. Brown.
- Jean Argue: 2 Pewter Ashtrays used in Dr. Slocum's office, also photo of cottage that once stood where Argue cottage is now. Moved to foot of Harbor St. on Ontario St.

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DID YOU KNOW

Curtis Pettit built the first frame schoolhouse (Dist.#4) on Beebe Road, town of Wilson, in 1834?

* * * * *



Wilson Historical Society

WILSON, NEW YORK 14172

NEWSLETTER

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

NOVEMBER 1983 Vol. 12 No. 10

LIBRARIAN
WILSON CENTRAL SCHOOL
WILSON, NY 14172

SCHOONER DAYS: (Part I)

In the fall of 1945, Charles Henry J. Snider, editor of the now defunct Toronto Telegram, wrote a series of articles for his paper called "Schooner Days" in which he made many references to the old Wilson port as well as descriptions of the 20 schooners reported to have been built there. We recently acquired copies of these articles, and feel they are worth preserving in the "Newsletter" for the museum's archives.

* * * * *

The first I ever heard of Wilson, N.Y., was in 1890 when I went to the Western Gap to watch the ships with two younger brothers. Capt. Pat McSherry had brought his schooner, the "Marcia A. Hall", into the Queen's Warf and was looking for help to load a cargo of lumber "for a place across the lake past Niagara called Wilson." Though only 11 years of age, I helped Capt. McSherry, and without knowing it, commenced my Schooner Days.

It wasn't until 1904 that I first made the acquaintance of Wilson Creek. We stood under all sail in a dying breeze and entered the harbor between the piers as the sun dipped into the lake. Our green galley, the "Frou Frou", was a centreboarder and could move wherever her 18" deep rudder could be dragged through. She was a tight little ship and a grand craft for her size with topmast, spinaker, and small cabin--and of course, auxiliary engines at that time were unknown.

The squat lighthouse clung to the west pier, and both piers were of timber, sunken and decayed--a line of cribs filled with stones and joined by stringers of heavy decking, sagged and humped like a switchboard. They seemed to have been set on sand and were sinking as storm waves sucked the support from under them in one place and piled it up in another. The channel was silting up and it had 10' of water here and 6' of water there. The piers ran approximately south and at their inner end the water shoaled to port. We kept to starboard and the space widened into a creek mouth of great beauty in the twilight, bordered by a few cottages and summer hotels.

We proceeded ahead to the landing float of a pretty hotel where the old clipper, "Zeus II", lay by the little warf. Mr. Harris, proprietor of the Harris House, stood on the dock, and the pretty little hotel with one lamp burning--no hydro then--looked as though it wouldn't throw us bedraggled lake-soaked voyagers out on our ears.

It was 75¢ for supper, bed and breakfast, and we had to go into a huddle and do a lot of lend-leasing among ourselves before deciding on the luxury of not sleeping on the wet floor boards of our ship's cockpit. There was still \$4.00 in Canadian money left among us five newspapermen, but the hospitable Yanks took it without discount, dried us out at the kitchen stove, and looked after us well with no questions asked.

We made an early start in the morning because of a brisk southwest wind, and we had about fifty miles ahead of us to reach Toronto. Sailing down the creek to the piers, we heard a scraping sound and discovered our topmast was foul of a telephone wire overhead. We pushed to where the wire was higher and managed to get her free, but dear knows what "Central" of those long departed days had to report.

On the history of the port of Wilson we are rather vague, for the time we were there in 1904 nobody knew much about the empty harbor--then sanded in between piers.

It seems that after the Americans captured Fort George in 1813, U. S. supply ships were chased into Olcott Creek and Wilson Creek and captured by vessels of Sir James Lucus Yeo's fleet--in particular by the schooner, "General Beresford", built here in Toronto. Soperhaps there was a settlement of some sort at Wilson Creek as early as the War of 1812, although Commodore Owen's survey of 1817 only marks the place as "Twelve Mile Creek", and shows no houses. The present village of Wilson is inland from the harbor but the Anderson Bros. of Oswego used to go up the creek with small craft to load grain and produce there.

For a long time there was lake trade between Whitby, Ontario, and Wilson, and two Port Whitby boys, "Tip" and "Billy" Wilson, went across the lake many years ago and settled in the American port. Some Ontario "Old Timers" think it was these Wilson Boys who gave it its name, but the port was named Wilson after the little village a mile and a half inland. (to be cont.)

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NOVEMBER PROGRAM:

Larry Babcock, past-pres. of the Niagara Frontier Wireless Assoc., will be the guest speaker at the monthly meeting on Nov. 21st. Mr. Babcock, an employee of Calspan, will demonstrate and talk about some of his rare old radios from a collection of over one hundred.

Following the program, refreshments will be served by Gerry Swann, Maryanne Sharpe and Lucy Monroe.

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WORRY is like a rocking chair. It gives you something to do but doesn't get you anywhere.

MERLE WILSON-COMMERCIAL FISHERMAN:

Merle started his fishing career in 1901 when his father, William, decided he wasn't learning anything in school and took Merle out to help him. So, along with brother Fred, the boys began to learn the often dangerous business of commercial fishing. Their 24' boat had a small sail and three pair of oars, and they fished anywhere from a half to six miles out on the lake. At the time they were catching herring, and would bring in 4 or 5 hundred pounds each trip every other day. The fish were packed in ice and shipped from the Wilson Depot to New York City where they brought 5¢ a pound or \$50 to \$75 a week--a considerable amount in the early 1900's.

Merle admitted he was scared many times, but one of the most harrowing experiences was the time they set out one cold morning in January to fish the herring grounds 6 miles out. They left the harbor at 8 AM with several other boats accompanying them. As the day went by it became cold and windy, and suddenly they discovered they were all alone--the other boats had gone. The south west wind became so bad, Mr. Wilson figured they'd be lucky to make Wilson, but he raised the sail and told the boys to row. Snow began to fall as darkness closed in and they could only guess where they might be.

Around 5PM, Merle sighted some trees along the shoreline, and his father recognized them as being a woods just west of Olcott. He wanted his father to pull into the Olcott harbor but Mr. Wilson would have no part of that, and decided to follow the shore back to Wilson. Huge ice banks towered above them as high as a house, but father and sons rowed the 6 miles back to Wilson where they finally pulled in between the old wooden piers. One hundred fifty people were lined up waiting to give the frozen fishermen a helping hand; most had thought the Wilsons lost in the lake but had kept their lonely vigil in hopes they might somehow return.

Merle recalled that many species of fish were caught during his early fishing years including perch, trout, whitefish, pike, and sturgeon, however, fishing began to decline in later years as the lamprey eel and pollution began to take their toll. The first fish to disappear were trout and whitefish, but blue pike were caught until 1959. By 1962, commercial fishing was just about over. Fred quit fishing in 1910 leaving Merle and his father alone, and for many years blue pike and perch were caught by them from spring until June. Power boats were not used until ca. 1918.

Fishing fell off drastically in the mid 30's, but one October Merle got tired of sitting and decided to get some nets in the water again. His father told him it would be a waste of time, so Merle went over to see Fred Wheeler. Fred didn't give him much encouragement either telling Merle they might just as well set the nets in his front yard because they'd probably catch as many there as in the lake. Never-the-less, the men took off at daybreak and placed 3 nets, one off the old wooden piers, one three quarters mile west, and another three quarters beyond.

The next morning was one Merle never forgot. They found all three nets full of fish, and by the time they got them loaded into the boat they had over 1800 lbs. of blue pike. The boat lay so low in the water that Merle's father, who was watching from shore, thought they had sprung a leak. Merle went to his ice house where he broke up chunks of ice with a sledge hammer, then, using his 20 lb. scale, packed the pike into thirty 60 Lb. boxes, and took them to his distributor, a Mr. Mang of LaSalle.

In 1940, Merle decided he needed a new boat and arranged with Mr. Mang to build him one for \$250--with Merle supplying the materials. Things went well for a few years until 1946 when he could no longer get his new 28' boat into the lake because of a sandbar that formed across the mouth of 12 Mile Creek. He decided to take the boat to Olcott where he operated it for 2 years but was able to return it to Wilson in 1948 after the government dredged the channel and built two new piers.

One time Merle took Frank Rignell on a fishing trip about 6 miles west of Wilson. While setting the nets the motor stopped, but they managed to rig a sail and head for Youngstown. As they neared the Niagara River, a Coast Guard vessel approached them and the Captain asked where they were from. Merle told them and asked if they would tow them into Youngstown so they could get their motor repaired. The coastguard offered to tow them to Wilson instead and threw Merle a line. At the time, the waves were kicking up pretty bad from a strong east wind, so when the Coastguard opened their engines up full throttle, Merle and Frank were soon drenched with water. They said when they entered the Wilson harbor, they felt like a pair of drowned rats.

Merle was grateful for the favor, however, so took the coast guard sailors to the boathouse and told Emerson to give them all they wanted to eat or drink--he'd settle up later. The Coast Guard Captain refused to take any money but told Merle if he would write to the Base and explain what happened, it would do them more good. This, Merle was more than happy to do.

In 1963, Merle gave up fishing and sold his boat, but no one was interested in his nets or other equipment. Fortunately, some of the buoys and nets were donated to the Wilson Museum where they are on display and will be a reminder of the man who gave up 63 years of his life to be a commercial fisherman in the town of Wilson.

(Note: The above article was compiled from a tape made by Ricky Schmidle a number of years ago during an interview with the late Merle Wilson. Thanks to Mrs. Jeanne Schmidle and Mr. Joe Higgins, the original tape was acquired from Jane Wilson's daughter, Nancy, and a copy made up for the Wilson Museum.)

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MUSEUM HOSTESSES:

Greeters at the museum for the month of November will be as follows: Nov. 6th, James and Elizabeth Cornell; Nov. 13th, Norman and Martha MacAskill; Nov. 20th, Merton and Lillian Evans and Nov. 27th, Dorothy Lort and Carole Schnoor.

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NEW MEMBERS:

The society extends a hearty welcome to the following new members who joined during the past month: Mr. and Mrs. Donn Wagner, Long Beach, California; Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Mudge, Buffalo, New York; Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Glick, East Aurora, New York, and Doris Cornell of Wilson.

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THE HARDEST JOB a politician has is to find a way to correct a mistake without admitting he has made one.

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DON'T FORGET THE BAKE SALE:

Election Day is the time; the Town Hall is the place; and Winnie Fischer is in charge. Please try to get your baked goods at the hall by 9:00AM--if necessary, please call Winnie for pickup. Donations gratefully appreciated. Don't miss this opportunity to purchase some of the best baked goods available anywhere in Niagara County. Remember the date--November 8th.

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FRIENDLY FISHERMAN:

Merle Wilson was not only a good fisherman, but a good friend to young people as well. One time, while Millie Croop was leader of Brownie troop #35, Merle offered to take her young girls out for a lake cruise. She recalled that the sides of his 28' boat were so high, many Brownies could not see over them--even when standing up. The trip was to Olcott and the day was warm and sunny--so much so in fact, several youngsters curled up on the floor of the boat and slept.

Merle helped out on another occasion when Intermediate G.S. troop #1 decided to enter a float in the firemen's field day parade. It was decided the theme would be "friendship", so it was only natural that Merle be asked to provide a "ship". He not only furnished a boat but a flatbed for it to ride on.

The day before the parade, the girls gathered at the home of Eleanor and Earl Brydges where they covered their "friend-ship" with yards of crepe paper. When the job was done, the gaily decorated boat "floated" on a sea of blue crepe paper waves. Happily, the scouts shoved it into the Brydges barn and went to their homes to wait for the next day's parade.

That night, tragedy struck when a thick fog bank rolled in off the lake and reduced the float to a mass of soggy, sagging, crepe paper. Millie got a call from Eleanor Brydges in the morning suggesting she get to Wilson in a hurry. Upon viewing the drooping mess, she rallied her scouts together and they set about correcting the damage. The float was re-decorated and ready when the parade moved out, and a happy group of girls sat in their "friend-ship" as it rolled through the village streets. Later, when the judges announced that their troop had won 1st prize, everyone agreed that Merle was a great guy, and their efforts had been well rewarded.

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EXHIBITS DON'T JUST HAPPEN:

Sometimes we get so involved in raising money to meet our annual expenses, we are apt to take for granted some of the people who arrange exhibits and make the museum the attraction it is. We refer, of course, to the museum committee which presently consists of Lois Jennings, Chrm., Norman and Martha MacAskill, Jean Argue, Eleanor Myers, Nettie Stimson, Gertrude Schnoor, Betty Stimson, Joe Higgins, Anna Mae Nevins, Helen Borngraeber, Grace Singer, Judy Zauner, and Millie Croop. As pointed out in the last "Newsletter", more volunteers are always welcome, so if you wish to join this active group, a call to Lois Jennings will do the trick.

Occasionally, outside exhibits are arranged by this committee such as the one at the recent Open House at Cambria. A display of the society's rare old woven coverlets received many favorable comments from interested visitors, and Lois Jennings and Norm and Martha MacAskill are to be commended for the time and effort expended to make it possible.

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MUSEUM PLANS AND PROGRESS:

The village has installed a new water line from the road to the museum which hopefully will solve some of the low water pressure problems experienced at recent "Country Fairs".

The officers and trustees have decided to auction off some of the later model cars donated to the society with the intention of establishing a fund for restoration of antique models owned.

A green light has been given to the possible construction of a pole-type pavilion on "Hojack Park". It is believed that such an addition would be useful in a number of ways.

Things are looking up on the windmill project. "Chuck" Messersmith has finally received some vital parts necessary for its operation, and it looks like it will now be "full breeze ahead".

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WASHINGTON TRIPS TERMINATED IN '55:

An item in the October "Newsletter" about a class trip to Washington, brought an interesting response from Earl W. Brydges, Jr., Att'y. at Niagara Falls, who noted that his Class of 1955 was the last to make the trip--and in his words, "who could ever forget it." We also checked with Marlene Marcks Schotz who graduated in 1956, and she said that instead of going to Washington her class held an outing at Sea Breeze near Rochester. Both Earl and Marlene are members of the Wilson Historical Society.

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MUSEUM ACQUISITIONS:

Nettie Stimson has donated a Pullman Stool, Hat Box, and 6 old purses and garters, a 1910 Studebaker Book and Car Calendar. Also, from Wilson High School, a "First Aid" French Record for American soldiers produced by the Victor Talking Machine Company.

Joel Babcock of Barker: Commercial Corn Sheller and 2 Grain Separators, one an "Empire" built by the Richmond Manufacturing Company at Lockport.

Jean Argue: wedding Dress (ca.1935), Brown swirled Glass Bottle, Cardboard shoe box, Brownie No. 2 Camera, 6 pr. old Door Knobs, also Godeys Ladys' Book-1872.

Bonnie Cantara, Ransomville: Old "Star" Parlor Organ.

Mr. and Mrs. Al Hibbard: General Electric Stove, ca. 1920.

Cone Read, Pavilion: New York Central Step Stool; Michigan Central Stepstool, ca. 1923.

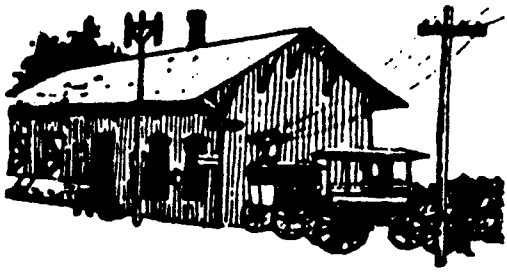
Carol C. Smith, Sanborn: Elson-Gray Basic Reader--Book III, used in Wilson Central School.

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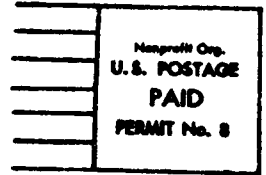
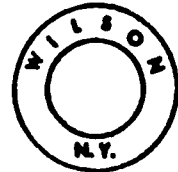
SUSPENSION BRIDGE JOURNAL:

On November 7, 1885, N. C. Arnold of Wilson, (while packing evaporated apples) placed a letter in one of the boxes requesting that the recipient write to him and let him know how he liked the apples. Several weeks later Mr. Arnold received an answer from the firm of Erick and Carl Schneider of Breslau, Germany, purveyors to the Emperor of Germany, who expressed themselves as being very pleased with the apples.

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Wilson



Wilson Historical Society

WILSON, NEW YORK 14172

NEWSLETTER

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

DECEMBER 1983 Vol. 12 No. 11
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WILSON CENTRAL SCHOOL
WILSON, NY 14172

SCHOONER DAYS: (Part 2)

Captain Richard Goldring of Toronto did some trading to Wilson during his sailing years, and his cargo was always sawed-lumber of some sort. His first trip, however, was in the 1860s when, as a boy, he sailed to the Wilson port in the family scow, "Betsey", when the harbor was indulging in one of its many rehabilitation periods. As a young man, Captain Goldring carried lumber and 30' crib timbers from Port Hope to Wilson in competition with the schooner, "Parthenon". Sometimes the harbor entrance was so rough it was hard to get in so he would go to Olcott or Niagara to wait for smoother waters. When calm, he'd return to Wilson where he'd throw his deckload overboard, tow it in the harbor, then heave his schooner, the "Maple Leaf", in with a windlass.

One time he arrived in Wilson when the "Parthenon" was coming out for another load. Capt. Goldring unloaded his cargo quickly and was soon outbound for Port Whitby where he arrived at noon. There he had the luck to find a lumber-shover at loose ends and was able to get the "Maple Leaf" loaded up again by dark. It was dead calm so he told the hands to spend the night in and he'd call them for breakfast. At 7:00AM "the fly at the masthead was beginning to tail off, so off went the mooring lines and away we sailed for Wilson." They arrived at noon to the amazement of the harbor master who scratched his head and asked, "Weren't you here yesterday?"

The next morning Captain Goldring had a windfall when he found the "Maple Leaf" surrounded by bundles of shingles. They had been swept from the deck of a barge and drifted up the lake to where his schooner lay anchored. He was able to salvage 26 squares before the breeze came up, and sold them to the harbor contractor. A story was told at Port Credit that one of its buildings had crossed the lake twice--once in cargoes of lumber shipped to Wilson, and once in deckloads stolen from the Wilson piers by returning hookers.

Another vessel that shared in the rebuilding of the harbor at Wilson in 1890 was the "British Queen", a schooner of about 300 ton carrying capacity. The "Marcia A. Hall" of Windsor was another trader--perhaps the last out of Toronto. One time the "Marshy Haul", as she was called, lay at the Queen's Warf laden with cedar posts for Wilson, but her usually congenial Captain Pat McSherry was ready to swallow tacks--there was a fair wind but he was unable to use it. While getting clearance to sail, his mate had taken it upon himself to mend the foresail and had hauled it out on the dock for repairs. To make matters worse, the crew, anticipating a hard days work and all night sail, had quit.

Spotting two boys on the dock, Captain Pat asked them if they'd like a trip to Wilson--and of course they would. They had been going to Sunday School religiously for 3 months so's to qualify for the annual Sunday School excursion to Wilson, and here it was being handed to them on a platter without even being asked to recite the "golden text". The boys pitched in and helped the mate and Captain Pat rollup the detached foresail and dragged it aboard where it and the main sail were "slab-reefed" to let the foreboom clear the deckload of posts. With everything shipshape, the "Marshy Haul" was soon on her way and the northwest wind held steady all evening. By midnight, the lumber-hooker arrived in Wilson and was soon nuzzlin' the pier in lee of the little red-capped lighthouse. Supper that night had consisted of only water-melons, but now they were in Niagara County--the land of plenty--so they all had bread, butter, and eggs for breakfast, along with coffee and milk.

One of the boys who made that trip to Wilson so many years ago was Tom Mowat, who later became Chief of Police at Oswego, NY. As a youth he made many more excursions to attend the Sunday School picnics held in Wilson, and in 1900 came aboard the tug "John Navagh" when it towed a dredge to the Wilson harbor.

Tom remembered one picnic in particular when the foundrymen and riveters of the Doty Engine Company held an outing in Wilson, and half the steelworkers got lost on a voyage inland to see the Wilson village. Their ship, the "Argyle", left for Toronto without them, and the men had to walk to Youngstown where they were able to get the "Niagara" back to Canada.

The last time Tom Mowat was in Wilson he recalled seeing one large fishing boat and a small launch chugging around the picturesque harbor. There were no longer any traces of the old red-capped lighthouse or the wooden piers that had brought in the Sunday School children, boiler-makers, shingle-shovers, lumber-hookers, or tourists of the late century, they were gone--all gone--and the American built schooners that once shipped out with loads of grain and apples were but fading memories. (To be continued)

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DID YOU KNOW.....

that twenty, two and three masted schooners were built at the Wilson harbor from 1848 to 1875 with some having a carrying capacity of over 300 tons?

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FAIR PLANNING MEETING SCHEDULED:

Rena Rohring, Chrm. of the 1984 "Country Fair", has scheduled a meeting of all fair chairmen at her home on 4371 Wilson-Burt Rd., Tuesday evening, December 6th, at 7:30PM. All of the Country Fairs have been successful because of early planning, and Rena hopes that everyone who will be involved will try to attend this first important meeting.

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GENEALOGY RESEARCH:

Tracing the origin of one's ancestors can be a fascinating and rewarding past time, and the society is fortunate to have Celeste Crawford in charge of the museum's genealogy records. She has spent countless hours filing and arranging family histories so they are easily accessible with all surnames neatly coded in three loose-leaf volumes. When members or friends of the society turn in family records they are helping to preserve vital statistics that might otherwise be lost to following generations. The fine job being done by Celeste reminds us that there are others in our membership doing genealogy research.

As previously noted, Harriet Nolan, daughter of Roy and Harriet Landy, is President of the Northern Gila County Genealogical Society at Payson, Arizona. Another of our members, Becky Hill, daughter of Ella Mae Peters, is President of the Seneca County Genealogical Society at Tiffin, Ohio. Her group was organized about 2 yrs. ago and now has an active membership of ca. 235 members. Also available for genealogy research is Sharon Fischer, daughter of Mrs. Winnie Fischer. Sharon did extensive work on the Pease family as well as the Carl Mehwaldt pottery family of Bergholtz.

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CRASH REMEMBERED:

During World War 2, June 21, 1943, a B-17 bomber crashed in the South Dakota badlands while on a routine training mission out of Ellsworth Air Force Base. Forty years later in June, 1983, a memorial was unveiled near the crash site to honor 9 airmen who lost their lives there.

Dr. John Argue was stationed at Ellsworth when the plane went down, and was one of the doctors assigned to the medical unit that rushed to the scene. Doc later served in Europe with the U. S. Airforce Medical Corps as a flight surgeon with the 483rd Bomber Group. He was discharged with the rank of Captain, October, 1945.

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NEW LIFE MEMBER:

Lois Stedman Barnum was given a Life Membership in the Wilson Historical Society by her husband, Whitney, in recognition of her birthday on November 8th. Lois is a graduate of Wilson Central School, Class of 1948, and is also an active member of Exley United Methodist Church.

She is a charter member of the historical society, and has served in a number of ways. In 1974 she was Chrm. of the Program Committee; in 1977 she was Tour Chrm.; and in 1978 and 1979 she served as Chrm. of the Ways and Means Comm. Perhaps her greatest contribution to the society was during the "Country Fairs" when she served as Food Chrm. from 1974 through 1981. Lois is the 54th member of the society to join the Life Membership Class.

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THUMBNAIL SKETCH:

Jennie Haner Bigalow, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. William Haner, was born September 28, 1886 in the house across from the former Ward Bros. Garage, now Wilson Sales & Service. Her father owned a livery stable, and salesmen who came to town by train, would check in at the Sutherland Hotel and then visit her father's livery to rent a horse and buggy. The livery was very popular then as it provided the only means of travel in the area other than by train.

Jennie graduated from the old Union Free School in 1906, and her classmates were Mildred Moody (Eakin), Florence Peterson, Mina Schulze (Bigalow), Sinnie LaPort, Edna Hoyt (Swick), Bessie DeNeau (Crawford), Bronson Taylor, Lloyd Smith, and Carl Ward. Jennie didn't have too much of a social life, because children who lived in the country usually had to work on the family farm when they weren't in school.

Her father ran a livery in Tonawanda for a short time but returned to Wilson when his aunt Johnson gave him her farm. Jennie lived there until her marriage to Fred Bigalow. They were married in 1908 but never had any children. Fred was elected Niagara County Sheriff, and Jennie worked for nine years as a matron at the county jail. She lived at her home on Lake Street to the age of 95 and now, at 97, is a resident of the Fairchild Nursing home in Lewiston.

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1984 CHURCH CALENDARS AVAILABLE:

The society has accepted on assignment 25 appointment calendars from Emmanuel Methodist Church in Lockport. They are beautifully prepared with each month represented by an 8x11 sketch of present or former historical buildings in the area. Included are the Wilson Depot, the North Ridge Methodist Church, and the former Olcott Beach Hotel, Lockport Railroad Station, and former Lkpt. Union High School. The calendars are selling for \$5.00 each with \$1.50 going to the Wilson Historical Society. If the 25 calendars are sold, orders will be taken.

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UNUSUAL ACCIDENT NEAR DEPOT:

The following item appeared in the Niagara Falls Journal, Aug. 5, 1893: South Wilson: "Aunt Esther Staats died at her home on Thursday morning and the funeral was observed from the house on Friday afternoon. On Tuesday of last week as Mr. and Mrs. Charles Staats were returning from Wilson, they failed to see the train coming from the west and just got over the tracks when the horse and wagon containing the rough box for Mrs. Esther Staats and a number of camp chairs, and Mr. and Mrs. Staats themselves, were suddenly precipitated into a deep ditch and Mrs. Staats was quite seriously injured. Had they been one minute later in getting across they would have undoubtedly been killed. (Courtesy of Don Loker, History Specialist at the Niagara Falls Public Library.)

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THE MATRIMONY TRAIL:

December 21st is a good time to get married. It is the shortest day of the year--and has the longest night.

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