

**Wilson Historical Society**  
**WILSON, NEW YORK 14172**

**NEWSLETTER**

**DONALD W. CROOP, Editor**

JANUARY 1989 Vol.18 No.1  
 (Coleman Press)

LIBRARIAN  
 WILSON CENTRAL SCHOOL  
 WILSON, NY 14172

**WILSON'S "OLD TIME RELIGION":**

The Wilson area was little more than a vast wilderness when the first Presbyterian Church was organized in the town on January 18, 1819, by the Rev. David M. Smith of Lewiston and John and Daniel Holmes of Wilson.

The following year the first Sabbath School, (Sunday School) was started by Deacon Holmes, Mr. and Mrs. Calvin Pratt, Luman Case, and Sally and Richard Holmes, and classes were held in the 1818 log schoolhouse that had been built on Reuben Wilson's property on Lake Road, about a mile and a half east of the present village.

A letter written in 1870 by Elmer Bickford, a member of the Presbyterian congregation, gives an interesting description of the first Sabbath School, and some of the difficult conditions that existed at the time:

"The hearth in the schoolhouse was wide, and a chimney of sticks and clay was built up on the outside of the log building. Furnishings were sparse and consisted only of an unpainted pine table and a single chair.

Desks with suitable seats were fastened to the inside walls of the cabin, and during public worship, additional seats were set up in the middle of the room.

The early pioneers spent many days of hard labor removing the dense tangle of underbrush and virgin timber, and it was not uncommon for children, while walking to Sabbath School, to see tracks of wolves or bear crossing their path.

The clothing worn by children was very similar in appearance, so nobody stayed home because of their dress. The garments were worn all week, but meticulous mothers always made sure the clothing was clean and pressed for Sunday.

In the summer, youngsters attended school barefoot, and the boys usually came in their shirtsleeves. If a girl's bonnet gave out, she would place a colorful bandana over her head rather than miss Sabbath School until a new one was acquired.

The Presbyterian Church was unique because it emphasized the importance of religious training for children, and the aim of the Sabbath School was to familiarize pupils with the early language of the Scriptures.

Youngsters were encouraged to memorize large portions of the Bible, and were often expected to recite 50 or 60 verses each week.

Singing was sparse with seldom more than one hymn being sung during a Sunday Service, also library material or religious papers were in short supply. As a result, young people would often read books like "Pilgrim's Progress" or "The Holy War", over and over again.

A religious revival in 1828 saw Sabbath Schools established in all the school districts in the township, but after the first frame Presbyterian Church was built on Lake Street in 1834, all the district Sunday Schools were merged into one central Sabbath School."

On July 10, 1894, the Presbyterian Church was consumed by flames in the same fire that destroyed the Ontario Hotel at the corner of Lake and Young Streets.

In 1896, the church was rebuilt with brick and stone, and services were resumed there and continued to July 25, 1930, when the church was dissolved by the Niagara Presbytery.

Today the beautiful old former Presbyterian Church is the home of Our Lady of the Rosary Roman Catholic Church. (Sabbath School information supplied by Miss Helen Stevens.)

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The 2nd church started in Wilson was the Methodist-Episcopal Society which was organized in March, 1827. The church was incorporated Jan. 2, 1836, and the 1st frame edifice was built across from the Presbyterian Church in 1837.

This building was used until about 1883 when it was moved north of the present church, started in 1884. Although not the oldest religious group in Wilson, Exley Methodist has been in continuous operation for over 150 years.

A unique fund-raising project was started in 1951 to build on a new addition consisting of a new modern kitchen and rooms for Christian Education.

The pastor, Rev. Walter Kingsley, handed each family in his flock a \$10 bill on Memorial Day, and asked that they increase its value by making use of their talents. The congregation responded vigorously, and many ingenious ideas were promoted from raising puppies and calves to making aprons, potholders, baked goods, bird houses, or raising flowers.

By Thanksgiving, the initial outlay of \$920 had been increased to \$7,420 dollars. The church's talent program, which was featured in McCall's Magazine, was the beginning of a financial drive that saw \$40,00 in building improvements paid off in six years.

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CALENDAR: Jan. 5th, Planning Board, museum, 7:30 PM; Jan. 11th, Board Directors, Dr. Singh's Office, 7:30 PM; Jan. 16th, Program Meeting, museum, 7:30PM.

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BOARD APPROVES PROPOSAL:

The antique car committee composed of Jim Pisello, Chrm., Wally Goodman, Tom Walder, Bob Rose, David Branch, Faye Pisello, and Clark Stimson, (advisory Committeeman) drew up a three year plan in November for renovation and improvement of the present facilities in order to better display the antique car collection--one of the museum's greatest assets.

The Board of Directors approved the plan as submitted at the December meeting which will call for a budgeted outlay of \$12,000 over the next three years.

In 1989-90, some of the funds will be used to renovate the 1959 Cadillac for parade purposes, and the Avanti will also be put in running condition.

The first year's budget will also include money for the general maintenance of all the cars, and funds to start a garage area for minor repair work.

It is the policy of the society to dispose any of the car acquisitions which have no immediate antique or classic value, and use the money received from their sale to recondition the cars retained at the museum.

During the past year, three of the society's late model cars were sold for approximately \$2800 including a 1969 Volkswagon Bus; a 1970 Olds Cutlas; and a 1975 Buick Riviera.

The Board also passed a motion to transfer \$2,000 from the general fund to the car fund so that the 1st year plans of the car committee would be funded.

The proposal for the 2nd year, (1990-91) asks for a budget of \$4,000 to be used for body work, paint, and engine detail on the 1957 Lincoln Continental and the 1946 Chrysler Imperial Limousine.

One thousand would also be allotted for finishing the garage area, while another thousand would be used for general maintenance on all cars.

In the third year, (1991-92), the 1923 1½ ton chevy truck and other restoration will be completed.

The committee also recommends that a pole barn should be erected on the grounds for storage purposes, and will also investigate the cost of acquiring fire and vandellism insurance for the Argue Building.

It is also suggested that auto insurance would be desirable on three cars in the collection, and that a historical plate be acquired for transfer from one car to the other.

The garage will be constructed in the west end of the present patio or breezeway which now connects the barnum Building to the Argue Building.

The Board of Directors unanimously agreed that renovation of the building as a proper display facility for the society's valuable antique car collection, (collectively estimated to be worth at least \$170,000) is long overdue.

The car committee agrees the proposal is an ambitious one, but will try to help with the funding. Wally Goodman, speaking for the committee, said they will be looking into obtaining State or Federal Grants, and are also interested in starting an annual Antique Car Rally to be held on the museum grounds.

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RECENT ACQUISITIONS:

Eleanor M. Brydges of Niagara Falls, has donated a framed certificate that was presented to Senator Earl W. Brydges in recognition of Historic Service to the People of New York State. The certificate was presented to him at the Albany Capitol in 1967 while he was serving as a member of the Rules Committee for the 1967 Constitutional Convention.

Diane Albright: One man's wool military top-coat, and two leather suitcases.

Betty Stimson: Photo copies of newspaper clippings of early deaths and weddings in the Wilson area.

Lois Allen, Lockport: School photo taken in 1931 at District Schoolhouse #13. Persons in photo are identified.

Mr. and Mrs. Charlton Bulmer: Two leather-bound diaries, 1890; also 8 tickets for the 1960 play, "Dudes and Dames", sponsored by the Wilson Lions Club to benefit the Little League Ball Park.

Mr. and Mrs. Wesley Johnson, Towanda, Penn: Smith-Corona typewriter purchased in 1921 for home course in typing to secure job as a stenographer.

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IN MEMORIAM:

Joseph Higgins, 83, passed away at his home unexpectedly, Tuesday, November 22, 1988. He was born in Lockport on April 27, 1905, the son of Joseph and Anna Specht Higgins.

He was one of the founders of the Wilson Historical Society, and, as its 1st Vice-President and member of the Board of Trustees, helped formulate the policies that led to the later success of the organization. Joe was also Vice-President of the Niagara County Historical Society for many years.

He was also a devout member of Our Lady of the Rosary R.C. Church, and member of the St. Vincent De Paul Society.

He is survived by one sister, Mrs. Willard (Anna Mae) Nevins of Wilson; a nephew, Bruce Nevins of Wilson; also a grand niece, Kristen Nevins; and one grand nephew, Sean Nevins, both of Wilson.

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated at Our Lady of the Rosary R.C. Church with burial at St. Patrick's Cemetery with Father Paul Burkard officiating.

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MEMBER IN THE SUN:

Congratulations to Rena Rohring, town assessor, who recently earned advanced certification designation from the State Division of Equalization and Assessment.

Rena served as Chairman of the 1984 Memorial Day Fair, and the words that she spoke to her helpers that year have as much meaning today as they did then:

"Don't ever let the enthusiasm which you all have shown ever be dampened. Our town needs what the Historical Society has to offer, so protect and preserve what we have been, and will be."

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THE FACULTY CLUB:

In the year 1946, the Faculty Club at Wilson Central School had a social calendar, and Dick Doten, a business teacher in Maine, recently sent Ernie Walpole a copy of one he had when he taught in Wilson.

Some of the teachers who taught in Wilson then are still residents of the area--some are deceased. See how many you can identify from the following list:

M. Schermerhorn, L. Coombs, M. Imershein, G. Shuman, C. Welsh, G. Snyder, M. Callahan, D. Dehn, E. Doug an, R. Lynch, H. Stevens, D. Allgeier, F. Blemaster, E. Dikeman, D. Reber, E. Smith, J. Stevens, M. Redder, M. Campbell, A. Brunetti, J. K. Xawitter, A. Schiekengurger, M. Stacy, E. Walpole, E. Tarr, W. Churchill, C. & W. Hutchison, S. Murdock, K. Ness, and R. Doten.

Faculty events during a six months period included a sleigh ride in January; a Valentine Social in February; a St. Patrick's Social in March; Easter in April; Entertain School Board in May; and a Picnic in June.

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HOLIDAY LIGHTING DECORATIONS:

Wilson may not be the "Rainbow Center", but for its size we'd say the lighting display in the village and town was a little less than sensational this Holiday Season.

Anyone who entered the village from the south was greeted with a beautiful arrangement at the Farm and Garden Supply, and as one proceeded into the village twinkling lights lit up the night on all sides.

The historical society museum had a brand new large wreath centered on the east end of the depot, and two large lanterns were mounted on either side. The wreath was put in place by Burt and Lois Jennings, and Don Burrows hooked a timer system to it.

The two large lanterns were gifts from the Wilson Business Association, and were formerly used to decorate the Main Street in Lockport.

Darrell Smith attached the lanterns to the museum, and hooked them into the timing system so that all three decorative pieces turned on and off at the same time.

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FROM THE MAILBAG:

Bea Hicks reports that she had an enjoyable summer showing sisters Marian Winger and Agnes Shanahan some of the sites in California they hadn't seen before.

She was able to take time out from her busy NSDAR schedule to spend Christmas in Phoenix with her daughter, and while there was able to welcome home her grandson from the Naval Academy.

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GALA AFFAIR:

One of the more popular events held at the Wilson Central School is the annual Senior Citizen Breakfast.

This year's event, sponsored by the Wilson Teachers' Association and students and staff of the Wilson Junior-Senior High School, was held on Dec. 15th from 8:15 to 11:00 AM.

Guests were treated with selections played by the Wilson Band, then adjourned to the cafeteria where they were served breakfast prepared by the 8th grade and Senior High Home Economics students.

A variety of entertainment was provided by the choral group and school choir, along with numerous displays of students' work, and exciting student demonstrations.

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NEW MEMBERS:

We are happy to welcome as new members, H. Bruce Lederhouse of Charlotte, North Carolina, and Mr. and Mrs. Kevin King of Lockport, NY.

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JUNIPER TRADITION:

Last summer, Miss Flossie Lortz donated 3 Junipers to the historical society, however, because of the long hot dry summer, it was impossible to plant them in the location decided upon.

Elwin Upton, grounds chairman, watered them faithfully every week all summer, and hopes they will survive until spring.

Of some interest is the fact that the Junipers produce berries with round black seeds which have always been associated with protection and freedom.

Years ago, the tradition was that if you kept 3 juniper seeds in your pocket, "You could walk in the forest without fear, drink from the lake without harm, and ride the wind."

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JANUARY PROGRAM:

Deanna Demmin, the N. Y. State Dairy Princess, will be the guest speaker at the Wilson historical society meeting on Monday, January 16, 1989, at 7:30 PM.

Miss Demmin will help her audience understand the dairy farmer and the dairy industry, and will also explain what being a Dairy Princess is all about.

Deanna is the daughter of Roger and Joanna Demmin of Wilson who operate a dairy farm on the Shadigee Road.

Following the program, refreshments will be served by Mary Bartz and Maryanne Sharpe.

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NEW TREASURER APPOINTED:

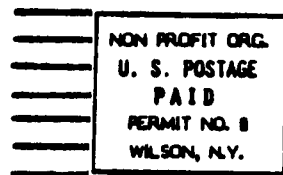
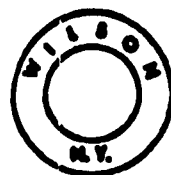
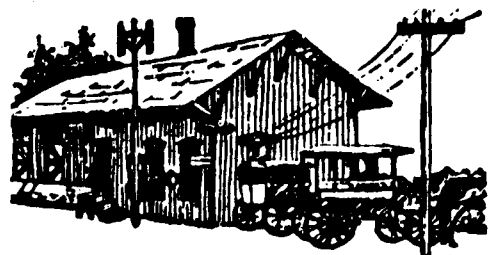
Don Croop, President, has appointed Carol Schnoor, Treasurer, to fill out the unexpired term of Mildred Croop, who suffered a stroke recently and is unable to continue her duties. Carol is an office employee at Thomas Marks School, and also held the position of Church Treasurer at Exley Methodist Church for many years.

Millie was elected Treasurer in 1972, and carefully administered the society's funds for 18 years. She learned to "love little figures" as an employee of the Chase National Bank in New York City, and later as an employee of the Wilson Branch of Marine Trust.

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BON MOT: Doing what you like is freedom. Liking what you do is happiness.

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**WILSON'S "PONY EXPRESS":**

Long before the fabled "Pony Express" riders of the old west carried mail over the Western Plains, Wilson had its own "pony express" rider, Richard Holmes.

In 1824, although only a boy of twelve, he received special permission from the Postmaster General to carry mail by horseback, and, once a week, would ride the route from Olcott to Wilson to Youngstown.

During the next thirty years, letters delivered by the Postal Service were sent either "prepaid" or "collect" and, according to stories handed down, those who received "collect" mail would often try to determine the contents before paying the postage due.

At the time, a letter could be sent thirty miles for six cents and, if it was delivered 450 miles or over, the charge was twenty-five cents.

A U.S. Postal Act of 1855 directed that all inland postage should be prepaid at three cents for up to 3,000 miles, and a ten cent charge was made for all letters delivered over that distance.

Up to about 1875, mail was brought to Wilson via the Lockport-Wilson Stagecoach Line, and an interesting story was told by the late Mabel Wilson which revealed how residents might know when a letter would be waiting for them at the postoffice.

The stagecoach driver, when passing a person's house, would blow on his long trumpet-like horn to alert the homeowner there would be mail for him at the postoffice. One of those horns used by the stagecoach driver is currently on exhibit at the Wilson Museum.

Mail was delivered by stagecoach to the outlying areas in town up to 1901 when the post-offices at East Wilson, South Wilson, Maple Street, and North Wilson were closed.

They were replaced by the rural free delivery service which was started in the town of Wilson under Postmaster Elmer Johnson. The first two routes covered twenty-three miles and were serviced with horse and buggy by carriers John Small and William Kruske.

In 1876, the Rome, Watertown, and Ogdensburg Railroad was completed through Wilson, and passenger trains began to bring in mail from Rochester and Niagara Falls.

Both passengers and mail were brought from the depot to the village by horse and carriage, and some of the men who drove were Fred Faery, Fred Mudge, Clayton Stockwell, Edward Moore, and Adelbert Mudge.

Mail service by rail was discontinued in 1932, and deliveries were then made by truck from Niagara Falls via Model City and Ransomville, terminating in Wilson.

In 1890, the Postoffice came out with its first printed stamped cards which soon became known as penny postcards, and in 1899, the 1st stamped envelopes were introduced to the public.

Thirty Postmasters have served the village of Wilson since Reuben Wilson was first appointed in 1824. The longest to serve was Postmaster Harold Albright who held the office for 21 years from 1950 to 1972.

The Wilson Postoffice was first located in Reuben Wilson's home on West Young Street, and may have changed location as new postmasters were appointed.

In 1897 it was established in the drugstore owned by Elmer Johnson, (now Okie's Pharmacy) but after the disastrous fire of 1901, the postoffice was rebuilt next to the Hub Hotel.

Here for nearly eighty years, the postoffice served its residents and business community, but when the Hub Hotel burned in January, 1980, it was moved to temporary quarters across the street.

Wilson now has a modern new postoffice on McChesney Street with Don Ramsdell of Newfane its congenial Postmaster.

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**FEBRUARY PROGRAM:**

Barbara Mosher, Program Chrm., has announced that Bill Myers will be the guest speaker at the regular monthly meeting to be held at the Wilson Museum, February 20th, at 7:30 PM. The subject for his talk will be "Photography and Cameras, Past and Present."

Bill and his wife, Kathy, are owners of the Myers & Myers Photography Studio, Young Street, Wilson, and are noted for the excellent quality of their work.

Emma Schrader, Chrm., has selected Diane Albright and Joann Demmin to serve as refreshment hostesses for the evening.

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**DID YOU KNOW...** that George Ferris built his first and only "Ferris Wheel" at the Columbian Exposition, Chicago, in 1893? It stood 25 stories high, held 1,400 passengers, and persons from the top of the wheel could see the far shores of Lake Michigan, 50 miles away.

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GENEALOGICAL CHAIRMAN SEEKS INFORMATION:

Miss Celeste Crawford, Chairperson, is anxious to get more information for the Historical Society genealogical files.

She has been doing an excellent job, and with your help can do much better. Following are a few ideas that she has submitted for inclusion with this newsletter. Please take a minute to look them over and see how they might apply to you.

\* \* \* \* \*

"When you joined the society, many of you submitted a family information sheet, and some of you submitted a genealogy chart. These sheets are in our genealogy file.

"How up to date are yours? Have there been births, deaths, or marriages that need to be added?

"If you aren't in our files, would you take a few minutes and write out the basic information about yourself and your family? For instance, the date and place of your birth; deaths marriages, and divorces; where you live; what you do; or anything else that would be of interest to your great-grandchildren.

"Will you also give us the same kind of information about your parents, grandparents, and go back as far as you can.

"If your family has a printed history, or just a family reunion booklet, could we have a copy?

"If you are working on your genealogy, could we help you? Maybe we have the facts you need buried in our files.

"Please contact me, Celeste Crawford, P.O. Box 265, Wilson, NY 14172, if you can help us, or if I can help you."

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DAIRY PRINCESS CAPTIVATES AUDIENCE:

Deanna Goodman, the New York State Dairy Princess, was the guest speaker at the January meeting of the Wilson Historical Society, and her presentation was, without doubt, one of the highlights of the year.

Deanna, a senior at Wilson Central School, is not only beautiful but an excellent speaker as well.

Members of the Wilson Community should be very proud to have her representing Wilson and Niagara County as she travels throughout New York State.

Deanna spoke on what it means to be a Dairy Princess, and after the program served everyone with a delicious New York Special Milk Punch. This went well with the cookies provided by Mary Bartz, Maryanne Sharpe, and Emma Schrader.

It's funny if you stop to think about it. Cows eat green grass to produce white milk twice a day which is first cooled and stored on the farm.

Trucks then take the milk to a processing plant where it is pasteurized and homogenized. Most of the milk is put in containers for delivery to stores, schools, and homes, while some is made into cream, cheese, butter, and ice cream.

Deanna's expenses are sponsored by the American Dairy Association and Dairy Council, Inc. of Syracuse and Williamsport, Pa.

With young people like her growing up in Wilson, the community's future should be bright.

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WAR OF 1812 INCIDENT:

While digging through some old papers we came across this interesting little account how the Tuscaroras helped the settlers during the War of 1812.

It seems that Solomon Long Horn and thirty-five of his brave warriors, volunteered to help repulse the British if they advanced on Lewiston from the north and spread the alarm should the British attempt to cross the river and invade the United States.

On the night of December 19, 1813, the Tuscaroras noticed lights flickering on the river and their scouts found a large band of British and Canadian Indians landing secretly.

They sped back to warn the people on the reservation, and soon everyone in danger were making their way to escape.

Solomon fooled the British into thinking large numbers opposed them by placing Tuscarora braves at short intervals where they would give out blood-curdling war whoops and blow horns as they moved along.

The delay was a life saver for the Tuscaroras as well as the white settlers, but when the British commanders attacked and met with no resistance, they knew they had been "duped" and decided to punish the Tuscaroras by burning their villages.

They carried out their plan, and once again the Tuscaroras were homeless and destitute in their service to the United States.

Commanders at Fort Niagara have always had high praise for the part the Tuscaroras played in the War of 1812.

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WILSON HAD FIVE POSTOFFICES:

During the 1800's, there were 5 postoffices in the town of Wilson. The 1st was established in Reuben Wilson's store on West Young Street in 1824.

The East Wilson Postoffice was started near the corner of Chestnut and Beebe Roads on June 14, 1856, and the 1st Postmaster was D. H. Sweet.

Emulus Stacy was appointed Postmaster for North Wilson on June 20, 1855, and this office was located near where the R.W. & O. Railroad later crossed Beebe Road in 1876.

The Maple Street Postoffice opened up on June 14, 1867, and Guy W. Loomis was the 1st appointed postmaster. Most Postoffices were located in the home of the Postmaster.

The South Wilson Postoffice was started June 26, 1849, and Micah Anderson was Postmaster. On August 17, 1854, Augustine Swick became Postmaster, and we mention his name because he was the great uncle of three of our historical society members, Rex Stacy, Sumner Stacy, and Pearl Stacy Royal.

\* \* \* \* \*

MY PARTNER FOR LIFE:

Mildred E. Croop, 76, daughter of the late Walter and Anna Rasmussen Elson, died at Inter-Community Hospital, Newfane, January 2, 1989, after a short illness.

She was a resident of the town of Wilson for 55 years; a member of the Exley United Methodist Church; and retiree of the Wilson Branch of Marine Midland Bank.

Millie loved working with young people and spent over thirty-five years as a Brownie and Intermediate Girl Scout Leader. She was also a troop organizer and member of the Selections Committee of the Niagara Falls Council of Girl Scouts.

She was also a den mother with the Wilson Cub Pack; a 4-H Leader; Sunday School Teacher; Junior MYF Counselor; and helped with the former East Wilson Boy Scout Troop No. 41.

She was a charter-life member and treasurer of the Wilson Historical Society; treasurer of the Delphic Circle; President of the Wilson Branch-Auxiliary of Inter-Community Hospital, and member of the "Chestnuts" and "Puppeteers."

She was given a Life Membership in the Thomas Marks PTA in recognition of her many years of service to young people in the community, and in 1986 was selected by the Hospital Auxiliary at Newfane as "Sweetheart of the Year".

Other activities included membership in the Rural Retirees Bowling League; the Newfane, Lockport, Ransomville, and Wilson Golden Age Clubs; the Niagara County Historical Society, and the Old Fort Niagara Association.

She is survived by her husband, Don Croop; two daughters, Carol C. (William) Smith of Sanborn; Anne Wiepert of Ransomville; and a son, Howard D. (Lucille) Croop of Rapid City, SD, also nine grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

A burial service was held at Exley Methodist Church with the Rev. Donald Foley officiating.

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FEBRUARY CALENDAR:

Feb. 2nd: The Planning Board will meet at the museum, Thursday evening, 7:30PM.

Feb. 15th: The Board of Directors will meet at Dr. Singh's Office, Wed., 7:30 PM.

Feb. 20th: Regular montly meeting at the museum, Monday, 7:30 PM.

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MEMBERS IN THE SUN:

Edward Marks has received the National Weather Service's top award for weather observation, the John Campanius Holm Award for "outstanding achievement in the field of meteorological study." Ed is the son of Thomas Marks who operated the nursery on Lake Road that his father started in 1910. Now retired, Ed has turned the business over to his son, Thomas, and lives with his wife, Gertrude, on East Lake Road.

\* \* \* \* \*

Ida Rohring Ereon, Wilson's "Grand Old Lady", is planning to celebrate her 110th birthday at the Newfane Health Facility, Saturday, February 18th, when she will be the guest of honor at an open house birthday party starting at 1:30 PM.

Ida, who was born on the Brayley Road in 1879, lived in Wilson for most of her life. Old Timers will remember when she and her husband, Seymour, opened the old "Gem" theater in Wilson--the home of the first "talking" movies.

Before going to the Newfane Health Facility, she resided for a time with her good friend, Emma Schrader, also from Wilson.

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PRIZES AWARDED:

The 1st prize in the Christmas Raffle, the Country Geese Throw, was won by Carol Fabin; the 2nd prize "porcelain doll" was awarded to Marion Pettit; and the 3rd prize Wood Train was given to Diane Albright.

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

With insurance rates nearly doubling this year, a committee was appointed composed of Dan King, Chrm., and Ollie Clark for the purpose of working with a representative of the Town Board to see if some arrangement could be worked out in the coming year to reduce the liability burden on the society.

In other action, a suggestion was made by the publicity committee to consider use of guides at the museum as well as doubling the visiting hours starting in April. Board members were asked to come up with some definite ideas to present at the March meeting.

The Board also passed a motion to place a plaque in the depot waiting room designating it as the "Don and Millie Croop Room." to commemorate the recent passing of the society's first treasurer, Mildred E. Croop.

Discussion was also held on the possibility of raising dues to justify the increasing cost of publishing and mailing the monthly newsletter. An approximate cost per year per member in the U.S. now runs about \$2.20. Present dues are \$3.00 and \$5.00.

Mailing out Canadian letters, because of 1st class postage required, brings the cost of the newsletter to \$5.20 per year, per person.

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IN MEMORIAM:

Florence N. Campbell, 91, daughter of the late Emma and Edward Nerber, died at the Mt. View Health Facility, January 9, 1989, after a long illness.

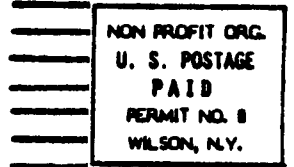
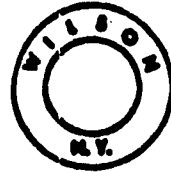
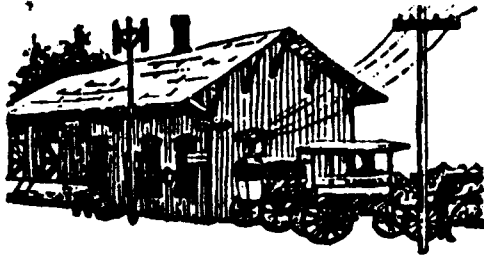
She was a member of the Wilson Order of Eastern Star for over 50 years, and treasurer of Exley Methodist Church for 17 years. As a girl, while residing at Warrens Corners, she recalled playing with the famous Sutherland Sisters. She was later employed in the Jeness and Williams Brothers Store in Lockport, and worked many years in the drapery department.

She is survived by a daughter, Mrs. Lawrence (Linda) Davis of Mechanicsburg, Pa., also two grandchildren, Troy and Sherrie Hubbard, also of Mechanicsburg.

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

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BON MOT: Don't count your years, let your years count.



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**HARBOR HIGHLIGHTS:**

Since the early 1800's, the Wilson Harbor has been like a magnet drawing thousands of people to its beautiful shoreline.

The harbor itself was formed by the joining of the two branches of 12 Mile Creek where they entered Lake Ontario--with "Sunset Island" separating the bay from the lake.

Although not really an island, the strip of land was originally a 15 acre peninsula, joined to the mainland by a long gravel bar.

Up to the mid 1800's, the old Wilson Militia used to drill on the "island", and in later years it was used by soldiers from old Fort Niagara. The encampment where they drilled was called Camp Cuyler after Major William Cuyler, one of the 1st officers killed on the Niagara Frontier.

Centenarian Bessie Crawford once reported that as early as 1812, some burials were made at the east end of the "island", and though she could identify the location of the burial site, there was no record of the persons interred there. It is recorded that Stephen Sheldon, who settled near the present village in 1809, was one of the first reported deaths and is believed to be buried there.

In 1846, Luther Wilson obtained permission from the Secretary of War to build two- 200 foot piers into the lake at the mouth of 12 Mile Creek, and in the period immediately following, he established a warehouse and commercial shipping business at the harbor.

Wilson was made a Port of Entry that same year and fruit, grain, and lumber were shipped to Oswego and other ports on the schooner "R.F. Wilson"--the 1st of 20 ships to be built at the harbor.

In 1876, when the R.W. & O. Railroad came through Wilson, ship building and the shipment of produce by sailing vessels declined, but a new era of prosperity was ushered in when W.H. Harris acquired the beautiful pine groves along the inner harbor and began development of "Lake Island Park".

The park helped make Wilson one of the most popular resort areas in Western New York, and thousands of visitors were attracted to the lake shore community each year. Many hotels were built to accomodate them, and among these in the village were the Ontario Hotel, the Sutherland Hotel, the American Hotel, the Tower House, and the Hub Hotel. Popular resorts on the island were the Vendome Hotel, (later named the Pittsburg Hotel), and the Huntington Lodge.

When the Lockport-Olcott trolley line started in 1900, Lake Island Park began to lose its appeal as a popular site for the farmers' picnic, baseball games, and other large outings. That, combined with the invention of the new mechanical wonder, the automobile, allowed people to travel to other locations more easily.

The natural harbor was still attractive for boating and fishing, and continued to be a popular place for family picnics and outings.

Commercial fishing at the harbor started around 1900 when William Wilson and sons Merle and Fred began setting nets as far as 6 miles out into Lake Ontario. Thousands of pounds of fish were taken each year and, not only sold locally, but also shipped in ice from the Wilson Depot to New York City and other destinations.

A new era was started in 1938 when sailing enthusiasts organized the Wilson Yacht Club. Some of those first "Barnacle Bills" were Waldron Hayes, Howard Murphy, Ernest Bambach, James Hinchliffe, Jack Balda, Bill Crandall, Cliff Beers, Bob Cone, Charles Hawkes and Bill Klein.

The site chosen for the new clubhouse was on "treasure island", and membership was limited to owners of sailboats. Many were of the "Snipe" class, followed by center board sailers such as "Lightnings", "Albacores", and "Sharks". Today, some keeled boats run up to 50 foot in length with others averaging from 20 to 24 feet.

Today, an influx of pleasure craft have taken over the harbor, and many sports fishermen frequent the waters using their own as well as charter boats. Many take advantage of the popular fishing derbies that are scheduled in Wilson waters throughout the year.

The Wilson Yacht Club, the Island Yacht Club, and Wilson Boatyard and Marina are filled to capacity and, looking back to an earlier day, one must agree that today's harbor might be described as "wall to wall" boats.

\* \* \* \* \*

**NEW MEMBERS:**

It is a pleasure to welcome the following new members: Mr. and Mrs. J. Eugene McCarthy of Cambria, California; Mr. Earl Albright, Sagaponack, Long Island; Brian E. Webster, Clarence, NY; Mr. and Mrs. Edward C. Webster, Olcott, NY; Mrs. Bonnie Fedchak, Newfane, NY; Mrs. Judy Wasick, Newfane, NY; and Anne Wiepert, Ransomville, NY.

\* \* \* \* \*

WILSON'S FLOWERING SHRUB:

In June, 1975, the Town Board took action making the Forsythia Bush the official flowering shrub for the town.

The familiar bush with bright yellow flowers is one of the first to blossom in the spring, and its cheerful presence signals that winter is over and spring is on the way.

The Wilson Bicentennial Committee purchased 100 of these bushes, and planted them at various locations through out the town such as the Town Hall, Little League Park, Wilson Museum, Water District Building, and Greenwood Cemetery. Bushes were also made available to the six churches in town.

Fourteen years have passed since the project was started, and it would be interesting to see how many shrubs are still growing at the sites where they were planted.

"Chuck" Campbell headed up the planting committee which consisted of Norman Thilk, John Weiler, Burt Jennings, Jess Willard, Karl Wright, and Joe Higgins.

We hear much these days about tourist attractions. Perhaps, with a little inspiration, Wilson's Forsythia Bush could become one. Who knows? If enough of them were planted, the town might someday decide to have a "Forsythia Sunday".

\* \* \* \* \*

MUSEUM ACTIVITIES:

Lois Jennings, curator, has announced plans that portend great expectations for displaying exhibits at the museum. New ideas are also being obtained by visiting other museums, and the most recent was a trip to the Amherst Museum by Lois, Eleanor Myers, and Helen Stevens.

The stone sink has been mounted on a stand made by Ollie Clark, and a pitcher pump donated by Art Schnoor has been attached. The items are very heavy, but with the help of Tom Walder, Ted Bull, Frank Massing, and Ron Zauner, they have been moved to a permanent location in the Schnoor Room. They also moved Doc Argue's barber chair to the Barnum Building where it will become part of several displays including barber shop, woodworking tools, and Post Office.

A refrigerator is needed for the new kitchen in the Barnum Building, so if you know where one is available, contact Eleanor Myers. Ollie Clark has also announced that the bronze plaque acquired for the building is mounted beside the door at the southeast entrance.

Hoyt and "Nora" Desso helped Burt Jennings install new rollers on the depot display cases, and one will contain the Civil War artifacts of John Webster which were given as a Memorial in the name of the Clayton Webster family.

Lucille Upton has consented to try and train guides to show visitors through the museum, and it is hoped that this program can get under way by April to prepare for longer summer hours. If you would care to become involved in this interesting project, a call to Lucille would help.

Dan King, Chrm., Ollie Clark, and Harold Mosher, have agreed to study the society's insurance coverage and see if a suitable plan can be worked out.

Moving exhibits and re-arranging them creates some problems, and while doing this the museum may appear to be in a mess. The Depot and Barnum committees are keenly aware of this, and hope everyone will be patient until things are under control.

\* \* \* \* \*

MARCH PROGRAM:

Charles "Chuck" Manhardt of Newfane will be the guest speaker at the meeting on March 20th. The subject of his talk will be "Miniature Lamps and Lanterns", and anyone having some of them are invited to bring them to the meeting for showing.

Emma Schrader has selected Wanda Burrows and Helen Clark to serve refreshments.

\* \* \* \* \*

CORRECTION:

Our apologies to the Roger Demmin family for inadvertently writing "Goodman" after their daughter's name in last month's Newsletter.

\* \* \* \* \*

PLANS UNDERWAY FOR MEMORIAL DAY FAIR:

This year's Memorial Day Fair will be held Monday, May 29th, from 10:00 to 5:00 PM, but Dealers will be permitted to set up on the grounds after 6:00 AM.

Nettie Stimson, General Chairman, is getting her chairmen lined up; posters and "handouts" have been printed for distribution; and Dealer Contracts should be in the mail by the end of February.

Faye Pisello, Chairman of the society's "flea" market tent, is sending out an early call for all "fleas", so if you would care to donate yours, please drop them off as early as possible at her home on 577 Lake Street--across from the Country Barn Shop.

\* \* \* \* \*

IN MEMORIAM:

The Wilson Historical Society extends its condolences to the family of Dudley Secor, son of the late William and Effie Tower Secor, who died January 21, 1989, at Inter Community Hospital, Newfane, after a short illness. He was a Wilson Businessman for many years.

\* \* \* \* \*

Also, to the family of Bessie M. Vana, who was born in Wilson in 1897, and died at her home in Lewiston, January 31, 1989. Mrs. Vana was a New York Telephone Pioneer.

\* \* \* \* \*

IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN DONE...AND SHE DID IT:

If you drive through lower town, Lockport, you may notice the freshly painted historic marker sign in front of the old Gov. Washington Hunt home, and, believe it or not, it was painted by Janet Sporleder of Wilson.

It seems Jan was dismayed by the shabby appearance of the Hunt marker, and decided to do something about it. She obtained permission to have it removed to her home where she gave the marker a fresh new coat of paint.

Janet is Chrm. of the society's historical sites committee, and we can thank her for making sure all of Wilson's historic markers are always looking nice.

\* \* \* \* \*

FRESH AS A DAISY:

Ida Ereon was the hit of the party and, as the saying goes, 'fresh as a daisy' when she celebrated her 110th birthday at the Newfane Health Facility, February 18, 1989. She is quite possibly the oldest lady in New York State and, at last report, a close contender for oldest in the nation.

Age, however, seems to be the least of Ida's worries as she obligingly acknowledges all the attention heaped upon her. She is sharp-witted and a match for many of the TV, radio, and newspaper reporters who ply her with questions.

Ida was a baseball fan for many years, and, when she celebrated her 109th birthday last year, officials of the Buffalo Bison baseball team invited her to throw out the 1st ball at the new Pilot Field--an offer which she later accepted. She was also given a seat from the old Bison Stadium which she gave to the Wilson Museum through her long time friend, former Mayor Kenneth Welker. The seat has been suitably marked with an engraved plate in honor of the event.

Ida Rohring Ereon was born on the Brayley Road, Wilson, in 1897, and married Seymour Ereon in 1907. He was a carpenter by trade, and they built their home on Wilcox Street in the village. During those early years she helped her husband show silent movies in the old Middleton Hall, and later assisted him with the operation of Wilson's 1st "talking picture" movie theater, the "Gem".

Ida has been a member of the Wilson Golden Age Club since the days of World War II, and a member of the Rebekah Lodge, I.O.O.F. for more than 70 years.

When she arrived at the age of 101, Mayor Kenneth Welker proclaimed February 18th as "Ida Ereon Day", and this year Supervisor Harold Mosher declared February 17th as "Wilson Loves Ida Ereon Day".

In recognition of her 110th birthday, Don Croop, President of the Wilson Historical Society, presented Ida with an Honorary-Life Membership.

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RECENT ACQUISITIONS:

A variety of items have been donated to the museum by Jeanne Hayes of Newfane, including a four generation photo of Edgar and Alice Swick-1885; Eastman Kodak Developing Kit; Two Red & White Store Nutmeg Tins; Seven 1st Day Issue of the Belva Lockwood Stamp; Crisco Glass Jar; Small Ornate Indian Shoe; and 1924 Handbook, "Washington".

Also, 5 copies of "Life Magazine"; "The Automobile Question and Answer Book"-1937; The "McCormick-Deering Ensilage Cutters", Illustrated; "An Age of Barns"; The "Constitution"; An "Introduction to the Manual of Geography-1876"; and Miscellaneous Postcards.

Mr. and Mrs. Harold Swanson: Vol. 1 & 2, "A Study of the History of the International Typographic Union" 1852-1963; 1852-1966.

Janet Larkin, Buffalo: 1941 Ford Truck.

Hoyt Desso: Heavy Duty "Dolly".

Ida Ereon, Newfane: Seat from Old Bison Stadium.

Harry Haven: Map by Peter A. Porter of Niagara Frontier as ceded to British by Senecas-1764.

Arthur Schnoor: School Tax Receipts, 1922 & 1924.

Robert Motchenbaugh: Two Automobile Hood Ornaments.

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FROM THE MAILBAG:

We received a nice letter from Barbara Leach of Syracuse who would like to learn more about her husband's pioneer ancestor, Hiram Leach, and his descendents. He is listed in the 1840 census as "head of household".

Hiram's brother, Noble Leach is on the Wilson Tax Rolls, and was buried in Wilson in 1867. Noble's wife, Petrulla Holmes, died in 1869 and is also buried in Wilson.

\* \* \* \* \*

Bessie Crawford and her daughter, Cleo Anne Salerno, both Life Members of the Society, became permanent residents of St. Petersburg, Florida, in February, 1989.

Bessie, who is 100 yrs. plus, enjoys being back in her Florida home, and Cleo, (formerly of Walnut Creek, Cal.,) is enjoying the nearby beaches and many wonderful new friends.

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IMPORTANT DUES ANNOUNCEMENT:

During the past 18 years, membership dues were received by the late Millie Croop who kept an up-to-date file on all members. From this file, your newsletter editor was able to make up an accurate address-o-graph-plate file on all persons to whom newsletters are sent.

In order to continue these files, we suggest that you mail all membership application forms and dues payment to Don Croop, editor, and please be sure to make all checks payable to the Wilson Historical Society.

Some local members have been in the habit of paying dues directly to the treasurer, so if you elect to do this, be sure that our new treasurer, Carole Schnoor, is given a membership application form along with your payment.

It is important that you follow the above instructions so that your name will be kept on the membership roll, and you will continue to receive the Newsletter.

After May 1st, Newsletters will be addressed to your permanent home address only. Please watch for the membership application forms that will be incorporated into the April and May Newsletters.

A note of thanks to Carol C. Smith who has been helping to file, sort, and mail the Newsletters to you.

\* \* \* \* \*

MARCH CALENDAR:

March 9th: Thursday, 7:30 PM, Planning Board Meeting at the Wilson Museum.

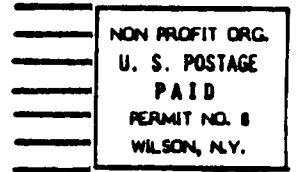
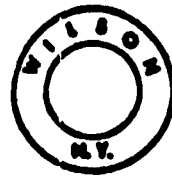
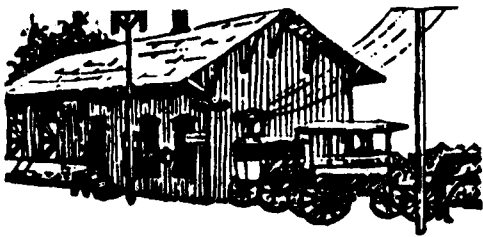
March 15th: Wed., 7:30 PM, Board of Director Meeting at Dr. Singh's Office, Lake Street.

March 20th: Monday, 7:30 PM, Regular Monthly Meeting, Patterson Room, Wilson Museum.

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BON MOT: The most important things in life are not things.

\* \* \* \* \*



# Wilson Historical Society

WILSON, NEW YORK 14172

## NEWSLETTER

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

MAY 1989 Vol. 18 No. 5  
(Coleman Press)

LIBRARIAN  
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WILSON, NY 14172

### RISE AND FALL OF A CHURCH:

In the early 1870's, Deacon Bates was a leader of influence among the Methodists who worshipped at the Chestnut Street Schoolhouse in East Wilson and, in a real sense, a pioneer of the society.

On March 6, 1871, a meeting was held at the home of Stephen Wakeman to organize the Methodist Society, and Rev. H.R. Smith presided. A motion was adopted to name the society the "Chestnut Street Methodist-Episcopal Society of the town of Wilson", and it was further moved that Stephen Wakeman, Benjamin Bull, and Warren Wetmore be appointed trustees.

Incorporation papers were filed March 13, 1871, and recorded in the Niagara County Clerk's office on March 16th. The following month, April, 1871, a deed was drawn up between the trustees and the Wakemans who conveyed part of lot #56 to the Methodist-Episcopal Society.

The trustees then headed up a building committee to which the following members were added, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Bull, V.M. Snyder, and George Hallifax. Contracts for the masonry work were let out to the Farleys, and the trustees furnished stone for the foundation. The inside walls of the church were plastered--the beautiful wood ornamentation came later.

A cornerstone-laying ceremony was held June 21, 1871, and in it were placed a Bible, county newspaper, "shin plaster", and a picture of Deacon Bates. The "shin plaster" was a type of currency used during the Civil War and later recalled. The picture of Deacon Bates was placed in the cornerstone as a token of esteem and grateful recognition for his years of service.

For several years, the Methodist Society was associated with North Ridge and Dickersonville, and the earliest record of a pastoral charge was in 1879 when Rev. Woodruff Post was appointed pastor of the Warrens Corners and East Wilson churches.

Much of the community's activity centered around the church for many years, and monthly luncheon meetings were held by the Ladies Aid at which youngsters from the Chestnut St. schoolhouse often attended for a hot meal.

During the prohibition years, the W.C.T.U. had an important roll in the community, and today the organization's colorful banner is an acquisition of the Wilson Museum--a donation from the late Mabel Wilson.

On the 50th anniversary commemoration service in 1922, Pastor William Dunstan remarked, "We are confidently expecting the day when it will again become necessary to elect an usher to seat the crowds, and that he will have so much to do he will need an assistant."

He then commented about a wedding that had been performed at the church the first year it was built. When the ceremony ended, the smiling groom payed the minister and his estatic wife rushed up and gave him \$10 toward the church debt. Pastor Dunstan concluded, "We trust it was worth it."

In the late 1930's, sewing bees were held at the church to make shirts and shorts for shipment overseas. The Youth Fellowship also met each week, and occasionally enjoyed outings at the Olcott Roller Rink. The East Wilson Boy Scout troop met there regularly in the 40's & 50's, and the 1st organizational meetings of the South Wilson Fire Co. were also held there.

Church attendance fell off noticeably in the early 1960's, and on April 5, 1964, a motion was approved by church officials to have the small congregation join with the North Ridge Methodist Church. One month later on May 20, 1964, the east Wilson congregation was accepted by North Ridge, and the last service at the East Wilson Church was held on May 31, 1964.

The former church building is now the home of Mr. and Mrs. Michael Cerrone who have made few changes in the outward appearance of the structure, but have tastefully remodeled the interior without disturbing the beautiful ornamental paneling.

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### IN MEMORIAM:

The society sadly regrets the demise of George Linnabery, 77, who died at South Mercy Hospital, Buffalo, March 30, 1989, after a brief illness. He joined the society in 1975 and, as a trustee, contributed many hours of his time and expertise in the construction of the Dr. John F. Argue Memorial Building.

He was a former industrial arts teacher at Holley, NY, and later became a tool designer for the Bell Aircraft Corp. Also during his busy career, he was a Boy Scout leader for over 60 years and District Commissioner for the Lewiston Trail Council.

He is survived by his wife, Dorothy, of Wilson; a son, Miles (Sue) of Laramie, Wyoming; also a brother, Harry, of Oneonta. Memorial services were held at Hamilton & Clark Funeral Chapel.

\* \* \* \* \*

ALL MEMBERSHIP CARDS will be mailed with the Newsletter unless an S.A.S.E. was included with your dues payment. Thank you for your patience.

\* \* \* \* \*

FAIR COMMITTEE NEEDS YOUR HELP:

In anticipation of another good year, the fair committee is making a special plea for your help in furnishing salads, pies, and baked goods. They also say that you can avoid the crowds on Memorial Day if you bring your contributions to the Barnum Building Sunday afternoon.

Faye Pisello would appreciate getting your "fleas" as early as possible, and they may be left on her porch if no one is home. The Pisellos live on Lake St. across from the Barn Shop.

Charlotte and Jane Pease will again be in charge of the plant booth, and wish to remind all you "green thumbs" you may donate as many plants as you wish to bring.

Lois Ward, our home-made candy chairman, would also like some of your favorite delicacies so that our visitors will have a wide selection of candies to pick from.

General Chairmen for this year's Fair are Lois Barnum and Nettie Stimson, and they are being helped by the following area chairmen: Antique Cars, Jim Pisello; Announcements, Don Croop; Candy, Lois Ward; Clean-up, Ed Hastings & Darrell Smith; Coffee & Donuts, Judy Zauner; Cotton Candy, Melinda & Jack Hutchison; Dealer Parking, Ron Zauner; Dealer Registration, Nettie Stimson; Drinks, Shelly Andrews & Chris Goodman; Entertainment, Clark Stimson; Fish Pond, Bobbie Hull; Flea Tent, Faye Pisello; Food Building, Maxine Jones; Food Supplies, Lois Barnum & Emma Lou Reppentine; Funnel Cakes, Carol Smith; Hot Dogs, Art Schnoor; Lemonade & Popcorn, Dick & Sue Schultz; Memberships, Chris Kelman; Movies, Tom Sharpe; Museum Displays, Lois Jennings & Eleanor Myers; Museum Kitchen, Pam Groff; Parking, Dan King; Plants, Charlotte & Jane Pease; Publicity, Bill Fritton; Quilt, Betty Stimson; Shuttlebus, Don Burrows; Thank you notes, Helen Stevens; Treasurer, Carole Schnoor; and Ways & Means, Doris Klees.

\* \* \* \* \*

NEW LIFE MEMBER:

Mary Elizabeth (Stone) Allgeier has become a Life Member of the Wilson His. Soc., through the courtesy of her sister-in-law, Dorothy Lort of Wilson.

Mary was born Dec. 16, 1921, at Toledo, Ohio, the daughter of John Stone and Dorothy Collins Stone, and attended Wilson High School, Virginia Intermont, Bristol, Va., and the Eastman Dental Dispensary. She and her husband, the late Sherman O. Allgeier, had 2 children, John and Christine. Mrs. Allgeier is a former member of the Waverly Library Board; the American Legion Auxiliary; and Daughters of the American Revolution.

\* \* \* \* \*

YWCA VISITS MUSEUM:

Forty-one members of the Lockport YWCA visited the museum on April 11th following a lunch at the Wilson House Restaurant. They appeared to enjoy their tour of the buildings with Lois Jennings, Lois Barnum, and Don Croop serving as their guides.

\* \* \* \* \*

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

All appointees of the Board of Directors have agreed to serve another year as follows: Lois Jennings, curator; Wallace Goodman, Nominating Chrm.; Don Burrows, Planning Board; Lois Jennings, Depot; Eleanor Myers, Barnum Bldg; Jim Pisello, Argue Bldg; Ron Zauner, Fittro Shop; Burt Jennings, Caboose; Elwin Upton, Grounds; and Norm MacAskill, Federation Rep.

Motion was approved to again award prizes on Class Night to senior male and female named by school for outstanding achievement in Comprehensive Social Studies. John Myers, 1st Vice-Pres., will present the awards for the society.

The Board also decided to approve recommendations of our insurance carrier to place fire extinguishers in all rooms and emergency lights at main exits. Approval was also given to have the B & P Security system installed at an approximate cost of \$3500.

Burt Jennings was appointed to head up a committee to investigate plantings of Forsythia Bushes in town. Miss Flossie Lortz will assist him.

A list of priorities was approved for future museum projects as follows: Bring Barnum Bldg. and Argue Bldg. up to display standards and build garage; Organize and fix up the Fittro Shop; Erect Stimson's log cabin on museum grounds.

Motion by Lois Jennings to get these projects under way and completed as soon as possible was approved. Additional \$1,000 was approved to complete renovation work in Barnum Building.

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MAY PROGRAM:

Bill Hilts, Jr., representing the Niag. Co. Fishing and Tourism Industry, will be guest speaker at the May 15th meeting, and will show slides and discuss tourism related subjects on the Niagara Frontier. The fishing festival is on in Wilson in June so the program is timely.

Refreshment hostesses for the evening will be Edna Robinson and Donna Pettit.

\* \* \* \* \*

CALENDAR:

May 10th, Board of Directors, Museum, 7:30 PM; May 15th, Monthly meeting, Museum, 7:30PM; May 29th, MEMORIAL DAY FAIR, all day--Museum Grounds.

\* \* \* \* \*

FROM THE MAILBAG:

Mrs. Florence Partington Porter, who used to play piano for the Ereons in the "Gem" while she was a student at Wilson High, called to see if Ida could receive phone calls at the Newfane Nursing Facility. She wanted to wish her a happy 110th birthday. Mrs. Porter came to Wilson in 1920 when her father, Rev. William Partington, became pastor of Exley Methodist Church.

Mrs. Helen McMurray of Flint, Mich., notes that the Newsletter "Brings back many happy memories of my teaching days in beautiful Wilson, and the many friends I made there." She recently found some photos of her former 5th grade pupils, and has offered to send them so they can be added to our collection of photos from the past.

NEW MEMBERS:

It is a pleasure to welcome the following new members: Patrick D. Brady, Boston, Mass; Franklin F. Campbell, Illinois; Suzanne Moxham Hunt, Monroe, NY; Jeff and Dayna Wiepert, Ransomville, NY; Norm and Patricia o'Brien, Williamsville, NY; & Dan and Jill Phillips, Wilson.

\* \* \* \* \*

CHILDREN'S GAME:

Most of us may recall those earlier years when the warm days of spring saw every boy's pockets buldging with "migs" and "aggies", and competition among the younger set was a daily adventure as each youngster competed to win a favored "aggie" for their collection.

Tom Sharpe of Wilson did some research that revealed playing marbles dates back to the days of the Egyptians, Romans, and Aztecs and, in the 16th century, a special meadow was maintained outside the town of Nuremburg just for marbles. Good Friday was designated as Marble Day, and the games were encouraged to prevent rowdier activity by the younger generation.

Basically, in our modern age, three marble games appear to dominate, namely, "Chase", "Ring", and "Hole". Chase games require shooting at an opponent's marble over a course that moves from station to station, while "Hole" involves hitting a marble in or out of a hole.

The most common of the ring games is called "Ringer", and requires a shooter to knock the marbles out of a prescribed space. "Ringer" is the official game of the Marble World Championships held at Wildwood, New Jersey. It is played by placing 13 marbles in the form of a cross in a 10 foot diameter circle. "Shooters" or "Moonies" shoot from the ring's edges to try and knock the marbles out of it.

Some of the cheaper marbles were made from clay and called "migs" or "immies", and these were often used by shooters to try and win a prized or beautiful agate. Although marbles were made from various other materials, the more popular ones were made from agate. Although marbles were originally made from alabaster, most are now shaped from glass.

It is said that most marble factories are in W. Virginia, but the finest "aggies" are still made in Germany. Many have become valuable as collector's items, and those made with sulphides are especially coveted. These usually have bisque heads dipped in a glass marble batter. Perhaps the most expensive sulphide marble is one with a miniature of Pres. McKinley that was made shortly after his assassination. One of these in good condition is said to be worth as much as one hundred dollars.

Some of the more popular names for marbles that may refresh your boyhood memories might include "Black Beauties", Candistripes", "Cats Eyes", "Glassies", "Milkies", "Migs", "Immies", and "Keepers".

And now, if you haven't "lost your marbles", we'll set-up a game of "Ringer", but mind you--no "fudging", and the first "moonie" to score seven "hits" will be the winner.

\* \* \* \* \*

IN FOND REMEMBRANCE:

Memorial Day is the time when we honor the service men and women who gave their lives for their country. The month of May would also be an appropriate time to remember those Wilson Historical Society Members who passed away since April, 1988:

Marie Reynolds, Whitney Barnum, Dudley Fitch, Roy Eckert, Joseph Higgins, Mildred Croop, Florence Campbell, Dudley Secor, Bessie Vana, and George Linnabery. May they rest in peace.

\* \* \* \* \*

SUNDAY HOSTESSES FOR MAY:

Clara Marcks, Chrm., has announced that thē Sunday afternoon hostesses for May will be: May 7th, Joe and Marguerite Geiser; May 14th, Miss Helen Stevens; May 21st, Gerald and Margaret Porter; and May 28th, Wallace and Chris Goodman.

\* \* \* \* \*

RECENT ACQUISITIONS:

- Mrs. Emma Schrader has donated two lanterns with the inscription "town of Wilson" on them.
- Wallace Goodman: One complete World War I uniform.
- Charles Manhardt, Newfane: Large Socony Road Map for Car Museum.
- William Bartz: Delegate Badge to Fireman's Convention held at Arcade in 1917.
- Arthur Schnoor: Water hand-pump for use with stone sink; also large school bell.
- Ruth Phillips: Postal Carrier's Route Directory, 1955-1958.

\* \* \* \* \*

BON MOT:

It isn't necessary to blow out the other person's light to let your own light shine.

\* \* \* \* \*

1989-90 MEMBERSHIP DUES

- COUPLE (\$5.00) Names .....Ph:.....
- SINGLE (\$3.00) Name.....
- JUNIORS (\$1.00) Names.....
- (under 18)
- LIFE MEMBER (\$100 ea.) Name.....
- HONORARY (Free-85 yrs. or older) Name.....

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED \$.....

Address..... P.O..... State..... Zip.....

Please make checks payable to: Wilson Historical Society

MAIL TO: DONALD CROOP, 4559 CHESTNUT ROAD, WILSON, N.Y. 14172

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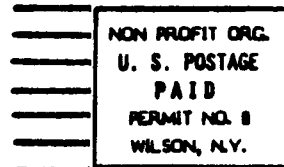
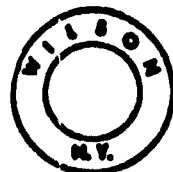
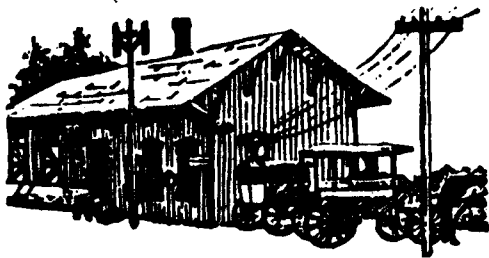
I WOULD BE WILLING TO HELP WITH: Please check (X)

- Memorial Day Fair..... Depot..... Argue Bldg..... Barnum Bldg..... Grounds upkeep.....
- Fittro Shop..... Caboose..... Hostess..... Guide..... Other (specify).....

\* \* \* \* \*

PLEASE NOTE: No newsletters will be mailed to delinquent members after June 1st.

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**Wilson Historical Society**

WILSON, NEW YORK 14172

**NEWSLETTER**

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

LIBRARIAN  
WILSON CENTRAL SCHOOL  
WILSON, NY 14172

JULY-AUG. 1989 Vol.18 No. 7  
(Coleman Press)

**DAYS OF THE RUM RUNNER:**

During the booming days of Lake Island Park, old accounts reveal that Mr. Harris, the proprietor, catered to a select clientele and allowed no liquor sales, Sabbath desecration, profanity, or bad conduct of any kind. (Perhaps the park should have been named "Utopia"). Despite his strict policy in regard to alcohol, Harris was unable to control drinking on the park's perimeter, and this is confirmed in an 1894 item that appeared in the Toronto Journal. It was written by a Canadian passenger on one of the old excursion boats who, after visiting the park wrote:

"Although soft drinks are allowed in the park, just beyond its borders are two saloons where lager bier of very refreshing and minimum intoxication quality, are dispensed to endless streams of never satisfied humanity."

It is also said that prior to 1900, plans were developed to build a trolley line from Lockport to Wilson--in fact, it is believed the right-of-way was established. As the story goes, the plans never materialized because of the rigid liquor policies at the park--so the line was built to Olcott instead.

Although the sentiments expressed by Harris on drinking had strong support in the Wilson community, we find one instance in old records showing that local officials weren't always in tune with the wishes of the majority. In 1878, for example, the Wilson Board of Excise composed of Jefferson Webster, Chrm., James G. O. Brown, Fred Barnum, B.D. Taylor, and Timothy Pettit, refused to grant a liquor license to Ella Chesite, owner of the Ontario Hotel, corner of Young and Lake Streets. At a follow-up meeting, 22 residents signed a petition to have the liquor license granted, and 204 residents signed another petition opposing granting of the license. Despite this strong opposition, the board granted the liquor license.

Wilson was probably no better or worse than any other community where hard work and the rigors of early pioneer living was often interspersed with the free flow of homemade wines, hard cider, and corn whiskey. In fact, another old item notes that when the Presbyterian Church was built in Wilson, "Brandy flowed freely during the construction." Since "one bushel of corn would pay for 6 quarts of whiskey", this is understandable.

When Wilson entered the prohibition era, there were probably few places other than the Niagara River where bootleggers could operate as easily as they could along the shores at Wilson. Since it was close to Canada, smuggling became a big racket, and the Coast Guard had their hands full trying to enforce the law. Many tragedies occurred along the river and lake between rum-runners and prohibition agents, and the seriousness of these confrontations is emphasized in the "Bug" incident:

An informant tells us that the "Bug", a fast motor launch, sailed from Olcott to Wilson with an illegal load of "booze". After unloading, it proceeded to Youngstown where it was challenged by the U.S. Coast Guard. The "Bug" had a steel prow, and decided to attack the coast guard vessel and ram it--it was a fatal decision as the sailors aboard the coast guard ship opened fire with machine guns killing all aboard the "Bug".

It was ironic that the favorite spot for rum runners to unload in Wilson was behind "Winter-green Island", where the Harris Boarding House once stood. One day, a customs agent, making his rounds, saw a man driving off in a wagon loaded with liquor barrels. Since the driver was in a big hurry, the customs agent secured another rig and took off in hot pursuit. When he caught up with the supposed smuggler, he was dismayed to find the barrels empty, but he was even more frustrated when he returned to the harbor and discovered that while he was away, another boat had unloaded its illegal cargo in another rig which took off in the other direction.

The late Dr. and Mrs. Kaiser of Lockport, spent their summers at their cottage along the Wilson lakeshore. They were well aware of the smuggling operations and said that many times, on a quiet night, fast motor boats from Canada would pull up at their breakwall, and men would scramble up the bank with loaded sacks.. A humorous account in Mrs. Kaiser's papers notes:

"A comical thing happened when our little white house was in the process of being moved. The movers came from Stockwell's Corners in East Wilson, and rather than going back and forth each day, the men slept in our house which they were moving. One night, when the house was on rollers by the side of the road, they were awakened by a flashlight shining in their eyes and, there looking down at them were two men with guns in their hands. Needless to say they were scared, but when the bootleggers discovered they had made a mistake where their "booze" had been dropped off, they did not linger long."

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**CHANGING TIMES:**

Mother used to set her baked pies on the window sill to cool them. Daughter sets hers there to thaw them.

\* \* \* \* \*

INTRODUCING OUR NEW PRESIDENT:

John Myers, newly elected President of the Wilson Historical Society, really doesn't need an introduction because for the past 17 years, as a charter-life member of the society, he has been one of the key "players" in the development of the organization.

In 1974, we discovered what a determined gentleman he is when we helped him attach the Billy Sherman plaque to the boulder marking the old confederate war horse's gravesite.

After building a form and placing the plaque on the stone, the bonding cement failed to harden and John had to remove everything and start all over again.

Now most people would have been "tearing their hair out" by this time but, non-plussed, he scraped the rock clean and did the job over as though nothing had gone wrong; and to those who have worked with him, that is how he has operated ever since as he tackled one job after another.

John has gained a lot of experience since his high school days and, even before graduation he operated a radio repair shop on Young Street. Also, he and Ronald Hamblin delivered ice around the village.

After graduating from Wilson High in 1934, he attended Cornell University and, upon returning to Wilson, drove truck for the Hinchliffe Vinegar Company, and tried his hand at his own trucking business.

Later, he started up an oil, heating, and plumbing business, and also worked for the Bell Plant where he received a letter of commendation for his engineering ability.

For the past 17 years, he has been deeply involved with the historical society. and has installed three oil furnaces, completely re-wired the depot, and hooked up the fire alarm system. He also wired the Barnum Building, Dr. Argue Memorial Building, Fittro Shop and old N.Y. Central caboose, and installed all of the audio equipment--much of which was acquired by him at great savings to the society.

There is reason to believe he will put the same dedicated effort into the office of President and with Nettie Stimson supporting him as 1st Vice-Pres., and Art Schnoor assisting as 2nd Vice-Pres., the society has voted in an administrative team that should get the job done.

In 1939, John married Eleanor Hinchliffe, daughter of Allen Hinchliffe, who served as Mayor of Wilson in 1925.

They have four children, Jean (Wright); Sue; Kathryn, and John, Jr.

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IN MEMORIAM:

J. Russell Hurlburt, 86, died May 11, 1989, at Inter-Community Hospital at Newfane. He was the son of William and Wilhimina Carroll Hurlburt, and graduated from Wilson High in 1922. He attended the University of Michigan and later became President of the Hurlburt Bros. Preserving Co. which he founded at Wilson in 1930.

"Russ" was a past president of the Wilson School Board, also founder and president of the Wilson Lions Club; Exempt Fireman Wilson Vol. Co. #1; Chrm of the Wilson Branch of the Salvation Army; and Honorary member of the Wilson Historical Society.

He is survived by his wife, Marjorie Crossman Hurlburt of Bronxville, NY; 3 daughters, Marylou Young of Rye, NY; Carol T. of New York City; and Hannah J. of Greenwich, Conn.

Memorial services were held at St. John's Episcopal Church in Wilson, and burial at Greenwood.

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RECENT ACQUISITIONS:

Lucille Upton has donated a number of old newspaper items; WHS Chronicle (1911-1912); Community Playbills (1952), (1959) (1960); Brochure for Tuscarora Park; Dedication Program for the WHS Gymnasium; Poster for V Mail; Chautauqua Program; Ransomville Program for Recital by pupils of Myra Wakeman; and brochure for enlistment in WMCA War Work. Also, War Memorial Plaque (1954); Man's Tuxedo: Man's White Suit, and 2 photographs.

Paul Luckman, Walworth, NY: Two cast iron railroad signs that were once placed along the old Sodus Bay line in Wayne Co. Signs were cleaned up by Don Burrows.

Amy Weaver, RT. 93, Lockport: Large photo of sons of Veterans, Peter Porter Camp, taken in front of the former Presbyterian Church.

Helen Clark: Red, white, and blue Flag Afghan with 13 stars and stripes chocheted by Helen Clark for the 1976 Bicentennial.

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NEW MEMBERS:

Please make welcome these following new members: Brad Klees, Coast Guard, Florida; Myrtice Jarrett, PA; Patricia Ramming, Lockport; Marilyn Rollinger, Lockport; Tom Bowler, Lockport; Susan Sobiegray, Niagara Falls; Charles Kreutz, Gasport; Shirley Hollister, Lewiston; Jeffery Strubing, Burt; Terry and Karen Curry, Newfane; Audrey Rosenthal, Wilson; Kathleen Casey, Wilson; Jack and Pat Castle, Wilson; Mr./Mrs. William Black, Wilson; Shawn Black, Wilson; also, Junior Member Roy Pettit III of West Virginia.

\* \* \* \* \*

WINDMILL WORKS WELL:

Old-fashioned windmills have mostly disappeared from the local scene, but one notable exception is the fine working model standing on the museum grounds. Assembled and repaired in 1984, the society is proud to be able to display this early example of one of the world's first methods of producing energy.

Through the persistence and know-how of Life Member, "Chuck" Messersmith, the windmill became operable and, because of him, has been checked over each spring and fall.

This year, thanks to the "Mohawk Tree Service", Wilson-Cambria Rd., "Chuck" and Shawn Black used a flat bed and hydraulic bucket to paint the 18 sails, check the turbin oil, and adjust the tension on the rabbit bearing and drive shaft.

On behalf of the society, "Chuck" wishes to thank the Blacks for their help, and hopes he can interest Shawn in helping him maintain the mill. Incidentally, Mrs. Black enjoys making dolls and showing them off. If interested, you may call her at 751-9722.

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ON THE HIGHWAY OF LIFE, there are more tollways than freeways.

ANNUAL MEETING:

Barbara Mosher, Chrm., and a special dinner committee composed of Winnie Terry, Mazie McCoy, Shirley Evans, Jan Sporleder, Emily McAvoy, and Dorothy Linnabery, prepared and served a delicious baked fish dinner to approximately 75 members in the Barnum Bldg. on June 19th.

A short meeting was held after the dinner and Don Croop, out-going president, asked for reports and the list of nominees for office. The following members were elected:

John Myers, Pres., Nettie Stimson, Vice-Pres., Art Schnoor, 2nd Vice-Pres., Pam Groff, Rec. Secy., Helen Stevens, Cor. Secy., and Carole Schnoor, Treas.

Trustees to June, 1992: Ollie Clark, Bill Fritton, and Nettie Stimson.

Committee Chairmen: Celeste Crawford, Library; Don Croop, Publications/Newsletter; Jan Sporleder, Historical Sites; Chris Kelman, Membership; Barbara Mosher, Programs; Doris Klees, Ways & Means; Lois Jennings, Memorial; Lois Jennings, Acquisitions; Maryanne Sharpe, House-keeping; Celeste Crawford, Genealogical; John Myers, Publicity; Emma Schrader, Refreshments; and Edna Robinson, Photographer. (Needed: Hostess Chairman).

Holding office and not voted on this year: Trustees to June, 1990, Jean Argue, Ed Hastings, and Burt Jennings. Trustees to June, 1991, Don Burrows, Dan King, and Lois Barnum.

Honorary Trustees: Harold Mosher, town supervisor; Eleanor Myers, town historian.

\* \* \* \* \*

J. RUSSELL HURLBURT:

A Life Membership in the Society has been given in memory of the late Russell Hurlburt of Wilson, by his daughter, Mary Lou Young of Rye, NY.

"Russ" attended the University of Michigan, and became a prominent member of the Wilson Business community in 1930 when he established the Hurlburt Bros. Canning Co. He also served as Pres. of the Wilson School Board; was founder of the Wilson Lions Club; Exempt Fireman, Wilson Fire Co. #1; and Honorary Member of the Wilson Historical Society.

He and his wife, Marjorie (Crossman) Hurlburt, raised 3 daughters, Mary Lou (Young); Carol; and Hannah. All five members of the Hurlburt family graduated from Wilson High School.

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A PRETTY FAIR REPORT:

Beautiful weather combined with the fine organizational ability of Nettie Stimson and Lois Barnum, and excellent support from the public at large, made this year's Memorial Day Fair the most successful one to date.

Everything seemed to run smoothly as well over 10,000 people enjoyed the large flea market, antique cars, craft demonstrations, museum exhibits, live radio coverage, quilt drawing, home-made foods, and musical entertainment provided by the Wilson High School Band, Roving Barber Shop Quartet, and "toe-tappin" Bison City Stompers.

All fair chairmen handled their jobs expertly from "set-up" to "clean-up", and the society is grateful to everyone who volunteered their services and furnished food.

A successful fair is important to the society as it is the principal source for our yearly operating expenses.

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SUNDAY HOSTESSES:

Sunday afternoon hostesses from 2-4 PM will be: July 2nd, Greg and Dena Mandeville; July 9th, Paul and Arlene Karsten; July 16th; Lloyd and Sandy Evans; July 23rd, Harold and Neva Benedict, and July 30th, Tom and Maryanne Sharpe.

Aug. 6th, Ed and Millie Lonsbery; Aug. 13th, Ray and Lorraine Algeier; Aug. 20th, Howard and Leona Hunter; and Aug. 27th, John and Jane Demmin.

Hostesses will also be on hand to greet you on Saturday afternoons from 2-4 PM during the summer months of July and August.

\* \* \* \* \*

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

The Board will meet on July 12th and August 16th at the museum, 7:30 PM. The next monthly program meeting will be held on September 18th.

\* \* \* \* \*

QUILT AWARDED TO LOCKPORT MAN:

Ray Drier of Lockport was the winner of the beautiful "fan" quilt given by the society on Memorial Day. Other gifts were awarded to Gary S. Pettit, Wilson, Afghan; Mr. Helfrich, Lewiston, Tablecloth; Edna Rose, Wilson, Grill; and William Murray, Akron, Cookbook.

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CLASS NIGHT AWARDS:

Andrew Aloisio and Bridget Hogan were selected by school authorities to receive the Wilson Historical Society awards for Comprehensive Social Studies. John Myers, Pres., awarded the gifts of recognition to the students on class night.

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MUSEUM PROGRESS:

Ten fire extinguishers have been installed in the museum facilities by Consolidated Fire Equipment, Canal Rd., Lockport, in the society's on-going effort to make the museum safe and secure. Arrangements have also been made for yearly inspections of the extinguishers.

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RECENT GUESTS:

About 15 members of the Study Club of Youngstown enjoyed a tour of the Wilson Museum recently where they were greeted and guided through the premises by Lois Jennings, curator, and Don Croop. After a couple hour visit, the ladies enjoyed lunch at the new Wilson House Restaurant and Inn. Group tours may be arranged by calling Lois Jennings.

\* \* \* \* \*

DID YOU KNOW...that the 1st Wilson Vol. Fire Co. field day was held in August, 1924, and that the 1st fire truck, "Old Betsey", was purchased on March 14, 1925 for \$12,000 dollars?

\* \* \* \* \*

BON MOT: A house is made of brick and stone, but a home is made of love alone.

\* \* \* \* \*

"BILLY SHERMAN'S CARETAKER:

Jan Sporleder, historical sites chrm., has kept the society's historic markers looking great, but there is one site she doesn't have to worry about--the Billy Sherman marker on the Ron Zauner farm.

Frank Massing, Judy's uncle, has adopted old Billy as his special project, and it would be worth a visit to the site to see how nicely he has spruced it up. The grass is mowed, flowers have been planted, the boulder has been painted white and, more recently, Frank has cleaned up the actual burial site and cleared a path to it from the road. The gravesite is enclosed with 4x4's with white cross and the original iris planted on the grave.

During the Civil War, Chief Bugler Pratt, who lived on what is now the Zauner property, captured the confederate horse, a Tennessee Walker, at the Battle of Chattanooga. He later rode the horse on Sherman's "March to the Sea", and named it "Billy" after his commanding officer. At the end of the war, he brought the horse back to his farm in Wilson.

"Billy" was over 30 years old when he passed away September 1, 1887, and he was buried with military honors by veteran members of Battery M of Peter A. Porter Post, G.A.R., who lowered him into the grave with American Flag draped over his head and army blanket over his body.

It was possible to locate the grave in 1974 because of the iris that had been planted on it by Kate Cuddeback, and today there probably isn't another Memorial to a Confederate Civil War horse anywhere in "Yankee" land other than "Billy's" grave here in Wilson.

The society is grateful to Frank Massing for recognizing the special significance of the site, and taking on the responsibility of caring for it.

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LIBRARY ACQUISITION:

"Pine Furniture, Our American Heritage", published by Collector's Books, will be added to the museum library. The book, which is profusely illustrated, features over 300 photographs of American Pine furniture and the use of pine in the home.

The book, compiled by Kathryn Mc Nerney, credits Lois Barnum, Nettie Stimson, and Audrey Orr for their valuable help given the author.

One section of the book titled, "A Home Restored", shows the 1861 Homestead of William Wilson, (home of Lois and Melanie Barnum) and portrays over a dozen authentic American pine pieces used throughout the house.

Anyone interested in obtaining a copy of the book may do so by contacting Lois Jennings.

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BARNUM BUILDING BLOSSOMS:

Many of our members may not be aware of the great transformation that has been taking place in the Whitney Barnum Building. Not only has a new kitchen and related work areas been built in, but plans are also being developed to add various display areas around the perimeter of the room. Things didn't "just happen", and credit for the lay-out and its planning must be given to the active Barnum Building committee composed of Eleanor Myers, Chrm., Barbara Mosher, Lois Barnum, Jill Phillips, Yvonne Smithson, Sue Schultz, Helen Stevens, Maxine Jones, Rena Rohring, and Wanda Burrows.

The work is being completed because of the "stick-to-it-ness" of Ollie Clark and Johnny Myers who have spent many hours on the job with the help of many volunteers including, Elton Kropp, Ralph Dinse, Ted Bull, John Benedict, John Demmin, George Cruickshank, Roger Ward, Howard Hunter, "Chuck" Messersmith, Art Schnoor, Elwin Upton, Carl Bodie, Don Croop, George Lederhouse, Harold Swanson, Morris Clark, Bill Fritton, Clark Stimson, Greg Mandeville, Pat Kelahan, Don Smithson, Roger Mawhiney, Willie Rockwood, Bill Bartz, Tom Rogers, Tom Walder, Dick Schultz, Ellsworth McKelvey, Harold Benedict, Hoyt Desso, Dan King, Don Burrows, and Dale Schlyer.

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GEORGE LINNABERY:

Kenneth Tanner, a lifelong friend and one of George Linnabery's first students at Holland Central High School, remembers George as a fine industrial arts teacher who taught many of his students the skills that later shaped their lives. His talents were varied and he was advisor to the school camera club, the model airplane club, and also helped out building stage-sets for school plays.

As Scoutmaster of Holland B.S. troop 507, he helped build shelters at Camp Ta-Wy-Ee of the Buffalo Council, and when World War II started, he helped build a small machine shop which was the beginning of the tool-design stage of his career.

He later resigned from teaching, moved to Wilson, and worked for the Bell Aircraft Corp. Bertram Kelley, retired Vice-Pres. of Engineering at Bell Helicopter, spoke highly of George and recalled that he was one of the key people who made production of the helicopter possible.

His ability was recognized when he began designing rotor blades and associated mechanisms, and he soon emerged as a leader of the Rotor and Controls Group, and presided over the changes from early wooden rotor blades to those made by metal.

When all the Bell testing laboratories were combined, George was the obvious choice to head the department, and became a key member of the company's management team.

George joined the Wilson Historical Society in 1975 and, as a trustee, volunteered much of his knowledge and expertise to help build both the Barnum Bldg. and Argue Bldg.

In recognition of his many contributions to the society, the Board of Directors, at the June meeting, voted to give him a Memorial-Life Membership in the Wilson Historical Society.

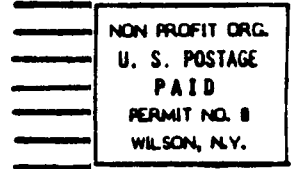
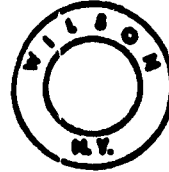
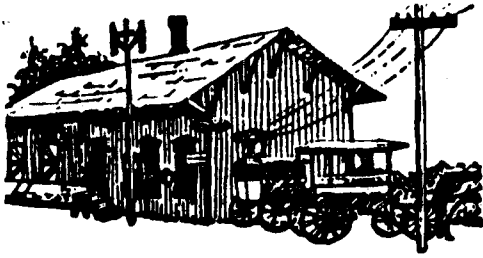
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FROM THE MAILBAG:

Marylou Young writes that she had a pleasant surprise when she visited the Wilson Museum. Her 2nd cousin, Earl Albright, (nephew of the late Whit Barnum) saw her name in the guest register and introduced himself to Marylou. She said that Fred Barnum's daughter, and Shirley, were there too, "So we took pictures of the four cousins! Wasn't that a co-incidence?"

Which merely goes to prove, you never know who will turn up or who you will meet when you pay a visit to the Wilson Museum.

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# Wilson Historical Society

WILSON, NEW YORK 14172

## NEWSLETTER

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

LIBRARIAN  
WILSON CENTRAL SCHOOL  
WILSON, NY 14172

SEPTEMBER 1989 Vol.18 NO.8  
(Coleman Press)

### WILSON'S RAILROAD DAYS:

The Lake Ontario Railroad was organized in October, 1870, but it was 1876 before the line was finally brought through Wilson. Some of the local directors were Reuben F. Wilson, Joseph Fowler, Oliver Scovell, and Burt Van Horn.

Many persons, from the outset, considered it an insignificant little railroad and perhaps it was since its rolling stock consisted of only two second hand locomotives, two passenger cars, and 50 or 60 freight cars.

Construction started at Oswego, but it was a long and difficult task. Work stopped when the tracks had only been laid 18 miles west of the city, and when work resumed it was halted again at Ontario so promoters could raise more financial backing. In 1875, the line was pushed west to Kendall, but at year's end everything was sold on the block to the Rome, Watertown, and Ogdensburg Railroad.

The new owners extended the tracks from Kendall to Lewiston, and in the spring sent an inaugural train over the line to announce its opening. Reference to that gala event was made in the secretary's report of the Womens' Aid Society of the Exley Methodist Church who noted:

"Public schools were recessed, stores closed, and business suspended. Everyone turned out-- ministers, laymen, rich, poor, big and little, in wagons, horseback, "posse back", and afoot to see the first train cross the townline road on the lakeshore division of the Rome, Watertown, and Lake Ontario Shore Railroad.

'Hundreds of people visited the spot and seemed loath to go home again and, like "Mary's little lamb", waited about patiently in the snow and slush. Among the crowd we noticed Capt. Luther Wilson and Esquire Andrew Brown, who have seen this town from its infancy--from solid forests to all the modern improvements of a large village.

'With a harbor unsurpassed on the lake, and now railroad facilities, who can tell what our future will be?"

The first passenger train passed through Wilson on June 12, 1876, and the first mail train steamed through on August 10, 1876, but during the next 7 years, the railroad barely survived going into receivership. However, in 1883, Charles Parsons acquired control of the stock, and hired Harry Britton to operate the line. Together, they built the lake shore branch of the R.W.& O. into a prosperous railroad.

The New York Central, not unaware of its competitor's success, leased all the properties of the R.W.& O. in 1891, but retained the time-honored name for several years on time tables and other advertising literature.

The 1st station was erected at Wilson in 1876-77, and this depot was used until 1905 when a new one was built by the New York Central. An item in the Jan. 12, 1905 edition of the Wilson "Star" stated, "The R.W.& O. depot in this village is being torn down and in its place the New York Central will erect a station of more modern design." In 1912-13, the waiting room, baggage room and ticket office were enlarged and the entire complex covered with a slate roof. The beautifully designed brick walks were also laid at this time.

The railroad played an important roll in Wilson's economy, and when the N.Y. Central took control in 1891, it serviced one of the greatest fruit-growing areas in the United States. Even the mighty N.Y. Central found it difficult sometimes to find enough equipment to handle the large amounts of fruit, vegetables, and other products shipped from Ontario's southern shore.

In its hey-dey, 5 passenger trains operated daily, and connections could be made to Buffalo, Chicago, N.Y. City, and Portland, Maine. Famous "flyers" that operated over the "Hojack" were the "White Mt. Express" and the "Wabash" which passed through Wilson mostly at night.

Improved highways and a growing truck industry forced the railroad to curtail operations, and by 1924, passenger trains were cut to two daily. Passenger service was discontinued in 1934, but the Wilson freight office remained open until June, 1959.

The Wilson Canning Co. bought the depot in 1961, and resold it to Dr. Argue in 1965. He used the building to store antique cars until Oct. 1972, when he gave it to the town of Wilson with the stipulation that it be used as a museum and meeting place for the Wilson Historical Society.

The sound of the steam locomotive whistle and the diesel's horn are no longer heard in Wilson, and the tracks that once carried the famous "flyers" through town have been torn up and scrapped. All that remains to remind Wilsonians of their one-time "only connection to the outside world", is the stately old depot-museum; the 1903 N.Y. Central work caboose; some railroad crossing signs; a miscellaneous collection of railroad artifacts; and nostalgic memories of an early day.

The "Hojack" name will also be preserved because of a generous gift of land by Dr. George and Rosemary Badger of Lockport. The 4½ acre plot has been seeded and planted to trees, and a historical marker designates the site as "Hojack" Park, with the names of its donors inscribed upon it.

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THE LADIES OF FARMER'S VALLEY:

On June 18, 1861, Miss L.C. Otto, on behalf of the Ladies of Farmer's Valley, Smethport, PA., presented an American Flag to the Home Guard of Farmer's Valley, Co. H, 58th Regt., of the Pennsylvania Volunteers. When making the presentation Miss Otto said:

"Knowing your patriotic feelings and love for the Union, we offer this flag trusting it will never be dishonored, disgraced, nor abandoned by you, but will be protected and cherished as an emblem of liberty and peace to all who may enlist under its folds."

Capt. Asa H. Cory, who accepted the flag on behalf of the Penn. Volunteers responded, "On behalf of the members of this Company, we return our heartfelt thanks to the Ladies of Farmer's Valley, (God Bless them) whos loyalty is as uncorruptable as virtue itself.

'We assure you, ladies, that the Flag that was baptized in blood at the birth of our Nation shall not be disgraced or dishonored by us, but, in memory of Washington, Jackson, and Taylor, will be kept unsullied and untarnished to the best of our ability.

'This Flag may yield to the corrodng tooth of time, yet we hope and believe that other flags bearing the Stars and Stripes will continue to wave over a happy and united people.

'Who does not love those Stars and Stripes, cemented as they are with the blood of our fathers.

'Most of our southern states have discarded this National Emblem and insulted and vilified it, yet we trust ere long it will float again over a United Nation."

(Note: We thank Sara Berry of Wilson for the information used in the above item. Sara and her cousin, Ella Mae Peters of Florida, are great-granddaughters of Capt. Asa H. Cory.)

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SEPTEMBER PROGRAM:

All "green thumbs" may be interested in the program scheduled for the 1st regular monthly meeting this fall at the museum September 18th at 7:30 PM.

Barbara Mosher, Program Chrm., has invited Al Schotz of Wilson to speak on the "Endangered Plants of Wilson and Autumn Wildflowers." Al attends college part time and is a Botanist who works for the State of New York.

Dedicated and faithful persons like Emma Schrader, Chrm. of the Refreshment Comm., are what makes our society "tick". Emma and Mary Bartz will be hostesses for the September meeting.

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SEPTEMBER CALENDAR:

Thurs., Sept. 7th, Planning Board meeting at home of Art Schnoor--8:00 PM.

Wed., Sept. 13th, Board of Director meeting at museum, 7:30 PM.

Mon., Sept. 18th, Regular monthly meeting at museum--7:30 PM.

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SEPTEMBER HOSTS & HOSTESSES:

Sara Berry, Hostess Chrm., has announced that the following members have agreed to greet visitors at the museum on Sunday afternoons from 2-4 PM:

Sept. 3rd, Zilpha Petty and Sylvia McCuaig; Sept. 10th, "Chuck" and Marion Campbell; Sept. 17th, Don and Joanne Wiltse; and Sept. 24th, "Stu" and Ernie Walpole.

\* \* \* \* \*

SUCCESSFUL QUILT REGISTRATION:

Linda Davis, Chrm., announced that 374 quilts owned by 112 area residents or organizations, were registered at the two Farm and Home Centre Registration Days held this summer in Lockport.

Five historical societies and two church groups entered quilts, and information about them was recorded by 73 volunteers.

Quilts owned by the Wilson Museum were entered by Lois Barnum and Lois Jennings.

\* \* \* \* \*

RECENT ACQUISITIONS:

Marilyn Cuddeback Rollinger of Lockport has donated two pictures of Mary Cuddeback Mittler and Vosburgh; also a Baby Dress and Pantaloons.

Mrs. Anne Larkin Gardner, Cleveland, Ohio: Beals, McCarthy & Rogers Catalogue #8; "Society of Automobile Engineers", 10 vols. (1912-1917).

Ralph Ward, Gasport: Lock and Key from the 1st schoolhouse in the village of Wilson.

Bea Mensch, Lockport: Miscellaneous collection of old hand tools.

Susan Sobiegray, Niagara Falls: Plastic mounted article on Memorial Day Fair.

Paul Manchester, Ransomville: Man's Derby "Bowler" Hat in good condition.

Harold Fitzsimmons: Three plastic mats featuring antique cars.

Jean Argue: Old Carpet Bag and Driving Gloves.

Winifred Terry: "A Book of Good Dinners for my Friends:, by Fanny Merritt Farmer (1905).

Dorothy Linnabery: Two Sears Roebuck Catalogs and four Montgomery Ward Catalogs.

Don Croop: World Almanac and Book of Facts (1981).

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SANBORN BAND FEATURED:

Millie Lonsbery and Chris Kelman had no complaints when they served as hostesses at the Wilson Museum on Sunday, August 6th. Many visitors were attracted to the museum that day to hear the town-sponsored Band Concert and enjoy the Ice Cream Social put on by the Tourism Committee and Historical Society.

Rena Rohring was Chairman of the event and was assisted by Wanda Burrows. Wally Goodman directed the Sanborn Band. All are members of the Wilson Historical Society.

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FISHING DERBY:

Anglers may wish to make a note on their calendars that the Niagara County Fishing Derby will be held September 9th through September 17th. Good luck to all of you!

\* \* \* \* \*

NEW MEMBER:

It is a pleasure to welcome Verna Barnum of Lockport as a member of the society.

\* \* \* \* \*

GROWING OLD is easy. The hard part is growing up.

SAILBOAT PIRACY:

Incredible as it may sound, the late Merle Wilson once told Clara Kaiser how he and his Dad, Billy Wilson, lost their sailboat.

They used their good-sized boat for fishing and at day's end, would always take down the sails and put them away. One day, however, they forgot.

That was the night that the last original warehouse built by Luther Wilson burned down. Naturally everyone in Wilson always turned out for a first class fire, and Billy and Merle were no exceptions.

After the fire, they started for home, and that was when they discovered that their sailboat was gone. They searched up and down the shoreline for it but with no success, but Billy wouldn't give up--he figured it had to be somewhere.

He decided to take the steamer at Lewiston and go to Toronto to look for it--a hunch that paid off. There in the harbor was his boat, so he notified the Sheriff who quickly picked the thieves up in Toronto.

When the culprits were brought to trial, it was learned that they had set the warehouse on fire so they could see to sail out of the harbor. Except for Billy's persistence, they might have gotten away with it.

The thieves, two brothers, were convicted of setting the fire and stealing the boat, and both were sent to jail, but the warehouse that they destroyed was the last visible landmark of that historic era when ship-building and shipping produce were thriving industries at the Wilson Harbor.

\* \* \* \* \*

IN FOND MEMORY:

Ida Ereon, 110, an Honorary-Life Member of the society, died June 22, 1989, at the Newfane Health Facility where she resided for the past 5 years. She is survived by a nephew, William Wilson and his sons, Charles and Tower Wilson, all of Wilson; also two dear life-long friends, Emma Schrader of Wilson, and Kenny Welker of Newfane. Burial was at St. Peter's Lutheran Church Cemetery, North Ridge, with Rev. David Musall officiating.

Jean W. Kress, 70, died at home, June 20, 1989, after a long illness. She was a descendent of Wilson's founding family, and is survived by her mother, Margaret Wilson; her husband, John Kress, both of Wilson; and sons Jeremy (Palma) of Lockport and Michael (Diana) of Wilson. A Mass of Christian Burial was held at Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic Church with Father Paul Burkard officiating. Interment was in Greenwood Cemetery at Wilson.

Marion B. Horton, 91, an Honorary-Life Member of the Society, passed away July 22, 1989, at Veteran's Hospital, Bay Pines, Florida. She was a receptionist for the late Dr. John Argue, and moved to Florida in 1951. She is survived by her sons, Robert (Helen) of Wilson, and Charles (Norris) of Largo, Florida. Services and burial were in Florida.

\* \* \* \* \*

MEMBERS IN THE NEWS:

Carol C. Smith, Sanborn, has been installed Regent of the Niag. Falls Chapter, National Soc. of the Daughters of the American Revolution. She is a graduate of Wilson High School and earned her BS and MS at Buffalo State College. She taught at Wilson Central, Starpoint, and Stevenson Elementary at Ransomville.

Harold Mosher will seek a 5th term as supervisor of the town of Wilson. He is a former mayor of the Village; one of the founders of Wilson's Little League; a 20 year Exempt member of Wilson Vol. Fire Co. #1; and active member of the Wilson Lions Club. In 1972, he attended the first meeting held to initiate the founding of the Wilson Historical Society in which he is now a trustee.

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MUSEUM ACTIVITIES:

John Myers, Pres., has appointed Wallace Goodman trustee to fill the vacancy left by Nettie Stimson who was elected 1st Vice-President.

Sara Berry has accepted the chairmanship of the Sat/Sun afternoon hostess comm., and Lucille Upton will assist her.

Lucille has done a tremendous job writing up descriptions of depot artifacts, and has also done some preliminary work on setting up a guide policy for the museum.

Don Burrows, Chrm. of Planning, reports that all fire extinguishers have been installed and emergency lighting equipment is in place. The security alarm system is ready, and Dale Schlyer has offered to handle any problems that might arise with fire or intrusion alarms.

Pres. Myers reminded everyone that all committee chairmen should appoint an assistant who could take over as chairman should the need arise.

Motion was approved to include a membership application in town's "Welcome Package" offering new residents a one year free membership in the society should they wish to join.

Motion was passed approving a cost estimate of \$500 to set up a Postoffice display in the Barnum Building.

Proposal by Barnum Bldg. Comm. was approved that members only be allowed to use kitchen facilities for a \$100 donation--\$50 to be refunded if kitchen is left in good condition.

The Tugwell log cabin will be donated to the society, courtesy of Red Clark, who will also donate 2 Cadillacs--one restored.

Request by Mayor Robert Martin to use society's parking lot for Eastern Niagara United Motorcade on Sept. 9th was approved.

Maintenance of depot foundation was discussed regarding holes that are permitting animals to get under building. Matter is referred to Lois Barnum and Burt Jennings, trustees in charge of the depot.

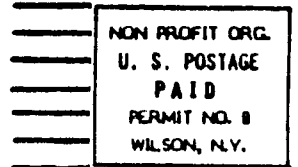
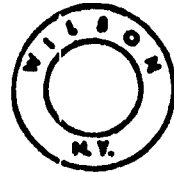
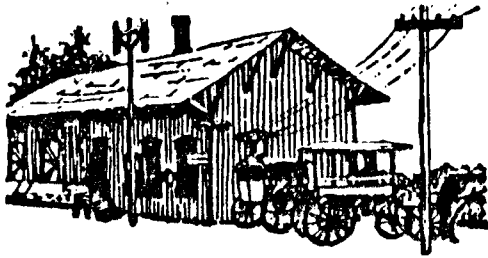
Proposed budget of \$18,500 through April 30, 1990, was approved with one dissenting vote.

The Wilson Soc. will cater the Niag. Co. His. Soc. Annual Dinner to be held Oct. 28, 1989.

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BON MOT: You have reached middle age when the girl you smile at thinks you are one of her father's friends.

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**Wilson Historical Society**

WILSON, NEW YORK 14172

**NEWSLETTER**

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

OCTOBER 1989 Vol.18 No.9  
(Coleman Press)

LIBRARIAN  
WILSON CENTRAL SCHOOL  
WILSON, NY 14172

**HUMOR ALONG THE "HOJACK":**

Several stories have been told how the R.W.& O. got the name "Hojack", but the one we like tells how Jack Welch, a farmer and one of the line's 1st engineers, couldn't forget his horse-driving ways, and everytime he slowed down for a station he'd holler "whoa" at the engine.

People quickly picked it up and jokingly began to refer to the railroad as the "Whoa-Jack" line--and as time went by, shortened it to "Hojack". Now whether this story is true or not, it's as logical an explanation as any.

Another "tongue-in-cheek" tale was written by historian William Olmstead and published by George Gooding of Lockport in 1910 that suggests how the hamlet of Burt may have originated:

"In 1875, when the R.W& O. opened, there was a a station at the crossing on Lake Road called 'Newfane'. In 1900, when the Lockport-Olcott trolley, running north, went under the steam line, which went east and west, the point of intersection was called "Burt" after Burt Van Horn. In exchange, the trolley line took the name of "Newfane" for its Charlotteville Station.

"The crossing of these two railroads at Burt seemed to have a permanent effect on the growth of the hamlet at that point. Ten years have made a town where once there were only fields.

"The problem was that the two railroads were always striving on how not to make connections, and passengers had to wait so long between trains, they concluded it was easier to settle there."

One time, a 'drummer', who wished to purchase a ticket from Wilson to Charlotte, inquired of the station agent how late his train would be. He was surprised when the agent told him the train was on time. "How come?", asked the astonished salesman.

"Oh this is yesterday's train, replied the agent, "She's just 24 hours late."  
In another incident, a letter mailed from Niagara Falls in 1882, wasn't received in Wilson until 1894. The U.S. Postoffice, often the target of criticism for misdirected mail, was partly exonerated by the editor of the Wilson "Star" who noted, "We always knew the R.W.& O. was slow, but this beats all records."

Train conductors on the "Hojack" were usually assigned to regular runs, and sometimes got well acquainted with their passengers. The late Mrs. Marion Horton often took her sons Charles and Robert to Rochester with her, and recalled that when the train reached the village of Greece the conductor would say to her youngsters, "Hold tight to your seats, boys, we're running through Greece"--a remark that always kept the boys giggling to the Rochester station.

One time a little old lady, noticeably under the influence of intoxicants, tried to board a train at Wilson for Holley, but insisted on trying to stand on the baggage car platform.

The conductor was obliged to put her off the train, and a short time later she was found fast asleep on the depot waiting room floor. When she finally came to, she boarded another train without incident, and it was later discovered she was quite prominent in her home town.

During the depression years, many tramps rode the freights into Wilson, and often camped in Wilson or Stevens woods. Sometimes, at night, they would break into the depot in search of money or other valuables.

Once, just before Christmas, Mrs. Patterson, the station agent's wife, went to Buffalo on a shopping spree and, in order to keep her daughters from finding out what she had bought them, hid their gifts in the depot safe. That night, tramps broke into the station and managed to open the safe. Mrs. Patterson later remarked she would have loved to have seen the expression on their faces when all they found for their trouble were 2 dolls and a silk petticoat.

Pearla (Clark) Spears of Lockport recalled that when she was a young girl, she spent a lot of time around the depot. She said that the locomotive engineers liked to drink and she would get a jug of hard cider for them at Hinchliffe's, and leave it by the railroad crossing. When she came back later for the jug, she'd always find a quarter under neath it.(Enterprising girl)

When Allen Hinchliffe's Vinegar Works operated east of the depot, he used to bring his small daughter to the station when transacting business. On the west side of the waiting room was a water fountain where his little girl always wanted to drink from the "magic fountain".

And, to a little girl, it was magic because each time her father waved his hands over it, water would suddenly spurt out--much to her amazement.

It was some time later before she discovered the secret of the "magic fountain"--unkown to her, her father pressed on a foot pedal to make the water come, and for many months thoroughly enjoyed the look of astonishment on his daughter's face when he did so.

Memories like that are hard to erase, so we imagine Eleanor (Hinchliffe) Myers, town of Wilson Historian, remembers that old "Magic Fountain" each time she walks into the Wilson Museum

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**PROJECT ALERT:**

Urgently needed: Some one to replace rotted planks on depot's baggage platform. Contact person; Art Schnoor, Supt. in charge of work details and construction. (751-6373).

COOPER TOWN:

A few of our members may recall the time when so much fruit was shipped from Wilson, several Cooper shops had to be built to help support the industry.

According to the late Earl Armstrong, the first Cooper shop was operated by the Johnson family in a brick building at the corner of Wood and Chestnut Streets.

They started making barrels in early July, and would deliver them to fruit growers in a special wagon rig called a barrel rack.

The Johnsons were a large family, but they could not supply enough barrels for the trade, and a man by the name of Miller started another Cooper shop by the railroad depot. Also, in the early 1900's, there were a number of Blacksmith shops in town including Fittros, Bonsteels, Biggins, Bells, Stockwells, and Stoddards. They shod the horses in town including the 96 housed inside the village. There was considerable objection, however, from the people who complained about the smell and flies that the horses attracted.

With the advent of the motor vehicle, people got rid of their horses, and the blacksmith shops gradually disappeared.

Anyone over 70 can probably remember when the stockyards were located west of the depot. That was where the pigs and cattle were kept before shipment by train to Buffalo.

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MUSEUM HOSTESSES FOR OCTOBER:

Sara Berry has announced that the following persons have agreed to serve as greeters at the museum, Sunday afternoons from 2 to 4 PM.

Oct. 1st, Howard and Leona Hunter; Oct. 8th, Harold and Neva Benedict; Oct. 15th, Dale and Janette Schlyer; Oct. 22nd, Jack and Winnie Terry, and Oct. 29th, George and Marjorie Lederhouse.

\* \* \* \* \*

OCTOBER PROGRAM:

Barbara Mosher, Program Chrm., has announced that "Clip" Smith, Public Relations Director of the Niagara Solid Waste Consortium, and Keith O'Neil, Co-ordinator, will be the guest speakers at the Oct. 16th meeting of the Wilson Historical Society. The very timely subject of "Recycling" will be the theme of the program, and everyone interested in learning more about it should make an effort to attend.

Since there is a Buffalo Bill football game scheduled on the 16th, our guests will give their presentation at 7:30 PM, and the business meeting will follow later.

Refreshments will be served by Millie Lonsbery and Jan Sporleder, hostesses for the night.

\* \* \* \* \*

OCTOBER CALENDAR:

Planning Board: Thursday, Oct. 5th; Art Schnoor's home, 8:00PM.

Board of Directors: Wednesday, Oct. 11th; Wilson Museum, 7:30 PM.

Monthly Meeting: Monday, Oct. 16th; Museum, 7:30 PM.

Niag. Co. Hist. Soc. Annual Dinner Meeting: Thursday, Oct. 26th, at Exley United Methodist.

\* \* \* \* \*

RECENT ACQUISITIONS:

Dr. and Mrs. Scott (Marves Myers) Isaksen have donated a Plum Pudding Mold; Large and Small Melon Mold; Covered China Tureen; Ivorina Nail Files & Button Hook; 2-Piece China Dresser; Set of 8 Cookbooks; 3 Schoolbooks, (1938-1940); and Iron & Trivet.

Kenneth E. Welker, Lockport; Portrait of Ida Ereon; Baseball signed by Buffalo Bison Team; also Baseball signed by "Buster" Bison; Cranberry & Chrystal Cup, signed "Ida and Seymour", Niagara Falls, (1901); also Token good for 5¢ in trade at H.W. Ferrins.

Nettie Stimson: Picture advertising the M.R. Smith Store in Wilson.

Wilson Central School, Class of '89: "T" Shirt with signatures of Class members on it.

\* \* \* \* \*

NEW MEMBERS:

It is a pleasure to welcome several new members including: "Buck" and Rebecca Tillitson, St. John's, Michigan (Rebecca is the daughter of the late Whit Barnum); Greta C. Guion, Clearwater, Florida; Clark and Dianne (Croop) Brown, Lompoc, California; LaMont Ridley, Albion; Joan A. Bower, Lockport; Marlin Marini, Depew; & Rev. Ron & Sylvia Haefer, Newfane.

As of September 14, 1989, there were 755 members in the Wilson Historical Society. Of that total, 467 live within the boundaries of Niagara County; 238 live outside Niagara County or Out-of-State; and 51 are Junior Members.

\* \* \* \* \*

NEW LIFE MEMBER:

Beatrice Mae Ridley McCabe has joined the Life Membership Class of the Wilson Historical Society. She is the daughter of Earl and Clara Hunter Ridley, and was born in 1932 in a house back of the old former Union High School.

She graduated from Wilson Central School in 1950, and Buffalo State Teachers College in 1953. She and her husband, Robert, have four children, Thomas, Kathleen, Bennet, and Scott. The family attends the 1st Baptist Church at Marilla, New York.

\* \* \* \* \*

GOLDEN WEDDING:

John and Eleanor Myers celebrated their 50th Golden Wedding Anniversary in the Barnum Building, Wilson Museum, on Sunday, August 27, 1989. A large number of family and friends attended the happy occasion. John is President of the society and Eleanor is town historian.

\* \* \* \* \*

TRAILERS NEEDED:

If anyone has an old four wheel trailer with tires that's no longer used, please consider donating it to the society. We could use it for transporting fair materials & storage use.

\* \* \* \* \*

DRIVE CAREFULLY---your car is not the only thing that can be recalled by its maker.

\* \* \* \* \*

THE FORGOTTEN GENERATION:

President Bush's remarks about a "kinder and gentler" nation, reminds us of earlier years when...It wasn't unusual for a gentleman to offer his seat to a lady on a public conveyance... Children asked to be excused from the dinner table...most people tried to be considerate of their neighbors...Kids generally obeyed their parents...and you could take your family to a movie without fear of seeing everyone on the screen disrobe.

Gum-chewing was unacceptable in school...four letter words weren't necessary to tell a good story...Men tipped their hats and held doors open for women...Doctors made house calls...Autos had running boards...Coke was a refreshing new drink...and electronic hi-jacking equipment wasn't needed at airports.

Church doors were open 7 days a week...Talk show hosts didn't insult their guests...One could get by on \$18 a week..."penny postcards" cost a penny...A meaningful relationship meant you got along well with your cousins...the Pil wasn't invented...and, we really must have been naive--people actually got married before living together.

\* \* \* \* \*

BOARD ACTION AND REPORTS:

The Fittro Shop was cleaned out to prepare it for a new cement floor, and on September 14th, Ollie Clark, Randy Ward, Elton Kropp, Ed Hastings, Doug Hastings, and John Myers worked from 8:30 AM to 8:30 PM to smooth and complete the new floor.

The Board of Directors made this project a priority because no future improvements can be made in the building until the floor is finished.

John Myers suggested that since an effort is being made to expand and renovate the library and firehall in the village, the society should delay any projects that might compete with or hinder completion of those worthy plans.

Eleanor Myers announced that since the society is not equipped to serve over a hundred people in the Barnum Building, arrangements have been made with the ladies of Exley United Methodist Church to prepare a dinner at the church for the annual meeting of the Niagara County Historical Society on October 26th. Museum will be open to visitors prior to the dinner.

In preparation to installing Wilson's old Postoffice in the Barnum Building, the committee has scrubbed the woodwork spotless. The structure was saved in the disastrous Hub Hotel fire. Ladies on the Barnum Building committee who helped out were Barbara Mosher, Sue Schultz, Yvonne Smithson, Helen Stevens, Jill Phillips, and Eleanor Myers, Chrm.

Mr. and Mrs. Charles Schlyer have donated a pine tree that was planted by their daughter when she was a girl scout under the leadership of the late Millie Croop. The scouts were given pine seedlings in Christmas cards by their leader, and the Schlyer tree is now over 6 feet tall.

The Board accepted the gift as a Memorial to "Millie", and will have it planted on the museum grounds this fall.

With an eye to the future, the Planning Board has made a color coded map of the museum grounds. The map was put together by Don Burrows, Chrm., and Dan King, and shows possible areas for expansion in the future. All six areas designated on the map were approved by the Board of Directors.

\* \* \* \* \*

WILSON IS NOT DOZING:

The late Clara Kaiser spent many summers in Wilson and wrote down a number of her observations and experiences. One of the colorful characters she wrote about was Art Burgess, who used to deliver mail on the island with a two-wheel pushcart. (The cart is presently in the museum)

One day, on the narrow walk that lay through the center of "Sunset Island", he met Mr. Somers who was also using a pushcart to deliver popcorn to residents. After glaring at each other for a few minutes, both men realized that the other wasn't about to move aside, so Burgess, with considerable authority, announced, "This is the U.S. Mail"--and he quickly got the right-of-way.

Clara recalled that Burgess was often the target of all the kids and she noted: "The boys often loosened the nuts on his cart, and when he started to push it, the wheels would go sasheing off in opposite directions. And then the air would be blue, and I have never heard such a fine collection of fancy cusswords before or since.

"Quite often, Art would collect a load of fire-water on the island, and I remember the time when he had everyone at the harbor in hysterics.

"In rowing from the island to the entrance of the slip, he rowed himself up on a sunken log, and his flat-bottom boat was perfectly balanced on it.

"He sat there and rowed and rowed for over an hour, and never seemed to know he wasn't moving. Finally, after the ferry boat had made several trips back and forth to the island, they felt sorry for him and shoved him off the log."

Mrs. Kaiser also had some thoughts about small towns, and some of her observations might well apply today:

"Driving through a small town, one is apt to find himself saying, 'What on earth does anyone find to do in such a completely dead and gone-looking place?

"Wilson is no exception but, as in all small towns, a casual passerby does not see the heart of the village beating steadily away.

"One must be a part of a community to know what's going on, and anyone living in Wilson, if he wants to, can be very, very, busy.

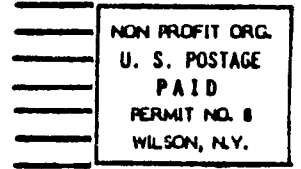
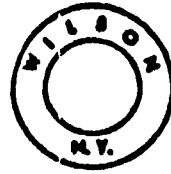
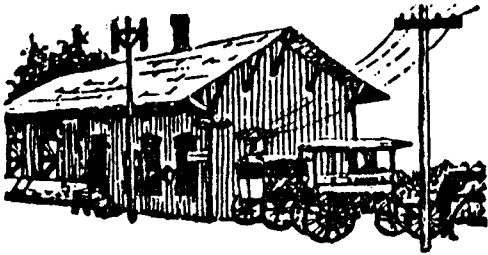
"With church, school, lodge activities, literary and civic groups, plus innumerable bridge and canasta groups going strong all year 'round; and with boating, fishing, and bathing at the front door, Wilson is not dozing."

Note: We thank Jean Argue and Betty Bulmer for use of papers written by their mother, Clara Kaiser. Jean and Betty's roots are firmly established in Wilson. Their g-g-great grandfather, Andrew Brown, helped start the Methodist Society in Wilson and donated the land on which the 1st frame church was built in 1838. Now the site of Exley U.Methodist Church, built to replace the original church in 1884. Both Jean and Betty are active members of it.

\* \* \* \* \*

BON MOT: When you give, forget it; when you take, remember.

\* \* \* \* \*



**Wilson Historical Society**

WILSON, NEW YORK 14172

**NEWSLETTER**

**DONALD W. CROOP, Editor**

November 1989 Vol. 18 No. 10  
(Coleman Press)

LIBRARIAN  
WILSON CENTRAL SCHOOL  
WILSON, NY 14172

**LICKING THE DEPRESSION:**

The Great Depression was in full swing when Elwyn Flagler moved to Wilson in 1930 and built a welding shop at the corner of Seneca and High Streets but, since the economy was poor, it was a difficult time to start a business--let alone raise a family of three children.

His daughter, Helen Ward of Lockport, recalls that as a girl she used to ride with him when he visited area farmers to shoe horses.

Many were "Broncoes" from the West with mean dispositions, and sometimes they would leap on her father's back or kick and step on his feet.

Farmers used to bring wooden wagon wheels in for him to fix, and he would replace broken spokes and put on new rims.

The outer steel rim was made by placing it in a deep ring of dry corncobs which he would set ablaze. When the rim was red hot, he'd pick it up with tongs and set it on the large wooden wheel. He would then drive the hot rim onto the wheel with a sledge hammer and clamp in place.

It was always necessary to pour water on the wheel immediately to shrink the rim and also keep the wood wheel from burning.

He also used to rebuild plow points that had been worn down from plowing stony fields, and Helen remembers that his customers would often remark that the rebuilt plow points would last much longer than new ones.

Elwyn was quite an inventor, and re-built the machinery that the late Stan Borngraeber used at his potato factory to peel and cut potatoes for french fries.

He also made the stainless steel conveyor and other machinery used at the former Current Canning Factory. The conveyor was as large as a semi-trailer, and was built in two sections so it could be moved and installed more easily.

Flagler had the idea of mounting his welder on a truck so he could drive to a farmer's field to repair broken equipment. This was a great convenience and savings to farmers who would otherwise have had to disassemble a machine in order to take a part into town.

While Don Flagler worked with his father, he and the late Lewis Smith built a replica of a 1903 Oldsmobile pick-up truck to commemorate Dr. John F. Argue's 25th year as a Physician in the town of Wilson. In 1988, Mrs. Jean Argue donated the vehicle to the Wilson Museum.

As busy as Mr. Flagler was, he always had time for his children. He made a point to be with them at mealtime, and the custom of saying "Grace" was always observed.

He also loved to fish, and his boat, (built entirely by him from sheet metal) was generally one of the first to be put in the water each Spring at the harbor.

In his early years, Elwyn lived on the Flagler homestead on the Charlotteville Road in Newfane, and when he attended school, he would drive a horse and buggy to Newfane and leave them in the church sheds of the Newfane Methodist Church. From there he rode his bicycle to Lockport where he attended school in the former High School on East Avenue.

Before moving to Wilson, he worked the Flagler farm, and also learned the welding and blacksmith trade while working as an apprentice for Leo Daigler of Burt.

Elwyn Flagler was a Wilson businessman for over 30 years and, according to his daughter, Helen, "Dad could fix the littlest kid's tricycle or the biggest farm machine---even if he had to fabricate the parts to do it."

\* \* \* \* \*

**HOSTS AND HOSTESSES FOR NOVEMBER:**

Sara Berry, Chrm., has selected the following members to greet visitors at the museum on Sunday afternoons from 2 to 4 PM.

Nov. 5th, Don and Wanda Burrows; Nov. 12th, Willie and Bea Rockwood; Nov. 19th, Dick and Emma Lou Reppentine' and Nov. 26th, Bill and Maxine Jones.

\* \* \* \* \*

**NOVEMBER CALENDAR:**

- Nov. 2nd: Planning Board Meeting; Art Schnoor's; 8:00 PM.
- Nov. 7th: General Election Day; 6:00 AM to 9:00 PM.
- Nov. 15th: Board of Directors Meeting; Wilson Museum; 7:30 PM.
- Nov. 20th: Regular Meeting; Wilson Museum; 7:30 PM.
- Nov. 23rd: HAPPY THANKSGIVING.
- Nov. 26th: 2nd annual "Light Up Wilson" celebration begins at Wilson Museum.

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**SOUNDINGS...**

People who are so sure they know where the younger generation is going should try to remember where it came from.

\* \* \* \* \*

FREDERICK OLDENBURG-WOOD CARVER:

Frederick "Fritz" Oldenburg probably never dreamed when he was a student at Wilson High School that he would someday become renowned as a painter and woodcarver.

His mother died while he was quite young, and he and his brother and sister, Franklin and Verna, were given a home with the Ernest Donner family who lived at the corner of Brayley and Townline Roads. Today, the farm is owned by Ollie Clark of Wilson.

His early leaning toward art education may have been sparked at school when he attended classes taught by Marjorie Hurlburt and, according to his sister Verna of Lockport, he once substituted for Mrs. Hurlburt when she was ill.

"Fritz" received further education in art under the tutorship of Emil Strube who, at the time, was an instructor at the Albright Art Gallery in Buffalo. In later years, he spent some time studying sculpture with Gerone Gordon of West Englewood, New Jersey.

During World War II, he served as an Army Technician at Camp Shelby, Mississippi, and painted several murals for display on the walls of his company's recreational hall.

In addition to teaching oil painting for nearly 20 years, "Fritz" was an exhibiting member of the Hackensack Art Club and past president of several others including the Rutherford Art Association; the Clifton Association of Artists; and the American Artists Professional League of New Jersey.

He was also a member of the North Jersey Wood-Carvers; the New England Wood-Carvers; and the National Wood-Carvers Association.

His carvings and wood sculptures have been exhibited widely, and his award-winning paintings and wood carvings grace the walls of many private collectors.

As the years roll by, it is not unusual for people to remember their boyhood years and think about the place they used to call home.

Such is the case with "Fritz" Oldenburg, who recently made it known that he wished to give some of his wood carvings and a painting to the Wilson Museum.

Included in the gift are several fish, duck decoys, and a life size bust of an Indian Chief. The bust, which he was commissioned to carve, was put on display in Japan.

Since the items are quite large, the problem was how to get them to the Museum. Nettie and Clark Stimson saved the day when they volunteered to drive to Clifton, N.J. to pick them up.

Verna Oldenburg Barnum, who supplied us with some of the information for this item, is also making a name for herself as a member of the Lockport Senior Centre's lively comedy troupe, the "bag Ladies" and "Line Dancers."

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FROM THE MAILBAG:

Rex Stacy, former Wilson Businessman, writes to tell us that he and Winnie have moved to Spring, Texas. He says that as another birthday approaches, the years begin to weigh more heavily---but he's not complaining.

Rex sent us a few more quips to add to the "Forgotten Generation" printed in last month's newsletter, and we note:

Bunnies were small rabbits, and rabbits were not Volkswagons. In our time there were 5 & 10 cents stores and, for just one nickel you could ride a street car, make a phone call, buy a coke, or, buy enough stamps to mail one letter and two postcards.

We were before FM radio...tape recorders...electric typewriters...word processors...disco dancing...electronic music...Batman...Rudolph the Red-nosed Reindeer...Snoopy...DDT...Jeeps...the Jefferson Nickel...Scotch Tape...M&M's...automatic shifts...panty hose...drip-dry clothes...dishwashers...clothes dryers...electric blankets...coin vending machines...jet planes...helicopters...and inter-state highways.

We were not before the difference between sexes was learned, but we were before sex changes-- We just made do with what we had.

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NOVEMBER PROGRAM:

Barbara Mosher, Chrm., has announced that Dick Gallagher will be the guest speaker at the Nov. 20th meeting of the Wilson Historical Society.

The subject of his talk will be "Collecting Toys of Various Types", and he will discuss How to get started; Selecting a specific field of toys; What to look for at Toy Shows; and how to locate them. He will also illustrate the difference between original toys and reproductions.

Emma Schrader, Chrm., said that Marlene Schotz and Maxine Jones will be refreshment hostesses for the evening.

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ACQUISITIONS COMMITTEE:

By request of the Board of Directors, one of the society's standing committees will be featured in future monthly newsletters. It is felt that the success of our society depends on how well each committee is doing its job, and every member should be aware of their duties.

The Acquisitions Committee is currently composed of the curator, chrm., the library chrm., also the chairmen of the depot, Barnum Building, Argue Building, Pittro Shop, Caboose, & Grounds.

Most items acquired are routinely accepted by the curator, but any item of a questionable nature should be subject to the committee's approval.

For the sake of clarification, the curator, or deputy, will issue all accession slips, and record all acquisitions in the accession book.

All acquisitions shall then be referred to the proper building for display or storage, and a copy of the accession slips shall be given to the newsletter editor for publication.

Current members of the acquisitions committee are Lois Jennings, curator, Celeste Crawford, librarian, Eleanor Myers, Jim Pisello, Ollie Clark, Burt Jennings, and Elwin Upton.

\* \* \* \* \*

NEW MEMBERS:

Please welcome the following new members into the Wilson Historical Society: Ethel and Bill Owler, Youngstown; Doug Hastings, Ransomville; Mr. and Mrs. Edwin Thompson, Clarence Center; and Randy Ward, Wilson.

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BOARD ACTION AND REPORTS:

The Board of Directors has made arrangements to use the Fritton barn for storage. This will free much needed space for future development

Harold Mosher, "Ollie" Clark, "Chuck" Messersmith, Elwin Upton, Ralph Dinse, Art Schnoor, and John Myers, have prepared the barn for storage use.

Harold Mosher, town supervisor, requested that the society participate in the 2nd annual "Light up Wilson" celebration, and the date for the society's tree-trimming event is scheduled for Sunday, Nov. 23rd, at 3:00 PM, with the Junior and Senior High School chorus arriving at 4:00 PM to sing Christmas Carols. Celeste Crawford has been asked to chair the event, and Wanda Burrows will assist. It is hoped that members who attend will furnish Christmas "goodies".

Request by Celeste Crawford approved to permit the Beta Lambda Chapter of Delta Kappa Gamma to use the Patterson Room for their annual scholarship auction which will be held Nov. 15, 7 PM.

A request by Pam Groff was also approved for the Delphic Circle to hold their Christmas meeting in the Patterson Room, Dec. 12th at 8:00 PM.

In an effort to encourage more participation by the general membership in the society, it was decided to have a different committee high-lighted in each newsletter describing its responsibilities and listing the name and phone number of the chairman. It was also suggested that all chairmen attend the next meeting of the Board on November 15th.

Manpower and a supervisor are needed for a Saturday work crew to accomplish necessary repairs while the weather is still good. Of chief concern is the deck on the baggage platform as well as securing the building from intrusion by animals.

Wally Goodman reported that work is progressing on the Argue Building. The floor has been scrubbed, degreased, and sealed and it is hoped to have it painted this fall. Once accomplished it is planned to cordon off the cars and display the car memorabilia that has been donated.

A Bridge Plate exhibit donated by "Red" Clark will be put on plot #3 with placement and erection to be determined by Don Burrows, Planning Chrm., John Myers, and "Red" Clark.

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LIBRARY DRIVE PROGRESSING:

For the past several months a historic drive has been under way to solicit funds for the renovation of Wilson's Public Library. Local and out-of-state residents are responding well, and hopes are high that the goal will be met when the drive ends at the end of next year.

Many fund raisers are being held by local groups, and Sen. John Daly lent his support to one recently at the Wilson Boathouse Restaurant.

Another popular fund-raising event was a tea at the home of Mrs. Floyd Clark when guests dropped off a donation for the library fund.

Students at Thomas Marks School are also getting into the act, and will hold a "Read-aThon" when pupils will ask sponsors to provide funds to match their reading accomplishments.

Many individuals are giving donations in memory of deceased loved ones, while many others are presenting special gifts in observance of anniversaries, birthdays etc. In addition, there are a number of promotional T-shirts and sweatshirts available at the library or Lakeside Market. With the entire community supporting the library drive, it seems unlikely the final results could be anything but successful.

The library drive is being conducted under the capable direction of Gregg and Dena Mandeville, with promotional work being done by Bill Fritton and Peg Fritton, Chrm. of the Board.

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IN FOND MEMORY:

Myra S. Pease died Sunday, Aug. 27, 1989, and was interred in the Orangeport Union Cemetery, Gasport, NY. She is survived by her husband, Raymond S. Pease, Lockport, and 2 step children, Paul (Arlene) Karsten of Wilson, and Kira Woodruff of Machias.

Lloyd N. Duxbury, 93, died Friday, Sept. 1, 1989, at Inter-Community Hospital, Newfane, after a short illness. He was a member of Exley Methodist Church; Exempt member of Wilson Vol. Fire Co; Wilson Lodge 881, I.O.O.F.; Honorary member Wilson His. Soc., and long time member of the Wilson Lions Club. Surviving are his wife, Mildred (Saxton) Duxbury, Wilson; 5 sisters, Edith Forsey, Lockport; Stella Dochstader, Niagara Falls; Genevieve Harbison, Ransomville; Emma Schrader, Wilson; and Annabelle (John) Benedict of Wilson; also a brother, J.D. Duxbury of Wilson. A Memorial Service was held at Hamilton & Clark Funeral Parlor with Rev. Don Foley officiating.

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RECENT ACQUISITIONS:

Florence and Henry Donner of Euclid, Ohio, have donated, (via Betty Dieter) a large trunk filled with items collected on the Donner trip to Africa. Included are a Fur Robe; Fur Rug; Woven Coverlet; Woven Reed Mat; Water Jug Cover; 2 Woven Baskets; Embroidered African Cap; Walking Stick carved with African figures; a Spear; Large Woven Reed Mat; Ostrich Egg and Feathers; Large wooden head rest; 5 Ladles; Handled Reed Basket; 4 Beaded Necklaces; Beaded Belt & Pendant; Wooden Bead Purse; Carved Ivory Knife & Fork; Woven Reed Purse; 6 Ivory-carved Hat Pins; and Egyptian-carved Stone Bracelet.

Charles Michaels, Lockport-Olcott Rd: Seven photos of cars in museum, also an 8x10 enlargement photo of the 1903 Caboose.

Duke L. Williams, Ransomville: Cobblers Bench donated in memory of John Calkins of Lewiston. Mr./Mrs. William Ganshaw: 14 Copies of the Wilson High School "Crest".

Elaine Edminston: Wilson High School Cookbooks (1926-1927)

Mr./Mrs Ralph Fisher, Lewiston: New York Central Railroad Step.

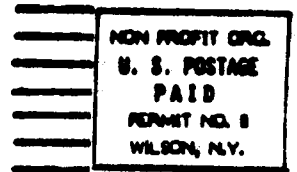
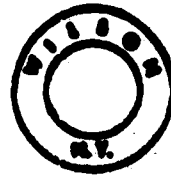
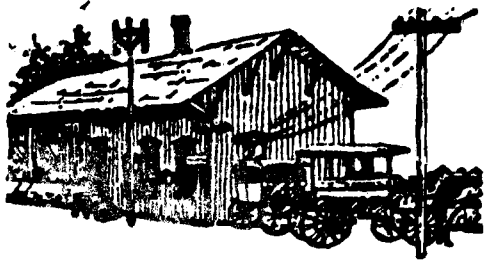
Jean Argue: Mortarboard; Gown; 2 Linen "Motoring Coats"; and Man's Swallow Tail Coat.

Lynford Griffin: White Kid Baby Shoes; Plush Cape; 2 Black Skirts; Petticoats; 2 Aprons; Green Faille Two-piece Dress; Liverstock Tatooing Kit; Telephone Bill payable at the Wilson Office in 1935; Elberta Mothers Club Programs (1923-1975) Calendar Plate from L.W. Smith Store (1910); Wilson High School Crests; 5 Christmas and New Year's Cards; "Good Old Days"-1971; Copy of Marriage License Certificate-1896; O.P.A. Sugar Certificates-1942; and Centennial Book.

Don Croop: Bound copy of direct line ancestry of Mildred Elson Croop.

\* \* \* \* \*

BON MOT: Microwave ovens make it possible to be a louzy cook in less time



**Wilson Historical Society**

WILSON, NEW YORK 14172

**NEWSLETTER**

**DONALD W. CROOP, Editor**

December 1989 Vol.18 No.11  
(Coleman Press)

LIBRARIAN  
WILSON CENTRAL SCHOOL  
WILSON, NY 14172

**WILSON'S "CHIC SALES" ERA:**

Modern plumbing "ain't what it used to be", (thank heavens) and anyone crowding the 70's may recall those "good ol' days" when the little house out back was a familiar sight in both village and town.

The late Clara Kaiser noted that they had a "Chic Sale" by their little white house on the lake at Wilson, and that "These affairs were generally 3-holers, two large and one small--so little Willie wouldn't "fold up" and fall through.

Their architectural beauty was simple, and generally limited to four sides and a slant roof, plus a door with a wooden slide on the inside to insure privacy.

The one we acquired was outstanding--literally and figuratively. It never had a coat of paint on the outside, so had weathered to a fine old dirty grey. Some artistic soul had tried to brighten up the convenience, however, by painting the whole inside a robin's egg blue, so we felt cheerful once locked inside the thing.

And of course the Sears-Roebuck catalogue always hung on a handy nail as standing equipment.

One fall after Hallowe'en, a very sad thing happened to our little outside restroom. We came down from Lockport and found something missing at our place, and sure enough, there the thing was---over the bank, a complete wreck.

My husband and a friend, neither of whom could drive a nail straight, lassoed the thing with a rope and dragged it up the bank--piece by piece.

But as a result of their handiwork, a weird thing happened. The rest room was put together so that part of the blue was on the outside, and part was on the inside. It looked like a Surrealist job.

So what do you think happened to this work of art? One day, a man who lived down the road apiece, came along and wanted to buy it.

He had enough money to buy the Brooklyn Bridge, but thought he sniffed a bargain. My first thought was to tell him to take it and welcome to it, but then I decided to tell the old miser to give me two dollars.

He looked at me and said, "Alright, I'll take it if you will deliver it", and I said, "It's a deal"--at the same time realizing I'd taken on a rather large order.

My good friends at the Wilson Boathouse rallied around, and we decided to make some fun out of it. The boys nailed long 2x4's on each side of the shanty which stood out like long handles; then I covered the thing with a huge American Flag.

The fellows lined up four on a side, and we gave all the youngsters pans to bang on; horns and whistles to blow on; and anything else to make noise with. The parade started with the women and kids falling in behind and, if anyone was watching that day, it was a sight they never forgot. Anyway, that is how I sold and delivered my "Chic Sales".

Later, we sold our little white house to a Buffalo Dentist and his family, and that is how Jean Schmidle came to know Wilson--she visited her aunt and uncle every summer."

\* \* \* \* \*

(Note: in 1929, Chic Sales, one of America's great rural character actors, wrote a little book called "The Specialist". His humorous account about the best way to build an outhouse was widely read at a time in our history when the backhouse was still a functional part of America's life style.

In 1979, the Wilson Historical Society published a version of its own which we named, "Wilson's Vanishing Heritage."

The booklet was put together with the help of Jean Argue and the late Dorothy Thilk, and also local artists including Anne Rohring, Berne Kent, Norma Ward, Frances Landy, Becky Stevens, Carol C. Smith, and the late Joseph Higgins.

The booklet depicts, in verse and sketch, some of the old "3-holers" that dotted the Wilson township in earlier years.)

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**DECEMBER HOSTS AND HOSTESSES:**

Greeters at the Wilson Museum, Sunday afternoons from 2 to 4 PM, will be as follows: Dec. 3rd, Lloyd and Diane Albright; Dec. 10th, Helen Stevens and Sara Berry; and Dec. 17th, Dick and Sue Schultz.

There will be no visiting hours on the Sundays before Christmas and New Years. The museum will also be closed to visitors during the months of January, February, and March.

\* \* \* \* \*

SOUNDINGS...An ounce of keeping your mouth-shut sure beats a ton of explanation.

"CELLAR-SAVERS":

One time in the mid-thirties, an incident occurred at our home that still brings a smile to my face. It happened in the Spring on a cold, rainy morning that caused ice to form over everything.

My wife and I had returned home after attending church services in the village, and we were preparing to have some lunch when our neighbor pounded on the door and yelled, "Don, your barn is on fire."

And sure enough, on going outside, we could see smoke and flames crawling up the corner of the building.

The fire was located in a small room we had fixed up for a few chickens which, in those late depression years, were a good source for eggs and an occasional chicken dinner on Sunday.

The cause of the fire was a small kerosene water heater which kept the water for our 12 hens and one rooster from freezing. It had apparently over heated and started the wall burning next to it.

We had been getting 12 eggs a day--sometimes 13, and one of our neighbors used to laugh and remark that we took such good care of our chickens, we even had the rooster laying.

Anyway, we slipped and slid to the barn where we managed to get the chickens out, and let our old cow "Daisy" out of her stall.

Fortunately, two men that I worked with in Harrisons, "Buck" Parsons and George Flecksenhaar, happened to drive by and, seeing the smoke and flames, drove in to see if they could help.

"Buck", sizing up the situation quickly yelled, "Get some pails", and then we rushed to the well where we tried to pump enough water to hold the fire down until help could arrive.

The problem was that the only water we had on the place came from the hand-dug well which was operated with an old chain pump. Half the rubbers on the chain that brought the water up through the wooden "pipe" were worn out or gone making it necessary to turn the pump handle 5 or 6 revolutions in order to get a quart of water.

We had to work so hard to fill a pail with water, we were laughing at ourselves in spite of the seriousness of the situation.

In the meantime, our good neighbor, Jenny Thilk, had called the Wilson Volunteer Fire Co., (Our efficient South Wilson Fire Company hadn't yet been organized in those days.)

Because of the icy road conditions, it took the fire company quite awhile to cover the 6 miles from the village, and, needless to say, the three of us were about ready to collapse from our "bucket-brigade" operation.

When "Old Betsey", with fire siren moaning, pulled into the yard, it sure was a welcome sight.

The flames were reaching to the barn's roof when the Wilson Volunteers took over, but it was only a couple minutes before they had the flames under control.

All the firemen seemed pleased that they had saved the barn, and as they rolled up their fire hose one of the volunteers smiled and said:

"Well, Chief, they can't call us "Cellar-Savers" any more."

\* \* \* \* \*

RECENT ACQUISITIONS:

Emma Schrader has donated the Bible of Jacob Ereon with family history; a picture of Ida Ereon throwing the first ball out at a Buffalo Bison game; a Buffalo Bison Pendant given to Ida at the game; also her Life Membership card in the Wilson Historical Society.

J.D. Duxbury: Lady's lined Angora Cape; 2 Ladies hats; Man's Derby; Pair of wooden Candlesticks; Egg Beater; Large Pottery Milk Pitcher; Hand Garbage Chopper; Pottery Mug; and a Birmingham Nasal Sprayer.

Beatrice Brawn, Old Beebe Rd., Lockport: Apron advertising the Wilson Lumber Yard; Watkins Almanac (1906 & 1913); "Outline of History" by H.G. Wells; Advertisement of the "Poro System" Hair Remover; N.Y. Times Pictorial Magazines, (12/20/19-11/14/18--9/19/17-and 3/7/18) also Egg Candler and Wood Crutches.

Rex Stacy, Texas: Badges of Battery M Reunions held at Wilson (1908), and Newfane, (1909). Badges of the Daughters of Union Veterans and Home Relief Corps; G.A.R. Buckle; and photo of Carrie Martin's 8th grade apple exhibit held 1914-1915;

Harold Swanson: Article on Cobblestone House (Morse); 1982 Article about Sutherland Sisters; 4 Badges, Empire Typographical Convention (1972-75); 2 Badges, International Typographical Union (1970); Gold Blood Donors Pins (2-4-6 gallons); 5 Service Pins; Carey for Governor Pin; Printing Equipment Manuals; and Stick for Hand-Set Type.

Floyd Salisbury: Milkin Machine.

\* \* \* \* \*

LIBRARY COMMITTEE:

The library committee's responsibility shall be to catalog, repair, and display all books, manuscripts, newspapers, scrapbooks, and collections of a like nature.

Celeste Crawford is Chrm., and she would welcome some additional members on her committee. If you feel you could make a contribution here, please call Celeste-(751-6845)

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DECEMBER CALENDAR:

- Dec. 7th: Planning Board Meeting at Art Schnoor's, 8:00 PM.
- Dec. 13th: Board of Director Meeting, Wilson Museum, 7:30 PM.
- Dec. 18th: Program Meeting at the Wilson Museum, 7:30 PM.
- Dec. 25th: MERRY CHRISTMAS

\* \* \* \* \*

DID YOU KNOW...that in 1880 the only cheese factory in Niagara County was located on the Daniel's Road? H.E. Burnham bought it from Lee Sanborn, and in 1890, 44,525 pounds of cheese were produced there. (Wilson "Star").

\* \* \* \* \*

A PAT ON THE BACK helps develop character if applied young enough, often enough, and low enough.

\* \* \* \* \*

DECEMBER MEETING:

Barbara Mosher, Program Chrm., is planning something a little different for the Monday night meeting of the society on December 18th.

At 6:30 PM there will be a light supper of soup and dessert, followed by a Christmas program featuring Judson Heck of Newfane as our guest speaker. Mr. Heck, who is town of Newfane historian, will give a talk on "The History of Santa Claus."

Tickets for the Christmas drawing will also be available at the meeting from Carole Schnoor who has been distributing them since the November meeting. Prizes to be awarded that evening will be Flowers, a Musical Dog, and Bells.

Refreshments hostesses for the evening will be Miss Helen Stevens and Eleanor Myers.

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CHANGE OF ADDRESS:

It is important that all members making a change of address, whether temporary or permanent, should send a written notice to the newsletter editor to insure that your newsletter continues to reach you. Change of address cards are readily available at your U.S. Postoffice.

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ANNUAL DINNER:

The Wilson Historical Society was host for the annual dinner meeting of the Niagara County Historical Society which was held recently at the Exley United Methodist Church in Wilson.

A delicious roast beef dinner was prepared by ladies of the church with flower arrangements by Lois Jennings.

The dinner set the scene for the introduction of the society's latest publication, a reprinting of the childrens' classic, "Teasure in a Trunk" by Helen Fuller Orton. Copies may be purchased at the Niagara Street Museum in Lockport.

Speaker for the evening was Rev. Msgr. Walter D. Kern, who spoke on the "Life and Accomplishments of Father Baker."

\* \* \* \* \*

IN FOND MEMORY:

Merton L. Evans, 77, died Nov. 11th, 1989, at Inter-Community Hospital at Newfane after a long illness. He spent most of his life as a farmer on the Randall Rd., and retired in 1974 with 20 yrs. service at Spaulding Fiber Co. in Tonawanda.

He was a member of Exley United Methodist Church, and joined the Wilson Hist. Soc. in 1982. He is survived by his wife, Lillian Brawn Evans and 3 sons, Stanley (Patricia); Lloyd (Sandy), both of Wilson; and Jack (Kathleen) Evans of Rochester. Also 3 daughters, Margaret Zastrow of Lewiston; Mrs. Ronald (Judy) George of Springhill, Fla., and Mrs. John (Bonnie) Gensler of Wilson; also 15 grandchildren and 9 great-grandchildren.

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

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BOARD ACTION AND REPORTS:

The Board expressed its appreciation to Dorothy Maxfield for chairing the Election Day Bake Sale held at Town Hall, and it was reported that \$135.00 was cleared.

Discussion was held to form a finance comm. to handle the Ways and Means with the stipulation that the treasurer and fair comm. chrm. be members of it.

A Planning Board recommendation was approved to have the south dock repaired by Randy Ward who will replace the present structure with treated lumber, including animal proof skirting. It is estimated that the project will cost between \$600 and \$1,000 for material.

It was announced that Gertrude and Edward Marks have offered their grandfather's buggy to the museum, and Dan King and Don Burrows agreed to pick it up.

Eleanor Myers reported that Ollie Clark has located enough oak wood to restore the post office exhibit planned for the Barnum Building.

Carole Schnoor, Treas., reported that the society's income from Oct. 11th to Nov. 15th was \$240.00, and that expenses for the same period were \$963.01.

The society's income from May 1st to date was \$15,825.93, and expenses to date were \$11,152.53.

Outside Christmas decorations have been put up by Don Burrows and Lois and Burt Jennings.

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PROTECT OUR TREES:

Trees put thousands of gallons of water into the air each year; put twice as many nutrients into the soil than they take out; reduce noise and cleanse polluted air; and reduce the cost of heating or cooling your home.

Trees increase yields from bordering field crops; protect livestock from heat and cold; and also protect land from erosion.

Hunters especially benefit from trees since they are the chief ingredient for a good wildlife habitat providing a home for 90% of our birds and wildlife.

In the fall of the year, trees delight both young and old as they burst out in a myriad of blazing color. (Excerpts from the Niagara County Soil and Water Conservation Dist. Newsletter.)

\* \* \* \* \*

MEMBERS IN THE NEWS:

Harold Mosher was elected in November to serve his fifth term as Supervisor for the town of Wilson. He is an honorary trustee of the historical society.

\* \* \* \* \*

HOLIDAY GREETINGS:

We wish everyone who has been receiving the Newsletter during the past year a Happy Holiday Season and good health throughout the coming year. Don Croop and Carol Smith, Publications.

\* \* \* \* \*

BON MOT:

There is no need to worry about the size of your Christmas tree---in your children's eyes that tree is 10 feet tall.

\* \* \* \* \*