

Wilson Historical Society

WILSON, NEW YORK 14172

NEWSLETTER

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

JANUARY 1986 Vol. 15 No. 1
(coleman press)

Chas. Myers, Town Historian
215 Lake St.
Wilson, N.Y. 14172

THE LOCAL MILITIA:

In Colonial days, the militia was organized as an effective means of local defense. In 1787 the framers of the Constitution gave Congress the right to call out state militia to suppress resurrection or enforce the law.

Although dependable at the local level, the militia wasn't always much help in national emergencies, so "war volunteers" were used in addition to the militia as early as the American Revolution.

During the Civil War, "war volunteers" made up most of the forces in both the Union and Confederate armies. After the war, some volunteer units expanded and became known as the "Organized Militia", and these later evolved into what we know today as the "National Guard".

Wilson had its share of militia companies, and it is recorded that in 1818 Daniel Holmes was appointed Captain of one of the 1st militia companies in the area.

Luther Wilson was also interested in the military, and under the New York State Militia Act of 1830, organized one of the first artillery companies in Wilson. About this same time, the 180th Regiment was organized, and we are told that Col. Andrew Sutherland, father of the 7 Sutherland sisters, was its commanding officer.

Captain Luther Wilson's Co. L was in the 66th Regt., and they used to set up their cannon on a hill at the west end of Young Street, and fire at a target placed about one quarter mile north on another small hill on the bank of 12 Mile Creek. The hill where the target was placed is known to this day as "cannon ball hill" because for many years later, cannon balls could be found there--especially after heavy rains washed away the soil. In the 1950's, a boy digging for fishing worms found a 4 lb cannon ball there which was later given to the museum.

According to information given us by Charles Buchner of Ransomville, there were five companies making up the 66th Regt during the 1850's. In addition to Capt. Wilson's artillery unit, there were the Light Dragoons commanded by Capt. B.H. Fletcher of Lockport, and the "Hibernian Volunteers" under Lt. Commander John Turner. Two other companies are unidentified.

The Niagara Democrat ran an item on the Irish unit, June 26th, 1851, as follows: "Hibernian Volunteer officers, non-commissioned officers and musicians of the uniformed company known as the Niagara Hibernian Volunteers in Dist. 8, attached to the 66th Regt., 31st Brigade, 8th Div. of the Militia of the State, are hereby ordered to meet at Camp Riley on Monday, June 30, 1851, for an encampment of six days."

Prior to the Civil War there were four military camps in Niagara County where regimental drills were held. Camp Riley was on the escarpment at the north end of Transit St. in Lockport; Camp Townsend was in Olcott; Camp Wilson was on the north side of Upper Mt. Rd. just west of Gothic Hill, Cambria; and Camp Cuyler was at the west end of Sunset Island in Wilson.

An amusing tale is told about a "battle" that took place at Camp Cuyler during an encampment there of the 66th Regt. in 1854. One night, Capt. Wilson and his rambunctious company of militiamen, decided to sneak out of camp and test the military readiness of the regiment.

Their effort was successful, and soon they tried to re-enter the camp from a different direction in an attempt to capture two cannons. They were suddenly challenged by a sentry who gave the alarm, putting the entire camp in an uproar.

Although no live ammunition was used, there were plenty of bruised bodies as a result of the ensuing battle. When everything finally quieted down, Capt. Wilson and his men were proclaimed the victors as they managed to get the two cannon out of camp.

When the Civil War started, the 66th Militia Regiment did not enter the conflict as a unit, however, nearly all of its officers and men re-enlisted in other Niagara Co. Regiments.

It is a matter of record that about 385 persons served in the Civil War from the Wilson area, and of that number over 100 served with Battery M, 1st New York Light Artillery.

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JANUARY MEETING:

On January 20th, discounting blizzards, Miss Helen Stevens will talk about two of Wilson's most famous products, "Pickles and Vinegar". Helen is a native of Wilson and will be remembered by many as a teacher in the Wilson elementary school system.

Emma Schrader, Chrm., has announced that refreshments will be served after the meeting by Emma Lou Reppentine, Lois Barnum, and Shelley Andrews.

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BON MOT:

All husbands are alike, but they have different faces so you can tell them apart.

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BAR FLYS TOOK OVER:

An old "Wilson Star" reveals that up to 1895 it was popular for bar customers to cast dice for drinks--with the loser paying the tab.

When the village board passed regulations to prohibit gambling or games of chance, an ingenious method was devised to get around the ordinance.

The barkeeper would place lumps of sugar, similar in size to dice, along the bar with each lump representing a drinker.

The first fly to light on a lump of sugar would make the person behind that particular lump responsible for a round of drinks.

According to the bar's patrons, this wasn't gambling--and in case there was any question, the fly was responsible anyway.

The shrewd bartender used to keep the flies away from his lump of sugar by putting turpentine on it--thus proving that even back in 1895 there were tricks to all trades.

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WE ARE IMPRESSED:

Eighteen students from Nancy Nievert's 4th grade class at Thomas Marks School visited the museum on Dec. 4th, and were given a guided tour of the premises by Millie and Don Croop. The pupils appeared to have a keen interest in their town's history, and from the many questions asked, showed they were well-versed on the local history of their community.

The youngsters seemed to enjoy listening to several old musical instruments including the 1898 Edison cylinder phonograph, and officers of the society were impressed by the neat, hand-written notes which were sent to the society by the class following their visit.

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FAIR COMMITTEE TO MEET:

Lois Barnum, Gen. Chrm., has scheduled a meeting of all fair chairmen at her home on Maple Rd., Thurs., Jan. 16th, at 7:00PM. Plans for the 1986 Memorial Day Fair will be discussed, and it is important that everyone attend and be prepared to make suggestions for the event.

There is still an urgent need to find someone willing to take charge of the food tables in the transportation building; the kitchenette in the museum; also a person to order supplies. Remember, the annual fair is our main "one shot" money-making project--it keeps us going. If everyone will pitch in this one day, we may be able to avoid raising our membership dues.

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QUILTERS SHARPEN THEIR NEEDLES:

Betty Stimson, Chrm., has announced that work on the society's new quilt will begin this January at the home of Florence Schultz, 2419 Lake Rd. If you would like to help with this project, you may call Betty or Florence for more information.

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NEW MEMBERS:

Welcome our latest new members, John P. Munch of Silver Creek, NY; and Robert and Jean Haley, Town of Tonawanda, NY.

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A FRIENDLY PLACE:

Although the museum will be closed to visitors in Jan., Feb., and March, our congenial hostesses will be back on the job in April.

Favorable comments from some who have visited the museum would indicate that our "greeters" have done a great job. Their cordial welcome, knowledge of the community, and willingness to please, have all combined to make the Wilson Museum a friendly place to visit.

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HISTORIC BRIEFS:

Jan. 12, 1887: Dr. W.J. Prish, rising young physician in Wilson, was united in marriage to Miss Gertrude A. Rice, one of Lockport's charming young belles, on Thursday, Jan. 6, 1887. The happy bride and groom have taken up residence in this village.

Messrs. William and Fred Donner have rented the farm owned by S. Thompson.

(Lockport Daily Union)

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MEMBERS PROVIDE INTERESTING PROGRAM:

The scheduled guest speakers for the December meeting were unable to attend due to snowy weather and bad roads, but Dorothy Linabery, Program Chrm., saved the day by inviting the members present to tell about their most memorable "Christmas past". Needless to say, many interesting and amusing tales were told.

Three musical stuffed animals were raffled off, and the winners were, Susan Stimson, Santa Bear; Kyle Andrews, Reindeer; and Edna Rose, Snow Bear. Carole Schnoor was in charge of the successful drawing.

The sociable evening was topped off with a delicious selection of Christmas cookies which were furnished and served by Lois Davis, Celeste Crawford, and Carole Schnoor.

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UP-COMING EVENTS:

Jan. 8th: Board of Directors will meet at Dr. Singh's Office, Wed. evening, 8:00PM.

Jan. 16th: Fair Committee meeting, Barnum home, Maple Rd., Thurs. evening, 7:00PM.

Jan. 20th: Monthly meeting, Wilson Museum, Mon. evening, 7:30PM.

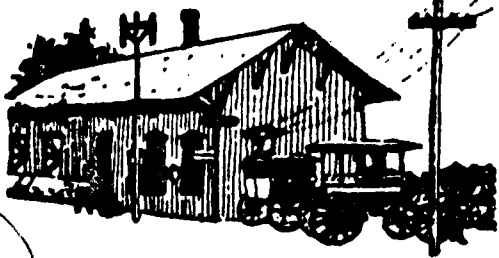
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IT WAS A BAD YEAR:

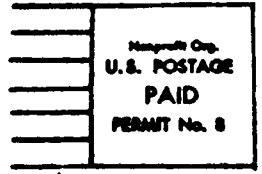
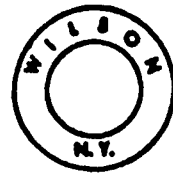
Feb. 1895: It is feared that the man who predicted this would be the mildest winter in 50 yrs., has been lost in the recent severe blizzard--at least nothing has been seen or heard from him since our old-fashioned winter set in in earnest.

Wilson has had no communication with the outside world for a week, and it is reported snow is 15 ft. deep in front of Charles Sweet's residence on Lake Rd. Old residents claim Wilson had a similar storm in 1855. Noone is worrying about the ice crop at the harbor because the ice is two feet thick this year. (Wilson Star)

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WILSON



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Wilson Historical Society
WILSON, NEW YORK 14172

NEWSLETTER

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

LIBRARIAN
WILSON CENTRAL SCHOOL
WILSON, NY 14172

FEBRUARY 1986 Vol. 15 No. 2
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DANIELS ROAD RECOLLECTIONS:

Harry Lester was 95 years of age when he was interviewed by the late Dorothy Thilk, former town historian, and at the time he was living on the Lester homestead where he had been born.

He recalled that his grandfather, Samuel Lester, was a blacksmith who had learned his trade in England, and when the Erie Barge Canal Locks were built at Lockport, was foreman of the blacksmiths.

He said that the Daniels Road was named after the Daniels family who lived south of the Ridge on lot no. 10. Mrs. Elisha Daniels was born in 1800 and died in 1828, and she was buried next to her son on the farm where they lived. Up to several years ago, the two stones that marked their graves could be seen from the highway.

When Mr. Lester was a boy, he remembered there were many apple orchards along the road, and the branches from many of the old "Spitzenbergs", "Snows", and "Golden Sweets", often spread over the highway.

At the corner of the North Ridge and Daniels roads, the trees were so thick the bark was stripped from one of them to show where the Daniels Road began.

The Lesters lived under the same rugged conditions experienced by other early settlers who lived off the land. After butchering hogs in the fall, hams were salted and smoked, sausage and liverwurst were packed in crocks, and soap was made with fat from the meat and lye extracted from wood ashes.

Apple butter was also made by boiling down cider in a large iron kettle suspended over an open fire in which bushels of apples were added and cooked for hours while stirring constantly to prevent scorching. A flat paddle fastened to a long cedar pole was generally used to do the stirring.

Harry remembered that the North Ridge road was originally laid out north of its present route which accounts why some homes are further from the road today than others. He also recalled that the first store was located near the North Ridge Cemetery, but was moved to another location by Art Scoby who later sold it to Bert Laffler.

The North Ridge Postoffice was at the rear of a house next to Laffler's store, and this was where residents of the Daniels road used to pick up their mail.

The old Bert Laffler store is no longer there, but many area residents may still remember when his son, Huey Laffler, used to tour the countryside with horse and wagon, (later truck) and dispensed groceries, dress goods, meats, kerosene and other staples house to house.

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SENIOR CITIZENS FETED:

Nearly 100 senior citizens attended the 4th annual breakfast at Wilson High School where they had the opportunity to enjoy the skills of the younger generation. Students directed them to the auditorium where they were welcomed by Ted Grocki, Principal, and John Rodgers, Pres. of the Teachers' Association. Before adjourning to the cafeteria, the school band, under the direction of Keith Schessl, played several Holiday selections.

A delicious breakfast was prepared and served by the 8th grade home career skills classes with help from Janet Pryce and the cafeteria staff, and a nice added touch were the place settings which featured mini loaves of bread, Christmas cards, jars of jelly, tomato juice, and molded chocolates--all prepared by the 8th graders.

During breakfast, guests were entertained by the Senior Ensemble directed by Lynda Williams, the Musicale directed by Maureen Moore, also Christmas Carols sung by the French, Latin, and Spanish students. A special dance was performed by Tina Schultz, a flute and piano duet was performed by Tammy McVie and Kirsten Szantor, and there were also square dance demonstrations, a scene from the Junior-Senior play, "Mash", and a lively performance by the Varsity Cheerleaders. Of special interest was a fashion show which featured students of the Home Economics class modeling some of their own hand-made fashions.

A variety of skills and exhibits were demonstrated by the students in the library, and all Senior Citizens appeared to appreciate the amount of work and effort expended by school personnel to make their visit a memorable occasion.

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MEMBER IN THE NEWS:

Congratulations to Sharon Schotz who was awarded a trip to the National 4-H Congress for her excellence during the past 9 yrs. in the 4-H food division program.

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BON MOT: The man with a new idea is a crank until the idea succeeds. --Mark Twain.

NEW LIFE MEMBER:

Gary S. Pettit, son of Sidney and Donna Pettit, was born July 24, 1949, and graduated from Wilson Central School in 1968. The following year he enlisted in the U.S. Coast Guard and completed his basic training at Cape May, NJ. He was then assigned to the 327 ft. C.G. Cutter "Bibb" at Boston, and during the next two years participated in many search and rescue operations in the north Atlantic Ocean.

In 1971 he was transferred to South Portland, ME, and while operating 40 ft. rescue craft as coxswain and boarding officer, was cited for many daring rescues off the Maine coast. He was honorably discharged in 1975 with the rank of Petty Officer, 1st Class, and also received the Coast Guard Good Conduct Medal.

Gary's roots spread deep in Wilson through his g.g-grandfather, William O. Pettit, one of the town's early pioneers who came here in 1822. William was a farmer who helped clear his land from the unbroken forest, and later served as 1st Lieut. of Capt. Wilson's Artillery Co., N.Y.S. Militia.

Gary is an employee of the Harrison Radiator Div. of GMC at Lockport, and also an active member of the Coast Guard Reserve. He is a stock car racing fan, an avid bowler, and also enjoys hunting, fishing, and boating.

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RECENT ACQUISITIONS:

Anne Wilson, Oregon, has donated two photos showing schoolmates at District No. 12 school, Maple Rd., ca. 1886. All children in pictures are identified.

Mildred Hillman: Three photos showing how "Averill's Corners" and "Drews Corners" looked in 1900.

Floyd Clark: Two steel auto ramps.

Dorothy Knight, N. Tonawanda: Ten candleholders.

Norma Ramsdell, Newfane: 1942 Cream Separator.

Clarence Monroe: Metal Marker for "Woodmen of America that belonged to Gus Scheffler.

Sam McCoy: 1870 Howe Platform Scale made in Rutland, VT.

Mary McCoy; Three glass Paper Weights, Script Pen in leather case, Two Bodice pins and baby pin, ca. 1900.

Larry Bulmer: Wooden apple barrel used by Frank Pingle. Like new.

Bill and Mary Bartz: Set of World's Fair license plates, also cow tie-chain.

Harold S. Argue, Pendleton: Collection of historical volumes in excellent condition. All books are listed under accession record 85-87.

Charles and Beatrice Mensch, Mesa, AZ: One book, "Team Work for Victory", and two copies of the Harrison Chronicle.

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IN MEMORIAM:

W. Arthur Davenport, died at Inter-Community Hospital, Newfane, on Dec. 22, 1985. He leaves his wife, the former Alice Townsend, and a daughter, Mrs. Ernest (Carol) Grenville of Wilson, also 2 granddaughters. He retired from Kimberly-Clark Corp; was a member of Exley U. Methodist Church; the Red Jacket Masonic Lodge in Lockport; and joined the Wilson His. Soc. in 1981. Interment was in Greenwood Cemetery, Wilson, with Rev. David Palmer officiating.

Joseph W. Vana died at Mount St. Marys Hospital, Jan. 11, 1986, and leaves his wife the former Bessie M. Clark; also 2 daughters, Mrs. William (Joyce) Westadt, and Mrs. Shirley Hollister, Lewiston; also 9 grandchildren and 10 g-grandchildren. He retired from the N.Y. Telephone Co. in 1965, was an army veteran of World War I, a member of the 1st Presbyterian Church, Lewiston, also Fire Co. Exempts, American Legion, Odd Fellows, Masonic Lodge, Lewiston His. Soc., and Wilson His. Soc. since 1973.

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"GEORGE" NEEDS A BACK-UP:

There are some routine jobs necessary to operate and maintain the museum. These include things like turning on or closing water valves; adding anti-freeze to outside flush toilets; draining outside lines and water heater; also servicing heating equipment, antique cars, windmill, alarm system, electrical wiring, disposing garbage, or checking doors and windows for energy loss. Our members should be aware when these things have to be done, so a chart will be made up and posted in the museum. There will be a place for your name if you feel you can help out as a "back-up".

Up to now we've depended pretty much on Art Schnoor, Johnny Myers, "Chuck" Messersmith, Bob Rose, Doc Argue, Larry Bulmer, Whit Barnum, Clark Stimson, Burt Jennings, George Linnabery, Leo Klees, Tom Sharpe, Ralph Dinse, Elwin Upton, Nettie Stimson, Lois Barnum, Millie Croop, Maryanne Sharpe, and Lois Jennings to keep an eye on things. They've all done a great job.

We think you'll agree if some of the above operations were neglected or forgotten, it could be very costly. We are bringing this to your attention in the hope that someone will be ready to lend a hand in case "George" isn't around when we need him.

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FEBRUARY PROGRAM:

Bill Ganshaw will be guest speaker on Feb. 17th, and will tell how fires were fought before Wilson Vol. Fire Co. No.1 was organized. He has been a Volunteer for 48 years.

Emma Schrader, Chrm., has asked Edna Rose, Jane Demmin, and Dorothy Linnabery to furnish and serve refreshments after the program.

The Board of Directors will meet at Doc's Office on Lake St., Feb. 12th, at 8:00PM.

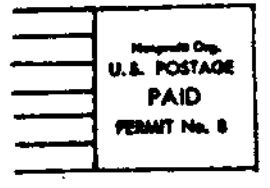
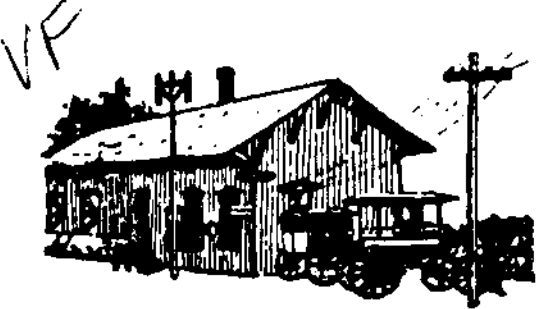
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NEW MEMBERS:

Please welcome the following new members: Gerrit and Linda Moot, Palm Bay, Fla.; Joseph and Elizabeth Scherer, Lake St., Wilson; and Gary Pettit, Casewood Drive, Wilson.

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WILSON STAR-1895: The man who gets mad at what newspapers say about him should give thanks each day for what the newspapers know about him and don't say.



Wilson Historical Society

WILSON, NEW YORK 14172

NEWSLETTER

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

MARCH 1986 Vol. 15 No. 3
(Coleman Press)

LIBRARIAN
WILSON CENTRAL SCHOOL
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"DOWN BY THE VINEGAR WORKS":

Allan Hinchliffe was born in Sinclairville, NY, and was a good neighbor and friend of Charles Tugwell. When Mr. Tugwell started the Fredonia Canning Co. in Wilson, Allan also came to the lakeside village where he later started up his own vinegar plant.

The Hinchliffe Vinegar Company was first located east of the present Ontario Orchards Cold Storage, but in 1916 the building burned down and Mr. Hinchliffe then purchased the Taggart and Stevens property at Wilson Station.

In 1918, he used lake sand and gravel to pour a hollow-core 40x120 foot concrete building next to the rail spur. At the front, on the 1st and 2nd floors, was an open space for barrel storage, and at the rear of the 2nd floor was the machinery for grinding up the apples that were delivered from storage bins.

After the apples were ground, they were sent below in chutes where press cloths held them between wooden racks until the cider was squeezed out. The residue, called pomace, was dried and sold for pectin, and the waste pomace was piled outside and became a good source for fishing worms.

A 50x120 foot generating plant was also constructed and it held forty wooden "generator" tanks with each containing 5 tons of coke. The cider was pumped from the press building to large storage tanks with a capacity of 20,000 to 50,000 gallons. When the sugar in the sweet cider changed to alcohol, it was repeatedly recycled through the generators changing it to acetic or cider vinegar.

Each year, 500,000 to 700,000 gallons of vinegar were shipped to plants in New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Michigan, and bottling and pickle plants in Wilson also obtained vinegar from the Hinchliffe Company.

As time passed, white vinegar, made from grain alcohol, was also produced with much of the same basic processes used. There were only 3 or 4 men employed at the plant year 'round, but during harvest time there could be as many as thirty.

The business was sold to Augsburg and Cooper in the late 1940's, but the plant closed down a short time later. The site is now occupied by the Basil Equipment Co., and nothing remains to remind residents of Wilson's historic old Vinegar Works.

(Note: Information for the above item received from Miss Helen Stevens, courtesy of Mrs. Eleanor Myers, daughter of the late Allan Hinchliffe.)

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IN MEMORIAM:

The society extends its condolences to the family of Pearl P. Leggett, 81, who passed away at Mount St. Mary's Hospital, Feb. 11, 1986, following a short illness. She was an operator for the N.Y. Telephone Co. for many years; a member of the Dickersonville Methodist Church; Ransomville Fire Co. Ladies Auxiliary; and Wilson His. Soc.

She is survived by a son and daughter, William of Ransomville; and Mrs. Anthony (June) Moshano of North Port, Fla; a step-brother, Russel Seefeldt of Wilson; also 7 grandchildren and 7 great-grandchildren. Interment was at North Ridge Cemetery with the Rev. Robert Boyer officiating.

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MARCH ACTIVITIES:

The program, "Memories and Mementos of a Bergen Country Store" will be presented at the regular meeting on March 17th by Halsey Buell, Sr., who will talk about the old store operated by his grandfather at Bergen, NY.

Refreshments will be served by Helen Horton, Marion Pettit, and Helen Sherrie, with tea and coffee provided by the society.

The regular meeting of the Board of Directors will be held at Doc's office, 400 Lake St., on Wednesday, March 12th, at 8:00PM.

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HISTORIC BRIEFS FROM LOCKPORT DAILY UNION:

Feb. 2, 1887: The town clerk of Wilson reports 34 deaths, 60 births, and 20 weddings on record for the year 1886.

Feb. 9, 1887: Our popular townsman, ex-supervisor M. S. Gifford, and Justice Arthur Barger, have formed a partnership as public auctioneers.

Feb. 16, 1887: The Wilson Debating Club has decided that building the Rome, Watertown, and Ogdensburg R.R. was a detriment to the town. R.W. & O. beware! Your fate is sealed.

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BON MOT: March is spring, sort of, but don't bet on it.

THE HURLBURT TOUCH:

Around 1930, Mrs. Marjorie Hurlburt organized the 1st girls' glee club in the old Wilson High School and, in an effort to interest the boys in vocal music, an operetta was given which led to the formation of a mixed chorus.

The proceeds from several musicals were used to purchase a piano and choir robes, and by 1937 both choirs were entered in the N.Y.S. Music Assoc. competitions. In 1938, the mixed chorus competed in the National contest held at Albany.

One of the operettas directed by Mrs. Hurlburt was "The Captain of the Guard", and picture if you will a teen age cast composed of Ralph Seefeldt, Delbert Schultz, Yvonne Duxbury, Sally Moot, Harriet Landy, Marilyn Coe, Frances Fenn, Jack Burton, Charles Horton, Stanley Mabor, Clifford Upton, Jack Johnson, Alice Fritton, Stewart Hamilton, and Kenneth Moss.

Guardsmen were Clifford Upton, Gordon Velzy, Sherman Allgeier, Melvin Myers, George Manning, Melvin Upton, Willard Harris, and Carson Demmin.

Folk Dancers, under the direction of Eleanor Hinchliffe, included Eleanor Burch, Virginia Coe, Mary McCormick, Doris Lutz, Mary Stone, Norma Stockwell, Lucille Swick, Eva Winters, Barbara Gale, and Catherine Gale.

Peasants in the lively operetta were Jean Bary, Albert Elemaster, Janet Carter, Martha Chapman, Virginia Crawford, Marulyn Cuddaback, Carol Fenn, Steve Fritton, Phylliss Gifford, Beatrice Hahn, Rosemary Hahn, Naomi Johnson, Lela Litchard, Jack Moore, Clifford McCoy, Jarvis Pettit, Georgia Plumb, Joyce Rignall, Helen Seefeldt, Marjorie Schultz, Clara Simon, Florence Simon, Jack Stone, Betty Sweeney, Sumner Stacy, Blanche Thompson, Richard Winters, and Robert Villent.

Mrs. Hurlburt had the special knack for bringing out the best in her young singers, and the musical programs she directed at Wilson School will long be remembered by the parents and friends of her many students.

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HAPPY BIRTHDAY, IDA:

Ida Ereon, a resident of the Newfane Health Facility, was honored on her 107th birthday with a reception at the home of Emma Schrader, Wilson, on February 18, 1986. Ida was born in the town of Wilson in 1879, and for many years, lived with her husband, Seymour Ereon, at their home on Wilcox Street. Old Timers will remember when Seymour and Henry Giles built and operated the Gem Theater in Wilson, and Ida helped out at the ticket window.

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NEW LIFE MEMBER:

Dr. Edwin Gates of Niagara Falls is the latest addition to the Life Membership Class of the Wilson Historical Society. Dr. Gates was born on May 18, 1900, and was the son of Edwin Lewis and Alice Wilder Gates. He was married to Agnes Cameron, and they had one son, Edwin W. Gates, Jr.

Dr. Gates, a graduate of Colby College and the Harvard Medical School, is an Internist and Diabetologist. He is a member of the American Medical Assoc.; Fellow of the American College of Physicians; N.Y. State Medical Assoc.; Niagara Co. Medical Assoc.; Niagara Falls Academy of Medicine; N.Y. Academy of Science; WNY Society of Internal Medicine; American Soc. of Internal Medicine; Niagara Falls Diabetes Assoc.; and Honorary Member of the North Dakota Diabetes Association.

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GIFT ACKNOWLEDGED:

The Wilson His. Soc. has received a Certificate of Charter Membership from the Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation, and informed that the society's name will be officially recorded and entered on a permanent "Register of Contributors" to be displayed at the museum of the rebuilt Statue of Liberty.

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PLANS OUTLINED FOR "MEMORIAL DAY FAIR":

Chairpersons for this years "Memorial Day Fair" on May 26, 1986, met last month at the home of Lois Barnum, Gen. Chrm., and discussed plans for the big annual event.

Over 200 dealers of antiques and crafts will be invited to participate in the huge "flea market", and several craft displays will also be demonstrated on the grounds.

Special emphasis will be placed on serving home-made foods such as Chili, Salads, Pies, and Breads, and there will also be a plentiful supply of "Funnel Cakes", Hot Dogs, Sausage, Beverages, and Chicken Bar-B-Q. Other favorites of the Fair will include special entertainment, museum exhibits, antique car display, quilt raffle, and free movies for children.

Also, for the convenience and safety of visitors, members of the "Races" radio emergency unit will patrol the grounds, and a First Aid unit of Wilson Fire Co. #1 will be present. Free Shuttle Bus Service, free parking, and free admission will also be provided.

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MEMBER IN THE NEWS:

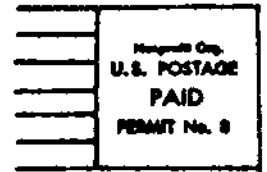
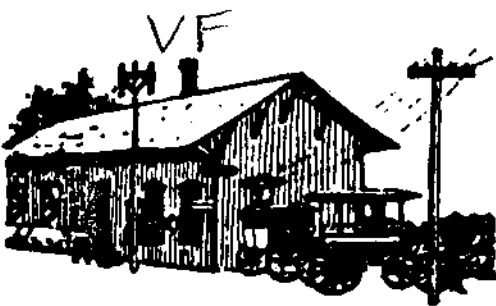
One of the more unusual acquisitions received at the museum is the one million year old petrified turtle which was found in the Southern Tier by Clarence Monroe. The authenticity of his find, which he dug from Clear Creek near Hume, was verified by the staff of the Buffalo Museum of Science. Clarence later received a golden certificate from the National Geographic Society which recognizes important geographical discoveries by private individuals.

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RECENT ACQUISITIONS:

Several donations related to the former Hurlburt Bros. Co. of Wilson include a framed picture showing four processes used there ca. 1950 and donated by Gordon Scheffler; Twenty invoice sheets from George Collins; Gold Krisp label for Bartlett Pears from Stewart Walpole; and 8 snapshots of former Hurlburt Bros. employees, from Ruth Korff.

Ida Wilson: 4 Photos of early Wilson Harbor; Photo of old Wilson Ballteam; 6 postcards of early Wilson scenes; Lake Island Park Brochure; and small map of park's north section.



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(Coleman Press)

Library

WILSON CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL
WILSON, NY 14172

A STROLL DOWN MEMORY LANE:

Around the turn of the century, when large crowds gathered at Wilson's "Lake Island Park", Claude Jones, a hometown boy, would inflate his balloon and rise 1,000 to 1500 feet above the ground. He filled it with hot air by placing it over a frame under which a fire was built, and while the bag expanded a ring of men would hold it in place. When the balloon reached its capacity, Claude would yell, "Let her go", and off he'd sail into space.

The air in the balloon would cool off at about 1500 feet causing it to roll over, and at that split second Claude would leap free and float down with a parachute. One time the wind came up when he was ready to take off, and not wishing to lose the hot air, he let the men release him anyway. He was blown out over the lake, and when he came down he had to swim back to shore.

According to the late Earl Armstrong, the amusement resort was named "Lake Island Park" because, when the land was first purchased, the east end of the "island" was part of the park property. You entered the mainland park from Harbor St., and could drive through the woods to an open area where "Red" Clark's house now stands. The woods was always crowded with horses and buggies, and many villagers walked there and would hang their picnic baskets on tree limbs until they were needed.

A ball diamond, backed by a ten foot board fence, had bleachers extending from 1st base to home plate, and they consisted of 2 inch planks set on wooden posts. Back of home plate was a grandstand that could seat 500 people, and it cost 15 cents to watch a game--nothing if you sat on the ground.

West of the grandstand was a large ferris wheel operated by a steam-powered threshing engine. A team of horses and tank wagon were used to supply the engine with water from the nearby creek. Just west of the ferris wheel was the dining hall where a good steak dinner could be bought for 50 cents. There was also a colorful red and white refreshment stand nearby where ice cream was available and lemon and orangeade was sold for 5 cents a glass.

Beside the bay was a bath house, boathouse, and water toboggan slide that cost 20 cents a half hour to ride. Bathing suits could be rented, and 50 small rowboats were also available. A large dance pavilion, which stood on the present site of Clark's home, was open on 3 sides with one end enclosed for stage and orchestra. Dancing usually started at noon and lasted until midnight. The pavilion was later replaced by the Tuscarora or T-Club.

South of the pavilion was a Merry-go-round which, like the ferris wheel, was powered by an old steam threshing engine. Next to it were 8 swings, and each could accomodate 6 people. An outdoor auditorium with speaker's stand was located west of the pavilion, and was large enough so 3-act plays could be held there. Seats on wooden posts were nailed to trees in a semi-circle with the top row about 20 feet off the ground.

A wooden foot bridge connected the mainland to Clark's Island, and another arched foot bridge crossed the slip leading to the Wilson Boathouse. This made it possible for persons using the excursion boats to walk from the east pier to the Park.

In 1894, the "Garden City" made two trips daily from Toronto, and generally docked in Wilson at 11:30 AM and 4:30 PM. A Canadian passenger wrote an article that year for the "Toronto Journal" in which he described Wilson as "A most attractive spot, thronged with thousands of gaily dressed, holiday seekers." He noted that attractions in the park included "Prominent speakers, band concerts, baseball games, dancing, boating, fishing, water-lily gathering, water sports, feasting, and flirting."

He also commented that even though soft drinks only were allowed in the park, just beyond its boundaries were two saloons, "Where lager bier of very refreshing and minimum intoxicating quality was dispensed to endless streams of never satisfied humanity."

He described the Greenwood Cemetery as being "well tenated" but not kept up in the best condition, and observed, "If no one wanted to make the effort necessary to care for it, it might better be turned over to a flock of sheep--a practise sometimes used in English churchyards." He was, however, impressed by the large number of small American Flags that marked the graves from a previous Decoration Day observance.

Wilson's status as a resort town slowly diminished after 1900 when trolley service was started from Lockport to Olcott, but today crowds of people are again taking advantage of the excellent boating and fishing which is supported by several fine yacht clubs, marinas, and boat launching facilities.

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BON MOT: Golf is what men do to relax when they're too tired to mow the lawn.

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FAIR UPDATE:

The annual "Memorial Day Fair" will be held on the museum grounds, Monday, May 26th, from 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM. A number of special attractions will be featured including a huge "flea market", antique cars, home-made foods, and a large variety of demonstrations and exhibits.

New this year will be a musical performance on the calliope by Will Engels of Colden, NY; also an old-fashioned checker game contest sponsored by the Masonic Lodge of Wilson. Although checkers is enjoyed by millions of people, many may not be aware that it is the world's oldest intellectual pastime, and is believed to have originated in the days of the early Pharaohs.

John Herberger of Olcott, Niagara County's champion checker player, will take on all challengers, and has been known to play as many as a dozen persons at one time without losing. He is also the checker champion of Ontario, Can., and placed third in New York State, so it is expected that the games will provide an interesting challenge to all checker enthusiasts.

Other attractions confirmed at this time will include a Memorial Day Tribute by the American Legion Post of Wilson; a concert by the Wilson High School Band; and a repeat performance by the "Banjo Pickers and Company".

There will also be wood carving demonstrations by Bob Schearer of Wilson, and Terry Benton of Lockport will exhibit her spinning expertise. Winnie Fischer of South Wilson will tell about the museum's old "Donner Loom", and demonstrate, on her own personal loom, how one works.

Jane Demmin, Chrm. of the society's "flea" tent would appreciate it if all members brought their "flea" donations to her home, the museum, or the home of Edna Rose.

Doris Klees, Chrm. of the plant booth hopes that all "green thumbs" are starting plants, and of course the fair couldn't operate without a generous response from the many members who furnish pies, cakes, salads, chili, etc.

With free movies and balloons for the children, and a number of other events in the planning stage, all indications point to another successful year. There is always a need, however, for younger volunteers to fill the ranks, so please get behind your Fair Chairmen--they are doing a good job, but they can't succeed without you.

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MUSEUM MEETINGS:

Due to an unexpected illness, Hal Buehl, Sr., was unable to present his "Country Store" program on March 17th, however, George and Dorothy Linnabery filled in and presented a program on "The Tools that Men used to build the Erie Canal, and the Songs They Sang". The musical portion of the program was given by David White.

Mr. Buehl is scheduled to present his program again on April 21st, but if he is still unavailable, Harold and Dorothy Applegate of Tonawanda will present a program on mechanical toys.

Refreshments at the April Meeting will be provided and served by Lillian Evans, Sandy Evans, and Patricia Fitch.

At the Board of Director meeting on March 12th, Dorothy Linnabery suggested that Kathy Horton be invited to give a talk at the museum during visiting hours, Sun., April 20th, at 2PM.

The Board also approved a suggestion by Christine Kelman, Membership Chrm., to make all active members of the society, 85 yrs. or older, Honorary Members.

A motion was also made to accept a 1978 Buick Electra 4-door sedan donated by Dr. Neil Dashkoff. The next Board meeting will be at the museum April 9th at 7:30 PM.

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NEW MEMBERS:

We are pleased to welcome Mr. and Mrs. Charles Rignall of Sheridan, N.Y., who joined the Wilson Historical Society in March, also Jeff Monroe and Dawn Brown of Ransomville, NY.

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MEMBERS IN THE NEWS:

Best wishes to Edward and Gertrude Marks who celebrated their 60th Wedding Anniversary recently with a family brunch at the Marriott Inn in Buffalo, N.Y.

A surprise birthday party was held for Myra Pease at the Lockport Country Club in celebration of her 80th birthday.

Congratulations to two of our junior members, Sandy Stimson and Aaron Goodman, who were selected to play in the County Concert held at Starpoint Central School last month.

The Retirees Bowling League honored Fay Campbell on his 90th birthday with a surprise party at Townline Bowl, Wilson. Fay, who carries a 137 average, was presented with a trophy to commemorate the occasion.

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THUMB NAIL SKETCH:

Lee Wadsworth Bickford of Niagara Falls, was born in Wilson on Aug. 3, 1918. He graduated from Wilson High in 1937, and in 1940 he married Lucille Buck of Niagara Falls. They have 5 children, Lee, Nancy (Martinez), Patricia, Gary, and Kathy (Cosgrove); also 6 grandchildren and one great grandchild.

Lee served in the U. S. Army Airforce during World War II, and was later self employed for many years in the refrigeration and air conditioning service. He also worked on the 1st jet aircraft built in the United States.

The Bickford family settled in Wilson in 1843, and have lived in the area ever since. The family origin is English, Scotch, and Irish, and Lees ancestry includes the surnames of Bostwick, Brookins, Campbell, Carrigan, Danforth, McCormick, Nugent, and Simmons.

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BASKET QUILT COMPLETED:

Twelve beautiful quilts have been given away since the society held its first "Memorial Day Fair" in 1973. This year will be no exception thanks to Florence Schultz, Beryl Tovell, Mae Scheffler, Maxine Jones, Marg Moyer, and Betty Stimson. The navy blue and white "basket" quilt, which the ladies finished recently, was pieced together by hand ca. 75 years ago. It is one of the prettiest quilts to date, and will be raffled off on May 26th at 5 PM. Donatio tickets are available from Betty Stimson, Chairman.

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BACK IN BUSINESS:

The Wilson Museum will re-open to visitors on Sunday, April 6th, following a 3 month shut down for winter. Hostesses who will greet you Sunday afternoons from 2 to 4Pm will be:

April 6th, Lorine and Ray Allgeier; April 13, Mary and William Bartz; April 20th, Doris and Leo Klees; and April 27th, Eloise and Edgar Culverwell.

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RECENT ACQUISITIONS:

Rena Kohring has donated a number of special items including a "Little Gem" farm wagon; Stove Top Pressure Canner; Oak Icebox; Floor model radio; Corn sheller; One-horse cultivator; Misc. auto parts and license plates; and advertising signs.

Town of Wilson: Town Clerk's Official Seal, ca. 1900.

Cynthia Wilson: Large Depression Glass Bowl in good condition.

Dudley Secor: Match book used in Fred Bigalow campaign for Sheriff.

Eleanor Harrington: Large Portrait Camera, ca. 1900.

Charles Nablo, Newfane Health Facility: Two hay forks and one evener.

Joe Higgins, Janet Sporleder, and George and Dorothy Linnabery: Large assortment of magazines, diaries, listed under accession records, (86-7); (86-8); and (86-5).

Wilson Free Library: Sixteen Copies of "Wilson Crest" from years 1941 through 1973.

Don and Millie Croop: Tape recordings of "Reed Organ" program given by Rev. and Mrs. Wadsworth; also Elwin Upton's talk on "Doll Houses and Furniture".

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NEW HONORARY MEMBERS:

In deference to the recent decision of the Board of Directors to bestow Honorary Membership status to all active members, 85 years of age or older, Christine Kelman, Membership Chr., has determined that the following should receive this honor:

Jennie Bigalow; Fay Campbell; Bessie Crawford; Ida Ereon; Frank Fenn; Ruth Gale; Bert Israel; Minnie Israel; Vira Munch; Frank Radigan; Beatrice Salisbury; Louis Swick; Hazel Thilk; and Margaret Wilson.

If anyone has been overlooked, please notify Millie Croop, treasurer.

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NEW LIFE MEMBERS:

E. Kenneth Welker, son of E. Walter and Margaret I. Welker, graduated from Wilson High School in 1928, and later attended Northeastern University.

It would be hard to picture Wilson without "Kenny" in the scene. He operated the Welker and Brown General Store, (formerly Miller and Browns) for over 30 years, and was a fireman with Bell Aerospace until he retired.

He recently was re-elected to a 3 year term as Mayor of Wilson, a position he has held for the past ten years, and prior to that served as water commissioner and tax collector.

Mayor Welker is a member of Our Lady of the Rosary R.C. Church, the Republican party, and the Wilson Lions Club where he's had 39 years perfect attendance. He has also been an active fireman with Wilson Vol. Fire Co. No. 1 during which time he served 5 years as Chief, drove truck, and served with the ambulance corps.

He has 4 married daughters, Anne of Albany, Mary Margaret of Springfield, Mass., Jody of Switzerland, and Jane of Lockport, NY.

* * * * *

Dorotha (Gaskill) Welker, daughter of Morris and Adda (Firch) Gaskill, was born in Wilson and attended the Wilson Schools. She graduated from Collingwood High School in Cleveland, Ohio, and later took night courses at the Cleveland Community College.

She formerly belonged to the Presbyterian Church in Cleveland, and was a 45 year member of the Order of the Eastern Star. Former clubs include the "Executive Secretaries" and the "Personnel Women" of Cleveland.

Now retired, she has been an executive secretary; personnel director; also sec.-treas. and part owner of a small company in Cleveland. She moved to Cleveland in the late 1920's, and her brother, Kenneth Gaskill, and sister, Mildred Treacy still live there.

Dorotha is the wife of Kenneth Welker, Mayor of the village of Wilson.

* * * * *

TEAMWORK: (an editorial)

We can never forget old "Topsey" and "Dewey". They were the team of horses that did the bulk of the work on my grandfather's 80 acre farm at Clarence. If ever there were two mismatched animals,--they were it.

Topsey was high spirited, and just a touch of the reins on her back was enough to send her prancing and straining into the task that had to be performed.

Old Dewey was just the opposite--nothing could budge him from his slow and deliberate pace.

Ever since those boyhood years, I've seen a lot of people who remind me of our old team. Some, like Topsey, put everything they have into every job they tackle, while others, like old Dewey, are content to plod along and let some one else pull the load.

Perhaps one of the reasons why the Wilson Historical Society has accomplished so much in the past 14 years, is because it has so many "Topseys" and so few "Deweys".

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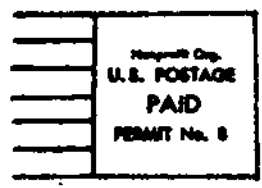
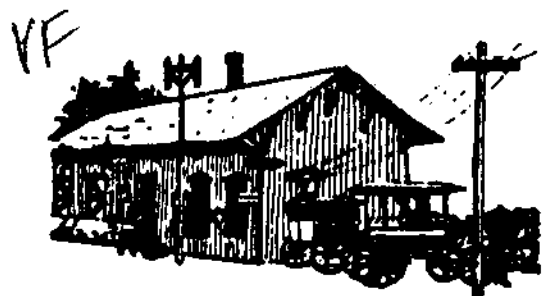
HISTORIC BRIEFS:

D. R. Sanborn sold the Wilson Cheese Factory to H. C. Burnham in 1880, and at the time it was said to be the only factory of its kind in Niagara County. It was run successfully for a number of years and each season transformed about 500,000 pounds of milk into 44,000 pounds of cheese. In 1880 the cheese sold for 11 cents a pound.

On Sunday, Nov. 24, 1894, the Charles Ackerman Boathouse at Wilson was destroyed by fire. The building had also been used as a saloon, lunch room, and dancehall. (Wilson Star-1894)

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APRIL IN WILSON: A great time to catch bullheads in the bay, or fish for trout and salmon off the piers or lake shoreline. Buy your bait and tackle in Wilson.



Wilson Historical Society

WILSON, NEW YORK 14172

NEWSLETTER

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

MAY 1986 Vol. 15 No. 5
(Coleman Press)

LIBRARIAN
WILSON CENTRAL SCHOOL
WILSON, NY 14172

DOCUMENT REVEALS HOLMES FAMILY TRADITION:

An interesting page in the history of the Holmes family came to light recently when an old account book was found in the former home of William H. Holmes on Wilson-Burt road. The farm, which he purchased in 1867, is now the site of Schearer's Nursery, operated by Ron and Sue Schearer of Wilson. The book was discovered while Ron was tearing out some partitions in the old house, and though lost over 100 years, is still in remarkably good condition. Notations in it were written by William Holmes, grandson of Daniel and Sally Holmes, and we quote:

"November 26, 1878: Yesterday was Thanksgiving in Wilson. Union services were held in the Presbyterian Church with Rev. G.S. Hamilton preaching from 1st Thes. V; 18, "In everything give thanks." The pastors of the Baptist and M.E. churches took part in the services, and the pulpit was decorated with fruit, flowers, vegetables, and grain; representing some of the things for which to be thankful.

But the chief object of this communication is to tell of Thanksgiving at the homestead of the Holmes family, where by recurring to the past and comparing notes with older members of the family, we found that we were celebrating the semi-centennial Thanksgiving in this house which began in 1829; the first Thanksgiving after the marriage of the eldest daughter of Daniel and Sally Holmes, and which, with two exceptions, has been observed every year.

For years the children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren have had a standing invitation to come home on this festive day. Yesterday, 32 varying in age from little Jemie of one year, to grandma of 87, gathered around the table to partake of the good things provided for the occasion; over 50 more who are entitled by birth and marriage to seat at this table, are scattered through the west and were unable to be with us.

They were kindly remembered in our festivities, and a blessing invoked upon them at the family devotions. Regrets were expressed that we had no record of these reunions and after a little discussion, one of the grandchildren, (William H. Holmes) was appointed secretary to make a record of this Thanksgiving and such reminiscences of the past as he might recall up.

Then, as the little ones were becoming weary, oysters and cake were served, and at ten o'clock the guests departed for their respective homes."

William Holmes, the grandson who penned the above words, was born in Wilson in 1840 where he attended district school and a few terms at Wilson Collegiate Institute. In 1861 he enlisted as a private in Co. G, 7th N.Y. Cavalry, and the following year re-enlisted in Battery M, 1st N.Y. Light Artillery. After the war he resumed farming and became an active member of Wilson's Peter A. Porter Post, G.A.R. In 1891 he served 2 terms as town Supervisor, but is perhaps best known for his chapter about Wilson in the 1902 "Souvenir History of Niagara Co."

His father, Richard C. Holmes, was born in Carlisle, NY, in 1813, and came to Wilson with his parents in 1818. He later served as deacon and trustee of the Presbyterian church, and was Sunday School superintendent for 30 years. He was also a school trustee for many years, and in 1867 was elected Town Supervisor.

William's grandparents, Daniel and Sally Holmes, came to Wilson from Carlisle, Schoharie county in February, 1818. They spent the 1st winter with Daniel's parents, John and Anna Holmes, who had settled previously along the north side of Lake road near Hopkins Creek. In the spring, Daniel erected a log house on 160 acres of land on lot no. 73 which he and his wife purchased from the Holland Land Co. It was built on the site of another log cabin that had been burned by the British in 1813. In June, 1818, Daniel moved his family to their new home and immediately began clearing the land and making improvements.

His 1st apple orchard was grown from seeds that Sally had brought with her from her father's farm, and some of the trees were still bearing fruit as late as 1973. In the spring of 1974, the last tree from the original planting blew down, and the present owners, Floyd and Hazel Salisbury, gave the Wilson His. Soc. permission to remove some of the limbs. These were made into small souvenir plaques, but one larger piece was preserved as a museum artifact.

In 1818 Daniel Holmes was appointed Capt. in Niagara County's 1st organized militia, and in 1819, he was elected clerk of the 1st town board in Wilson.

Each generation of the Holmes family had close ties to the Presbyterian church, and it all started Jan. 18, 1819 when the church was organized in the home of John Holmes by Rev. David M. Smith of Lewiston. Six members of the Holmes family founded the new church including John and Anna Holmes, Daniel and Sally Holmes, and Peter and Ruth (Holmes) Crosby.

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HONORARY MEMBERS:

The following members have been added to the society's Honorary Membership Class: Rena Coe, Glenn Hillman, Mabel Wilson, and Frances Landy, also Doris Clark and Bessie Vana.

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FAIR TIME, AGAIN?

Well, believe it or not, the month of May is on the way and on Monday, May 26th, from 10 to 5PM, the Wilson His. Soc. will sponsor its 14th annual "Memorial Day Fair at the museum grounds on route 425.

Featured this year will be a huge "flea market", quilt raffle, antique car display, home-made foods, exhibits, and great entertainment. There will also be a variety of special events for the children including free balloons, free movies, and free wagon rides. The wagon rides will be provided by Peter Rohring of Wilson and his beautiful Belgium draft horses.

Due to an unfortunate accident to her husband, Doris Klees will be unable to continue as Plant Booth Chrm., but Jane Pease has graciously consented to take her place. She is planning some new ideas, and would appreciate hearing from anyone who could provide her with some un-decorated grapevine wreaths. If you can, please call Charlotte Pease at 751-9612.

Don't forget to bring your "fleas" to the museum for the society's "flea market" tent, and it is especially important that all our members furnish those delicious pies, cakes, salads, and other baked goods that everyone so enjoys.

Art Schnoor and his faithful crew will be in the "dog house" again dispensing hundreds of top-grade hot dogs; and those perennial favorites, Jan Sporleder's Chili and Carol Smith's Funnel Cakes, will also be available.

There will be one category in the pie-baking contest this year, and according to Marlene Schotz, Chrm., anyone under 18 yrs. of age may compete for the title, "Champion Pie-Maker." An award of \$15 will be given for 1st place; \$10 for 2nd; and \$5 for third.

Lois Barnum, Gen. Chrm., believes the fair committee is working hard to make your Memorial Day visit to Wilson a happy one whether it be browsing through the "flea market" or watching demonstrations like the "Rainbow Country Woodcarvers." Of course if "pop" would rather go fishing while "mom and the kids" prowl around the fairgrounds---well, that's okay too.

Parking and admission will be free, and there will also be free shuttle bus service from the village to the museum grounds. Parking will be provided through the courtesy of Perry's Auction Barn, Ontario Orchards, Pfeiffer's Foods, and the Farm and Garden Center.

All things considered, you really couldn't pick a better spot to be than Wilson during the "Memorial Day Fair." Now you all come down and see, you hear?

* * * * *

NEW MEMBERS:

We welcome the following new members: Gordon Mawhiney, Wilson, and Clarence and Jeanne Nablo, Wilson; also, (from Buffalo) Jill, James, & David Holls, g.children of Elton and June Kropp, Wilson; & Dana & Bethany Upton, children of Comdr. Thomas & Karen Upton, Norfolk, Va.

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OTHER SOCIETY HAPPENINGS:

There are a lot of reasons for liking the month of May, and the "Apple Blossom Festival" of the Newfane His. Soc. is one of them. Join your neighbors on May 18th and share in their good food, fine entertainment, great country store, and excellent exhibits.

The His. Soc. of the Tonawandas will hold a "flea market" on the grounds of the Long Homestead during "Canal Fest '86" at Tonawanda, July 20-27th. For info call, 694-7406 or 433-6810.

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FROM THE MAILBAG:

Mary Cornell writes that Lancaster, Cal., had such a population boom they divided the town in two. Although she hasn't moved, she now lives in Quartz Hill, California.

Gerald Rodney of Belvidere, Ill., enjoys reading our Newsletter and, as an officer in the Boone Co. His. Soc., is trying to get them to publish one also. We had the pleasure of meeting Rodney a while back when his uncle, "Chuck" Messersmith introduced him to us.

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MAY ACTIVITIES:

The following members will serve as "greeters" at the museum from 2 to 4 on Sundays: May 4th, Lloyd and Diane Albright; May 11th, Bob and Edna Rose; May 18th, Mert and Lillian Evans; and May 26th, Don and Millie Croop.

At the meeting on May 19th, "Wilson's Early Roads" will be the topic with Don Croop leading the discussion. Lois Barnum, Chrm., will present a slate of officers to be voted on at the June meeting. Jean Argue, Rena Rohring, and Marlene Dinse will be in charge of refreshments.

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Approved motions: to sell 1978 Buick to Larry Bulmer; award \$25 on Class Night to High School boy and girl with best marks in history; purchase opaque projector from Quill Corp.; accept revised By-laws; accept date change for Niagara Wireless Assoc. meeting to May 10th. Lois Jennings announced that Tom Sharpe has agreed to raise and lower flag on Sundays. Art Schnoor and Whit Barnum have hung swinging doors on storage area and furnace room. The next director meeting will be held May 10th at the museum, 8:00PM.

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RECENT ACQUISITIONS:

Norma and Roger Ward have donated old blueprints from the former Covert Car Co. at Lockport; also 15 books listed under accession record No. 86-24.

Jack Beaber of E. Detroit, Mich: Old baseball uniform worn by his father, Chester, cousin of Seymour Ereon.

Floyd Salisbury: Heavy iron hook used with cable to draw barges along lake-found on shore.

Dorothy Linnabery: Red lace dress, ca. 1950.

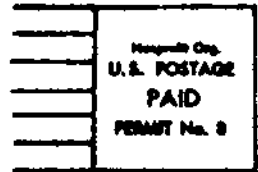
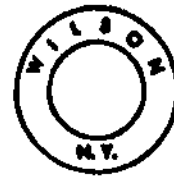
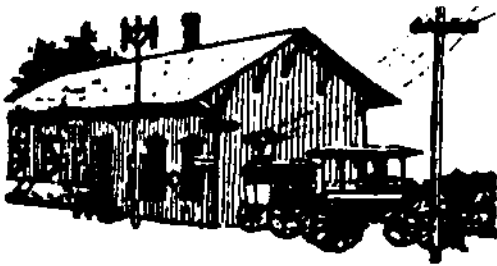
Glenn Patterson, Kingston, Ont: Fob and Chain that belonged to his father, B.R. Patterson, a commemorative gift as 25 yr. veteran of Ontario R.R. Was telegrapher in 1919.

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BON MOT:

To be seventy years young is sometimes far more cheerful and hopeful than to be forty years old. ---Holmes.

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Wilson Historical Society

WILSON, NEW YORK 14172

NEWSLETTER

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

JUNE 1986 Vol. 15 No. 6
(Coleman Press)

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

MODELING THE IRON FIREMAN:

Mrs. Irma (Singer) Woodcock of St. Petersburg, Fla., recently revealed some interesting history about the origin of the Wilson Fire Company's "Iron Fireman", and noted that in 1886 her father, George Singer, was the model for the casting.

George lived in Lockport for 63 years, and in 1885 used to deliver parcels from the post-office to the old railroad depot for \$1 a day. In 1893 he was promoted to house-to-house mailman, and when he retired in 1930 he was working at the stamp window of the Main Street Postoffice.

Mr. Singer believed that one of the greatest accomplishments of his life happened while he was a member of the Active Volunteer Hose on Walnut Street, Lockport. The Company decided to make an iron statue of a fireman for their hall, and George, because of his "Adonis" like qualities, was chosen to be the model.

The molding shop of John and Jabez Bramley on Elm Street was selected to do the work, and young George, dressed in parade regalia, was "buried" under a load of Red Creek clay. When the clay hardened, it was broken apart so he could get out, then put together again. Plaster of Paris was poured down the neck opening which made a plastic likeness of young Singer.

The plaster model was used to build a mold in the sand into which molten iron was poured. Separate impressions were made of his face, head, and helmet, and these were later welded to the iron body. When the 960 pound statue was finally completed, it was raised to the top of the Hose House on Walnut Street where it remained for 27 years.

When Mr. Singer first became a volunteer fireman, fire wagons were pulled by two men, and the bucket system was used to put out fires. Things changed as the years rolled by, and in 1913, the City of Lockport decided to have its own paid fire-fighting system.

The statue was then moved to the front lawn of the Exempt Hall on Elm Street where it remained for many more years. In 1940, Mr. Singer felt the statue was being neglected, so he arranged to have it hauled to Wilson where two of his sons, Edward and Louis, were volunteer firemen. There the statue became a familiar figure in front of the Young Street firehall.

A slight interruption occurred in 1963 when, in the dead of night, some unknown culprits removed the statue. Later, a phone call alerted Wilson volunteers that the iron fireman had somehow miraculously appeared before the Ransomville Firehall.

It is somewhat of a mystery how the half ton statue was moved to Ransomville as it took six men and a tow truck to return "George" to his rightful place on Young Street.

* * * * *

IN MEMORIAM:

James Campbell, 36, son of Milburn and Marion Campbell, died in Atlanta, Ga., on April 12, 1986. He graduated from Wilson High School in 1967, also Adrian College, Mich., and received his master's degree at Stenna Heights College at Adrian. At the time of his demise he was Vice-Pres. of Marketing at Northside Travel in Atlanta.

Besides his parents, he is survived by a sister, Mrs. Robert (Carolyn) Paton of Irvington, N.Y., also 3 nephews. He was a member of the Exley United Methodist Church in Wilson and the Wilson His. Society. A Memorial Service was held at the church on May 17th, and interment was in the Greenwood Cemetery in Wilson.

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FAIR UPDATE:

The Fair will be only days away when you read this so all we can do now is pray for a reasonably good day. Don't forget, we need pies, baked goods, salads, or what have you; but we could also use an hour or two of your time. Call Wanda Burrows or Lois Barnum if you can help out--or just volunteer on the day of the fair. We're all aware that the Fair is important to the society, but whether it will be successful or not depends on our membership.

Marlene Schotz, Chrm., says this year's pie contest will be open to everyone from 9 to 18. You may enter by calling her at 751-9883. Pies should have two crusts, and should be brought to the Food Barn for judging from 10 to 10:30 AM on the morning of the fair. Cash prizes will be awarded to the champion pie bakers.

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HONORARY MEMBER:

Marietta Goodman of Beechwood has been added to the Honorary Membership Roll. If anyone else has been overlooked, please notify Millie Croop, Treasurer.

Recent new members are: Angeline Shea, Wilson, Alfred & Nancy Schultz, Newfane, Dianne Croop, Sanborn, Revia Munch, Fla., Arthur Ulrich, Fla., Carroll Hurlburt, N.Y.C., Hannah Hurlburt, Conn., and Jr. member Bridget Walpole of Virginia.

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LOCKPORT DAILY UNION:

June 2, 1887: The day on which the nation honors its dead soldiers, was observed in Wilson in a manner becoming the occasion. At 1:30PM, Peter A. Porter Post assembled at their headquarters on Main St. and were joined by the Womens' Relief Corps, after which they marched to Greenwood Cemetery where appropriate exersizes were held. The graves of fallen comrades were decorated by details from the W. R. C., and after the ceremonies the procession reformed and marched to the Presbyterian Church to listen to the oration by Rev. Thaddeous Dudley of Middleport, NY. The weather was all that could be desired, and a large number of friends and relatives of the deceased soldiers were in attendance.

Everyone who desires to enjoy a day of real genuine amusement, should visit Wilson, as a large number of pickerel and black bass are being taken here daily. Sheriff George W. Eatten can testify to the excellent success attending those trolling at the place. A party of Lyndonville fishermen carried away 42 pickerel on Tuesday.

June 15, 1887: Regents examinations are being held in the Union School this week. The following is the program: Monday AM, Physical Geography and Botany, PM, American History and Chemistry; Tuesday AM, Arithmetic, Geometry, and Astronomy, PM, Grammar, Rhetoric, and History of England; Wednesday AM, Arithmetic, German, and Book Keeping, PM, Spelling and Geography; Thursday AM, Physiology, PM, Civil Government and Philosophy, and Friday AM, Algebra.

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IMPROVEMENTS:

Art Schnoor reports that a number of wall panels have been installed in the Transportation Building for displays, also shelving for use in the food distribution area. He has also sanded and re-finished a section of the floor in the kitchenette with beautiful results. Consideration is now being given to acquiring a commercial sander so that the remaining original flooring can be done. It would unquestionably improve the appearance of the museum.

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TREASURER'S REPORT:

The annual report of the Treasurer for the fiscal year ending April 30, 1986, shows a balance of \$8,200 in the Life Membership Fund; \$11,969.99 in the Building Fund; and \$7,336.09 in the General Operating Fund.

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JUNE HOSTESSES:

Clara Marcks, Chrm., announces that the following members will greet you Sunday afternoons from 2 to 4PM during the month of June: June 1st, Ora and Marion Pettit; June 8th, Harold and Barbara Mosher; June 15th, Roger and Marge Goodman; June 22, Kenny and Dorotha Welker, and June 29th, Willis and Beatrice Rockwood.

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PROGRAM FOR JUNE:

Dorothy Linnabery, Chrm., has prepared a special information sheet for inclusion with this newsletter pertaining to the "Road Workers Meal" to be held at the meeting on June 16th.

Committee reports and election of officers will also take place at this time. There will be no no program meetings during July and August.

Meetings of the Board of Directors will be held on Wednesday evening, July 9th, and August 13th, 8PM at the museum.

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GOLDEN WEDDING OBSERVANCE:

Congratulations to John and Marion Goodrich who will celebrate their Golden Wedding Anniversary on June 30, 1986. They plan to head north from Florida after June 1st and expect to be in the Wilson area for a while.

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WE'RE HAVIN' TO GO--COME TO THE FAIR:

Monday, May 26th, is the biggest day in our year, and Lois Barnum, General Chairman, has announced that the following Comm. Chrm., (with their helpers) will be ready to serve you on Fair Day: Wanda Burrows, food; Art Schnoor, hot dogs; Sara Berry, snacks & drinks; Judy Zauner and Frank Massing, coffee and donuts; Carol C. Smith, funnel cakes; Sue Schultz, lemonade and popcorn; Lucy Monroe, candy; Melinda Hutchison, cotton candy; Jan Sporleder, Chili; and Emma Lou Reppentine, supplies.

Betty Stimson & Millie Croop, cashiers; Kathy Frerichs, kitchen; Ruth Thomas, dining room; Jane Demmin, fleas; Gail Walder, fishpond; Jane Pease, plants; Winnie Fischer, souvenirs; Dave Palmer, balloons; and Betty Stimson, quilt.

Nettie Stimson, dealers; Darrell Smith, movies; Lois Jennings, museum exhibits; Eleanor Myers, school room display; Celeste Crawford, genealogical; Clark Stimson, entertainment; and Whitney Barnum, parking. Also, Burt Jennings, railroad caboose.

Also, Don Burrows, information and emergency radio; Bob Rose, antique cars; Karen Haseley, publicity; Don Croop, announcements & advertising; Maryanne Sharpe, housekeeping; Edward Hastings, set-up; and Tom Sharpe, clean-up. Edna Robinson, current event photographer.

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RECENT ACQUISITIONS:

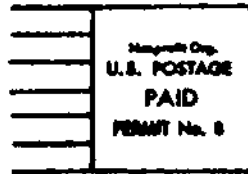
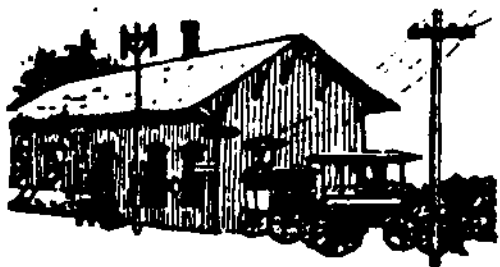
Large assortment of items from Ida Ereon, Newfane Health Facility: Quilt top; yellowware bowl, brownware bowl; paper dress and hat; orchid lace & net dress; violet brocade jacket; collection of hats and fur jacket. Fur collar, fur muff, and lace dress, 1913; assorted ladies clothing; red and white quilt top, silver mesh bag, box playing marbles and Misc. papers including citations from State Legislature on birthdays; Greetings from White House, Gov. Carey, Sen. Daly; also baptismal certificate and 1975 Confirmation certificate.

Emma Schrader: Collection of hats, collection of shoes, Black taffeta dress (1890), two Centennial bonnets, silk hose, and slips.

Helen (Salisbury) Covey, Deming, N. Mexico: 3 photos of Wilma M. Welch's piano students at recital. Pupils identified by Marlene Schotz.

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BON MOT: The public is the only critic whose opinion is worth anything at all.---Mark Twain



Wilson Historical Society

WILSON, NEW YORK 14172

NEWSLETTER

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

LIBRARIAN
WILSON CENTRAL SCHOOL
WILSON, NY 14172

July-August 1986 Vol. 15 No. 7
(Coleman Press)

WHEN STEAM WAS KING:

Some controversy developed in Wilson a few years ago when the decision was being made whether the old "Hojack" railroad should be re-built to carry coal to the Somerset Power Project. As we now know, the old 1875 route was abandoned, but stories are still told about those romantic days when the Lakeshore R.R. was Wilson's only link to the outside world.

Hazel Demmin Salisbury recalled a thrilling experience she had in 1915 when she was only 10 years old. She had won a spelling contest at the Ide Road School, and was asked to take part in a county-wide event to be held in the red brick school at Lewiston.

Her father didn't own an automobile at the time so most of their traveling was by horse and buggy. Lewiston was much too far for such a trip, so on the designated day her father hitched up the team and drove her to the Wilson depot.

She got on the early milk train and was soon chugging west for Lewiston, but as she got closer to the village she became quite apprehensive--she had never been so far from home by herself before. She felt better, however, when the train stopped at the Lewiston station, and the friendly engineer told her what direction she must go to reach the school.

The building was a mile and a half from the station, but she walked down the old Portage Road and reached it long before classes were starting. The door was open so she walked through the halls until a teacher noticed her and took her "under his wing."

Hazel had brought a brown bag lunch with her from East Wilson, and when noontime arrived she ate in a classroom by herself. All the other children went home for dinner.

The spelling bee was held after lunch, and Miss Gazelle Hoffman, superintendent, attended to pronounce the words for the contest. At that time, it was customary for the children to write down their answers on paper rather than spelling the words out loud.

When the contest ended, it was still early afternoon so Hazel decided to walk around the village until her train arrived at 5:30 PM. Suddenly she heard someone walking behind her and turned to see Miss Hoffman standing there--she had decided a little girl shouldn't be wandering around the streets by herself. She invited Hazel to her home, and shortly after sent her to the store.

When she told the storekeeper she had come to Lewiston all by herself, the friendly grocer gave her a big orange. In those days, an orange was a treat that Hazel seldom had, however, instead of keeping it for herself, she decided to take it home and give it to her little sister--she knew she would be thrilled to get something from a place so far away as Lewiston.

At 4:00PM she started her long walk up the hill to wait for the 5:30 train, and as she plodded along she thought about the good time she'd had that day and how kind the people in Lewiston had been.

When she finally climbed back on the train and headed east to Wilson, she knew down deep in her heart that never again would she think of Lewiston as a strange, scary, far-away place.

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NEW MEMBERS:

Members joining the society in May include, Harold and Neva Benedict, Stanley Evans, Rev. Marcia Hill, David Edgerton, George and Mary Frances Miller, Walter and Nancy Berryman, Daniel and Doreen Buczkowski, William Shook, and Cathy Price, all from Wilson; Also, Mary Lynn Brydges Barden, Waterport; Henry Perry, Donald and Shirley Lort, and Mr. and Mrs. Robert Kirsch, Lockport; Shawn Tussing, Ransomville; Mr. and Mrs. Daniel King, Newfane; and Leo Lewandowski, Buffalo.

New Junior members include Joseph, John, Paul, and Kevin Buczkowski, Wilson; Sarah Tiffany, Rushville; and Joshua Smith, Sanborn.

(Note: Sarah Tiffany is the 3½ month old daughter of Mrs. Deborah Eastman Tiffany, and a direct descendent of John Eastman who, with his family, accompanied Rueben Wilson and his family to Wilson's shores in 1810.

Joshua Smith is the 7 months old son of Darrell and Sally Smith of Sanborn.)

Most recent Honorary Member is Edna Martin of Wilson.

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CAR DONATED:

It could now be said that the Wilson His. Soc. is in the Gas & Electric business. Doc Argue has donated a 1976 electric Citicar to the museum which was accepted at the May meeting.

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RED STAR ISSUE:

A "Red Star" by your address label indicates your membership has expired, and no more "Newsletters" may be mailed to you. We hope it's an oversight--we value your support.

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BLUE PRINT FOR LOVE:

During the routine process of acquiring donations for the museum, items of a personal or historic nature often turn up, and makes interesting material for the Newsletter. A case in point is a set of old blue prints for the one cyl.1904 Covert automobile built in Lockport.

The prints, which were donated by Norma and Roger Ward, were originally owned by Mortimer Blazer who lived at 434 Lake Street and died a widower ca. 1966. When Blazer's possessions were being cleaned out so the house could be sold, many of his things were put out with the garbage because even the Salvation Army, at that time, didn't appear interested in old trunks filled with cards, valentines, and, (in this case) the Covert Car blue prints. Rather than stand by and see these items tossed out, Norma asked if she might have them.

Upon taking a closer look, she discovered that some personal notations had been made on the reverse side of the blue prints--things like, "Was your date pretty?", etc. It appeared the pencilled-in remarks had been done in the office when Mort met a new female acquaintance. That acquaintance later turned out to be his wife, and Norma believes the blue prints may have been kept over the years for sentimental reasons.

She also believes that Mr. Blazer worked as an engineer or draftsman, but remembers him best back in 1957-65 as a "Kindly old man, quite deaf, sitting on his front stoop, and enjoying the sun with his blind old cocker spaniel."

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FROM THE MAILBAG:

It is nice hearing from former Wilsonians and learning of their activities. David Weiler, a charter member of the society, helped establish it as a trustee and Chrm. of the Ways & Means Committee. The family now reside in Raleigh, NC, and Mary reports that daughter, Beth, graduated from high school in June. She may emulate her grandmother, Chris Kelman of Wilson, and major in education. Sister Jenny has completed two years college on the Dean's list.

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WIND DAMAGE:

Strong winds blew down part of the depot chimney and damaged about ten roof shingles. The chimney has been rebuilt from the roof up, and the shingles have been replaced by Roberts Roofing. There was also some damage to the windmill, but "Chuck" Messersmith got right on the ball and has it in good working condition again.

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NEW "FRIG" IN MUSEUM:

Harry Rohring donated a real antique 1929 G.E. refrigerator to be used in the kitchenette. After moving the solidly-built, heavy iron cooling unit into place, Harry, Whit Barnum, Ora Pettit, and this writer, will readily attest that "They don't build them like they used to anymore." Mr. Pettit, a G.E. distributor in Wilson for many years, put a new seal on the door and remarked that the old 1929 model "runs great", which says a lot for a 57 yr. old "frig".

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SUMMER HOSTESSES:

Clara Marcks, Chrm., has announced that the following members have agreed to serve as "greeters" at the museum on Sunday afternoons from two to four o'clock.

July 5th, Fred and Sara Berry; July 13th, John and Eleanor Myers; July 20th, George and Susan Cruickshank; and July 27th, Stuart and Ernestine Walpole.

August 3rd, Dale and Jeanette Schlyer; Aug. 10th, James and Faye Pisello; Aug. 17th, Wes and Nan Johnson; Aug. 24th, Robert and Bobbie Hull; and Aug. 31st, Elton and June Kropp.

(We also wish to thank Art and Kay Ness who served as substitutes last month.)

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OPERATING BUDGET:

The Board of Directors have approved an operating budget of \$7,450 for the year starting June, 1986 to June, 1987.

Budgeted items are: Antique cars, \$250; Caboose, \$300; Historic Sites, \$200; Museum Maintenance, fuel, lights, telephone, and insurance, \$5,000; Museum Comm., \$300; Office Supplies, \$100; Programs, \$100; Publications, \$950; and Ways & Means, \$250.

In other action, the directors appointed Leo Klees to act as "Project Engineer" for the proposed new transportation building. Leo will work closely with Ed Hastings and Art Schnoor to get the building program underway. Since most of the labor will be voluntary, let's see if we can revive some of that "pep, vim, and vigor" that built the fine facilities we have now.

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RECENT ACQUISITIONS:

Henry Perry of Lockport has donated two unusual tools from Vietnam. One is a "Coup-Coup", and looks like a cane with a heavy, sharp blade extending from the top of the handle. It's the traditional tool and weapon of the Montaguard tribes, and was presented to Mr. Perry by the Vietnam Forest Service. The other tool is the standard hand saw of Vietnam which is similar to the American buck saw. These saws are handmade and used by some of the fine Vietnamese cabinet makers. Other items include Tawain, Japanese, Yugoslavian, Phillipine, and Hong Kong coins; a Korean passport issued to Mr. Perry in 1957 by the U.S. State Dept.; and several 1st day covers including one of Wilson, also assorted letters that came through the Wilson Postoffice when Harold Albright was Postmaster.

Mr. and Mrs. Charles Mensch: Three small wooden planes, one glass-cutting tool, and one marking guage--all in excellent condition.

Edna Rose: Copy of etching done by Lionel Barrymore of Purdy's Basin.

Mr. & Mrs. Robert Haley of Tonawanda: One wicker baby buggy.

Clarence Baehr of Newfane: 8 Books including New Testament, 1863; Johnson's Fact Book, 1921.

Berenice Robinson (Mrs. F. Melviss) of Gasport: Ladies clothing and 5 Postcards, Ransomville.

Thomas Marks School: "Crest" Yearbook, 1985-86

Hallett & Pricilla Addoms, Niag. Falls: 4x5 foot picture frame, late 1800's/

Marian Winger: Doll Carriage; Early bread maker; Universal #8 early juicer.

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ROAD "SNAFU":

One of the early roads in the town of Wilson was the "Marsh Settlement Road" which first connected what is now known as East Wilson and South Wilson. The road was cut through the wilderness in 1824, and was nothing more than a wagon trail when Joseph Marsh built his cabin near the present intersection of Chestnut and Beebe roads.

Old Timers recalled that the road was later called "Chestnut Street", but in the late 1920's, when Beebe Road was paved from Chestnut to Warrens Corners, the entire highway was named the "Warrens Corners-South Wilson Road."

This long, cumbersome name was dropped in the late 1930's, and the section between East Wilson and South Wilson was re-named "Chestnut Street". This, however, created a problem as there already was a "Chestnut Street" in the village of Wilson making it inevitable that two "Chestnut Street" in the town would cause some confusion.

It wasn't long before delivery trucks were taking parcels to the village that should have been delivered in East Wilson or South Wilson, and on one occasion, even the Wilson Volunteer Fire Company was misdirected.

It happened when a call was phoned in to "put out the fire behind the church on Chestnut Street. Assuming that the caller meant the East Wilson Methodist Church, the volunteers alertly responded, but upon finding no fire, returned quickly to the village where they found the blaze behind the Baptist Church, (on Chestnut Street) two blocks from the fire hall. Luckily, the small brush fire didn't do much damage.

In an effort to end some of the confusion, many East Wilson and South Wilson residents on Chestnut Street began to use "road" on their addresses--a designation that probably should have been used on the highway signs. Every rural road in the town of Wilson is designated as a road with the exception of the East Wilson "Chestnut Street".

It is interesting that today, over half the residents living on "Chestnut Street" have identified their home addresses in the telephone directory as "Chestnut Road;" and though this would seem to point the way as an easy solution of the problem, easy solutions don't always work in this day and age.

Perhaps, if no reasonable compromise can be reached, the "Chestnut Street" in the village could be changed to honor one of Wilson's former Mayors such as Mosher, Horton, Lutz, or even Welker.

But whatever the answer is, it does seem to border on the ridiculous to have two "Chestnut Streets" in the township of Wilson.

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IN MEMORIAM:

We have just learned of the sudden death of Mr. Charles Mensch of Mesa, Arizona. The members of the society extend their sincere condolences to Mrs. Mensch and the other members of his family.

About a year ago, Mr. Mensch gave a cash donation to the society in honor of Dr. John Argue to be used for paneling to display auto exhibits in the transportation building. The paneling was in place for the Memorial Day Fair, but because of his sudden demise, the information had not been conveyed to him.

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ANNUAL MEETING:

In spite of "Tornado Warnings", over 60 persons attended the annual meeting which was held in the transportation building,--a response that would indicate everyone was looking forward to the delicious pot roast "Roadworkers Meal" planned by Dorothy Linnabery, Janet Sporleder, and Charlotte Pease.

Officers elected for 1986-87 were: Whitney Barnum, Pres., Norm MacAskill, 1st Vice-Pres., John Myers, 2nd Vice-Pres., Millie Croop, Treas., Tom Sharpe, Rec. Sec., and Helen Stevens, Cor. Sec.

Trustees elected to June, 1989, were: Leo Klees, Nettie Stimson, and George Linnabery.

Under the new re-vi-sed by-laws, three appointments were made by the Board of Directors: Lois Jennings, Curator; Arthur Schnoor, Planning Board Chrm; and Wallace Goodman, Nominations.

Committee Chairmen elected were: Lois Jennings, Acquisitions; Celeste Crawford, Library; Celeste Crawford, Genealogy; Dorothy Linnabery, Program; Janet Sporleder, Historical Sites; Elwin Upton, Grounds; Don Croop, Publications; Winefred Fischer, Ways & Means; Christine Kelman, Membership; Emma Schrader, Refreshments; Clara Marcks, Sunday Hostesses; Edna Robinson, Photographer; Maryanne Sharpe, Housekeeping; George Linnabery, Transportation Bldg.; Burt Jennings, Caboose, and Don Croop, By-laws.

The most important job of all has not yet been filled, 1987 Fair Chairman, because the Memorial Day Fair provides the society with the funds to operate. We especially wish to thank Lois Barnum who ran the fair so well for the past two years.

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HISTORY AWARDS:

Lisa Ann Aloisio and Nathan Diachun received the society's awards at Class Night for top achievers in American History. Both were presented with \$25 checks by Whitney Barnum, Pres. of the Wilson Historical Society.

Junior members of the society who also received recognition on Class Night were Jeffrey Dinse, Gina Pisello, and Sharon Schotz.

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ADOPTS PROJECT:

We heard Leo Klees would like to put the old dump wagon back in shape. The wagon was given to the society by the Pfeiffer Co., and is a relic of the days when lake gravel was drawn to patch and repair the old macadam roads.

The society has acquired many items that could be reconditioned or repaired. All it takes is some spare time and a willingness to help out--Burt Jennings has been doing it for years.

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ISN'T IT STRANGE how unimportant your job can be when you ask for a raise, and how important it is when you want a day off?

FAIR WRAP-UP:

The Wilson Historical Society had a very successful fair on Memorial Day, and even the weather co-operated as over 150 members and friends pitched in to serve the thousands of visitors who attended. At 6AM about 200 dealers began to set up tables on "Hojack Park", and by 10AM the grounds were churning with activity. At 12 Noon, members of Wilson's American Legion Post paid tribute to our fallen war heroes with Comdr. John Demmin officiating.

According to Lois Farnum, Gen. Chrm., the fair had something for everyone, and one of the attractions was a school exhibit prepared by Eleanor Myers, town historian. The display outlined the old and newer methods of teaching, and included the showing of video tapes taken at the recent reunion of Wilson High School alumni.

There were rug weaving demonstrations by Winnie Fischer who also showed youngsters how to operate a loom. Outside the museum were wood carving demonstrations by the Rainbow Woodcarver's Association, and the Niagara County Dairy Princess, Amy Martin, and her alternate, Jennifer Kneeland, greeted visitors and gave out samples of milk punch.

Entertainment was provided by the Wilson High School Band, square dancing by a local New-fane-Wilson group, also banjo and accordian music provided by Monty Stimson, James Hewitson, and Leo Volk. Darrell Smith showed free Disney movies with films and projector provided by Nioga, courtesy of the Wilson Public Library. Free balloons were also given to the children, courtesy of Liberty Norstar Bank and Don Burrows Welding, who provided the helium gas. Free wagon rides were also available thanks to John Wasik, Peter Rohring, and their beautiful Belgium Draft horses.

Harold Mosher, town supervisor, won the 75 yr. old "Basket Quilt" made by Florence Schultz, Beryl Tovell, Mae Scheffler, Maxine Jones, Marge Moyer, and Betty Stimson; Loretta Pettit won the Afghan made by Doris Channing; Jan Sporleder won the doll made by Betty Stimson; and Marge Ganshaw received a copy of the Wilson Historical Society Recipe Book.

Colleen Miller was named "Pie-baking champion" in the pie contest conducted by Marlene Schotz. Jonathon Schearer placed second, and Stephen Pardee came in third.

Nine pupils from Thomas Marks and Stephenson elementary schools were awarded prizes in the poster contest with three \$5 prizes given by the historical society to Kathy McGrath, Melissa Faery, and Corey Harman; A \$5 gift certificate from MacDonalds was awarded to Todd Harman; A Pizza Hut gift certificate was given to Jennifer Lane; Two Skateland passes were awarded to Melanie Reed and Susan Farley; and two Palce Theater passes were presented to Adrian Frerichs and Jim Rodgers. All contestants received free bowling coupons from Allie Brandt Lanes in Lockport.

The society is grateful to all its members and friends who furnished, chaired committees, and worked at the various concessions, and though we can't mention everyone, there are a few that we should. Frank Massing, for instance, spent two nights in the caboose as night watchman, and he was also on the job bright and early to assist Judy Zauner prepare coffee and donuts for the dealers. Also, a tip-of-the-hat to Nettie and Clark Stimson who mailed out the dealer contracts, laid out the grounds, and directed dealers to their respective "spots".

A special "thank you" to the Masonic Lodge of Wilson who sponsored the "Beat the Champ" checker games--a first at this year's fair. Also many thanks to the following who spent many pre-fair hours getting ready for the fair: Wanda Burrows, Lucy Monroe, Whit Barnum, Arthur Schnoor, "Chuck" Messersmith, Clarence Monroe, John Myers, Burt Jennings, Lois Jennings, Millie Croop, Lois Barnum, Jane Demmin, Edna Rose, Carol and Sally Smith, Jane Pease, and Don Burrows. We'd also like to mention antique car buffs, Doc Argue, Bob Rose, George Linnabery, Larry Bulmer, George Lederhouse, Leo Klees, and Clarence Monroe who prepared cars for exhibit. Also high on our "angel list" is Ed Hastings and Tom Sharpe who handled set-up and clean-up.

Over 60 Wilson businessmen helped advertise the fair in the Union Sun & Journal, Retailer, Metro News, and Niagara Gazette; and a number opened their parking facilities to our free shuttle bus service including the Wilson Town Hall, Exley Methodist Church, Our Lady of the Rosary R.C. Church, Pfeiffer's Foods, Wilson High School, Farm and Garden Center, Ontario Orchards, and Perry Auction Barn.

Pfeiffers Foods also donated the delicious loganberry concentrate that has been so popular at the last 14 annual fairs, and the Wilson Boathouse Restaurant furnished the butter used in the food building. We also thank Wilson Central School for the use of snow fencing used for crowd control, also other cartesies extended; also Buetel's Greenhouse for providing flowers to brighten up the grounds.

We especially appreciate the co-operation received from the Wilson Volunteer Fire Co. #1, in providing tables and chairs, and many persons have commented on how glad they are to see the ambulance parked on the fair grounds. We not only value their support, but also the support received from Races Emergency Radio Service who help co-ordinate the parking and the shuttle bus service.

The society's annual fair has always been a "fun fair"--a time to get together with old friends and swap stories about "the good old days". We believe it should continue that way. Putting on the fair is not easy, but it does provide the funds necessary to operate the museum and make improvements. Everything considered, we believe it's worth the effort.

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PLANTS BLOOM AT FAIR:

Jane Pease, Chrm., was new this year, but she had the ability to make a tough job look easy. In addition to obtaining large numbers of plants from local members, she also acquired many beautiful arrangements from area commercial growers.

These included, Beutel's Nursery, Creekside Gardens, Clayton's Nursery, Flowers by Jackie, Faery's Nursery, Faery's Greenhouse, Hudson's Nursery, Jane Farm and Greenhouse, Luff's Greenhouse, LaRose's Farm Market, Marks Nursery, O.C. Family Greenhouse, Suits Florist, and Steadman's Old Farm Nursery.

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BON MOT: Whenever I hear people discussing birth control, I always remember I was fourth.

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NOTICE FOR MUSEUM HOSTESSES:

Lois Jennings, Acquisitions Chrm., wishes to remind all hostesses that it is very important to make out an acquisition transmission slip every time someone leaves a gift for the museum. After you make out the transmission record, be sure to have the donor sign it. Give the white copy to the donor and return the pink copy and cardboard copy to the box. If a gift has any special history or story of family interest connected to it, try to also record this information on the transmission slip--even if you have to attach an extra sheet. Your co-operation will make a very difficult task much easier.

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HOSTESSES FOR DECEMBER:

The following have agreed to volunteer their services as hostesses during the month of December: Dec 6th, Paul and Gerda Williams; Dec. 13th, John and Eleanor Myers; Dec. 20th, Ken and Dorothy Tracey; and December 27th, Grace Kirk and Margaret Wilson.

The society joins in wishing Mrs. Margaret Wilson, Hostess Chrm., many happy returns of the day in recognition of her 90th birthday which she celebrated on Monday, November 16th. The next time some of you 60 year olds begin feeling tired and weary, think about those gals-around-town like Ida, Beatrice, Jennie, and Margaret.

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DECEMBER PROGRAM:

The regular meeting on Dec. 21st will feature a German Christmas celebration with the Zauner family in charge. There will be special foods, music, and entertainment and Judy Zauner will be assisted by Ruth Zauner, Liz Schearer, Maryanne Sharpe, and Eva Zortman. Dora Wakeman and Hazel Salisbury will handle the coffee, tea, and "punch".

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FITTING MEMORIAL:

The Delphic Circle, one of Wilson's oldest cultural organizations, has planted a "Mountain Ash" in the "Hojack Park" in memory of their late long-time member, Dorothy Think. Mrs. Think suggested the name "Hojack" for the park which was made possible by the donation of the land by Dr. and Mrs. George Badger of Lockport.

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NEW MEMBERS:

Friends will miss Don and Dee Flagler who moved to Texas recently, however, the Flaglers will continue to keep in touch with their former home town as members of the society. We are also happy to welcome Mr. and Mrs. Charles Seaman who joined following the Nov. meeting.

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WINTER TOUR PLANNED:

Eleanor Myers, Chrm., announced that a tour of the Bond House, Lockport, Sun. Dec. 20th will leave the Wilson Museum at 2PM. Car pools will be made up for the trip. The Bond House will be specially decorated for the Christmas season. Here is a good chance for everyone to see the first brick house built in Lockport.

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BAKE SALE A SUCCESS:

Bill and Peg Fritton, Chrm., reported the bake sale on election day netted nearly \$140. Ladies of the society, long noted for their culinary expertise, provided a great variety of delicious "goodies" for the annual event which lasted from 10 to 6 PM.

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PIONEER ANECDOTES:

Stephen J. Stockwell settled at "Stockwell's Corners" (Beebe & Chestnut) in 1825. It is recorded that he once went hunting with an Indian who missed every shot. The Indian grew disgusted and grunted, "Gun Mad", and tried to straighten the site by putting the gun in a fire...Wolves roamed about freely in those days, and Stephen's daughter, Lucinda, was frightened by them when they howled at night--she had good reason because during their first year the cabin only had a blanket for a door...Her brother, Ralph, once turned some wild squirrels loose in a room full of long-skirted women. The ladies were holding a "spinning bee". and you can imagine what happened when they saw the furry rodents scurrying about.

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DECEMBER CALENDAR:

Decorate Christmas Tree: Sunday afternoon; 2PM and on; Everyone come. (DEC. 6th)
Gnostic Guild: Christmas Party at Wilson Museum; Tuesday evening, 6:30 PM and on. (DEC. 15th)
Board of Trustees: December meeting cancelled. Bond House Tour: Sun. 2PM (DEC. 20th)
Regular Meeting: Christmas Party; Patterson Room; Monday evening, 7:30PM; (DEC. 21st)

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MUSEUM PROGRESS:

Work on the storage room and tool shed is progressing well; All but one of the 5 display cabinets in the antique car building have been repaired and painted; and four cement posts marking the north boundary line of "Hojack" park have been set. Helping on these projects were Art Schnoor, Wally Beutel, Ed Lort, George Linnabery, Elwin Upton, Bob Rose, Millie Croop

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TO DECORATE TREE:

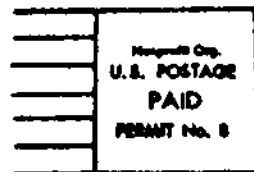
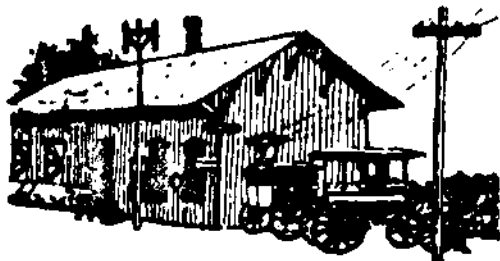
On Sunday, December 6th, the annual tree decorating party will be held in the Patterson Room starting at 2PM. Miss Flossie Lortz will be in charge. The tree, provided by the Smiths will be taken to the museum earlier by courtesy of Burt Jennings. Everyone is invited.

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RURAL CARRIER RETIRES:

Ruth Phillips retired from the Wilson Postoffice as rural carrier, Tuesday, Nov. 17th. She was given an ovation at the Nov. meeting in recognition of her past five years of faithful service to the community. Stormy weather, snow drifts, engine trouble, and flat tires will now be a thing of the past for Ruth.

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Wilson Historical Society

WILSON, NEW YORK 14172

NEWSLETTER

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

LIBRARIAN
WILSON CENTRAL SCHOOL
WILSON, NY 14172

SEPTEMBER 1986 Vol.15 No.8
(Coleman Press)

FORMER GI REMEMBERED BOYHOOD YEARS:

On June 13th, 1944, Philip Brown was serving in the U.S. Army. He was stationed in England, and though thousands of miles from home, often thought about the little town he'd left behind. In a letter to his father, Sam Brown, he wrote about some of the things he remembered about Wilson when he was growing up, and we quote from a copy of that letter because it might strike a responsive chord in some of our older members.

"Dear Dad: Sort of nice to think of Middletons moving back into their old stand, (drug store). I wish they could restore it to its former condition--all the dark, heavy woodwork; the little tables for children along the side of the room; the glass-covered tables with boxes of candy inside; the cool marble fountain; the phone booth; the pile of magazines in the window; the rickety postcard rack; the big mirror in the back; and the round tables and chairs with iron legs. (Note: One table and four chairs are now in the museum, and the counter top in the kitchenette was made from the marble soda fountain.)

Do you remember when Roy used to take me in there and buy me 2 or 3 ice cream sundaes with vanilla, chocolate sauce and peanuts, and I used to ask you for 15 cents for a sundae and 15 cents more to buy one for Jimmy Hinchliffe?

Remember Jack Rubles old place? Jack sold hot dogs for 5 cents, and Dox sold them for 10 cents. You said that Jack had to sell twice as many as Dox to make the same money--and I believe he did.

Jimmy Hinchliffe's grandmother used to live above Rubles, and she had some red and white poker chips we used to play with. She also gave us peppermints.

Remember Slocum's barber shop and how the coons and coon dogs used to make it stink--also the telephone office that was across the street? And remember when Arthur Dobbs fell off his wheel chair while using the elevator at his sister's house?

Remember how you used to line the barn with cardboard so our horse, Bonnie, could be warm? And remember the patent medicine man who'd set up his stand across from the store on band concert night--complete with a box full of snakes to draw a crowd?

Remember the bowling alleys in the old Wilsonian Club, and the stag dinner when Fred Gailbraith fixed a ham with spices and brown sugar; also the coconut shell with the coconut still in it that Rex Tugwell's father sent back from Puerto Rico? It was kept on the table in the main room of the club.

Those were the days."

(Note: Phil Brown, a native of Wilson and member of the Wilson Historical Society, now resides in Washington, D.C. His father, Sam Brown, used to be a partner in the old Miller & Brown drygoods store, Young Street, Wilson.)

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BY-LAWS REVISION:

On March 16, 1986, the by-laws of the Wilson His. Soc. were revised by a committee composed of Don Croop, Chrm., Whitney Barnum, John Myers, Lois Jennings, and Arthur Schnoor. They were approved at the May meeting and copies were given to all officers, and one placed on file in the museum. We have been asked to inform our members, via the newsletter, of some of the changes that were made.

The society now operates under a Board of Directors consisting of the duly elected officers; nine elected trustees; town of Wilson Supervisor; Town Historian; Curator; Planning Board Chairman; and Antique Car Chairman.

The board will decide all matters of policy and shall have general responsibility for the conduct and administration of the affairs of the society. The board shall also be responsible for appointing a Curator, Nominating Committee Chairman, and Planning Board Chairman. All other committee chairmen shall be selected by the nominating committee.

In the next newsletter we will outline some of the duties and responsibilities of the various officers and committee chairmen.

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LOOKING AHEAD:

The 1986 Memorial Day Fair is history, but some members of the society are already looking forward to next year. The quilting committee has acquired a top for a new quilt, and Joe Higgins is hard at work appliqueing the new design. The double size spread will feature red tulips with green leaves and stems. Joe let us take a peek at his handiwork, and after it is quilted it promises to be a real beauty.

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TRANSPORTATION BUILDING ON SCHEDULE:

Work is progressing nicely on the society's new transportation building--the floor is laid, the cement block walls are more than half up, and it is expected that the roof will be on and the entire job completed before winter sets in.

The decision to construct the building was given a green light two years ago when the society was able to allocate \$12,000 for the project in its building fund, and the town committed \$10,000 more from its Capital Reserve Fund.

Whitney Barnum, President of the Wilson Historical Society, also applied to the state for an additional one time grant of \$15,000 which was approved in July through the office of Rep. Joseph T. Pillittere of the 138th Assembly District.

During the past 14 years, most of the improvements that have been made have been achieved by the organization's volunteers--the current building program is no exception.

Helping with construction to date have been Leo Klees, Whitney Barnum, Edward Hastings, "Ollie" Clark, Arthur Schnoor, "Chuck" Messersmith, Elwin Upton, Francis Brown, and Raymond Allgeier. Also, George Linnabery, John Myers, Wesley Johnson, Ralph Dinse, Frank Massing, Tom Sharpe III, Don Croop, Gregory Mandeville, Clark Stimson, Ron Zauner, George Lederhouse, Gary Pettit, Kevin Reppentine, and Randy Ward.

Some essential work was performed with town equipment and the following personnel: Robert Hoffman, Tom Boyd, Phil Bartz, Tom Jablonski, and Keith Dixon. The village also contributed some equipment and men for the project including Bob Zastrow and Gary Greenwald.

We especially wish to thank William Hess who donated use of his tractor with loader; Adrian Frerichs for use of his tractor and loader; and Roger Demmin for use of two tractors, one with loader and the other with cement mixer.

With any kind of break from the weatherman, two more work Saturdays should see the walls completed, and it is hoped that a few more new volunteers will show up so that the entire building can be finished quickly.

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NEW MEMBERS:

Some new members have joined the society during the summer months including Sally Pelton, Chicago, IL; Betty Martin Goater, Popano Beach, FL; Henry and D'Nelle Mullett, New Port Richey, FL; Kathy J. Wilson, Johnstown, NY; Fayette and Mabel Wilson, Mayfield, NY; also Roger and Joanne Demmin, and Gerald and Margaret Porter, all from Wilson; and Charles Buchner and Helen Brunner, both of Ransomville. (Note: Fayette Wilson and Kathy Wilson are direct descendents of Joel Wilson, brother of Reuben, after whom the town of Wilson is named.)

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SEPTEMBER HOSTESSES:

The following persons have volunteered to serve as hostesses Sunday afternoons from two to four: Sept. 7th, Ralph and Helen Dinse; Sept. 14th, Richard and Emma Lou Reppentine; Sept. 21st, James and Betty Cornell; and Sept. 28th, Harold and Esther Albright.

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FEDERATION DISPLAY:

John Myers, 2nd Vice-Pres., was in charge of the Wilson display which won 2nd place at the Farm and Home Center Federation exhibit. The Wilson exhibit featured 8x10 photos of twelve cobblestone houses that may be seen along the society's "cobblestone trail". Hand-out brochures with descriptions of the houses were available.

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NEW HISTORIAN:

The Wilson society extends its congratulations to Mrs. Dorothy Rolling who was recently appointed County Historian by the Niagara Co. legislature. Mrs. Rolling is also part time historian for the town of Niagara and member of the Niagara County Genealogical Society.

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N.C.G.S. PLANS REPRINT:

The Niagara Co. Genealogical Soc. is reprinting and indexing the 1902 "Souvenir History of Niagara County", and the hard cover 8x11 inch book will have about 250 pages. It will be available until Oct. 15th at the pre-sale price of \$25 plus \$1.75 sales tax and \$2 postage. The history is considered unique because the chapters were written by pioneers from various communities. William H. Holmes, for instance, wrote the chapter on Wilson.

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RECENT ACQUISITIONS:

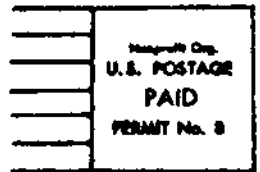
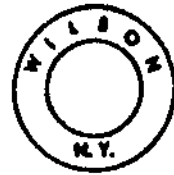
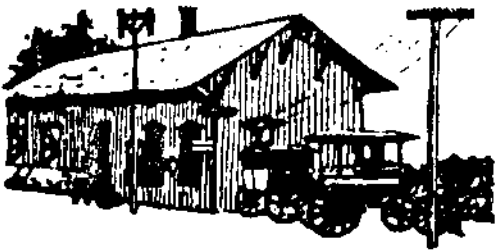
- Waldo Buetel, Ransomville; gas grill for use at annual fair.
- Eleanor Desso: Pair of ladies designer shoes for use with old museum dresses.
- Mrs. Charles Mensch, Mesa, Arizona: 1975 Buick Riviera in memory of Charles Mensch.
- Roger Schultz, Lockport: One-man seeder, handcrafted, 10 seed trays. Very good condition.
- Kenneth Graham: Windshield wiper for model A Ford.
- Nettie Stimson: Picture of Covert Gear employees at Lockport, 1929; Harrison employees, 1941; also one green bottle with lable from Dr. J.O. Moore, veterinary.
- Charles Messersmith: Two wooden coils from a Model-T Ford.
- Harold Donner, Ithaca: Books, "The Niagara" by Donald Braider; "Lake Ontario" by Arthur Pound; and the "Fighting Tuscarora" by Chief Clinton Rickard.
- Leo Klees: Early stove cooking timer, photographs, postcards, and miscellaneous papers.
- Dr. Argue: Flag holder for 1925 car.
- Beatrice Salisbury: Misc. early school exams dating back to 1911-1912.
- Thomas Fare: Wooden croquet set.
- Edna Rose: Three old jello molds.

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FROM THE PAST:

March 28, 1887: Mr. S. J. Swann is about to return to Wilson from East Aurora and open up a new bakery here. (Lockport Daily Union)

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Wilson Historical Society

WILSON, NEW YORK 14172

NEWSLETTER

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

DECEMBER 1986 Vol.15 No.11
(Coleman Press)

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

LEGENDS OF THE EAST BRANCH:

In the 1800's, creeks or rivers running into Lake Ontario were convenient "landmarks" for estimating distances from Fort Niagara, thus in Niagara County we have Four Mile Creek, Twelve Mile Creek, and Eighteen Mile Creek.

Twelve Mile Creek, which flows into Lake Ontario at Wilson, has an east branch with its source in Cambria; and a west branch which originates at the Tuscarora Indian Reservation. The east branch, which flows through the village, had some interesting historic sites along its course as it wound its way to the lake.

Near the west end of Young St., on the south side of the road, was a small flat-topped hill rising just behind the old Wilson Mill. It was called Battery Hill because Luther Wilson's Militia Co. used to place a 3 lb. cannon on top of it and fire at a target set up on Cannon Ball Hill--about one half mile to the north.

For many years, cannon balls could be found at the target site--especially after hard rains when the soil washed away. One cannon ball, found in the late 50's, was donated to the Wilson Museum.

Battery Hill was also the site of the 1st cemetery in the village, although in the early 1800's, a few burials were made at the east end of Sunset Island. This is confirmed by Mrs. Bessie Crawford, former long time resident of the island who once wrote, "There is no record in existence of the number or names of those buried there, but we do know its location."

Across the road from Battery Hill was the old Reuben Wilson home, and the site of Wilson's first Postoffice. The old frame structure, built in 1824 around an original log house, is still in good shape and occupied.

Just west of the Wilson home was another high hill known as Three Oaks Hill. Three large oak trees at the top were used as a look-out point to spot anyone coming up the creek. From there a clear view of Cannon Ball Hill could be had as well as Indian Hill, another look-out point further downstream.

Just before reaching Cannon Ball Hill, one comes to the spot known as Prospect Point. It was here that several chunks of Fool's Gold were found raising hopes in some residents that some might become rich. The bright yellow substance looked like gold in its soft rock formation, but was of no value what-so-ever. Just east of Cannon Ball Hill was Greenwood Cemetery and the remains of an old brick yard. On the west side of the creek flats was a boat yard where small sailing vessels were built.

A little north of Cannon Ball Hill was Indian Hill--so named because it was well-forested, and the Indians liked to camp there. This was born out later by the large number of arrow heads found there. Much of Indian Hill was bulldozed and used for fill when the new bridge on Route 18 was built over the creek.

Continuing downstream, one came to three large rocks that seemed to be placed in a triangle. It is said that during the War of 1812, three American soldiers paced off a hiding place some where between the rocks and two large "notched" oak trees, and buried a small chest of money so that it wouldn't fall into the hands of the British. Legend has it that the soldiers were killed in battle at 4 Mile Creek, and to this day, the treasure has never been found. The last time we rowed up the creek, the rocks and one oak tree were still in place.

Short Point, the next site of interest, was a gently sloping bank where Indians and trappers were said to have landed their canoes and camped. Just beyond was Mud Bridge which connected the former Tuscarora Park with the Island Yacht Club.

At the west end of the yacht club property was a place known as Glisman's Point. One time when Sturgeon were plentiful in the lake, a Pound was built there to keep them in. It was fenced in like a corral with planks placed over it to walk on, and the huge fish were kept until they could be cleaned or smoked and sent to market in Lockport by stagecoach.

At the east end of the yacht club, the creek entered "Millie Cook Cove", named after the vessel, Millie Cook, that caught fire in the lake. Her crew managed to steer her into the harbor and grounded her in the cove where she burned to the water line.

In the not too distant past, slow moving row boats and canoes moved leisurely up and down the placid waters of the East Branch. Today, the harbor is a bustling, "fisherman's paradise" with wall to wall boats. A sign of progress, no doubt, but we sort of like to remember it the way it was.

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THOUGHT FOR TODAY:

Don't kick about the times in which you live. A hundred years from now they'll be referred to as "the good old days." (Wilson Star-1895)

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THE HOLIDAY SEASON:

Lois Jennings invites all members of the society to come to the museum Sunday, Nov. 30th, from 1:00 to 4:00 PM to help decorate the Christmas tree. She hopes everyone will try to turn out so the museum can be properly decorated for the Holiday Season.

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Dorothy Linnabery has announced that the program on Monday evening, Dec. 15th, at 7:30 PM, will feature "An Italian Christmas", and will be presented by Mr. and Mrs. Anthony Cipolla of Wilson; Mr. and Mrs. Michael Molinaro of Lockport; Mr. and Mrs. Angelo DiMillo of Lockport, and Rev. Paul Burkard of Our Lady of the Rosary R.C. Church, Wilson.

Following the program, refreshments will be served by Jean Swanson, Maxine Jones, and Emma Schrader.

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Remember those cute animals that Carole Schnoor brought to the December meeting last year? Well, if you didn't win one, you'll have another chance on December 15th. "Santa Bear", "Sno Bear" and "Reindeer" are looking for a home, and each fluffy animal stands 15 inches tall, and contains a music box that plays 16 different Christmas melodies. Donation tickets are available from Carole at 50 cents each or three for a dollar.

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The twelve towns of Niagara County will enter displays at the Festival of Lights in Niag. Falls this year based on the song, "The Twelve Days of Christmas". Wilson's entry will be submitted by Jackie Zastrow of "Flowers by Jackie" and will be "A Partridge in a Pear Tree."

* * * * *

The Wilson Senior High School Chamber Ensemble will perform at the Wintergarden, Niagara Falls, on Dec. 11th at 8:00 PM, as part of the Holiday festivities scheduled there. Free.

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SUNDAY HOSTESSES FOR DECEMBER:

Dec. 7th, Fenton and Bessie Cole; Dec. 14th, Milton and Helen Clark; Dec. 21st, John and Jane Demmin; and Dec. 28th, Lloyd and Diane Albright. The museum will be closed to visitors during the winter months of January, February, and March.

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Whitney Barnum, Pres., has appointed Jean Argue to fill out the unexpired term of her late husband, Dr. John F. Argue. Also appointed was Donald Burrows who will replace Carole Schnoor, who recently resigned. The next meeting of the Board will convene at the home of Whitney Barnum, Wed. evening, Dec. 10th, at 8:00 PM.

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WAYS & MEANS REPORT:

Winnie Fischer reports that \$208.70 was realized from tables set up at the Episcopal Church "Apple Fest", and the Election Day Bake Sale at Town Hall. Assisting Winnie were Millie Croop, Lois Barnum, Edna Rose, and Doris Klees.

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DUTIES OF COMMITTEES: (Continued)

- 11. A Grounds Comm. will be responsible for upkeep of grounds and plantings around museum, also making sure grounds are mowed in summer, and snow cleared from driveway and parking lot in winter.
- 12. A Memorial Day Fair Chrm. will be responsible for selecting all fair personnel, and supervise all areas of planning and conduct of the fair.
- 13. A Genealogical Comm. shall be responsible for producing and distributing genealogical forms and family record sheets, also keeping all data received in permanent alphabetical file.
- 14. A Publicity Chrm. shall arrange for publicity of meetings and special events in local papers, TV, etc.
- 15. Caboose Comm. shall care for and keep up the old railroad caboose.
- 16. The Antique Car Comm. will be responsible for the care, upkeep, and display of all cars owned or on loan to the society.
- 17. The Refreshments Comm. shall provide a minimum of three persons to provide and serve light refreshments after each monthly meeting.
- 18. Sunday Hostess Comm. shall provide at least 2 greeters for the museum on Sunday afternoons from 2 to 4 PM--more if required.
- 19. The Quilting Comm. is responsible for making a quilt to be raffled at the Memorial Day Fair. Raffle donation tickets shall also be acquired by the committee who will be responsible for all ticket donations.
- 20. A Photographer shall be selected to photograph all current events, and see that all pictures are displayed in the museum albums.

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BUILDING PROGRESS:

Except for some "finishing touches", the bulk of the work on the roof of the new transportation Building was completed on Thursday, November 6th.

Although a total of 50 persons were involved in the construction project, we are especially grateful to the following volunteers who repeatedly reported to work--day after day: Leo Klees, Arthur Schnoor, Ed Hastings, "Ollie" Clark, "Chuck" Messersmith, Elwin Upton, Dennis Clark, Gregory Mandeville, Tom Walder, George Linnabery, Maxwell Hunter, John Myers, Maurice Clark, and Eddy Seefeldt.

"Ollie" Clark and several other members of the Carpenters Union, Local 280, including Kenny Hoffman, William Reinbolt, and Dave Desso, put the roof supports in place and we thank them for their skilled assistance. In addition we would like to acknowledge the services of some others not previously mentioned, William Shook, Al Waite, Bruce LaMantia, Otto Klees, and Lloyd Norton. Last, but not least, Millie Croop who called all the people who volunteered their help.

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BON MOT: Don't complain because rose bushes have thorns: Be glad that they have roses.

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WHEN THE CIRCUS CAME TO TOWN:

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

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

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

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

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

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NEW LIFE MEMBER:

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

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

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

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

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

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FOURTH GRADERS VISIT MUSEUM:

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

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

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

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RECENT ACQUISITIONS:

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

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

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

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

Helen Borngraeber: Box of Photographs.

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

Mrs. Ellagene Hayes: Old Button Hook.

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

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

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MEMBER IN NEWS:

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

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