

January 1998 through December 1998

WILSON HISTORY:

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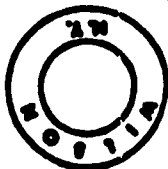
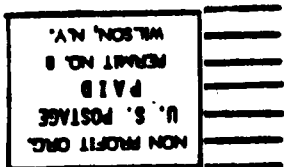


(Coleman Printing)
January 1998 Vol. 26 No. 1

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

NEWSLETTER

WILSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY
WILSON, NEW YORK 14172-9763



January 1998

MENS CLUBS THRIVED IN WILSON:

Two Mens Clubs were very active in Wilson in the early 1900's and the 1920's, and the first one was organized on January 1, 1909.

The stated purpose of the new club was to "Increase good fellowship amongst its members; to advance the business and social interests in town; and increase efficiency in good citizenship."

In order to join the Club, one had to be at least 16 years of age; of good moral character; be recommended by the Club's membership committee; and willing to sign the Club's Constitution. The Membership fee was 50 cents, and dues were a dollar a year.

The Club met on the first Friday night of each month, and a special "Ladies Night" was also held each month in the former Oddfellow Rooms in Young Street.

We could not determine when this club dissolved, but it may have been about the time that the new Wilsonian Club became active.

In April, 1916, the Wilsonian Club of Wilson was incorporated., and according to its Constitution the principle objectives were to "Promote good fellowship; develop athletic sports; Buy, sell, and hold mortgages to improve real estate; and to erect, repair, or improve buildings in the village and town."

The late Phil Brown of Washington, DC., recalled that his father, Sam Brown, Reuben Foote, and Frank Campbell helped organize the Wilsonian Club, and some of its first resident members were Victor Berlin, B.F. Gale, Charles Tugwell, Roland Singer, Jake Miller, Merle Wilson, William Mudge, Dr. John Burns, Mike Radigan, George Middleton, E. M. Bigalow; Seward Moot, H. D. Pease, Allan H. Hinchliffe, V. W. Hackett, Rex Tugwell, William L. Hurlburt, H.W. Smith, F. A. Faery, and Fred A. Bigalow.

The resident member initiation fee was \$100 and regular dues were \$1.00 quarterly, also resident membership was limited to 100 persons. There were other membership categories, however, such as Associate members and non-resident members.

The Wilsonian Club was organized in the former Luther Wilson residence at the time when the former Wilson home was becoming an eyesore at the village four corners.

It was exclusively a male organization, and for many years many activities included bowling, dances, band concerts, and an occasional "smoker" to watch boxing matches.

There were three bowling alleys in the basement, but the ceiling was low. It was said that when tall men such as Russ Hurlburt would bring their arm back to bowl they'd sometimes hit the ceiling with the ball.

There were a couple pool tables on the first floor, and on the second floor the south wing was turned into an elaborate banquet hall. For a long time, a coconut shell, with the nut still in it, was on display. It had been sent to the Club by Charles Tugwell when he visited his son, Rex, in Puerto Rico.

The beautiful porch along the southwest side was used as a bandstand when Lake Street was roped off for dances, but this porch was removed in 1949 by a future owner.

It was said that most of the young men in Wilson who could dance learned how at the Wilsonian Club. Phil Brown once wrote, "How delighted some of the girls like Naomi Fitch, Felice Campbell, and Helen Maynard were when some of us 'clumsy-footed' boys would make an attempt to dance with them."

By 1919 the club was doing well. Seward Moot was President, C.A. Walter was 1st Vice-Pres., C. E. Johnson was 2nd Vice-Pres., and A. H. Gale was Secretary-Treasurer. There was also a 15 member Board of Directors.

In 1928, the Wilsonian Club was disbanded, and Bill Kirchoff purchased the building. He sold it to Dwight Wilson who started up a restaurant. The property was later acquired by Howard and Dorothy Fitzgerald who redecorated it and operated it as the Wilson House Hotel. Later Mr. and Mrs. John Hope acquired the premises and operated it as a restaurant and hotel.

Today the "Wilson House Restaurant and Inn" is managed by Rico Gulino and Chuck Mercurio, and is considered by many to be one of the areas finest restaurants.

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JANUARY MEETINGS:

- January 14th: Board of Director Meeting, Museum, 7:30 PM
- January 26th: Regular Monthly Meeting, 7:30 PM at Museum. (Note change to 4th Monday)

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BON MOT:

The handwriting on the wall means that the grandchildren have found the crayons.

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RECENT ACQUISITIONS:

- Author Marie "Bobbie" Kalman , Niagra-on-the-Lake, has donated 10 autographed books for the Schoolhouse "Historic Communities Series."
- Mary W. Brown, Washington, DC, Sam Brown's Ledger for 1st store, later known as Welker and Browns; also "Niagara Historic Trail".
- Zilpha Petty: 10 old books for Schoolhouse; also 1965 Map of Niagara County.
- Jean Upton, Newfane, NY: Pictures from Rural Schools.
- Schoolhouse Comm., Wanda Burrows, Chrm., Donor Recognition Book; notebook of photos.
- Ann Teiper Welker, Albany, NY: 3 books for schoolhouse, "Bow Wow & Mew Mew"(1911); First Book of English, and "Lives of Presidents, 1889.
- Ruth Kramer, Ransomville, NY: Framed Poem for Schoolhouse.
- Jeffrey Treichler: Two milk bottles (Leetch & Dickinson); 3 Mason Jars; One Larkin Co. Bottle; One Coca Cola Bottle; One Whiskey Bottle; Two Flasks; Ten Medicine Bottles; One Ink Bottle; One Insulator; and Two unmarked Bottles.
- Anne Faery: Photos of Rolls Royce and Pierce Arrow Cars; Two Early Photos of Museum from Air; 1946 Lockport Phone Book; Dr. Argue Prescription Pad; Two Land of Cobblestone Booklets; Pamphlet, "Niagara" (Vol 1-No.10); 5 Misc. 35mm slides, and two sheets of 40 slides taken at the museum by the late Dr. John F. Argue.
- Marlene Schotz: Three boxes of 43 books, 9 review books, 2 pamphlets, 1 valentine, 1 plaque, and one chalk box.
- Neal Wixon, Buffalo, NY: One oil painting of antique store near Wilson Boathouse.
- Jim Harold, Arlington, VA; 8 issues of Antique Automobile, "Tin Lizzie".
- Kenneth Radig, Grand Island, NY; 1 Plow; 1 Corn Planter; 1 Hay Fork; 2 Saws; 1 Sledge Hammer, and 1 Auger.
- Jeanne Swanson, Burt, NY: Photo of Village of Wilson from the air (excellent)
- Virginia Strablow: Wedding Dress & Slip; Bridesmaid Dress and Hat.
- Bill Rose: Iron Wheel Luggage Cart (1900), originally from Buffalo Train Station.
- Jesse & Charles Michel, Ransomville, NY: Large blown up picture and frame of Pres. McKinley and group in 1901; also B.E. News article regarding McKinley.
- Norma Wiltse Briggs, FL: Mrs. Rorer's Cook Book (1886)
- Donald Wiltse: Two pair of clamp on Ice Skates (for schoolhouse).

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CONNOR BIOGRAPHY:

An interesting booklet on "Educational Opportunities as viewed through the Life of Veronica E. Connor," has been given for the museum library by its author, Karen M. Raccaia, Principal of the Thomas Marks School.

Veronica Elizabeth Connor, who was born in 1810, began her education in the Gothic one room School on Rt. 93, just west of Randall Road. She was later enrolled in the Ransomville Public Schools where each teacher taught two grades. After graduation from the Niagara Falls High School, she attended the Wilson Teacher's Training Class and graduated in 1929. Her first teaching job was in School at Porter Center on Rt. 93.

She took leave from teaching in 1932 to further her education at Buffalo State Teachers College, and in 1936 was appointed to the teaching/Principal position in the Grand Island Schools. Her long and successful career in the field of education came to a climax in 1996 when the Grand Island Middle School was renamed the "Veronica E. Connor Middle School" in her honor.

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100 YEARS MAKES A DIFFERENCE:

The guy who said "what goes up always comes down" probably didn't pay taxes: Anyway, the following item appeared in the March 6, 1896 edition of the Niagara Falls Journal:

"The village of Wilson got through the fiscal year of 1895 on \$425.87 with \$92.50 still left in the treasury."

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IN MEMORIAM:

Lt. Col. Floyd (Jim) Hicks, 91, an Honorary member of the Wilson His. Soc., died Nov. 23, '97, at home. He was born in Somerset, the son of Claude V. and Anna Armstrong Hicks.

He retired from the army in 1965, and from the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco in 1971 as Chief of the Protection Department. He was a member of the Aldergate United Methodist Church of South San Francisco; Life Member of the Retired Officers Association; Sons of the American Revolution; B.P.O.E; and an avid Bowler.

He is survived by his wife, Beatrice Stockwell Hicks; a daughter, Claudia Noller of Poenix, AZ a son, Scott St. James of Valley Village, CA; 2 grandchildren, Navy Lt. James (Kristi) Noller of GUam; and Laura (Michael) Dixon of Phoenix, AZ.

A Memorial Service will be held at South San Francisco, and burial will be in Greenwood Cemetery, Wilson, at a later date.

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FROM THE MAILBAG:

Don Hammond of Orlando, FL, writes that he spent a lot of time working in Wilson's old "Gem" Theater during the 1950's, as did Rodney Toenniesen, Susie Scheffler, Danny Lort, "Skip" Pettit, and Bob Steinman. Don notes that Harold Smith ran the "Gem" in the 50's, and is still in the movie business at Newport, TN.

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JANUARY MEETING:

Miles Linnabery, Chrm., reports that arrangements for the program meeting on Jan. 24, 1998, are incomplete, and suggests you watch for a notice in the Union Sun & Journal. Miss Carole Schnoor is our new Publicity Chrm. Lorraine Brady will be in charge of refreshments,

The society is deeply grateful to Norie Desso who did an excellent job as Refreshments Chrm. from 1992 through 1997.

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QUIPS: The hardest door to open is a closed mind.

NEW LIFE MEMBERS:

Wanda E. Stephenson Burrows, the daughter of Edmund and Audrey Bridgeman Stephenson, was born Oct. 13, 1933 at Niagara Falls, NY. She attended school in the Falls and Wilson, and graduated from Wilson Central High School in June, 1951.

She had two children by her marriage to Donald A. Burrows, a son, Donald K. (Cathleen) Burrows; and a daughter, Julie L. (Mark) Smith. They also have four grandchildren, Justin and Stephanie Burrows, and Katelyn and Chelsea Smith.

Wanda and family belong to Exley United Methodist Church, and she is Chairman of the School-house Comm., and Gen. Secretary of the Wilson Historical Society. She is also well-known throughout town as Deputy Town Clerk of Wilson, a position she's held for ten years.

She and husband, Don, also own and operate the "Burrows Fruit Farms" and hold membership in related farm organizations like the Niagara Co. Farm Bureau, and Western N.Y. Apple Growers and N.Y. Cherry Growers Associations.

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Donald E. Flagler, the son of Elwyn J. and Rosa Smith Flagler, was born in Newfane on March 22, 1931, and attended Wilson Central High School. In 1952 he married Dee Whitney and they had two children, Crystal Flagler Jones, and Michael Whitney Flagler; also 4 grandchildren.

Donald first worked with his Dad, Elwyn Flagler, who moved to Wilson in 1931 with a box full of horseshoeing tools. Although it was during the "Great Depression", Elwyn was able to open a blacksmith shop near the corner of Seneca and High Streets in the village. He shoed horses for the next ten years, but had to stop because of a heart condition, however, the horseshoeing paid for the first welding machine and the Flagler Welding Business was established in 1942.

Donald Flagler ran the Welding business until 1981 when he moved to Texas where his son and daughter live. There he worked for the Fritto-Lay Engineering & Mfg. Co. until he retired.

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Helen Flagler Ward, the daughter of Elwyn and Rose Smith Flagler, was born on the Flagler Homestead in Newfane, Nov. 23, 1924. She attended a Newfane Country School, the Newfane Village School, and graduated in 1942 from the Wilson Central High School. She also attended NCCC.

Helen had three children, Stuart Ward, Suzanne Ward, and Judith Ward Jacubek. The family was affiliated with Exley United Methodist Church, and Helen was also active in the Lockport Camera Club, and made porcelain dolls with local doll artists, Fern Greene, Bea Blisset, and Mary Schillinger.

Helen revealed some interesting history of her earlier years in Newfane and Wilson, and recalled that when she and her sister attended grade school in Newfane, the Methodist Church burned down. The fire was clearly visible from the northside windows of their school which was located where the Miller Hose Firehall is today.

School was dismissed because of all the commotion on Main Street, and Helen's cousin, M. Collins, was able to take a picture of the church bell falling from the tower.

When her family moved to Wilson, they bought the house at 159 McChesney Street, Her father jacked up the house on steel beams obtained from an old steel bridge, then layed blocks for a cellar and completely "gutted" the house. After a year of renovation by her Uncle, Lewis Smith, they moved in. The house was said to have been very old and the beams used to build it were floated over the lake to Wilson from Canada.

They attended the old wooden annex on back of the old Union School where each day the dairy delivered small bottles of free milk everyone--it was depression times. Their 6th grade teacher, Mary Farquarson, used to march the Class across Lake Street each day to watch construction of the new high school. Helen recalled that the new school had the smoothest sidewalks in town--great for roller-skating on their old steel skates.

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NEW MEMBERS:

We welcome new mebers Philip W. Goodrich of New Brighton, MN; also Capt. and Mrs. Craig King, OPOOE 09110; and Robert Van Housen of Burnt Hills, NY.

Generous contributions to the building fund were received from Pauline Kurtz and Donald and Avita Hammond, also Tom and Gail Walder and Jim and Carilyn Warblow.

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NEWSLETTER NOTICE:

There have been instances where some members have not received their Newsletters. If you know of anyone who isn't, please call Kara or Sandy Holden at 751-6596. Newsletter addresses, including box numbers, must be correct or the Post Office will not deliver them.

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SEWING CLUB "TOPS":

During the winter months, a group of very active women got together for an evening of sewing and sociable snacks, and as time went on they decided to sew a quilt top for use in the Memorial Day Quilt Raffle sponsored by the Wilson Historical Society.

Quilters who joined in the project were Anne Rohring, Norma Ward, Shirley Evans, Emily-McAvoy, Barbara Mosher, Winnie Terry, Marge Williams, and Lois Barnum. The actual quilting is done by Betty Stimson.

The pattern chosen for the top is called "Sun Bonnet Sue Through The Year" and, as the title suggests, the 12 blocks making up the quilt top depicts different events and holidays throughout the 12 months of the year. The original "Sunbonnet Sue" has been familiar to the Quilting World for many years.

The ladies of the "Quilting Club" have become a very close-knit group and have derived much enjoyment from their meetings. Their new quilt was displayed at the Keenan Center last Fall, and will be on display at other locations including the Wilson Town Hall.

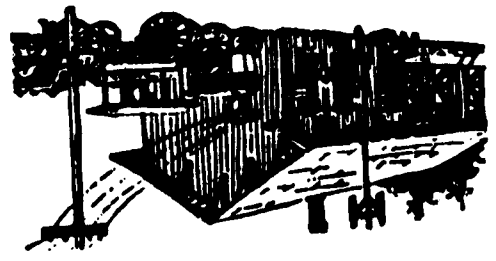
The ladies do not plan to rest on their laurels, and are already starting a pattern for 1999.

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SOUNDINGS:

It's the little things that matter most. What good's a bathtub without a plug?

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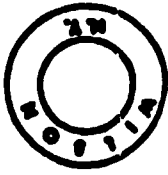
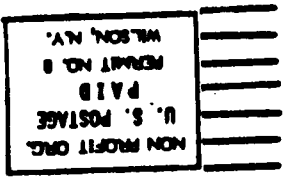


February 1998 Vol. 26 No. 2
(Coleman Printing)

DONALD W. GROFF, Editor

NEWSLETTER

Wilson Historical Society
14172-9763 NEW YORK



February 1998

PRESIDENT STEPS DOWN:

Don Burrows, who skillfully guided the Wilson Historical Society through the past four years, has decided to step down and turn the leadership roll over to Gary Fitch.

Considering Don's busy career as a fruit-grower, it is remarkable that so many things were accomplished under his term of office. Unassuming and easy going, he has that great ability to get things done without ruffling too many feathers.

A native of Wilson and product of the Wilson Schools, Don has been a fruit-grower for over 45 years. He and his wife, Wanda, are members of Exley U.M. Church, and have two children, Donald K. Burrows, and Julie B. Smith--also four grandchildren.

His agricultural career involved serving on many boards--several as President, and he also owns and operates the Burrows Welding Shop adjacent to his home. It hasn't been all work and no play, however, as he still found time to work with Cub Pack 21; operate his own Ham Radio, and enjoy hunting and fishing.

Many things have been accomplished by the Historical Society since Don has been President, and we mention a few because we believe people like to know what's going on at the museum.

Five acres of land was donated by the late Dr. George Badger of Lockport, also a vital strip of land adjacent to the Depot was donated by Donald and Mary Ann Basil of Wilson. Four thousand feet of tile was installed in the 5 acre plot for drainage, and the land was then seeded.

A new roof was put on the Fittro Shop, and the outside painted; a new overhead door was installed in the Argue Car Building, also a drop ceiling so heat could be brought into the place. A new gas furnace has also been added.

A new tile floor was laid in the Barnum Building kitchen along with a cooler and stove acquired from the South Wilson Fire Company. A new overhead door was also installed and the inside walls painted by Darrell and Sally Smith. With exception of the Depot, all other buildings were painted including the Barnum Building, Dr. John Argue Car Building; and Fittro Barn.

A new cement pad was installed in the new Shelter, and the entire structure was stained by Micky Hunter.

Memorial trees have been planted each year on the museum grounds, and in 1997 a tree was planted by the local 4-H Club in honor of the late Winnie Fischer.

A trend to encourage youth participation at the museum facility was enhanced by the relocation of the Randall Road Schoolhouse on the museum grounds. The school has been furnished and renovated under the guidance of Wanda Burrows, Chrm., so it looks like it was in the late 1800's. Other activities such as Easter Egg Hunts and Halloween Party have been promoted to attract youngsters to the museum.

One of the biggest achievements under the Burrows Administration was the erection of a 50 X 80 foot pole barn with floor which provides much needed storage space for historical society acquisitions and equipment. One of the most impressive sights in the storage barn is a large Tanker Truck donated to the museum by the Wilson Volunteer Fire Co. #1.

Although Don has turned the leadership of the society over to Gary Fitch, we suspect he will continue to be heavily involved in museum activities--it just isn't his nature to quit.

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NEW PRESIDENT TAKES OVER:

Gary Fitch, newly elected President of the Wilson Historical Society, assumed office on Jan. 1, 1998. He served as 1st Vice-President during the past 4 years and, prior to that, was a member of the Board of Trustees. He and his wife, Patricia, have been members since 1974.

Gary is a native of Wilson, the son of Dudley and Elsie Burrows Fitch, and a product of the Wilson Central School. He graduated with the Class of 1954, and in his marriage to Patricia McKernan, they had four children, 2 boys and 2 girls.

Gary is descended from Enoch Fitch, Sr., who, in 1829, purchased 100 acres of land on what is now known as the Fitch Road, town of Wilson.

Decendants of Enoch Fitch have raised apples in Niagara County for nearly 170 years. and Gary currently operates the Ontario Cold Storage plant in Wilson.

Other newly elected officers who will be working with Gary are Darrell Smith, 1st Vice-Pres., Gordon Strablow, 2nd Vice-Pres., Richard Schmidle, Secretary, Wanda Burrows, Cor. Sec., and Judy King, Treasurer.

Three new trustees elected to Dec. 31, 2000 are: Bruce Muck, Pam Groff, and Lois Barnum.

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QUIPS:

Teachers found out a long time ago what advertisers have learned since...saying it once is not enough.

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NEW LIFE MEMBERS:

Wilbur R. Reese, son of Walter and Edna Smith Reese, was born on the Randall Road, Wilson. on Sept. 20. 1918. He attended the Randall Rd. Schoolhouse. Dist.#8. where he completed eight grades in 6½ years. He graduated from Wilson High School as Salutatorion of the Class of '34. and received a B.S. in education at Buffalo State Teacher's College in 1938. He also attended Ohio State University as a special graduate student in Psychology.

He had 3 children by his marriage to Hope Elizabeth King; William J. Reese, Sandra Reese Hoyer. and Lois Reese Wordermeyer. They attended the Free Methodist, Methodist, Baptist, and Episcopal churches, but never joined any.

He is a member of the American Psychological Society, National Vocational Guidance Assoc., Board of Managers of the Virginia Congress of PTA; the Williamsburg-James City Community Action Board; and is listed in "Who's Who in the South and Southwest."

During World War II he was a Naval Pilot and attained the rank of Lt. Commander. After the war , at Columbus, OH, he was the commanding officer of Flight Squadron, VF 67E. From 1950 to 1964 he was Commanding Officer of a Naval Reserve Composite Co. at Williamsburg, VA. He received a certificate of retirement in 1978.

Mr. Reese has done research on 117 families, and one of interest to Wilson, was on Henry Maham, Jr., who gave the land on which the Randall Road Schoolhouse formerly stood. Maham's house was near the cabin of Asa Randall after whom the Randall Road was named.

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Lester S. Clark and Betty Anne Clark of Hayward, CA, have been made Honorary Life Members of the Wilson Hist. Soc.

Lester is a native of Wilson, the son of Merle and Ethel Ward Clark of Wilson, and was born March 7, 1926. He graduated from Wilson Central School in 1944, and from the University of California at Berkley in 1954.

After serving in the Airforce during World War II, he became an investor and Sales Representative for several National Corporations--as well as for himself. His outside activities include membership in the Presbyterian Church and "Spirit of '13' Club". Lester's family comes first, but he gets much satisfaction from his relationship with people--especially volunteers.

Betty Anne Clark was born in Denver,CO, June 5, 1928, the daughter of James and Natalie Flegel Marcos. She attended Lincoln Elementary School at Lodi, CA; also Needham Junior High and Lodi High School. She also attended the Healds Business College at Sacramento,CA; and Sacramento Junior College.

Both Betty and Lester are affiliated with the Centerville Presbyterian Church at Fremont,CA; and Betty is interested in church groups and book clubs.

Betty and Lester have five children: James Stillman Clark; Carol Clark Romero; Kathleen Clark Patel; Leslie Clark Lilly; and Jeffrey John Clark.

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SENIOR BREAKFAST:

On Dec. 16, 1997, nearly 200 Wilson area senior citizens attended the annual breakfast put on for them by students of the Wilson Central School. A delicious breakfast was served along with excellent entertainment provided by students from Thomas Marks and Stevenson Elementary Schools, also the Middle School and High School of Wilson.

The well coordinated program was hosted by Mrs. Palacios of the Wilson Teachers Association, and welcoming remarks were made by Daniel Connor, Supt., Michael Wendt, Principal of the Middle School, and Mr . Johnson, Principal of the High School.

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STUDENT ACHIEVER:

Kyle Andrews, son of Shelly and Larry Andrews of Wilson, attended the National Youth Leadership Forum on Law and the Constitution which was held recently in Washington, DC. There Kyle had the opportunity to meet with lawyers of several prestigious law firms where he learned first hand about careers in both the legal profession and government.

He was able to explore and tour the Capitol, and other highlights of his experience included meeting and speaking with Trent Lott, Majority Leader of the Senate, and legal analyst Victoria Toesing, a frequent guest on CNN's "Crossfire".

Kyle's grandmother, Lois Barnum, made it possible for him to attend the Forum by helping to sponsor his trip to Washington. Kyle, a top student in Wilson Central School, has also been a great help at the historical society's annual Memorial Day Fairs.

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SPECIAL REQUEST:

Judy King, Treas., would like to remind everyone that her Postoffice address is in Newfane--not Wilson. All correspondence to her should be addressed to: 2898 Beebe Road, Newfane 14108.

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CABOOSE PROJECT:

The siding on the the north side of the caboose is badly in need of replacement. Darrell Smith hopes to tackle the job when weather permits next Spring. He is interested in lining up two or three men who are handy with a saw or hammer who might be willing to help him. He can be reached at 751-0102. Our caboose is extinct and well worth preserving--can you help?

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QUILT NOTES:

Tickets for the quilt-drawing are enclosed with this Newsletter, making it possible for one of our members to own one of the nicest quilts ever offered by the Wilson Hist. Soc. What makes this year's quilt so special is the fact that many of your friends had a hand in sewing and quilting it. For this we thank, Norma Ward, Shirley Evans, Emily McAvoy, Barb Mosher, Winnie Terry, Marge Williams, Lois Barnum, and Betty Stimson.

Please return your quilt stubs directly to Betty Stimson, Box 162, Wilson, NY 14172.

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BON MOT:

A rumor is as hard to unspread as butter.

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RECENT ACQUISITIONS:

Janet Sporleder of Wilson: Movie Camera
Ed Allgeier: Well Pump; Log-roller; Horse drawn mowing machine.
Henry Scarupa, Ransomville: 1 Plane; 1 Auger; 2 Levels; 1 Saw; NYS License tag, 1938.
Karen Raccuia, East Amherst: Book biography on the Life of Veronica Connor.
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EAGLE SCOUT:

Congratulations to Christopher Schultz, Chestnut Rd., who successfully completed all requirements necessary to earn the rank of Eagle Scout. Chris, a member of troop 67, was recognized at a special Eagle Court of Honor conducted by the Niagara District Iroquois Trail Council at North Ridge U.M. Church, Jan. 10, 1998.

Chris completed his Community Service requirements by leading a group of Scouts in renovating and refinishing about 20 desks for the old Randall Rd. Schoolhouse. Among his other talents, Chris was Valedictorian of the Class of '97; maintained a 98.17% average in academics; was President of the Senior Class; participated in Band and Student Council; played Varsity Baseball, Tennis, and Football; and is listed in Who's Who among American School Students.

Chris is the son of Calvin "Dick" and Sue Schultz, Charter members of the Wilson Hist. Soc.
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MEMBERSHIP NEWS:

Please welcome the following new members: Tim Cramb of Wilson; Chris Demmin of Yorkshire, NY; Larry Demmin of Kings Mt., NC; Michele Singer Ross of Vienna, VA; Judith Gerlach of Wilson;

New Life Members are Joyce Richards of Wilson, and Lester and Betty Ann Clark of Hayward, CA.

Honorary Members: Joan Kerrison of Rochester, NY; Myron Webster of Lockport, NY; Don Croop of Wilson, NY; and Vincent Loomis of Ocala, FL.

Generous Building Fund Donations were received from Lester and Betty Clark; Tom and Helen Rodgers; Michele Singer Ross; Winona Hamblin; Gail and Tom Jeacock; Richard and Janice Zipp; Robert and Ann Botzer; Myron and Ruth Webster; John and Barbara Gale Cowan; Mary Margaret Welker Young; Kathy and Adrian Frederichs; Alfred and Martha Stockwell Harvey; Eva Zortman; and Althea and Robert Eastman. A special Bldg Fund Donation was given by Gary Pettit who designated that it be used toward painting the Depot.
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TOWN OFFICIALS SWORN IN:

Seating capacity at Town Hall was "Standing Room Only", Jan. 1, 1998, when Marilyn Allgeier, first lady to ever be elected supervisor in the town of Wilson was sworn in at 4PM.

Opening remarks were given by John Group, Chrm., Republican Comm., and Rev. Edward Irwin of Exley U.M. Church delivered the Invocation. Hon. Amy J. Fricano, Niag. Co. Court Judge, administered the oaths of office to the following officials, (accompanied by family members.):

Marilyn Allgeier, Supervisor; Brad L. Clark, Sr., Councilman; Bruce G. Muck, Councilman; Wanda E. Burrows, Town Clerk; George R. Berger, Town Justice; and Kathleen Dixon, Tax Collector.

A reception was held in the Conference Room immediately after hosted by Jan Sporleder and Barbara Mosher.
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AROUND THE MUSEUM:

Sincere thanks to Dan King, Dayl Phillips, and Dan and Chris Phillips for digging out the trenches and laying lines to the schoolhouse for phone and power. Also to Robert Rohring who roto-rooted sewer line with 100' of Cable. No obstructions found.

The pretty Christmas tree trimming and lighting was done this year by Kevin, Leah, Judy, and Savannah King. Thanks for bringing some Christmas cheer to the museum.

Sally Smith, Chrm., reports that 100 more copies have been ordered of the "Valiant Men of Battery M" and the "Cobblestone Trail". Both booklets were sold out.

Martie and Cathy Stephenson have been given permission to have a Memorial tree planted on the museum grounds for their grandfather.

The schoolhouse comm. has placed an old pump and platform near the front of the old school. The pump was donated by Marilyn and Edward Allgeier.

Dorothy Maxfield reported that Kara Holden has started to make up some new identification cards for the museum. This will be a great improvement when the new computerized cards are up.

The new Life Membership Plaque already has six names on it.
* * * * *

MYERS ROOM:

A new plaque has been attached to the door of the ticket office designating it as the "John and Eleanor Myers Room". The late President and Eleanor were both charter members of the Society and contributed many hours of time and labor to improve Museum facilities.

The Myers Room contains a Memorial Case featuring rare radio equipment from the collection of the late president, also many other radio and wireless artifacts acquired by the museum.
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FEBRUARY CALENDAR:

Feb. 11th: Board of Director Meeting; Patterson Room; 7:30 PM.

Feb. 23rd, Regular Monthly Meeting; Patterson Room; 7:30 PM

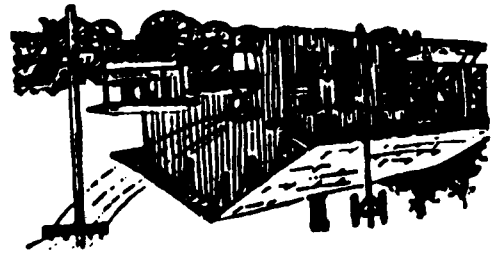
The museum will be closed on Sunday to visitors until April 5th.
* * * * *

FEBRUARY MEETING:

Program for Feb. 23rd meeting should be in Lockport Journal. Carole Schnoor is our new publicity chairman. Lorraine Brady, Chrm., will arrange for refreshments following meeting.
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SOUNDINGS:

Quantity is what you can count. Quality is what you can count on.
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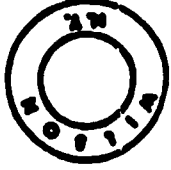
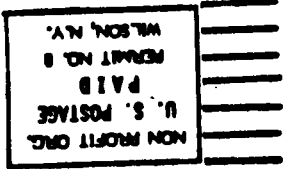


(Coleman Printing)
MARCH 1998 VOL. 26 NO. 3

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

NEWSLETTER

WILSON, NEW YORK 14172-9763
Buffalo Historical Society



March 1998

FROM SWAMP TO "FLOWER CITY":

One might say that Wilson is sandwiched between the two largest, sprawling, cities in WNY, Buffalo and Rochester. Since most of us have a pretty fair idea of Buffalo's early history, we thought it might be interesting to do some research on how Rochester got its start.

We were surprised to learn that Rochester began its development in 1790, 20 years before Wilson was settled, when Samuel Latta acquired considerable acreage and started a warehouse at the mouth of the Genesee River.

At the time, what is now Rochester was only a "mud hole" or dismal swamp, however, in 1800, Col. Nathaniel Rochester came from Maryland to look over the place that would later bear his name.

The harbor at Charlotte was made a Port of Entry in 1805, and things began to look up a few years later when a community picnic was held at the corner of what is now Main & St. Paul Streets.

An early settler, Edwin Scranton once wrote: "In the daytime you could hear and see the deer in the swamps, while at night there was the mournful sound of hooting owls, barking foxes, or Howling wolves."

Derick Sibley was an auctioneer in 1812 when the little community was called Rochesterville, and when the first census was taken in 1815 there was only a population of 331 persons.

In 1813, Rochester's Main Street consisted of a cabin or two with the beautiful Genesee River winding through hundreds of great trees with thick underbrush crowding its banks. A lone wooden bridge crossed the river near the falls, and Front Street used to be a high water Creek with an island separating it from the main channel.

James Carter was the first Blacksmith and probably the busiest man in town in those "Covered Wagon Days". That was about the same time that Gideon Cob cut the timber and removed the stumps to make a 3 rod road where State Street is today.

The first marriage was on Oct. 8, 1815, when Miss Delia Scranton became the bride of the town's first tailor, Jehiel Barnard. Then in 1816, things really began to happen in the village. A Band was organized; the first weekly newspaper, the Rochester Gazette, was published; and the following year a 26 member volunteer fire company was organized.

The first County Court was held in 1821 in the attic of the famous Ensworth Tavern, and from 1824 to 1834, Rochester became embroiled in a stormy movement initiated by Josiah Bissell, Jr., A. Riley, and A. Champion, who considered it wicked to run stages and boats or deliver mail on Sundays. An ordinance was passed to fine any tugboat Captain \$200 for sounding a bugle on the Sabbath, and anyone having a nine pin bowling alley could be fined \$5 a day.

The 19th century village also boasted a Vigilance Committee of six men, each armed with a pistol and knife, who kept law and order with a firm hand. Loafing around the town pump at the "Four Corners" was also unlawful, and householders who did not sweep their sidewalks every Saturday paid a \$1.00 fine.

The first canal aqueduct over the Genesee River was completed in 1823 and cost \$83,000. In 1824 the Rochester Female Society erected the first Free School on Washington Street on a lot donated by William Fitzhugh. It was also near that site that the first tomatoes were grown as a vegetable.

In 1827, the first Court House was built on the south side of Main Street at the four corners, and the building was made from stone quarried on the site. It was erected on a lot donated by Col. Rochester, Col. Fitzhugh, and Major Carrol.

In 1823 the Reynolds Arcade was put up and said to be the largest most expensive building in the United States, east of Albany. In it was the first Postoffice and the first Justice Court, and here the first physician practised and the first lawyer espoused the principles of the legal profession.

Another landmark in the 1800's was the Eagle Tavern which stood where the Powers Hotel was later built at the four corners. The Eagle Tavern was a leading hostelry and haven for weary travelers for 40 years before it was torn down in 1868.

The Carthage Railroad of 1833 was the forerunner of the street car. It was 2 miles long, and the "horse railroad" started at the east end of the old aqueduct at Water Street.

Jonathan Child was Rochester's first Mayor and he took his oath of office at the first meeting of the Common Council held on June 10, 1834. Mayor Child was a schoolteacher who taught at Utica, then settled in Charlotte where he became a merchant and postmaster. He was married to Col. Rochester's daughter.

These are a few of the things that happened as Rochester grew out of a muddy swamp to become one of America's great industrial and cultural cities.

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MILES OF PROGRAMS:

Being Program Chairman and arranging for historical society entertainment is no easy task and may, perhaps, be one of the most difficult positions held by anyone. That is why our "Hat is off" to Miles Linnabery who is beginning his 4th year as Program Chrm.

Looking back over the past 3 years, we can't remember anytime when Miles's invited guests didn't present interesting, unusual, or historic programs--always of interest to someone if not everyone. Now, with new Publicity Chrm. Carole Schnoor taking over, it can be expected that the membership, as well as the public, will be better informed of up-coming programs so you can plan to attend them on the 4th Monday night of the month.

At the meeting on March 23rd, Mr. Mark Jones of Eden, NY, will not only "Toot on his Tuba", but will also talk about and show examples of Brass Bands in WNY from 1812 to the Civil War era. Mr. Jones, who is well-versed on the subject, is Pres. of the Buffalo Musician's Association.

At the April 27th meeting, Dave Dickerson of Newfane will talk on the very interesting subject, "Prisoners at Fort Niagara during World War II."

Then, guess what?, the May 25th meeting is cancelled because it falls on the day of our Great Memorial Day Fair. In view of this, it was decided to give Miles a vacation so he'll have more energy to expend on the Fair.

On June 22nd, the society will gather at the Barnum Building for its annual dinner and committee reports. As of this Newsletter, the program, which is usually coordinated with the dinner, has not yet been determined.

And of course, as in the past, there will be no program meetings during July and August.

Before leaving the subject of program chairmen, we wish to state that our society has had a number of good ones starting with our first program chairman, Betty Stimson. Following Betty were John Rodgers; Lois Barnum; Norman MacAskill; Dorothy Linnabery; Barbara Mosher; Janet Naslund; and currently, Miles Linnabery.

Dorothy Linnabery served the longest with nine memorable years; and Barbara Mosher was next with six great years.

* * * * *

NEW LIFE MEMBER:

Joyce Salisbury Richards, the daughter of Emmet W. and Beatrice Lockwood Salisbury, was born February 12, 1931, Wilson, NY.

She graduated from Wilson Central School in 1947; SUNY at Genesee; University of Buffalo; and Niagara University.

She had five children by her marriage to Robert F. Richards, (deceased) William, Stephen, Daniel, Sharon, and Roxanne

Joyce is a member of the Episcopal Church, and joined the Wilson Historical Society in 1993. She upgraded her membership to the Life Membership Class in December, 1997.

* * * * *

EARLY HARBOR IMPROVEMENT:

In the year 1846, Luther Wilson obtained permission from the Secretary of War to build two piers out into Lake Ontario, 200 feet apart at the mouth of 12 Mile Creek. From then until 1867 he continued to improve the harbor by extending the piers and dredging out the channel--all at his own expense.

The dredging was done by horsepower, the horses being driven on a board around in a circle--system also used at the time to provide power for old-fashioned horse threshing.

In 1867 the "Wilson Harbor Co." was formed and a contract drawn up between Luther and the Company to the effect that if certain requirements were met, part of the harbor and adjoining lands would be turned over to the Company in exchange for stock. Conditions, however, were never met, and the Company went bankrupt--with ownership of all lands remaining as before.

Since then several appropriations have been made by Congress which allowed the piers to be re-built, piers extended, and channel deepened by use of steam dredges.

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NEW MEMBERS:

Please welcome Mr. and Mrs. Burdell Ward of Hickory, NC, who were given memberships in the society courtesy of Lester Clark of Haywood, California.

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NOTICE ALL MEMBERS:

A big "thank you" to all members who renewed their dues through 1998--your continued support provides the ammunition needed to keep your historical society in business. We also wish to remind you that the society operates under a wide variety of committee chairmen--some elected, and some appointed by the Board of Directors.

In view of this you may become as involved in the society as you wish to be. All committee chairmen have been listed in the Newsletter, and all would be happy to have you join one of their working groups. There are a lot of talented people on the membership roll, but of course we have no way of knowing if you'd care to share those talents with the society unless you tell us.

Remember, the Memorial Day Fair is on May 25th. If you have never given any time to your society before, the fair is a good place to get started.

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FAIR UPDATE:

The fair committee has met three times at the home of Lois Barnum where plans have been discussed for this year's fair on May 25th. Use of the new acreage is uncertain at this time, however, if weather conditions are suitable it may be possible to allow some vendors and exhibits to be set-up on the newly seeded grounds this Spring. Another committee meeting is scheduled for March 12th when plans for the fair will be further discussed and finalized.

The society is fortunate to have such an active group of members overseeing fair activities: Attending the February 12th meeting were: Lois Barnum; Nettie Stimson; Beth Waldron; Sally Smith; Gary Fitch; Darrell Smith; and Ron Zauner.

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SOUNDINGS: What ever you want to do, do it---there are only so many tomorrows.

SCHOOLHOUSE BENEFIT:

Everyone is invited to attend a "Schoolhouse Benefit" which is scheduled to be held at the Wilson House Inn on Saturday, March 14th. A cash bar at 11:30 AM will be followed by a luncheon at 12:00 Noon.

Tickets for the benefit will be available at the Town Hall (751-6704), or you may call Mrs. Janet Sporleder (751-9924.) A \$12.00 donation per person will be charged for tickets.

A Chinese Auction of "Theme" Baskets will be featured, also a short program presented by Mrs. Karen Racciua, Principal of the Thomas Marks School, and Dana Figura with some children from Thomas Marks.

A special attraction in the program will be the showing of the "Schoolhouse Video" which documents the entire schoolhouse project from the time it was moved from the Randall Road to its present location on the Wilson Museum grounds. Featured in the video is an excellent presentation by Miss Helen Stevens, former teacher.

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DISTRICT #4 ROSTER OF 1882:

An interesting acquisition was received recently from Durwood Bendt of Wilson showing the Roster of the East Wilson District #4 Schoolhouse in 1882. Charles A. Clement is listed as the teacher, and Peter Bush was trustee. Perhaps some of our members might be able to identify a grandparent or g-grandparent among the following list of students:

Hanford, Emma, Cora, Jaems, and Matilday Bush; Vickie and Kittie Briggs; Tena, Mary, John, Willie, and Hattie Bobzein; Burt, Josie, and Charles Beebe; Minnie and Hermann Brandt; Charles, Flora, Mary, and Annie Capen; Rubie, May, and Hattie Gaylord; Reka, Gusta, Willie, August, Kittie, and Otto La,pe; Frank and Adda Loomis; Burt Laffler; Curtis Loomis; Willie and Sammy McClellan; Charles, Willie, Mary, and Annie Nugent; Martha, Lizzie, and Bonnie Nesseltrher; Myrtie Robbins; Grant Roberts; Eddie, Bird, Walter, and James Stockwell; Mary and Frank Smoyer; Warren Tumber; and Nenjamin, Ellen, Frank, and Walter Wilson.

The District #4 Schoolhouse was located on Beebe Road, and was built by Curtis Pettit of Wilson in 1834.

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WILSON MUSEUM SUSTAINED BY FAIRS:

In past years the annual Memorial Day Fair has been the main source of income for the Wilson Historical Society. Successful fairs have provided the funds necessary to maintain the grounds, make repairs, pay utilities, and other operating expenses.

The first annual fair was held in May, 1973, and it is interesting to note how much the fair has grown since that year.

For instance, rental space for vendors totaled \$260; the food concession took in \$98.01; Candy, \$110.32; Cheese, \$79.51; Hist. Soc. "Flea Market Table", \$399.26; Hot Dogs, \$147.17; Coffee and Donuts, \$25.25; Novelties and ceramics, \$399.95; Balloons, \$45.42; Fish Pond, \$8.03; and Memberships, \$105.00. Total income realized from the 1st fair was \$1793.68. Fortunately, as the museum has expanded, so has the Fair.

* * * * *

BOARD ACTION & REPORTS:

A "thank you" to Elton Kropp and Miles Linnabery for getting and installing new ceiling light bulbs in the Croop Room.

Treasurer, Judy King, requested that her books be audited by the society. Motion was made and approved to grant the request, and Bruce Muck and Don Burrows were appointed to do the audit.

A motion was made by Miles Linnabery, seconded by Pam Groff, and unanimously approved to appoint the following area chairmen for 1998:

Dorothy Maxfield, Cuator; Art Schnoor, Planning Board; Dan King, Finance; Lois Barnum, Barnum Building; Wally Goodman/Bill Rose, Dr. Argue Car Building; Ed Allgeier, Fittro Shop; Darrell Smith, Caboose; Elton Kropp, Grounds; Micky Hunter, Breezeway and Shelter; Eleanor Myers, Nominations; Gary Fitch, Construction; Dan King, Storage Barn; Wanda Burrows, Schoolhouse; and Norm MacAskill, Federation Representative.

Members appointed to the 1998 Fair Committee were: Lois Barnum, Chrm., Nettie Stimson, Darrell Smith, Ronald Zauner, and Beth Waldron.

Bill Rose was appointed trustee to Dec. 31, 1999, to fill out the unexpired term of Anne Faery who moved to Mesa, Arizona.

Miles Linnabery was appointed trustee to Dec. 31, 1999, to fill out the unexpired term of Darrell Smith, who was elected in December to the office of 1st Vice-President.

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COL. PORTER'S "BLOODY 8TH":

Benedict Maryniak of Lancaster, NY, presented a program on the Civil War at the regular meeting in January, and his interesting talk covered the exploits of soldiers who served under Col. Peter A Porter, Commander of the 8th New York Heavy Artillery.

At Cold Harbor, the "Bloody 8th", also known as "Porter's Life Insurance Company", lost Col. Porter and 630 other officers and men during two days of furious fighting. Over 50 men from Wilson served in the "hard luck" regiment which was originally mustered in at the Niagara County Fairgrounds at Lockport, NY, August 22, 1862.

After the meeting, Lorraine Brady, Refreshment Chairman, and Sara Berry served refreshments.

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CALENDAR DATES TO REMEMBER:

March 11, 1998: Board of Director Meeting, Patterson Room, 7:30 PM.

March 14, 1998: Schoolhouse Benefit; Wilson House Inn, Luncheon 12 Noon; Chinese Auction.

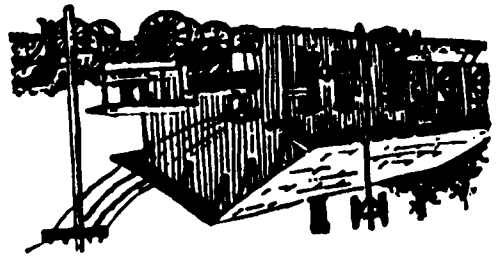
March 23, 1998: Regular Monthly Meeting, Patterson Room, 7:30 PM; Mark Jones of Eden, NY.

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BON MOT:

NO Floods; NO Tornadoes; NO Earthquakes; NO Place Like Wilson.

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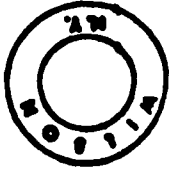
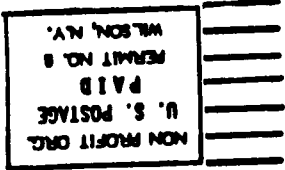


April 1998 Vol. 26 No. 4
(Coleman Printing)

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

NEWSLETTER

Wilson Historical Society
Wilson, New York 14172-9763



April 1998

FIRES PLAGUED EARLY WILSON:

In 1890, the Metzger & Son Hardware store was located in the Masonic Block. Metzger was a former hardware clerk in Lockport, and his store in Wilson was considered to be one of the best in Niagara County.

On August 19, 1890, a fire started in his store and some local residents had just managed to put out the flames when a powder keg exploded engulfing the store in flames again. A brisk wind fanned the flames to the Masonic Building which was completely destroyed including the offices of the Wilson "Star". Also consumed by flames were the Charles Markle Dry Good Store and a Notions store operated by Frank Clark.

The most serious loss in the Masonic Block fire was the office of surveyor Dox who had accumulated a forty year collection of surveying instruments, maps, and charts. The Dox Barn behind the Masonic Building was also lost.

Bucket brigades were able to contain the fire from spreading further east along Young Street, but perhaps the severe fire may have been the cause for getting people to think about the need for a fire company in the village.

Nine years later, in 1899, another bad fire broke out in the Justus W. Hackett Grocery and Meat store on Young Street, and a news item in the Wilson "Star" described it as follows:

"About 2:00 AM on March 17, 1899, a fire broke out in Hackett's grocery store, but by the time the alarm was given by Dr. J.O. Moore, the fire had gained such headway it was impossible to do anything but carry out the contents from adjoining buildings.

"Furnishings were removed from the newsroom of Thomas Moore, and the new residence of Henry C. Honeywell, editor of the Wilson "Star". Goods were also removed to Charles Grout's store across the street, but nothing was saved from the Hackett's store.

"The furniture store of A.H. Reed, across from Hackett's, was badly scorched and the window panes broken out, but because of Mr. Reed's efforts, not only his store but other nearby buildings were saved."

A couple years later, the 3rd and most damaging fire in Wilson's history occurred on June 9, 1901, when most of the block on the north side of Young Street was consumed by flames. Strangely enough, Wilson still had no fire company. The matter of organizing one had been brought up twice after the Masonic Block fire, but residents voted it down both times.

The 1901 fire started at 11:30 PM in the Burgess Boot and Shoe store, and was discovered by Freeman Emerson who, though the hour was late, was shaving a man in his barber shop. Bucket Brigades responded quickly but were no match for the flames which first consumed the Johnson Building with its grocery store and Postoffice. Also destroyed were the 2nd floor meeting rooms of the "Order of Foresters" and "Womens Relief Corps, Peter Porter Post, GAR."

Emerson's Barber Shop was the next to go followed by Vosburg's Storage and Julius Weaver's Bicycle Shop. Also destroyed in order were the Warren Bush Drygoods store, and the 2nd floor meeting rooms of the "Modern Woodmen" and "Sons of the Veterans Lodge."

The only store spared at the east end of Young Street was Miles Vosburg's General Store, located where Shefflers is today) and the second floor storerooms of Cuddeback & Cooper.

The Southerland Hotel on the corner was saved through the efforts of the many men who turned out to fight the fire, and even the Methodist parsonage and adjoining barn were saved when they caught fire from flying sparks.

At the west end of Young Street the Harness Shop of E.F. Barton was destroyed, also Thompsons 2nd floor shoe-maker shop. The J.W. Hackett & Sons grocery store, which had been reopened after the disastrous fire of 1899, was again destroyed as were the George Perigo Hardware store and the Frank Slocum Barbershop. At the corner of Young and Katherine streets the home of Charles Haner and 2nd floor apartment of Frank Slocum were saved.

Merchants immediately went to work cleaning up and erecting new buildings, but every carpenter, stone mason, and mechanic were in great demand during the next two or three years.

Twenty-three yrs. later, a Vol. Fire Co. was finally organized in Wilson.

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TOP ACHIEVERS:

Mellissa Huehl was selected "Super Kid" of the month at the Middle School in Huron, SD. Her twin brother, Chad, was also selected as an outstanding reader. Shad and Mellissa are the children of Donna Huehl, daughter of the late Howard Croop. (Do you have a special achiever in your family? If you do, please let us know.)

* * * * *

SOUNDINGS: When someone else blows your horn, the sound travels twice as far.

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FAIR ACTIVITIES OUTLINED:

The Wilson Hist. Soc. Memorial Day Fair will be held at the museum grounds on route 425 Monday, May 25th, from 9 to 5 PM, and we urge everyone to plan to celebrate the day in Wilson.

Lois Barnum, fair chrm., reports that things are shaping up well and expects that most area chairmen will be serving again this year. The main attraction will again be the "flea market" which promises to be bigger and better, and Nettie Stimson, Chrm., works very hard to make the event a big success. Not only does she make up and mail out hundreds of contracts to vendors, but spends most of the night before the fair checking in dealers and assigning them spaces.

The antique cars have generated a lot of interest ever since the late Dr. Argue exhibited them at the first annual fair. Wally Goodman and Bill Rose now see to it that cars are ready for display, while dozens of antique cars from private owners are always on the grounds.

The quilt drawing, which gets underway several months before the fair, is handled by Betty Stimson in co-operation with the Ways & Means Comm., and this year's "Sunbonnet Sue Over the Year" is truly one of a kind. Betty suggests that everyone who received tickets in the Newsletter should try to return them soon to her at P.O.Box 162, Wilson, NY 14172.

The newly renovated Schoolhouse will also be a big attraction and will bring back nostalgic memories to those who attended a one room school. Wanda Burrows is to be congratulated for keeping the project "alive" and getting the necessary improvements made.

The fair committee trys to plan a fair pleasing to everyone, and food specialties will again feature a Chiavetta Chicken Bar-B-Que which always comes off like clockwork under the expert supervision of Shirley Hunter and Shirley Linnenbank. Other food concessions will include Sally Smith's "Dutch Country Funnel Cakes"; Althea Montgomery's "Beef on Weck"; Pam Groff's "Homemade Pies" complimented by Sara Berry's Coffe and Pepsi stand.

Dale and Debbie Schlyer's "Hot Dogs" and "Pepsi" stand will be near the caboose; Judy Zauner will be dispensing "Coffee & Donuts" from early morning on; and Dick and Sue Schultz will be bagging up popcorn and serving Pepsi & Lemonade; and Melinda Hutchison will be whipping up those fluffy "Cotton Candy Cones."

We will try to tell you more in the May Newsletter about Entertainment, Displays, bussing, and other announcements.

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BOARD ACTION & REPORTS:

Lois Barnum reported that the main concern of the Fair Comm. is the sound system and the Womens' Restrooms. Don Burrows reported that he and Ora Pettit are working on the sound system. Art Schnoor, Chrm., Planning Comm., recommends the installation of an electric dryer in restrooms to eliminate toilets being plugged with paper towels; also a surge tank so toilets can be flushed more quickly. Both items are being looked into by Board.

Don Burrows made motion to appoint Elton Kropp chrm. of a tree committee to determine use and placement of Memorial trees. Motion approved; Darrell Smith will serve on committee.

Illegal parking on east side of Lake Street has become a problem, especially on Fair Day when Busses, Fire Trucks, and Ambulance have difficulty getting through. A meeting with village officials was held and the problem will probably be corrected.

Don Croop announced that Sketchbook II is being put together, and said that Beth Waldron, Charles Horton, Sara Berry, Jim Waldron, and Becky Baker Hill will be helping.

Gary Fitch, Pres. announced that tile drains are working well on museum grounds, and new seeding appears to have weathered the winter. He suggested that new racking or stacking boxes should be used in storage barn to better organize and make use of space. He also suggested that the caboose should be targeted as the next major project. Repairing floor, cupola, and replacing siding on north side of car should be considered.

Board members attending the Feb. meeting were: Darrell SMith, Gordon Strablow, Elton Kropp, Don Croop, Marilyn Allgeier, Miles Linnabery, Eleanor Myers, Pam Groff, Lois Barnum, Bruce Muck, Celeste Crawford, Wanda Burrows, Don Burrows, Bill Rose, Art Schnoor, Sally Smith, Wally Goodman.

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IN MEMORIAM:

Robert G. Thomas, 80, of Wilson died March 3, 1998, at Niagara Falls Medical Center. He was born in Akron, OH, the son of Francis and Mary (Green) Thomas. He married Ruth Doyle of Pittsburg in 1945, and they moved to Wilson where Bob worked as a custodian for the Wilson Central School District. He was a World War II Navy Veteran and served aboard a Destroyer Escort.

He was a member of Exley United Methodist Church; the Newfane and Wilson Senior Citizens; American Legion; and Senior Bowling Club at Townline Bowl.

He is survived by his wife, Ruth, and 3 sons, Rev. Robert Thomas of Belmont, Australia; Richard Thomas of Macedon, NY; and Russel Thomas of Arlington, Va; also a brother, James Thomas of Nampa, Idaho; and 5 grandchildren.

Services were held at the Rutland-Corwin Funeral Home in Newfane with Rev. Ed Erwin and Rev. Don Foley officiating. Burial was in Greenwood Cemetery, Wilson.

* * * * *

Gertrude Schnoor, 84, of Wilson died March 9, 1998, at home after a long illness. She was born in Lockport, the daughter of Fred and Grace Carlton Clark. She was a member of the Exley United Methodist Church, the Wilson Rebekahs and Order of the Eastern Star; and Charter Life Member of the Wilson Hist. Soc.

She is survived by her husband, Arthur; a daughter, Carole of Wilson; and a son, Gerald, of Rochester, NY. Also a brother, Chester (Marion) Clark of Lockport; 4 grandchildren and 5 great grandchildren.

A Memorial Service was held at Exley United Methodist Church with Rev. Edwin Irwin and Rev. Donald Foley officiating. Burial was in the North Ridge Cemetery at Cambria.

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PIES NEEDED FOR FAIR:

Homemade pies are a "hot item" at the Memorial Day Fair, but whether the supply meets the demand depends on you--our faithful members who bake them. Pam Groff, Chrm., suggests that the best time to bring your pies is to the Barnum Bldg., Sun. afternoon, May 24th.

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NEW LIFE MEMBERS:

Joseph John Geiser was born Feb. 23, 1918, in Germania, Pa., and he attended school at West Branch in Potter County. He married Marguerite Richmond in Niagara Falls, Ont., and they had three children, stepson Arthur Turcotte of Minneapolis, MN., Douglas Geiser of Niagara Falls, and Raymond Geiser of Ellenboro, NC.

Joe was inducted into the service during World War II, and served over 3 years in the South Pacific in the Medical Corps. He was shipped to Australia, then New Guinea, and finally to the Philippines where he served to the end of the war. On his return home he spent a month in Japan, then received his honorable discharge at Fort Knox, Va.

He was happy to spend two months in Germania before returning to his job at International Paper, Niagara Falls. In 1951, he left International to work for Hooker from where he retired with a disability after 24 years.

Joe enjoys bowling with the Senior Citizens at Townline Bowl; is a member of Our Lady of the Rosary R.C. Church in Wilson; Wilson Chapter of the American Legion; Disabled American Veterans; and Exempt member of Wilson Volunteer Fire Co. #1.

* * * * *

Marguerite Geiser, daughter of Basrold and Margaret (Kenny) Richmond, was born in Niagara Falls, Ontario, on Oct. 17, 1920. She attended school in Canada and moved to the United States in 1941, and became a citizen of the U.S.

In 1942, she married Pvt. Arthur Turcotte and a son, Arthur P, J. Turcotte was born. Pvt. Turcotte died overseas during the war, and Marguerite married Joseph Geiser on Feb. 19, 1949. They had two sons, Douglas and Raymond Geiser.

Marguerite is a member of the Ladies Auxiliary, Wilson Vol. Fire Co. #1; the Friends of the Wilson Free Library; and both she and Joe are now Life Members of the Wilson Hist. Soc.

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MUSEUM ATTENDANTS FOR APRIL:

April 5th: Elton & June Kropp, Gordon & Virginia Strablow, (Open Museum-Elton Kropp); April 12th: Easter Sunday (Museum Closed); April 19th: Beverly Woolson, Kathleen & David Stewart, (Open museum-Lois Barnum); April 26th: Norma Ward, Beth & Jim Waldron, (Open Museum-Carole Schnoor; May 3rd: Wallace and Christine Goodman, Barbara Mosher, (Open-Wally Goodman)

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APRIL CALENDAR:

April 8th: Board of Director Meeting at Museum, 7:30 PM.
April 11th: Easter Egg Hunt at Museum, 11:00AM- Sponsored by Optimist Club.
April 12th: Easter Sunday--Happy Easter.
April 27th: Regular Meeting: Guest, Dave Dickerson of Newfane-"Prisoners at Fort Niagara".

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EARLY HISTORY RECALLED:

Bill Rose gave an interesting talk at the Feb. meeting about the area where his home stands on Wilcox Street. He also displayed early village maps and a collection of old bones, tools, iron handles, and pulleys dug up around his place. He believes ironware may have been used in old fruit dryer that burned down around the turn of the century.

After the meeting, cookies, coffee, and tea were served by Lorraine Brady, Wanda Burrows, and Daniel Brady.

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MEMBERSHIP NOTES:

The following names should be added to your membership roll: James and Mary Muscoreil; (751-9213); Mary Frances Miller, (751-6505); Gary Gath, (751-9482); Lynn and Helen Sherrie. (751-6383); Mary Reese, (751-6599); Robert L. Brooks; James and Ellen Ellis; and Kristen Wilson, of Pittsford, NY.

Welcome our newest "livewire" junior member, Katelyn Smith of Lockport. Katelyn is a familiar figure around the museum--usually helping grandpa or grandma Burrows.

A generous donation to the building fund was received recently from Charles Seaman of Florida, and the society thanks Mr. Seaman for his interest and support.

Two of our more active members, Elton Kropp and Gordon Strablow, put in several days cleaning up brush and unsightly junk that's been accumulating along the east line. Their work has greatly improved the looks of the area east of the schoolhouse.

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HONORARY MEMBERS:

Harold Donner of Ithaca, NY, and George Lederhouse of Ransomville, were recently given Honorary Memberships in the Wilson Hist. Soc. Harold joined the society in 1980, and George became a member in 1983.

Any member who reaches the age of 85, (when payment of dues is no longer required) may take advantage of this by notifying membership chairman, Sandy Holden (751-6596).

We now have 33 Honorary members: Harry Brown, Mabel Burrows, Fenton Cole, Vernon Croop, Don Croop, Harold Donner, Doris Fraser, Cora Gushee, Chris Kelman, Joan Jerrison, Dorothy Kirkland, George Lederhouse, Howard Lederhouse, Dorothy Linnabery, Vincent Loomis, Marie Luff, Sally Pelton, Ada Nickerson, Bob Motchenbaugh, Harry Porter, Florence Porter, Emma Schrader, Elwood Schultz, Grace Singer, Lydia Southard, Rex Stacy, Marion Tabor, Lena Tate, Dorothy Taylor, Dora Wakeman, Jeanette Warner, Myron Webster, and Jane Wilson.

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JOIN THE CLUB:

If you can't remember what day it is...if you pretend you can hear when you can't...if you get mad when your family tells you to take it easy--and madder if they don't...if you can remember clearly things that happened 50 years ago, but can't remember what you had for dinner---then join the Club--you're getting old.

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BON MOT: Many ambitions are nipped in the Budget.

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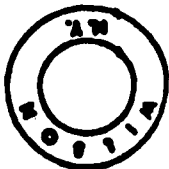
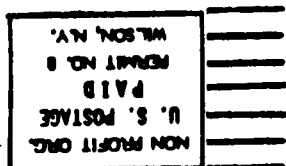


May 1998 Vol. 27 No. 5
(Coleman Printing)

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

NEWSLETTER

WILSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY
WILSON, NEW YORK 14172-9763



May 1998

HORTON'S HARDWARE STORE:

Horton's Hardware on Young Street may possibly have been the most complete, old fashioned hardware store to ever operate in Wilson. The business was started ca. 1917 by Alfred Ernest Horton, and a couple of his early employees were Jim Wilcox and Lou Schrader.

Anyone familiar with the old Horton facility may recall that up to about 1940 there were two similar buildings appearing on the site--with a narrow walkway separating them.

There were two gasoline pumps in front of the store, and a kerosene pump was located near the corner of the east store. When one entered the front door, there was a long showcase along the right wall containing knives, clocks, and pocket watches, and beyond that cans of paint were stacked.

On the wall opposite the knives and clocks were cabinets containing tools, bolts, screws, and other miscellaneous hardware. On the wall across from the paint cans were racks with sheets of glass, and behind the glass rack a door opened into a business office.

In the center of the room was a 6½ foot pot-belly stove, and extending across the room behind it was a counter with bins of nails beneath it. The area behind the counter to the back of the store was used as a tin shop.

A stairway led to the 2nd floor where garden tools and lawnmowers were stored in the wintertime, and snow shovels and sleds in the summertime. The central area of the 2nd floor contained piles of furnace grates, while the back section was used for plumbing supplies.

A driveway along the east side of the store extended from Young Street back and around the building with an exit into Mechanic Street. Also at the rear outside of the store was a pipe rack in which all sizes of galvanized pipe were kept. Across the driveway from the pipe rack were rolls of barbed wire and woven fencing.

Behind the store was a garage where a Model-T Stake Truck was kept and principally used to transport heavy equipment and hardware to and from the Wilson Depot.

A nearby shed contained drums of turpentine, boiled linseed oil, raw linseed oil, and denatured alcohol. Customers were able to bring all types of bottles, cans or jugs to be filled--a practise that probably wouldn't be allowed today.

When Ernest Horton opened his hardware shop in the east building, the west one was used to store furnaces, oil stoves, gasoline stoves, bathroom fixtures, cook stoves, and room heaters. Later, Harvey Duxbury acquired use of this building, and started up a meat and grocery store in it. The business was discontinued when the east building was torn down and Robert Horton, son of Ernest, moved the hardware business into the west building.

Ernest Horton was a good businessman and also active in Civic affairs. When the Wilson Volunteer Fire Co. #1 was organized on September 17, 1923, he was elected to serve as the first President. Some of the early meetings were held in several locations including Horton's and it was said that the Company had so little money the men used orange crates for seats when they held meetings.

Ernest Horton married Marion Stephenson, and they had two sons, Robert and Charles. Robert followed in the footsteps of his father and took over the operation of the store in the 1940's. When the village of Wilson celebrated its 100th Anniversary in 1958, Robert Horton was Mayor.

Robert and Helen Horton had two sons, Charles and Thomas. After Thomas graduated from college, he took over the Hardware business ca. 1980. He decided, however, to give it up in 1997 but still maintains a shop in the back of the building from where he conducts a home repair business. He is also known to be very talented as a piano teacher.

Tom's wife, Cheryl, takes charge of the front area of the store, and rents out space to dealers in Craft Work.

Note: We are grateful to Charles Horton of Largo, Florida, and Helen Horton of Wilson for supplying information used in this article.

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THUMBNAIL SKETCH:

William R. Holmes was born in Wilson Oct. 22, 1840, the son of Betsey Frost and Richard Holmes. William was a veteran of the Civil War, and married Jennie Pettit of Somerset, NY. She died in Wilson on August 5, 1877.

In 1881 he married Elizabeth Tenbrook of Pendleton, NY, and they had two sons, Merle and LeRoy. Except for his years in the army, William lived his entire life in Wilson. During that time he served as Justice of the Peace, and also Town Supervisor in 1891. He died on May 11, 1941/.

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DID YOU KNOW that Adelbert Mudge was the last surviving Civil War veteran in Wilson ?

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BOARD ACTION AND REPORTS:

Minutes of the April 8, 1998 Board of Director meeting: Sally Smith, Acting Secretary. Judy King, Treas., reported that total bills paid for month were \$977.29. The Society's income tax was prepared by Robin Slate, and the audit report being done by Bruce Muck and Don Burrows was delayed because Judy was sick.

Gary Fitch, Pres., reported that 5 bids were submitted to mow the same area of the museum grounds as last year. Bids ranged from \$100 to \$325 per cutting. Motion made by Wanda Burrows, seconded by Dorothy Maxfield, to accept \$150 bid put in by Lee Smith. Motion passed.

Wanda Burrows reported that \$1200.00 profit was made on schoolhouse auction dinner held at the Wilson House Restaurant. Stones for schoolhouse foundation were brought from Randall Rd. and piled near schoolhouse. She also showed a blueprint drawing done by Colleen Gaskill of "Active Landscaping and Decor" which shows landscaping plan for schoolhouse. Motion made by Darrell Smith, seconded by Lois Barnum, to continue landscaping and other necessary work as funds for the schoolhouse become available. Motion approved.

Elton Kropp reported that 2 blue spruce were removed to permit easier passage to new property. Truck loads of fill are being put around storage barn, courtesy of N.Y.S. D.O.T. ditching program. Gary Fitch noted that the row of blue spruce trees are infested by the spruce gall, and said that insecticide Seven should be sprayed on them this spring and fall. Wanda Burrows made motion, seconded by Dorothy Maxfield, that trees should be sprayed.

Miles Linnabery announced that Janet Sporleder will be "head chef" for the annual dinner on June 22nd. A program will be put on by the Victorian Dancers--committee reports given.

Don Burrows reported that 25 or 30 shingles had blown off of the storage barn. Gary Fitch said he would contact Pete Rohring of Parco Building Systems to have them replaced.

Lois Barnum reported that it would be too expensive to install an electric hand-dryer in ladies rest room, and that outside washing facilities will be provided for the Fair.

Gary Fitch presented a Fitch Family Genealogy to Celeste Crawford, Chrm., to be included with other family genealogies in the Library.

Seventeen officers and trustees attended the April meeting: Art Schnoor, Lois Barnum, Gordon Strablow, Sally Smith, Bruce Muck, Don Croop, Gary Fitch, Eleanor Myers, Darrell Smith, Dorothy Maxfield, Celeste Crawford, Don Burrows, Wanda Burrows, Judy King, Marilyn Allgeier, Elton Kropp, and Miles Linnabery.

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FINAL FAIR REPORT:

Lois Barnum, Fair Comm. Chrmn., reports that everything appears to be falling into place for the Memorial Day Fair on May 25th, and the last meeting of the fair comm. will be at the Wilson Museum on May 14th. She hopes that all fair chairmen will try to attend.

Nettie Stimson has lined up some fine entertainment for this year's event, and one of the highlights will be Dave Ruck's "Hill Brother Singers" who plan to serenade visitors while strolling around the fair grounds. The popular Niagara Experience Players will also be present and one group will perform the "Disney Dazzle" and another group will present Cole Porter melodies. Last but not least will be Jim Waldron at the piano, and his spirited performance will be put on in the vicinity of the Chicken Bar-B-Que. The exciting kite-flying demonstrations by the Great Lakes Flying Society will also return again this year.

WLVL Radio of Lockport will be broadcasting from the grounds from early morning until noon, and helping with our local fair announcements will be "Good Neighbor Dave Marmon."

John Demmin, commander, and members of Wilson's Martin F. Jennings American Legion Post 836, will honor our Veterans ca. Noon near the museum's Veteran's Monument and Flagpole. The Legion has conducted services at the museum for several years following their traditional Services at Greenwood Cemetery. It is fitting that they come to the museum and remind everyone that Memorial Day is observed each year to remember all Veterans who fought to preserve our Country as a Free Nation. The Wilson School Band will play after the ceremony.

A special school exhibit will be prepared in the Depot by Eleanor Myers, town historian, featuring all copies of the "Wilson Crest.", and visitors will also be able to see regular exhibits in the Car Barn, Fittro Shop, Schoolhouse, and Caboose.

Admission to the grounds is free, and a free shuttle bus service will transport persons to and from the museum from parking lots in the village. Visitors should also be aware that no parking will be allowed on the east side of Rt. 425 between the museum and Tabor Bridge.

It is expected that over 300 Vendors will be set-up in the Flea Market area, and there'll also be a Petting Zoo, Pony Rides, and free balloons for the youngsters. All things considered, Wilson might be a great place to spend Memorial Day on May 25th.

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MAY CALENDAR:

- May 13th: Board of Director meeting at museum, 7:30 PM.
- May 14th: Fair Comm. meeting at museum, 7:00 PM. All fair chairmen should attend.
- May 25th: MEMORIAL DAY FAIR: 9-5PM. No regular monthly meeting in May.

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BITS & PIECES:

Congratulations to birthday gal, Emma Schrader, who will celebrate her 96th birthday on May 26, 1998.....Daniel Brady was a great help when Darrell Smith and Don Burrows hooked up the gas and phone lines in the schoolhouse.....Julie Godfrey has joined lady's quilting group who already have made a quilt for the 1999 Memorial Day Fair.....Everyone is concerned that Okies Drugstore and Rainbow Connection are going out of business in Wilson.

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EASTER BUNNY VISITED MUSEUM:

A very successful Easter Egg hunt was held at the museum on April 11, 1998, and ca. 300 youngsters and parents attended the well-organized event which was co-ordinated by Jill Philips of the Home & Garden Supplies. Ollie Clark, Darrell Smith & Bill Rose opened up the museum.

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SOUNDINGS: Experience is what causes people to make new mistakes instead of old ones.

EARLY DAYS OF BASEBALL:

Probably very few people around Wilson ever heard of Richard Mayes, an old-time semi-pro ball player at Brookville, Pa., and we wouldn't have either if it wasn't for Sara Berry, who just happens to be his granddaughter.

Sara has a number of mementos of her grandfather including a picture taken of him standing between Lou Gehrig and Babe Ruth. In that picture, the three of them are examining a couple of old baseballs that were used in 1875 and 1902.

Dick Mayes was an active ball player from 1876 until 1922, and in 1890 he tried out as a first baseman with the Pittsburg Club of the National League. Unfortunately he broke his wrist which spoiled his chances for a Major League career.

Some of his team mates, however, did make the Majors including Rube Waddell and Schreck of the Philadelphia Athletics; Haldrich, Padden, and Wallace of the St. Louis Browns; Richey of the Pittsburg Pirates; Rhines of Cincinnati; and the famous outfielder, Slagle, of Chicago who, in 1890, played side by side with Mayes at Brookfield, Pa.

The National League was organized in 1876 and, at that time, the rules of the game were similar to the rules of "Diamond Ball", a favorite soft ball past time at Pittsburg. The pitcher delivered the ball, for instance, 45 feet from home plate, and it took nine called balls to walk a batter to first base.

An unpadding catcher's glove had only been in use for a year, and the catcher's mask was still an innovation. The bat could be no longer than 42 inches, and the catcher had to stand far back of home plate, and could not move forward until two strikes had been called on the batter. The ball was known as "Dead Red" and had an inner cover and an outside cover painted red. It took a mighty hefty batter to send the ball out of the park.

Mayes recalled that Connie Mack disliked drinking and swearing, and one time when Mayes was in Philadelphia to look up old friends and team mates, he found Rube Waddell in a saloon drinking with a friend. Connie Mack suddenly walked in and Waddell quickly shifted his drink with his friend's lemonade---at the same time inviting Connie to have a glass of lemonade with him.

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MEMBER IN THE NEWS:

Bonnie Muck, a Wilson teacher and certified reading instructor, is the new part time corrective reading instructor at the St. Peter Lutheran parochial school at North Ridge. She will work with small groups of children, (who need extra help) to help them supplement their reading skills so they can perform successfully at their grade levels.

The program is possible under a 1997 Supreme Court Ruling that allows co-operation between private and public schools when it can accomplish something good for the children.

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MARCH PROGRAM:

If you missed the March 23rd meeting of the society, you missed a good one. Mark Jones of Eden, NY, not only gave a good talk about early brass bands in America, but also displayed several rare pre-Civil War brass horns and some slides.

Wanda Burrows was in charge of refreshments, and she was helped by Lorraine Brady and Joshua Fischer.

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GOLDEN WEDDING:

Congratulations are in order for Tom and Helen Rodgers of Wilson who celebrated their 50th Wedding Anniversary with an Open House at the North Ridge United Methodist Church from Seven to nine PM. April 16, 1998.

The friendly gathering of relatives and friends was hosted by members of their family.

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PRICELESS QUILT:

The Sunbonnet Sue Calendar Quilt which has been on display at the Wilson Town Hall and the Rainbow Connection, is, without question, one of the most beautiful quilts ever made by the Wilson Historical Society. The workmanship and detail shown in each square of the calendar year is extraordinary and, as one lady was heard to remark, "It's much too beautiful to get rid of---it should have been preserved in the museum."

But that wasn't the intent of the remarkable group of ladies who devoted many hours of their time and sewing skills to piece together the priceless creation.

The ladies who made the quilt were: Lois Barnum, Mary Clark, Shirley Evans, Emily McAvoy, Barbara Mosher, Anne Rohring, Winnie Terry, Norma Ward, and Margery Williams. The actual quilting was done by Betty Stimson---and all their names are sewn on back of the quilt.

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NEW MEMBERS:

Please welcome Cheryl Fulton and Dennis Sears who recently joined the Wilson Hist. Soc., and also made a contribution to the Building Fund. Also, through the courtesy of Darrell and Sally Smith; Susan Sobiegray and junior, Scott Sobiegray, 8; of Niagara Falls, NY; Joan and Sam Hoover of Niagara Falls; and Derek Masters, 12, New Road, Ransomville, NY.

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MUSEUM GREETERS:

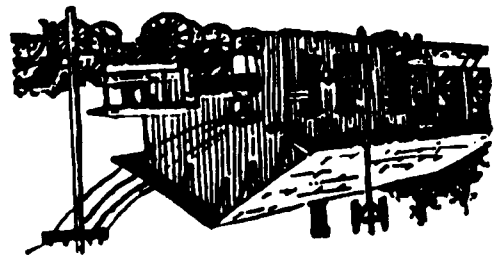
May 3rd: Wally & Chris Goodman, Barb Mosher, (open-Wally); May 10th: Don Croop and Helen Stevens, (open-Don); May 17th: Jack & Winifred Terry, Marlene Schotz, (open-Ollie Clark; May 24th: Joe & Julia Dulkiewicz, Joyce Richard, (open-Fair Comm.); May 31st: Ron, Judy, & Jonathon Zauner, (open-Dorothy Maxfield); June 7th: Jeanne Swanson, Dale & Debra Schlyer, (open-Bill Rose). Our members make it possible to open the museum to the public. Thank you.

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DID YOU KNOW....that thigh high boots were originally worn by pirates and smugglers who tucked stolen items or other valuables in them---a practise that spawned the term "Bootlegging?"

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QUIPS: TV will never replace the Newspaper. You can't swat a fly with a TV.



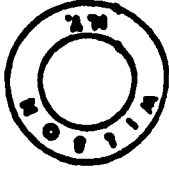
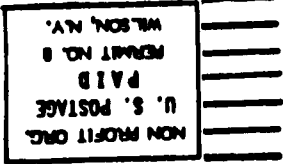
June 1998 Vol. 27 No. 6
(Coleman Printing)

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

NEWSLETTER

Wilson Historical Society
Wilson, New York 14172-9766

June 1998



TALE OF TWO "IRON FIREMEN":

Most residents of the Wilson Community know how the "Iron Fireman" was made and eventually placed in front of the Wilson Fire Hall in the early 1940's. But for those who don't, we'll reiterate that the "Iron Fireman" was made in 1886, and George Singer of Lockport, a member of Lockport's Active Volunteer Hose Company, was the man selected to be the model.

George dressed up in his parade uniform and allowed himself to be completely covered with "Red Creek Clay", and when the clay hardened the mold was cracked open allowing him to be released.

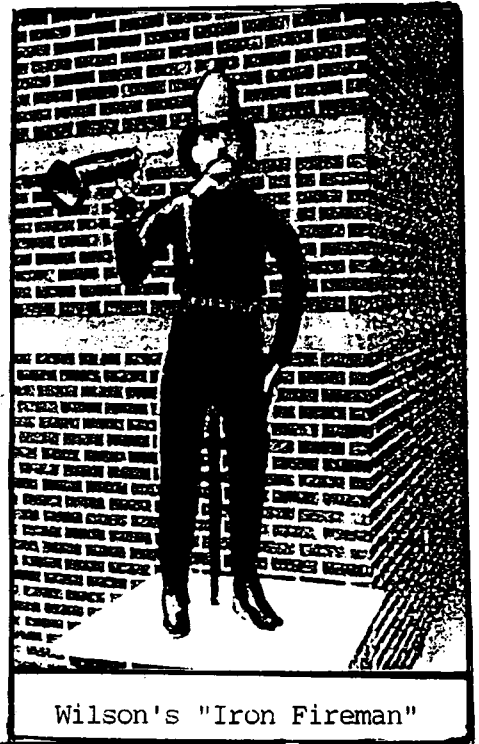
Molten iron was then poured into the Plaster Paris mold, and separate impressions were made of his face, head, and helmet. These were later welded to the iron statue.

When completed, the statue weighed 960 pounds, and it was immediately hoisted to the top of the old Hose House on Walnut Street where it remained for 27 years.

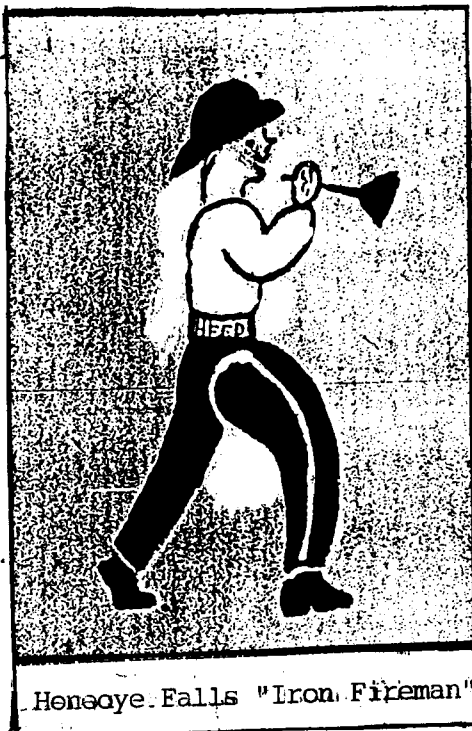
In 1913, the statue was moved to the Exempt Hall on Elm Street where it remained until the early 1940's. It was about that time that George Singer decided the statue was being neglected so he and his two sons, (who were members of the Wilson Volunteer Fire Company) helped him remove the statue from Elm Street and take it to Wilson where it was placed before the firehall on Young Street.

Everything went smoothly until 1963 when, in the dead of the night, "George" disappeared. The next morning a phone call alerted Wilson Firemen that their "Iron Fireman" was standing in front of the Ransomville Firehall at Ransomville, NY.

"George" was quickly returned to Wilson, but it was always a mystery how any one was able to remove the statue from Wilson without someone noticing, because it took six men and a tow truck to bring the statue back to its rightful place in front of the Fire Hall.



Wilson's "Iron Fireman"



Honeoye Falls "Iron Fireman"

We recently learned from Anne Bullock, village historian at Honeoye Falls, NY, that Wilson and Honeoye Falls have something in common--both villages have rare "Iron Firemen" displayed by their Fire Companies.

The Honeoye Falls "Iron Man" was originally made in Canada, and belonged to the St. Catherines Fire Department. It was a one-dimensional figure and first made to be carried in Volunteer Fire Company competitive exercises or parades.

The "Iron Man" at Honeoye Falls had several "capturings" during its long existence, and several fire companies had it for awhile including companies at Rochester, Albion, and Avon, NY.

It was reported to be a cold night in October, 1891, when several men removed the statue from Avon, and brought it to Honeoye Falls.

Upon its arrival, the statue was turned over to Mike Tucker, a local gunsmith, who rebuilt and repainted the "Iron Fireman", then mounted it on the highest steeple on the village hall, which, at that time, also housed the Honeoye Falls Volunteer Fire Company and equipment.

And there it remains to this day, although Anne Bullock admits that it is still eyed longingly by other fire departments in the area.

Both the Wilson and Honeoye Falls "Iron Firemen" are an inspiration and a symbol to the many brave men and women who volunteer their services in their companies and willingly risk their lives to protect the people and property, in their respective communities, from the devastation of fire.

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QUIPS: Nowadays, a dollar saved is a quarter earned.

OKIE'S DRUGSTORE CLOSED:

There appears to be a sense of sadness in the community over the closing of Okie's Pharmacy in Wilson. The history of pharmacies in the village goes back to 1880 when M.C. Betts had an apothecary store in Wilson, so it is hard to imagine the place without one.

In 1887, Oscar McChesney operated a combination Jewelry, Stationary, and Drugstore here, but later sold all his medicines and drugs to Norman Keck.

The Salisbury and Jones drugstore was the next to open on Young Street, and later became known as Bigalow and Salisbury's. In the meantime, George Middleton opened a drugstore in the Masonic Building in 1905, but in 1908 he and Roland Singer purchased the store owned by Bigalow and Salisbury. Clarence Johnson bought out Singer's share of the business, and the drugstore then operated as Johnson and Middleton's.

George Middleton was in the drug business until 1936 when he sold out to his son in law, Charles Haner. A while later, Haner died, but his wife Edna Haner continued the store.

In 1943, John Bieda, publisher of the Wilson "Star", bought the drugstore and reopened it as the Wilson Pharmacy. At the same time, Edna Haner moved the Middleton Drugstore across the street and, for a year, Wilson had two drugstores on Young Street.

In 1944, Bieda sold the Wilson Pharmacy back to Edna Haner, and she moved the Middleton Drugstore back to its original location. She continued to operate it until 1951 when she sold out to Gordon Mac Pherson. He ran the place until 1968 when he sold it to William Okoniewski.

"Okie" kept the drugstore in operation for thirty years until April, 1998, when he sold the business, but not the store, to Rite-Aid of Ransomville.

Jerry Dean, Mayor of Wilson, concerned for the Senior Citizens who will be inconvenienced by the sale, was reportedly making every effort to get another drug company to move to Wilson. Hopefully, he will be successful.

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MEETINGS:

Dave Dickerson of Newfane gave an interesting slide presentation on the "Prisoners at Fort Niagara during World War II", and explained how many of them were used to help Niagara County fruit-growers harvest their crops. Wanda Burrows was in charge of refreshments and was helped by Sally Smith, Virginia Strablow, and June Kropp.

On June 22nd, the Annual Dinner will be held in the Barnum Building at 6:00PM. The Victorian Dancers will entertain, and Jan Sporleder will be in charge of the dinner.

The June meeting of the Board of Directors will be held on Wednesday, June 10th, at museum.

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MUSEUM GREETERS:

Virginia Strablow, Hostess Chrm., in spite of a short stay in the hospital, has managed to prepare a list of hostesses for June--we thank everyone for their cooperation:

June 7th, Jeanne Swanson, Debra and Dale Schlyer, (Open, Bill Rose); June 14th, Ruth Weaver, Rena Israel, Richard & Jan Zipp, (Open-Elton Kropp); June 21st, Lucille Upton, Frances Dietz, and Ruth Lampman, (Open-Lucille); June 28th, Sue and Dick Schultz, Alice Thomas, (Open, Gordon Strablow); July 5th, Don and Wanda Burrows, Gary Pettit, (Open, Don).

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STUDENT ACHIEVER:

Andrew Muck, a 1995 graduate of Wilson Central School, has been named to the Dean's list at Colgate University where he is majoring in Molecular Biology. Andrew is the son of Bruce and Bonnie Muck of Wilson.

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4-H CLUB PLANTS ARBOR DAY TREE:

Members of Shirley Harper's "Tri Town Clan" 4-H Club planted an Amelancer Ornamental tree on the museum grounds, Saturday, May 2nd, for Arbor Day.

Don Burrows gave the youngsters a hand and instructed them in the proper way to plant a tree. He pointed out that not only must the dirt be packed firmly around the roots, but they also should be very careful not to nick the tree bark with their shovels since this could allow the tree to die. Elton Kropp helped Don place the rather large tree in place and the children did a good job planting it. Don then showed them how to prune the tree to promote growth.

Greatly interested, and helping when possible, were the granddaughters of Don Burrows, Katelyn Smith, and Elton Kropp, Meghan and Kelly Marotta of Lockport. Also participating were Sue Managano and friends, Gillian, Tiffaney, and Linda and Louanne Staselanage. Also attending was Nancy Schaal Simmons, who was recently appointed to the Wilson Town Board.

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WANT TO BE AN ACTIVE MEMBER?:

Here are some areas where you could help out: Grounds; Schoolhouse; Buildings; Library; Collections; Exhibits; Hospitality; Memorial Day Fair. All it takes is a phone call to either Gary Fitch, Pres., (778-8854 or 751-9331) or Dorothy Maxfield, Curator (751-6311). They will be glad to answer any questions you might have.

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NEW MEMBERS:

It is a real pleasure to welcome Wilson native, Joyce Fitch Penningroth of Englewood, FL, who recently joined the Wilson Hist. Soc. Joyce, a 1951 graduate of Wilson Central School, also gave a very generous donation to the Building Fund. We also welcome Mr. and Mrs. Timothy L. Conte, Sr. of Rochester, NY. The Contes have been vendors at our Memorial Day Fair.

The following names may also be added to your membership roll: Mary Reese of Wilson, NY (751-6599); and Kristen Wilson of Pittsford, NY.

We also welcome Lowell H. Fitch of Torrington, Wyoming, and Carol (Cramer) Jones of Falls Church, Virginia, courtesy of her sister, Dorothy Parker of Wilson. Carol is a 1961 graduate of Wilson Central School, and joined the society in 1994.

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BON MOT: The way some people find fault, you'd think there was an award.

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BOARD ACTION & REPORTS:

Wanda Burrows made a motion seconded by Ollie Clark to give Judy King, treas., permission to pay all bills related to the Memorial Day Fair, also to use her own discretion in paying other urgent monthly bills.. Motion passed. Judy reported that her books for 1997 have been audited.

Gary Fitch, Pres., reported that since non-profit organizations are eligible for grants, if any member of our society is capable of preparing one, he'd like to hear from them. He also thanked Elton Kropp and Gordon Strablow for the excellent job they did cleaning up and seeding the grounds along the east line.

Elton Kropp reported that two tees have been planted, and that Gary Fitch arranged to have the spruce trees sprayed and the new lawn area fertilized.

Don Burrows reported that the flagpole for the schoolhouse has been erected, and the public address system repaired by him and Ora Pettit.

Pam Groff suggested that the car committee should consider entering some of the society's classic cars in the "Cruise Nights" held in the village on Friday nights.

Celeste Crawford suggested that a new answering machine should be purchased for the museum, and Bill Rose was authorized to look into the matter and buy one if required. It was also agreed that the handicap ramp by the depot needs repair and a new carpet installed. Gary said he would take care of the matter.

Attending the May Board meeting were: Gary Fitch, Judy King, Elton Kropp, Celeste Crawford, Bill Rose, Wanda Burrows, Ollie Clark, Don Croop, Dorothy Maxfield, Pam Groff, Eleanor Myers, Gordon Strablow, Don Burrows, Lois Barnum, and Richard Schmidle, Recording Secretary.

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MEMBERS HONORED:

Micky and Shirley Hunter were honored recently at the 5th Annual Batavia District Laity Banquet. They joined Exley U.M. Church in 1960, and both have figured prominently in the church.

Congratulations to Helen and Ralph Dinse who celebrated their 60th Wedding Anniversary on May 18, 1998.

Emma Schrader, 96, was feted at the Wilson House Restaurant on May 26th, with a Dutch treat birthday luncheon. Wilson's "Cookie Lady" is especially active at her age.

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SCHOOLHOUSE FINISHING TOUCHES:

Wanda Burrows, Chrm., has announced that final work is being done on the old schoolhouse and, when completed, the school will be one of the "neatest" attractions in Niagara County.

Ed Hastings has replaced the original rock foundation; Urban Insulation of Williamsville have completely insulated the buiding; Ken Wendt of Sanborn has provided the Propane Hookup for the old Pot-Belly Stove; the Handicap Ramp is being provided by the Wilson Lions Club, Mike Moyer, Chrm.; and the new schoolhouse flagpole was donated by Dave Clark.

Members of Boy Scout Troop 67's "Flaming Arrow" Patrol, along with Miles Linnabery, peeled the bark from the pole and waterproofed it.

Landscaping was done by Artistic Landscape and Decor of Middleport, NY; and the sidewalk excavation work, as well as erection of the flagpole was done by Dayle, Don, and Chris Phillips.

Much of the labor has been donated, but all other expense has been paid for from schoolhouse funds which were earned in on-going projects--with great support from the community.

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BITS & PIECES:

Brion Lonsbery, g-grandson of Millie Lonsbery, made the Honor Role at Thomas Marks School last month....Paul Harold of Chatham, Va., suggests that "Adopt-a-Car" members, or others, consider trying "Blu Coral Polish" on musuem cars. He claims it's the best polish he's ever used and, containg teflon, provides a long-lasting permanent finish....Have you noticed how great the schoolhouse looks after Ed Hastings replaced the foundation?,,,,,On may 10, 1998, a Crimson King Maple.was planted on the museum grounds in memory of Lawrence Rance. Members of the Stevenson, Steblein, and Rance families held a short Memorial Service by the tree after it was planted.....If you noticed Howard and Leona Hunter had big smiles on their face recently, it was because their daughter, Kim, has made them proud grandparents.

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RECENT AQUISITIONS:

Julia Dulkiewicz, South Wilson, has donated a number of books including Boy Scout Handbooks, also two First Aid Kits.

Gary Fitch: Genealogy of the Fitch Family.
David Moody, Remsen, NY: 1904 High School Diploma from Wilson High School received by his father, Chester Alfred Moody.

Don Croop: Two dresses from estate of Mildred Croop--1980 vintage.
Rebecca Treharne, Ransomville: Small Loom and Two First Aid Kits.

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DO YOU REMEMBER 1919:

If you are 85 or older, you probably remember when World War I ended, and the U.S. Postoffice issued a 3¢ stamp to commemorate the occasion. That was the year prohibition was voted in as the 18th Amendment to the Constitution, and Pres. Teddy Roosevelt died--but not before arranging the groundwork for the Panama Canal. America's "Sweetheart" was Mary Pickford, and everyone loved the little tramp, Charlie Chaplin. Two popular songs were "I'm forever blowing bubbles", and "How you gonna keep them down on the farm, after they've seen Pa-ree."

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CALENDAR FOR JUNE:

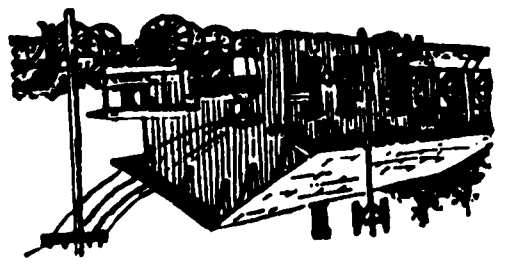
Board of Director Meeting at Museum on June 10th.
Annual Dinner, Barnum Building, 6:00 PM on June 22nd--Jan Sporleder, Chrm.

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SOUNDINGS:

You can preach a better sermon with your life than with your lips.

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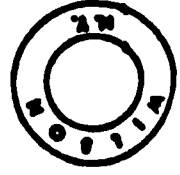
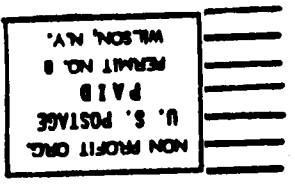


July/August 1998 Vol. 27 No. 7
(Coleman Printing)

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

NEWSLETTER

Wilson Historical Society
Wilson, New York 14172-9763



July / August 1998

THE RARE DONNER WAGON:

Many former residents of Wilson as well as many new friends often stop by to see the Wilson Museum, and one such person to visit recently was Rudy (Larry) Nagode of East Aurora, New York. He was interested in the African artifacts that were donated to the Wilson Museum by the family of the late Professor Henry Donner of Cleveland, Ohio.

Mr. Nagode is now the proud owner of the 1948 Chevrolet wooden Station Wagon used by the Donners when they toured Africa in 1948 to study the stars Prof. Donner had earlier discovered at a South African Observatory in 1927 and 1933. Dr. Donner was formerly a Professor of Astronomy and Geology at Western Reserve University in Cleveland.

A large collection of artifacts gathered up by Prof. Donner and his wife are now stored in the Wilson Museum.

The Station Wagon in which the Donners made their African trip is, in itself, a rare collectors item. The car had, in fact, been especially modified for its 9,500 mile trip from Algiers to Capetown, Africa.

It was equipped with two batteries; dual spotlights to ward off wild animals at campsights; an added hardwood platform to protect the gas tank from damage; extra heavy-duty springs; and a front end winch. In 1948, Africa was still very primitive with rutted, sandy roads and "not always friendly natives."

The station wagon in which they rode was home for the Donners and they slept and ate in it. It contained everything they would possibly need to travel eight months from mid-winter conditions to desert heat.

Henry removed the rear seats and built in a bed high enough to accommodate trunks and suitcases beneath it. Supplies under the bed also included 5 cartons of tinned or concentrated foods; a supply of spare parts; all sorts of tools; 5 gallons of motor oil; and a 2.5 gallon milk can for water.

Between the back of the bed and the tailgate stood eight 5-gallon military cans--four for water, and four for gasoline. Left over luggage was stacked on top of the bed including maps, charts, sextant, short wave radio, medical kit, cameras, firearms, stove, etc.

The front winch was driven by the car's crankshaft and was capable of pulling up to 3 tons. It could be operated from the driver's seat, and a small boat anchor was attached to the end of the 100 foot cable for gripping the ground should they ever get stuck.

In addition, all windows were fitted out with curtains and screens, and the tailgate provided a surface for dining, or even an ironing board.

The Donners figured their load capacity probably averaged out to between 1500 to 2,000 lbs.

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Henry Donner was a native of Wilson where he was born in 1902. He graduated from Wilson High School in 1921, and received his B.S. in Electrical Engineering at Michigan University.

He became very interested in astronomy and from 1927-1933 discovered 1,100 Double Stars while at Michigan's Lamont-Hussey Observatory in South Africa.

Henry married Florence Mudge, also of Wilson, and since they never lost interest in their hometown, joined the Wilson Historical Society and kept in touch with Wilson activities by reading the Wilson Historical Society "Newsletter".

The Donner's African artifacts were left to the Museum in 1989 and Mr. Donner died in 1991, at Willouby, Ohio, however, he was buried in the Cambria North Ridge Cemetery.

Henry Donner was the grandson of Henry Donner who built the Donner Loom in 1895. In 1984, 5 years before he died, Henry Donner and his nephew, Ed Whitcop, delivered the Donner Loom to the Wilson Museum where they were met by Art Schnoor and Don Croop--who later, with help from Winnie Fischer, were able to assemble the loom in the Schnoor Room in good working condition.

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IN MEMORIAM:

Cynthia (Lauer) Wilson, 68, a volunteer with the Wilson Free Library, died at home May 17th, following a long illness. Cynthia was the daughter of the late Frank and Lillian (Stapleton) Lauer, and graduated from Wilson Central School in 1947. She also belonged to the Wilson Historical Society and in 1978 served as Corresponding Secretary.

She is survived by her brother, Frank E. (Jean) Lauer of Gettsville, NY, and an aunt, Marie Getman of Wilson, New York.

Funeral arrangements were made by the Hamilton & Clark Funeral Chapel of Wilson, and burial was in Greenwood Cemetery at Wilson, New York.

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BON MOT: Believe half of what you hear, but make sure it's the right half.

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FAIR HIGHLIGHTS:

Perhaps the greatest highlight of this year's fair was the excellent work done by the Fair Committee and, as we all know, the fair doesn't happen by itself. The society is deeply grateful therefore to these persons who planned it and saw it to a successful conclusion: Lois Barnum, Nettie Stimson, Darrell Smith, Beth Waldron, and Ron Zauner.

"Making the wheel turn", however, depended on some great area chairmen without whom the Fair couldn't have been held: Shirley Hunter and Shirley Linnenbank, Chicken Bar-B-Que; Dale and Debbie Schlyer, Hot Dogs; Sally Smith, Funnel Cakes; Althea Montgomery, Beef-on-Weck; Pam Groff, Home-made Pies; Sara Berry, Pepsi and Coffee; Judy Zauner, Coffee and Donuts; Dick and Sue Schultz, Lemonade and Popcorn; Melinda Hutchins, Cotton Candy.

Wally Goodman and Bill Rose were in charge of the antique cars; Wanda Burrows, the Schoolhouse; Doug and Julie Smith, Balloons; Dick Schmidle, Ways and Means; Sandy and Kara Holden, Memberships; Darrell Smith, Caboose; Eleanor Myers and Dorothy Maxfield, Museum Exhibits; Gary Fitch, Ticket Sales; Judy King, Finances; and Kyle Andrews who serviced the Pepsi Canisters.

Other supportive chairmen who kept things moving included Ray Groff who stayed on top of the garbage disposal problem; also trouble shooters, Don Burrows and Dan King.

The society's "Sunbonnet Sue Over the Year" Quilt was a real crowd pleaser, and donation tickets sold like hot cakes. A drawing for the beautiful spread was held at 4:30 PM, and "Good Neighbor Dave" Marmon of Lockport pulled the winning tickets from the barrel.

John Mikula of Niagara Falls was the lucky winner, while other prizes drawn were as follows: Afghan, Donna Cass of Olcott, NY; Woodcarving, Dianne Quinn of Williamsville, NY; "Wilson Sketchbook", Betty Hausman of Wilson; and Wilson Hist. Soc. Cookbook, Pauline Kurtz of Wilson.

Other featured attractions were a School Exhibit in the Patterson Room; Dozens of beautiful Classic Cars in the lot South of the Museum; and a huge flea market with 300 Vendors.

The Hill Brother Singers were a hit in the Barnum Building during lunch time, and a spectacular Parachute Drop was made by eight members of the Beebe Road Flying Field. Maestro Jim Waldron, or "Honky-Tonk Jim", entertained the Bar-B-Que Crowd, and the ever popular "Niagara Experience Players" put on two great shows.

A short Memorial Service by members of Wilson American Legion Post was observed in front of the old Schoolhouse, followed by the playing of the Star Spangled Banner by the Wilson High Band.

Perhaps the spirit and character of the Wilson Memorial Day Fair was best summed up by a lady who was overheard to say, "I do so enjoy coming to the Wilson Fair each year because it's such a nice family oriented event--a place where one can meet old friends and renew acquaintances, and the people are so friendly here."

All things considered, it was a very good year, and the Wilson Historical Society appreciates all the support and generosity of everyone who was involved with it.

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NEW MEMBERS:

It is a pleasure to welcome Nancy and Elvin Simmons as members of the Wilson Hist. Society as well as their daughter, Kierston. Nancy is our recently appointed town Councilwoman, and Elvin is the Assistant Principal at Williamsville North High School. Junior member, Kierston, is starting Kindergarten at Thomas Marks in September.

We also wish to welcome David and Julie Godfrey of Wilson; Tim Roberts of Orchard Park, NY, (courtesy of Sue Scherer); John P. Munch of Silver Springs, NY, son of Don Munch; Frank and Joanne Buell of Wilson; Tom and Amelia Bach of Wilson; Dave and Lynette Draper of Wilson; Cynthia Melcher of Niagara Falls, NY; Shirley Hollister of Lewiston, NY; Susan Wisniewski of Wilson; and Life Member Floyd A. Green of Wilson, NY

(Please note: Any person whos membership dues have elapsed for one year or more will be recorded as a new member, (when renewing) unless back dues are paid up.)

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BOARD ACTION & REPORTS:

At the June Board meeting, it was decided not to hold an Ice Cream Social this summer. The popular event has been held for the past 10 or twelve years, but in view of a fall-off in attendance, the town board decided not to sponsor a band this year. Instead, the Society will try to participate in the Methodist Church "Flea Market" which will be held Labor Day at the Museum.

Ollie Clark made a motion, seconded by Judy King, to have the museum's security system hooked up in the old schoolhouse. Motion was approved.

Dorothy Maxfield made a motion, seconded by Miles Linnabery, to gratefully accept an offer by Wilson's Garden Club to maintain the floral plantings around the schoolhouse. Celeste Crawford, a member of the Club, will act as the liaison between the Garden Club and the Historical Society. Julie Godfrey of Wilson is President of the Garden Club.

Attending the meeting were: Bruce Muck, Eleanor Myers, Celeste Crawford, Don Croop, Micky Hunter, Miles Linnabery, Ollie Clark, Judy King, Elton Kropp, Dorothy Maxfield, Pam Groff, Gordon Strablow, Lois Barnum, Floyd Clark, Bill Rose, Gary Fitch, Pres., and Dick Schmidle, Secretary.

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Lois Barnum, fair chrm., has announced that she has been unable to locate 2nd prize winner, Dianne Quinn of Williamsville, who was awarded the Woodcarving. Will anyone knowing Dianne or her whereabouts, please notify Lois at 751-6665.

John Mikula of Niagara Falls was the happy winner of this year's quilt. He picked it up at the Barnum home where he was able to meet some of the ladies who made it, Pictures were taken and hopefully may appear in the Niagara Gazette.

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MEETINGS:

July 8th: Board of Director Meeting at museum, 7:30 PM.

Aug. 12th: Board of Director meeting at museum, 7:30 PM.

There will be no monthly program meetings during July and August.

The museum will be open to visitors on Sunday afternoons from 2-4PM during July and August.

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TEENAGERS ARE...people who express a burning desire to be different by dressing exactly alike.

FITTRO FARM ATTRACTION:

When you enter the Wilson Museum grounds, you will notice an attractive, red and white barn with the name "Fittro Shop" lettered on it. This is where many of the museum's farm-related tools and implements are displayed. Ed Allgeier is in charge of the Fittro Shop, which is named after N. Bruce Fittro who started a blacksmith shop there in 1898.

The property was once owned by George Pettit whos daughter, Grace Pettit, married Ernest Moote. Their daughter, Gertrude Moote later married N. Bruce Fittro.

Bruce Fittro had operated a blacksmith shop in Wilsonburg, West Virginia, but was persuaded to come to Wilson and opened up a new shop. He constructed a new forge and chimney, and made his own tools and bellows.

The shop was a very busy place, and as long as horses had to be shod, the clang of ~~hammer~~ anvil could be heard from early morning until supper time. Usually he was hard pressed to keep up with orders so he employed a man to help him.

They were kept busy making iron rims for wagon wheels, and the kettles used by the nearby Fredonia Canning Co., were often brought to Fittro's shop for repairs.

Train crews from the old "Hojack" line used to stop by the shop frequently in order to fill their water jugs from the well that stood near the house.

Those World War I years was also in the era when the game "Croquet" was popular, and a croquet court was set-up west of the house. Some of the old timers who used to compete there were station master, Dick Patterson, Ellsworth Pettit, Charles Carrigan, Ed Bickford, and Burt Gallup.

After the war ended, there was a decline in Smithing because everyone was fascinated with the new automobile industry that was beginning to blossom out.

Fittro was quick to see the need to stock up on gas and oil, and turned his blacksmith shop into a gas station which he operated until his death in 1949.

Bruce Fittro's granddaughter, Virginia Clark Klaiber, is a Life Member of the Wilson Hist. Soc.

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MEMORIAL SERVICE:

Philip Goodrich of New Brighton,MN, has announced that there will be a Memorial Service for his parents, John and Marion (Downes) Goodrich at the Exley United Methodist Church at 4PM, July 7, 1998.

Marion was an active member of Exley and a former Lockport High School teacher. She also did substitute teaching at Newfane and Wilson schools. She died at Lakehurst, Fl., in May, 1993 and was interred in Greenwood Cemetery at Wilson.

John Goodrich operated the Goodrich Farms on Lake Road. He was also a member of Exley; the Wilson Lions Club; Farm Bureau Extension Service; and founder of the Lake Ontario Fruit Growers Association. He was a member of several Wilson Bands, also the Champion Tonawanda Legion Band. John and Marion joined the Wilson Historical Society in 1973.

They had one son, Philip (Helen) Goodrich of New Brighton,MN; and two daughters, Jean (Allen) Patchin of Friedly,MN, and Barbara Philips of Flagstaff, Az.

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BITS AND PIECES:

It's hard to keep up with some of our volunteers, and many times projects are completed before we know who did them. One big job before fair day was done by Andy Sporleder who used his John Deere and Roto-Tiller to break up and level off the large pile of fill that had been dumped behind the schoolhouse.....Many thanks to Gordon Strablow for repairing the handicap ramp by the depot, and to Micky Hunter for cementing and stapling new carpeting on it.....And perhaps you noticed the new plantings around the museum sign--they were donated and planted by Beutel Nursery of South Wilson.....If you used the washstand south of the Barnum Bldg. on Fair Day, you might be interested to know that it was designed and built by Don Burrows.....some of our members spent long hours before and after the fair "setting up", "picking up" and "cleaning up". You need but look at all the materials stored in the Storage barn to know what they accomplished.

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MUSEUM ATTENDANTS:

Virginia Strablow, Chrm., has announced the Sunday afternoon museum attendants for July and August as follows: Please mark the dates you volunteered for on your calendar.

July 5th: Don and Wanda Burrows, Gary Pettit, (Open-Don); July 12th, Tom and Helen Rodgers, Gerry Swann, (Open-Don Croop); July 19th, Richard and Jeanne Schmidle, Charles Messersmith-Open, Richard); July 26th, Celeste Crawford, Dale and Debbie Schlyer,(Open-Celeste);

August 2nd, Celeste Crawford, Edna Robinson, Helen Horton, (Open-Celeste); August 9th, Bill and Maxine Jones, Christine and Wallace Goodman,(Open-Wallace); August 16th, Sidney and Donna Pettit, Dorothea Mark,(Open, Floyd Clark); August 23rd, CaroleSchnoor, Art Schnoor, Dennis Meier, (Open, Carole); August 30th, Howard and Dorothy Parker, Pauline Kurtz,(Open, Darrell Smith.)

September 6th: Gary and Patricia Fitch, Donna Fritton, (Open, Gary).

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RECENT ACQUISITIONS:

Gary Pettit: 1903 Graduation Certificate of Ruby Jarvis Pettit; Wilson High; Wilson High Graduation Picture,Class of 1903; 1908 Graduation Certificate for Ruby, Buffalo Normal College.Picture of Schoolhouse at Lake and Hulburt Roads--All framed.

Joseph Dulkiewicz: Banner, "God Bless America" "Spirit of '76" Bought while in Navy,World WarII
Thomas Singer: Discharge,Pension Papers, Death Certificate for Thomas M.Singer,Pvt., BatteryM

#st N.Y. Light Artillery, Civil War; also Genealogy of Martin Bush Family by Cora Bush.
Dwight D. Mehsehle, Ransomville: Picture of Wrights Corners School Dist. Ca. 1923.

Zilpha Petty, Lockport: WWII Naval Uniformsworn by Archie Petty including 4 hats, 4 ties, gloves, epauletts and buttons; also, 2 dresses, 2 blouses, 4 bonnets, skirt, gloves, 2 slips, 2 nightgowns, stockings, scarf, shoes, hat, and fan.

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SOUNDINGS: We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.

SINGER FAMILY REVIEWED:

In 1977 the historical society published the booklet, "The Valiant Men of Battery M". Battery M is of special interest to Wilsonites because during the Civil War over 100 brave men from Wilson volunteered their services in that unit.

Their names, as recorded by former Town Clerk, Arthur Dobbs, are listed on pages eleven and twelve. At the time of its publication, we discovered that Lorenzo Pratt, Chief Bugler of Battery M was not on Dobb's list, and more recently we discovered that the name of Thomas M. Singer was also missing from the roll.

In verification of this the museum now has copies of Pvt. Thomas M. Singer's Honorable Discharge papers; also his application for a Pension, and a copy of his death certificate. Accordingly we may note that Pvt. Thomas M. Singer enlisted in Captain Cothran's 1st New York Light Artillery Regiment of Volunteers on October 15, 1861 at Lockport, NY. He served three years and his records show that he was born in Buffalo, NY. When he enlisted he was 22 years of age and stood 5 foot, 4 1/2 inches tall.

During his enlistment he was confined to the hospital with measles, and later typhoid fever. After he was discharged he married Caroline Staats at Buffalo in 1864, and they had two children, Roland R. Singer and John.

Roland Singer was born in South Wilson in 1867, and attended the Collegiate Institute in Wilson. In 1892 he married Emma Bush of East Wilson, then taught school until 1904. At that time he built the Wilson Cold Storage, and became one of Wilson's most prominent business men, with interests in several businesses including the Wilson Lumber Company, the Central Milling Company, Wilson Drugstore, and Wilson Cold Storage.

His business associations brought many colorful visitors to the Singer home such as Henry Turcott, the Watermelon King of Columbus, Ohio; also a Mr. Bean from Buffalo who had Roland organize the "Singer and Bean Cold Storage."

Roland Singer also served eight years on the Niagara County Board of Supervisors, six as Chairman. A good friend was Supervisor Fred Krull of Lockport who purchased the Park at Olcott which he later turned over to the county.

He was an active member of Exley Methodist Church, and when he died four former pastors officiated at his funeral, the Reverends Copeland, Eastman, Fairburn, and Partington.

Emma Bush's father, Martin Bush, lived in the cobblestone house where the Beebe Road Flying Field is now located. Martin built and sold the well-known "Bush Pump"--many of which were sold throughout the area. He later became associated with Wilson's Bush/Chapman Milling business which was located in the village on West Young Street.

Thomas K. Singer of Appleton, NY, the son of Harold and Grace (Kenyon) Singer and grandson of Roland Singer, graduated from Wilson High School in 1950 and the University of Pennsylvania in 1954. He was a Captain in the U.S. Airforce and later became Vice President of the Kaiser Aluminum Corporation. Retired, he and his wife, Jacqueline, live on their farm at Appleton, NY. Both Tom and Jacqueline are Life Members of the Wilson Historical Society.

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SUMMER CONCERTS SCHEDULED:

A number of Free Concerts have been scheduled for Clark's Park on Harbor Street, Wilson, at which everyone is invited to attend:

On Saturday, July 18th the BUFFALO ZOOMOBILE WILL BE AT THE PARK AT 2:00PM and promises to be an interactive unforgettable learning experience for all children.

On Saturday, July 25th, BUFFALO & BRANDY will present a children's Concert at 1:00PM.

On Thursday evening, August 13th, NANCY KELLY will present a program at 6:00 PM of music from the big band era.

On Saturday, August 15th GLENN COLTON will present a Family Concert at 1:00PM.

On Thursday, August 20th, the 80 piece AMERICAN LEGION BAND OF THE TONAWANDAS Will present a concert at 6:00 PM.

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Two concerts are presently scheduled for the Village Park as follows:

Sunday, July 12th, BARROOM BUZZARDS

Sunday, September 13th, BAND CONCERT.

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LOST CAUSE:

When Faye Campbell passed away, we lost a valuable source of information for the Newsletter. Faye had a great memory, and we were always fascinated by his stories about Wilson.

We recall one time when he told us about how the first automobiles were built in Wilson and how, as a boy, George Brooks gave him a ride in his first "Niagara" automobile.

The Wilson Automobile Company apparently got off to a bad start, and it was clear from the start that Wilson would never become a second Detroit. The village board, for instance, passed a resolution that George couldn't drive fast on village streets. In fact, many people thought he shouldn't have permission to drive on village streets at any speed--because it scared their horses.

Brooks argued that there were many horses in town that were far more dangerous than his cars--at least, he said, his cars were under control and they went where he drove them. Not always the case when it came to unruly horses.

George Brooks was the chief mechanic for the fledgling company, and Stanley Dwight was the owner and manager. The first car was built in 1901 at the Brooks Machine Shop located next to the old Bush/Chapman Grist Mill. In 1903, the business was moved to the old Creamery Building near the Exley Methodist Church. It was here that the first "Niagara Runabout" was built, and though several were built, the village was not ready for industrial expansion. Unable to get financial backing, Dwight and Brooks had to close their doors.

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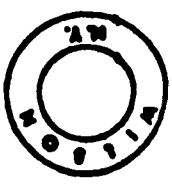
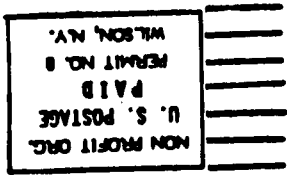
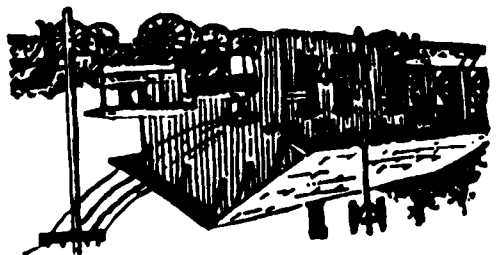
QUIPS: Think how hard it is to change yourself and you'll understand what chance you have of changing others.

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(Coleman Printing)

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

NEWSLETTER

Wilson Historical Society
Wilson, New York 14172-9763



September 1998

MAKING WILSON HISTORY:

Wilson shouldn't be categorized as a "Sleepy little bedroom town" when the fish bite so good the fishermen can hardly take a nap. Freshly stocked waters contribute to making Wilson one of the best fishing areas in Niagara County, and more and more anglers are finding it out. Besides, where can one find a prettier place to keep or launch a boat than in the well protected Wilson Harbor.

Plenty of good, clean outdoor entertainment is available during the summer months starting with the Wilson Historical Society Memorial Day Fair.

Local sporting competitions including soccer abound at the school while K-5 Runs and numerous fishing derbies are held at the harbor.

A variety of summer concerts are scheduled at Clark's Park and the Village Park, and the Wilson Volunteer Fire Co. parade and fieldday, (a 3 day event this year) continues to be one of the best held anywhere.

Another big event is the Methodist Church Flea Market on Labor Day which is being held on the Museum grounds this year, while a recent addition to the Wilson scene are the Friday evening "Cruise Nights" initiated by Mayor Jerry Dean. Mayor Dean is also promoting a "Watch Wilson Grow" campaign to encourage new growth and expansion of the business community.

A "new look" in the village is already in evidence and features American Flags along newly paved streets; new circular benches and tables and tubs of floral plantings along Young Street. Noticeable also is the bulletin board at the four corners which is kept up to date so residents may always be informed of on-going events taking place in the community.

Two new establishments are opening in Wilson giving impetus to the "Watch Wilson Grow" campaign. Leanne-Haley Brown, a pharmacist at Petersons in Newfane, has purchased and is renovating the former laundry facility on Pettit Street, and is planning to have a new drug store operating there soon.

We also note that a new florist shop is opening soon on Young Street, the "Garden Gate", and will be run by Shelly Andrews, a native of Wilson.

Mayor Dean's efforts to promote and clean-up Wilson are reminiscent of the 1950's when Wilson Girl Scouts of Troop #1 used to line the streets with freshly painted green and white trash barrels bearing the slogan, "Keep Wilson Clean."

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1874 PARTY RE-LIVED:

Members who attended the annual dinner in June took part in a "Harvest Party" similar to one that was held in Wilson's old American Hotel in 1874. Ladies dressed in attractive Victorian Gowns were accompanied by their gentlemen escorts in formal black & white. They mingled with other guests as they enjoyed a special dinner fare consisting of finger foods, consume', roast beef, ham, salads, condiments, and desserts.

The colorful Amherst Dance Society demonstrated a number of period dances including the Waltz, Opera Reel, Quadrille, and Virginia Reel, and members of the Wilson society joined in. The program concluded with everyone standing and singing verses from "Home Sweet Home."

The entertainment and dinner were planned from an actual program and menu used at the American Hotel in 1874. The hotel was originally built of brick and used as a hospital by a Dr. Kress of Wilson. The building is believed to have stood on the site of the present St. Paul's Lutheran Church.

The society is especially grateful to Jan Sporleder who prepared the dinner and was assisted by Emily McAvoy, Barbara Mosher, Lois Barnum, Melanie Barnum, Marge Williams and Sara Berry.

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VISITORS FROM ENGLAND:

Mr. Richard and Nicole Dick of Warwickshire, England, visited the Wilson Museum and were very interested in the many fine displays--both in the Depot and Car Museum. Mr. Dick was especially interested in our collection of antique and classic cars since he is associated with a car museum in England. Richard and Nicole were guests of Tom and Jacqueline Singer.

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SEPTEMBER MEETINGS:

- Sept. 7th: Labor Day Flea Market-Museum grounds, 5am on. Sponsored by Methodist Church.
- Sept. 9th: Board of Director Meeting. Patterson Room, 7:30 PM.
- Sept. 28th: Monthly Meeting, Patterson Room, 7:30 PM

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BON MOT: Speak well of people and you need never whisper.

"IRON FIREMAN" GETS NATIONAL RECOGNITION:

Jim Harold of Arlington, Va., felt that the Wilson Fire Company's "Iron Fireman" should have more recognition, so decided to do something about it. He obtained an application form from the Smithsonian in Washington, DC, to have the statue recognized by the National Museum of American Art. He then sent the form to his friend, "Chuck" Messersmith of Wilson, a 50 year veteran with the Wilson Volunteer Fire Company.

"Chuck" immediately began gathering information about the "Iron Fireman" including photographs, and articles written in the Wilson Historical Society Newsletter describing the statue's history. He forwarded the material to the Smithsonian Institution and on July 23, 1998, received the following letter.

"Dear Mr. Messersmith: Thank you so much for so promptly sending us a completed report form; photographs; and accompanying historical information about the Fireman Statue in Wilson. We are delighted to be able to add a description of this outdoor sculpture to the national Inventory of American Sculpture database." Sincerely, Christine Hennessey, Co-ordinator of Inventories of American Paintings and Sculpture, National Museum American Art. Anyone wishing to review the origin and history of the "Iron Fireman" may find the story in the Wilson Historical Society Publication, "Wilson Sketchbook" on page 117 under the title, "Singer was model for Iron Fireman".

* * * * *

The Iron Fireman article in the June Newsletter brought this humerous response from Marg Ivanek of Dunnellon, Fl. We can't "top" her letter, so here it is, (with minor editing)

"Wow!, your last Newsletter sure jarred a memory of that old "Iron Fireman". Around the mid or late forties, he put a terrible fear into the hearts of two Wilson teenagers.

"I think it was late summer when I, and a pal named Shirley Barry, had just left Tate's Movie Theater. A storm was moving in fast as we started up Main Street toward Lake, so we stopped in front of Lee Ward's garage to debate whether to run for it or go back to the theater and call home.

"I vividly remember the wind whipping around the corner as we huddled in front of the large plate glass window in Ward's garage. All at once, Shirley grabbed me and started shrieking for me to look in the window. Look I did, and what I saw will live with me forever. A deadman was lying on the garage floor. I'll never forget that white, white face, and I didn't want to look further at what might be hidden below the sill in the shadows.

"Our feet took wings and in no time at all we were bursting through the front door of my house- both gasping for breath while trying to tell my startled parents there was a deadman in Lee Ward's garage. Seeing the looks on our faces, my father was convinced and went into action.

"You guessed it. It was the "Iron Fireman" lying in repose at Ward's garage until such time as he could take up his vigil in front of the Wilson Volunteer Firehall.

Shirley and I had a short span of fame, but it wasn't the kind we wanted. My father wasn't laughing either. Thanks for the memories" Marj Ivanek, better known then as Budgie Stockwell.

* * * * *

FEDERATION NEWS:

Norm MacAskill, who joined the Wilson Hist. Soc. in 1972, has been elected Pres. of the Niagara Co. Federation of Historical Societies. Norm has faithfully served the Wilson group as 1st Vice Pres., 2nd Vice-Pres., Program Chairman, and Federation Representative.

The Federation set up an exhibit at this year's fair in the 4-H Training Center. Seventeen Federation groups had exhibits in honor of Cambria's 190th Birthday.

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BOARD ACTION & REPORTS:

Gary Fitch, Pres., has appointed a new committee to develop a Mission Statement for the Wilson Hist. Society. The committee is to propose goals and try to determine what the future direction and accomplishments of the society should be. A report should be ready by April, 1999, and members of the committee are: Wanda Burrows; Wally Goodman; Dave Mahar; Dave McLaughlin; Bruce Muck; Thomas Singer; and Darrell Smith.

Gary also announced that Robin Slate will no longer do the IRS reports for the society, and a new CPA must be engaged prior to April, 1999.

Discussion held on installing fire protection and security alarms in Fittro Shop & Schoolhouse. Action to be taken at the October meeting.

Don Burrows and Dan King have volunteered to keep the new acreage mowed for balance of year.

Bill Rose installed new answering machine in library: Don Croop will monitor calls.

Don Burrows announced that the Barnum Building roof needs attention. No action taken.

Motion made by Don Croop, seconded by Don Burrows, that Judy King be authorized to obtain Bonding for the Treasurer and the President, also liability insurance for all officers and directors. Coverage to be provided by Jeff Baker, Seaway Insurance, @ approximately \$1200. Motion unanimously approved,

Motion made by Wanda Burrows, seconded by Miles Linnabery, that Sally and Darrell Smith be authorized to spend up to \$300 for expenses related to this year's Halloween Party scheduled for Sunday, October 25th. Motion unanimously approved.

Motion made by Don Burrows, seconded by Marilyn Allgeier, that Ann Marie and Miles Linnabery attend two grant-writing workshops at N.C.C.C. on Oct. 21st and Oct. 28th at a cost of \$60. Motion unanimously approved.

* * * * *

NEW MEMBERS:

Please welcome the following new members: Joanne Ruch of Buffalo, NY; Carolyn Pack of Wilson; and Jennifer Tata of Wilson.

* * * * *

DON'T FORGET...

To wind down your summer at the Exley Methodist Flew Market on Labor Day...and join the spooks and goblins at the museum for the big costume party on Halloween.

* * * * *

QUIPS: Once you get started doing nothing it's hard to quit.

MUSEUM ATTENDANTS:

Museum attendents on Sunday afternoons from 2-4PM as submitted by Virginia Strablow, Chrm., will serve as follows: Sept. 6th, Gary and Patricia Fitch, Donna Fritton. Gary will open: Sept. 13th, Lois Jennings, Tim Crank, Marie Miller. Dan King will open: Sept. 20th, Ed Webster, Mary Webster, and Marge Craig. Open, Lucille Upton; Sept. 27th, Walter and Jamie Moxham, Ollie and Helen Clar. Ollie will open: Oct. 4th, Bill Rose, Judy Rose, and Marion Campbell. Open Bill

* * * * *

SEPTEMBER PROGRAM:

Miles Linnabery, Chrm., has announced that Wilbur Dunn of Newfane will be guest speaker at the regular meeting on September 28th, 7:30 PM at Museum. His topic will be on the NY 8th Heavy Artillery. Approximately 53 men from Wilson served in the 8th.

* * * * *

IN MEMORIAM:

Lena Tate, an Honorary member, died July 22, 1998, at Inter Community Hospital, Newfane. She is survived by a daughter, Linda of Ransomville; a brother, Joseph (Carmella) Ciambrone) of Niagara Falls, NY; and a sister, Mary Tate of Phelps, NY. Lena and her husband, Francis, used to run the old "Gem Theater" on Young Street for many years.

A Mass of Christian burial was celebrated at Our Lady of the Rosary R.C. Church in Wilson, with Rev. John J. Leising officiating. Burial was in Greenwood Cemetery, Wilson.

* * * * *

Alfred Stevens, 82, died August 11, 1998 after a long illness. He was born in Ransomville, the son of Emerson and Edith Freeman Stevens.

Al served in the U.S. Army during World War II as a Staff Sgt., and later was employed as a supervisor at Harrisons for 26 years. He was a Past President of Harrison's G-9 Club.

He was the husband of the late Mary (Forsey) Stevens of Lockport; and is survived by two sons, James (Karen) Stevens of Middleport; Robert (Bonnie) Stevens of Lockport; a daughter, Cynthia (Thomas) Swift of Lockport; and a sister, Ruth (Richard) Kramer of Ransomville.

Services were held at the Prudden and Kandt Funeral Home in Lockport, and burial was in the Acadia Park Cemetery at Pendleton, NY.

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A SPECIAL THANK YOU:

We thank Donald and Loretta Jackson of Seattle Washington for their generous \$100 gift in benefit of the old Randall Road Schoolhouse.

* * * * *

LABOR DAY FLEA MARKET:

The Labor Day Flea Market which is sponsored by the Exley United Methodist Church, will be held on the Wilson Museum grounds, September 7, 1998, starting at 5:00AM. A \$15 set-up fee will be charged to all vendors.

Shirley and Micky Hunter will coordinate the event which will feature a Chicken Bar-B-Que; Hot Dogs; Homemade Pies; Popcorn; and Coffee and Donuts.

The Wilson Hist. Soc. may open some buildings during the event, and will also serve Cotton Candy and Funnel Cakes.

* * * * *

RECENT ACQUISITIONS:

In May, 1974, the Wilson Hist. Soc. held its first quilt drawing which was won by Mrs. Marion Robinson of North Ridge. The beautiful "Northwind" spread had been pieced together in the early 1800's by Mrs. Harriet Ames, g-g-grandmother of Dorothy Thilk, one of the founders of the Wilson Hist. Society. The actual quilting was done in the museum under the careful supervision of Florence Schultz and Betty Stimson, and some of the other who worked on it were: Anna Mae Nevins Joseph Higgins, and Beryl Tovell.

Mrs. Robinson gave the quilt to her daughter, Ann McChesney who lived in New Jersey. When Ann passed away recently she left no daughters, so her husband thought it would be nice to return the quilt to the Wilson Museum.

Patricia Wilson Wright of Youngstown has presented a matted, framed picture of the Randall Road Schoolhouse as it appeared in 1898. Her father, Floyd Wilson, is seen in the photo standing with other students by a bicycle in the right front row. The picture now hangs on the wall in the schoolhouse along with other schoolhouse memorabilia.

Estate of Laura Clark via. Brad Clark: 1948 Framed Calendar/Thermometer from the Maitland P. Smith Clothing store; 1949 copy of "Wilson Dial"; New York Canals, 1960; 1954 Lockport Directory: "America's Arts & Skills"; 7 books and magazines on "Boating"; and Cookbook.

Donna Kurial: Golde Floral Autograph Album; "Ivanhoe" Book; Webster (Unab) Dictionary; Items belonged to Mildred Putnam Hamilton and came from 3384 W. Lake Rd., Wilson.

Neal Wixon, Buffalo: One McGuffey 5th Grade Reader for Schoolhouse.

Shirley Linnenbank: 10 Excellent Photos taken at 1998 Memorial Day Fair.

Zilpha Petty: Large 13 star Colonial Flag; 3 large, Med. and small 48 Star American Flags.

Jean Weaver: Assortment of Sheet Music.

Miles Linnabery: 4 Photos of Battery M. Monument at Gettysburg, also Flag.

Donna Sproston, Illinois: Autobiography including some by L.N. Wilson of Ness City Kansas.

L.N. Wilson is a great-great grandson of Reuben Wilson after whom Town is named.

Robert Young, Penn.: Framed Certificate of Battery M Personell, Youngs ancestor, Sgt. Rems.

Wilson Central School: 1997 and 1998 Wilson Crests.

W.R. Reese, Va.: Update of the Onderdonk Family Genealogy.

Bobbi Sikoski, Youngstown: 6 Childrens "Picture Puzzle Books"--excellent.

Eleanor Canfield: Two Menus.

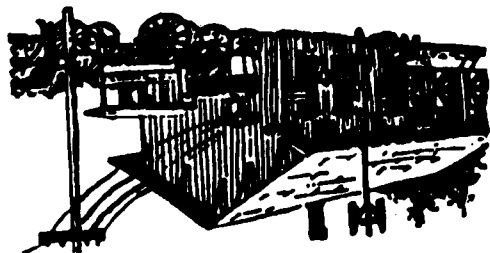
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SOUNDINGS:

Home is a place our feet may leave, but not our hearts.

* * * * *



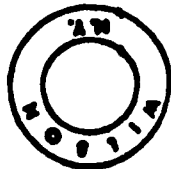
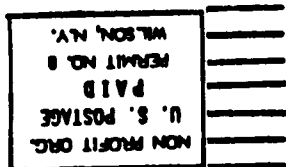


October 1998 Vol. 27 No. 9
(Coleman Printing)

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

NEWSLETTER

Wilson Historical Society
Wilson, New York 14172-9763



October 1998

LOOM IS ONE OF A KIND:

The Donner Loom, which is on exhibit in the museum's Schnoor Room, has a long and interesting history. It was built by Henry Donner in 1895 from a single oak log from which he hewed and fitted the parts necessary to put it together.

He was born in Wolcottsville in 1868, and in 1892 married Louise Schultz. He was 27 when he built the loom and still living in Wolcottsville. His wife, Louise, learned to weave from her mother, Wilhelmine Schultz, and it was because of her interest and knowledge that gave Henry the inspiration to build the loom.

In 1899, the Donners moved to Wilson and settled on a 50 acre farm at 3717 Daniels Road. They brought the loom with them and, when they wanted to weave carpets, would set the loom up in their bedroom. When finished, the loom was dismantled and stored until more carpets were needed.

In 1910, Henry built a new barn where he set the loom up permanently on the 2nd floor. Here the loom could be used anytime.

In 1956, William Donner bought the farm from his parents, and he and his wife, Edna, continued to operate the loom and take orders for small rugs. Since they were too busy in the summer to fill all orders, he turned his pig pen into a weaving room; installed a wood-burning stove; operated the loom all winter long.

In 1972, William Donner and his family left Wilson and moved to Big Tree Road south of Jamestown, NY. They took the loom with them and continued to use it until 1977 when he died.

The loom was then acquired by William's son, Melvin, who stored it in Jamestown until 1984 when he decided to donate it to the Wilson Museum.

It was brought to the museum by Henry Donner and his nephew Ed Whitcop, and it arrived with many of the parts in baskets. Art Schnoor, Don Croop, and the late Winnie Fischer, were able to figure out how to assemble the loom, and Winnie was able to operate it.

From then on, when the historical society held its Memorial Day Fair, Mrs. Fischer demonstrated how the loom worked. Later, she set-up her own smaller loom beside the Donner Loom and would then show youngsters how to operate it, under her guidance.

The Donner Loom is still a "one-of-a-kind" attraction at the Wilson Museum, and a number of the rugs that were woven on it are displayed nearby.

* * * * *

MEMBERSHIP NOTE:

The Wilson Historical Society has been able to expand and grow because of the loyal support of its members. As you know, all annual memberships expire on December 31, 1998. We thank all members for their past support, and sincerely hope you will continue that support.

Payment of dues is very important because it helps your society meet its operating budget which includes utilities, maintenance, and publication of the monthly Newsletter.

We start the renewal program early to try and lighten the load of our membership chairmen, Sandy and Kara Holden. Up-dating the files, making up new membership cards, mailing out membership cards, changing addresses and making up tabs for mailing newsletters as well as attaching them to newsletters, really involves considerable time—and we thank the Holdens.

The Wilson Historical Society can only be as strong as its members want it to be.

* * * * *

IN MEMORIAM:

Rex E. Stacy, 96, former Wilson Businessman, died August 22, 1998 at Huston, Texas after a short illness. He was owner of the former Rex E. Stacy Coal and Feed Business in Wilson for over 50 years.

He was a 72 year member and past master of Ontario Lodge 376, F&AM of Wilson; 1st Baptist Church of Wilson; Lions Club; and Ames Chapter of Royal Arch Masons. He also was a founding member of the Board of Trustees of Inter Community Hospital at Newfane.

He was pre-deceased by his wife, Winifred, in 1994, and is survived by a daughter, Patricia S. Harrington of Spring, Texas; also a brother Sumner of Mineola, Texas; a sister, Pearl Royal, of Seal Beach, CA; a grandson and three great grandchildren.

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

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SOUNDINGS:

If you feel low, don't despair. The sun also has a sinking spell every night, but it comes back up in the morning.

* * * * *

READER CORRESPONDENCE:

A recent item in the Newsletter about the Singer family, brought an interesting response from Ms. Ernestine Walpole, former Wilsonite, who now resides in Richmond, Virginia.

"Ernie" recalls that her father, Frank Dietrick, managed the Roland Singer farms from 1917 to 1927. She remembers that there were several fruit orchards, and that they had 2 live-in hired hands who worked full time.

During the Harvest Season her father used to hire the hobos who camped along the "Hojack" railroad--officially known as the "Rome, Watertown, and Ogdensburg Line."

She recalled that she spent many hours across the street with Mrs. Singer, Helen, and the hired girl in the big brick Singer house. The term "maid" wasn't used in rural areas at that time so the hired girl was Elsie Schaal. Elsie later became Mrs. Earl Carrigan, and still later Elsie and Ernie's mother became close friends.

Ernestine was intrigued by a button under the dining room table that Mrs. Singer would touch with her foot. This rang a bell in the kitchen to summon the "maid".

In more recent years, the Singer farm became the home of Nettie and Clark Stimson, who made the barns into a "Country Barn Shop". "Ernie" said she was grateful to Nettie who was kind enough to take her through the house so she could reminisce.

Referring to another item about the Donner family, Ernie recalled that Florence Donner used to be her Sunday School teacher at Exley Methodist Church.

* * * * *

Lester Clark of Hayward, CA., recalled some of his early days in Wilson when the Water Filtration Plant was on route 18 just east of Lake Street.

Seymour Erion worked for the village water department and part of his duties were to oversee the filtration plant which had a gravity-operated filtration system.

Lake water was pumped into a sand filter bed where most of the solids were removed and chlorine was added. Les remembers that he and others used to replace the 2 inches of sand that was used to renew the filter.

He also said that Seymour had a Model-T Ford with a 3x4 foot box on back where he carried his shovels and tools. He said the car made a lot of noise, gave off a lot of fumes, and sounded like it had a 4 cylinder "skip" engine in it.

Seymour Ereon was a popular star on the ball diamond and played in many games at the old Lake Island Park ball diamond. His wife, Ida, who survived him, lived to be 110 years old.

* * * * *

A couple readers of the Newsletter have asked if the Donner family of Wilson was related to the historic "Donner Pass" family.

We were intrigued by the same question, and recall asking Henry Donner that same question. Mr. Donner said that the Donners of Wilson and the Donner Pass family were indeed related, but he wasn't quite sure how. He said he would let us know when he figured it out, but he died a short time later so could never confirm it.

* * * * *

Bernie Kemp of Wilson revealed an interesting highlight to the history of the Wilson Fire Company's "Iron Fireman" when he noted that he was asked to paint the statue in 1958 when the village celebrated its Centennial. Now, 40 years later, he has again painted the "Iron Fireman" in celebration of the Fire Company's 75th Anniversary.

During those forty years, Bernie touched up the statue whenever he felt it was necessary, and recalls that when the statue was moved to its present location, the fire company had it sand-blasted and sprayed with rustproofing--thus making it necessary for him to re-paint the statue from scratch.

"After 40 years of intimate contact" with the iron statue, Bernie feels he knows every square inch of it, and wonders how many people realize that the "iron fireman's" boots appear to be on the wrong feet.

Mr. Kemp, a well-known member of the Wilson Community has served as an art instructor, director of guidance, and board member of the Wilson Central School District for over 30 yrs., and also served 8 years on the village Planning Board and 10 years as village trustee. He was also a trustee of the Wilson Hist. Soc. from 1973 through 1977, and sketches drawn by him are used on the society's letterheads, note pads, ceramics, and postcards. He and his wife, Nancy, have been staunch supporters of the Historical Soc. since 1972. The 1962 Vauxhall in the car museum was donated by Nancy in September, 1981.

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MEMBERS IN THE NEWS:

Wanda E. Burrows, Town Clerk, and Nancy Schaal Simons, Town Council member, recently presented a \$3,000 donation from this year's Salmon and Fun Runs to the Wilson and Ransomville Free Libraries. Accepting the check for the Ransomville Library, was William McLaughlin, Pres., and Kathleen Voltz, Vice-Pres., accepted the check for the Wilson Library.

* * * * *

CEMETERY WREATHS AVAILABLE:

The Greenwood Cemetery Advisory Board is offering freshly made Douglas Fir Christmas wreaths, approximately 24 inches in size, with red bows and sturdy stands to be placed in Greenwood Cemetery this Holiday Season. The committee will place the wreaths in early December, and remove them in the Spring.

The total cost of the service is \$25, and orders must be placed and payment received no later than Tuesday, Nov. 24, 1998. For more information call the Town Clerk's office. 751-6704

Please include on your order the name of the person or family where each wreath is to be put. Make checks payable to the Town of Wilson, and address the order to 375 Lake Street, POBox 537 Wilson, NY 14172-0537. No orders or payments will be accepted after Nov. 24, 1998.

Members of the Greenwood Cemetery Advisory Board are: Barbara Mosher, Donna Fritton, Don Luff, Rena Rohring, Diane Zabel, Keve n Buczkowski, Donald Held, and Marlene Martin.

* * * * *

BON MOR: The secret of getting ahead is getting started.

RECENT ACQUISITIONS:

We wish to correct an error in the last Newsletter under acquisitions, wherein we referred to Patricia Wilson Rice as Patricia Wilson Wright. Since we try to record names correctly in the Newsletter, we are truly sorry for the oversight, and apologize to Mrs. Rice for it.

As you may recall, Patricia Wilson Rice of Youngstown donated a matted, framed picture of the Randall Road Schoolhouse as it appeared in 1899. Her father, O. Floyd Wilson, is seen in the picture sitting on a bicycle in the front right row. The Photograph is now on display on the schoolhouse wall along with other framed pictures and plaques.

Nettie Stimson of Lewiston has donated 7 Books for the Car Museum: "GM-75 Years of Transportation", "Ford Road", "Henry's Wonderful Model-T", "1895-1930 Autos", "100 Years on the Road:, Corvette Sportcast", and "Sports Cars."; also, 2Pointer Sticks and 1 Baton for the Schoolhouse; 1973 Steam and Electric Railroad Calendar; and Metal Roosevelt Beach Arrow Sign.

Anonymous: 18 Workbooks for Schoolhouse that belonged to Emma Laux from the N. Tonawanda Schools.

Wanda Burrows: Teacher's Desk donated in memory of her childhood friend, Joan Shortz Walrod.

Patricia Wilson Rice, Youngstown, NY: 1 child's desk for Randall Road Schoolhouse. Donated in memory of her father, O. Floyd Wilson.

* * * * *

BOARD ACTION & REPORTS:

Motion was made by Miles Linnabery, seconded by Micky Hunter to spend \$600 to have the Cadillac Convertible overhauled. Unanimously approved. The Cadillac is one of the society's most valuable cars and licensed to operate.

Motion made by Don Croop, seconded by Dorothy Maxfield & approved to purchase cedar siding and paint to recondition Caboose. Darrell Smith, Don Burrows, and Paul Holden are in charge of the job and will over see the project as soon as possible.

Sally Smith, Ways & Means, reported that in spite of a bad storm and power outage on Labor Day, the society was able to clear over \$300 on the funnel cake concession.

* * * * *

OCTOBER CALENDAR:

October 14th: Board of Director Meeting at museum, 7:30 PM.

October 26th: Monthly program meeting, 7:30 Pm. at museum. Wanda Burrows will give a program on the Randall Road Schoolhouse.

October, 25th: Hollween Costume Party at museum. 6Pm. Sponsored by Historical Society.

* * * * *

MEMBER IN THE NEWS:

Nancy Schaal Simmons has announced that she is a candidate for the Wilson Town Board in the upcoming election.. A Republican, Nancy currently holds the position having been appointed to fill the unexpired term of George Berger last April.

She is the daughter of the late Elizabeth Schaal who served on the Town Board for 18 years. Nancy is a native of Wilson and 1979 graduate of the Wilson Central School; attended the Texas Lutheran College; and received her BS degree at SUNY at Geneseo.

The Simmons family resides at their Cambria/Wilson Road home and attend the St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Wilson where Nancy serves on the church council.

* * * * *

QUIPS:

If everything is coming your way, you're probably in the wrong lane.

* * * * *

1999MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION.....1999

NEW..... RENEWAL.....

NAME.....

ADDRESS..... PHONE # () -

BOX #..... CITY..... STATE..... ZIP CODE.....

PLEASE CHECK BOX IF ADDRESS/NAME HAS RECENTLY CHANGED

PLEASE INDICATE PREVIOUS LAST NAME, IF APPLICABLE _____

JUNIOR (UNDER 18) \$1.00 EACH COUPLE \$8.00 _____

NAME _____ AGE _____ SINGLE \$5.00 _____

NAME _____ AGE _____ LIFE \$150.00 _____

NAME _____ AGE _____ LIFE (Couple) \$250.00 _____

HONORARY MEMBER (85+) FREE

BUILDING FUND DONATION \$ _____ TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED _____

* * * * *

APPLICATIONS AND MONIES ARE DUE BY JANUARY 1ST.

PLEASE MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO THE WILSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY, AND RETURN TO:

SANDY HOLDEN PO BOX 319 WILSON, NY 14172

MUSEUM ATTENDANTS:

Virginia Strablow, hostess Chrm., has submitted the following list of members who have agreed to serve as hosts & hostesses Sunday afternoons from 2 to 4 PM at the museum:

- Oct. 4th: Marion Campbell and Bill and Judy Rose. Openmuseum, Bill Rose.
- Oct. 11th: Maureen Bryer and Richard and Jeanne Schmidle. Open museum, Richard Schmidle.
- Oct. 18th: Lorraine Brady and Jack and Dorothy Maxfield. Open Museum, Dorothy Maxfield.
- Oct. 25th: Lois Barnum and Harold and Neva Benedict. Open MUSEum, Lois Barnum.
- Nov. 1st: John and Jane Demmin, Floyd and Mary Clark, Open Museum, Floyd Clark.

* * * * *

IN MEMORIAM:

Margory F. Lederhouse, 78, a retired school teacher, died Sept. 5, 1998 at Mount St. Mary's Hospital, Lewiston, after a long illness. A lifelong resident of the town of Porter, she graduated from Wilson High School and earned her B.S. at SUNY Brockport. She taught 5 yrs. in a Ransomville rural school, and was a first grade teacher at Stevenson Elementary School for 20 years. She was financial treasurer for the Fillmore Chapel UMC and received a NYS legislature Achievement Award in 1988 for her outstanding effort of inspiring the lives of Senior Citizens.

Member of Ransomville and Newfane Golden Age Club; Order of the Eastern Star, Chpt. 374; NYS Teachers Association and Retirees Bowling League at Townline Bowl, Wilson. In 1974 she was elected Sunday Hostess Chrm. of the Wilson Hist. Soc., and served in that capacity 3 yrs.

She is survived by her husband, George Lederhouse of Ransomville with whom she celebrated 57 years of marriage. She is also survived by two daughters, Carol (William) Gaillard of Hoosick Falls; Karen (Thomas) Upton of Norfolk, Va., a step-brother, H. Edgar Fenner of New Castle, Pa., and five grandchildren and 2 great grandchildren.

Services were held at the Fillmore Chapel U.M.C., and burial was in North Ridge Cemetery with Rev. Jacob Denny officiating.

* * * * *

MEMBERSHIP NEWS:

Please welcome the following new members: Gail Burgen of York, Pa., daughter of Helen and Tom Rodgers of Wilson; also Jean Hayes of East Wilson.

Best wishes to Elwood and Dorothy Schultz of Dorwood Park, Ransomville, who celebrated their 69th Wedding Anniversary in September.

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HOLIDAYS ARE APPROACHING:

Just a reminder that the Ways & Means Comm. has a few items in the museum that would make great Christmas gifts. One of the nicest, perhaps, is the Wilson Afghan which features the 1818 Seal of the Town of Wilson; apple trees; sail boat on Lake Ontario; the village park Gazebo; Luther Wilson House; Wilson Central School, and the Wilson Vol. Fire Co. and the "Iron Fireman.

The supply of afghans is getting low so if you haven't already purchased one, we'd suggest you do so before they are all gone--no more will be available. They come in 3 colors, Navy, Teal and Rose and are a real bargain at \$30 each. You may either pick one up Sunday afternoons at the museum or call or write Sally Smith, 4559 Chestnut Rd., Wilson, NY 14172; Phone 716-751-0102. Wilson Sketchbook I, Cookbook; Caps, T-Shirts, and a variety of small booklets are also available.

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SUPPORT ENUW:

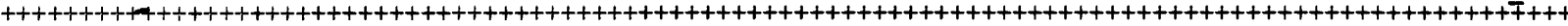
The 1998 Eastern Niagara United Way Campaign is underway. "Lives change when a Community Cares." Support ENUW.

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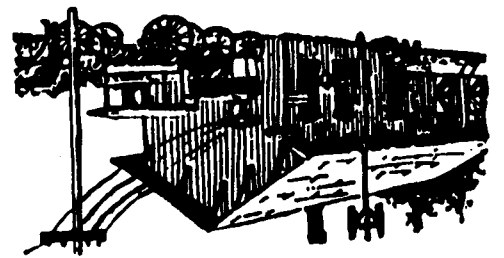
FINAL THOUGHT:

No cowboy was ever faster on the draw than a grandmother pulling baby pictures from her purse.

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November 1998

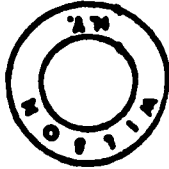
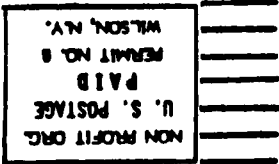


November 1998 Vol. 27 No. 10
(Coleman Printing)

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

NEWSLETTER

WILSON, NEW YORK 14172-9763
Wilson Historical Society



November, 1998

LEGACY OF SERVICE:

The late Mrs. Floyd (Hazel) Salisbury of East Lake Road, Wilson, spent most of her life in community service, and that commitment was recognized at a public dinner held at the Wilson House Restaurant on October 16, 1961.

An official proclamation signed by Mayor Robert Horton was presented to her by Mildred Croop, Pres. of the Wilsonian Business & Professional Womens' Club, and Senator Earl W. Brydges of Wilson was the guest speaker.

Mrs. Salisbury graduated from the Wilson High School in 1922, and obtained her teacher's certificate from the Middleport Training Class and taught in several schools including the Daniels Road and Randall Road schoolhouses.

She was a member of Exley Methodist Church; the Civic Club; Elberta Mothers' Club the Delphic Circle; and Wilson Chapter No. 268 Order of Eastern Star. She also headed up the rural drive for the new Inter-Community Hospital at Newfane and served as chairman of the Auxillary from Wilson.

In 1959-60, she was President of the Wilson Central School Community Ambassador Project, and entertained several "ambassadors" in her own home. She also helped work their 70 acre farm with husband, Floyd, and daughter, Diane.

During the past several years she became involved in the project to move the Randall Road Schoolhouse to the museum grounds, and shortly before her demise wrote the following item about her "Randall Road School Memories":

"I came to teach at the Randall Road School, Dist. No. 8, in September, 1929. I was delighted when I saw the beautiful big playground, (over an acre) with a lovely white house sitting well back in the yard, Fourteen beautiful spruce trees across the front and along each side made the picture complete. They not only added beauty to the scene, but protection from sun, wind, and storm throughout the changing seasons of the year.

'The schoolhouse was lovely, with large windows on each side, slate blackboards across the front, and a huge stove at the back of the room.

'I rang the bell and the boys and girls came hurrying in to see the new teacher--nearly forty of them. From the tall 8th graders to the little, anxious beginners, they all answered "present" as I called the roll-- Ethel, Les, Clayton, Frances, Harold, Garnett, Gerald, Ruth, Russell, Barbara, Janet, Wilbur, and many more. They smiled at me and I returned their smiles. Our friendship and love had begun--a friendship and love that has endured for all these many years. We studied and learned and worked and played together. Life was good... and fun. Each day was great just to be alive and part of one big happy family.

'I still hear their merry voices across the years as I travel back along Memory Lane to those wonderful days of yester-year.

"School days, school days
Dear old Golden Rule days,
Reading and 'riting and ;rithmetic,.....
When we were a couple of kids."

'I taught by the 5 R's--Reading, 'Riting, 'Rithmetic, Right and 'Rong. We followed the Golden Rule--(really 6 R's)

'We played many games- Pom Pom Pull Away, Red Light, Tag, Drop the Handerkerchief, and of course, Baseball.

'We thought life was wonderful and it was, until one spring day in 1933. That morning was very warm and rumble of distant thunder filled the air. About 10:30 the wind began to blow, the thunder became louder--the world became as dark as night. The power had gone off and the lightning was almost continuous. The great trees bent in the wind and the rain and hail fell in torrents.

'The children were badly frightened and began to cry. I told them to come up to my desk. Soon they were on my lap and at my feet. Even the older ones came too. We all prayed to God to protect us and keep us safe. Finally, the thunder and lightening died away and the darkness passed. The rain stopped and the storm was over.

'Mr. Schultz, the trustee, put on rubber boots and raincoat and came down to see how we were doing. The road was blocked with limbs and many trees were blown down, but we were all safe. It was an experience we shall never forget. We were grateful to the folk of other days, who built our schoolhouse so strong and sturdy.

'Now it is moving to a new home. I hope it will be happy there--but remember the happy days of long ago on the Randall Road." (Submitted by Patricia Wilson Rice.)

* * * * *

BON MOT: To teach is to learn twice.

SKETCHBOOK II IS AVAILABLE;

We are pleased to announce that Wilson Sketchbook II has been published is now available at \$15 per copy at the Wilson Museum, the Wilson Town Hall, or the newly established Florist & Gift Shop , The Garden Gate, which is operated by Shelly Andrews at 257 Young St., Wilson, NY. The attractive new Shop features Unusual Floral Designs, and Unique Gifts in the Gift Shop

You may also have a copy sent to you by mail, but there is an additional charge of \$4.50 per book to cover the cost of a mailer and postage. First Class Postage for quick delivery.

The Wilson Historical Society Publication was written by Don Croop, and consists of 99 pages and 37 photographs devoted to the history of Wilson. In addition there is a 14 page Cross Index File

The book is dedicated by its author to the late Dr. John F. Argue and Supervisor Whitney E. Barnum who figured so prominently in the organization and establishment of the Wilson Historical Society in the Town of Wilson.

Most of the photographs were provided and prepared for publication by Charles Horton of Wilson, and we also wish to thank Mary Sharon Murphy, graphic technician with the Niag. Co. Planning, Development and Tourism Comm, at Lockport, and Wanda Burrows, Wilson Town Clerk, for their valuable assistance in getting the book published.

The excellent job of typing up the material was done on computer by Beth Waldron of Wilson and Sara Berry did her usual great job as consultant.

We also wish to thank "Becky" Baker Hill of Tiffin, Ohio, who compiled the cross index file. "Becky" also did the Index for Sketchbook I. "Becky", a charter Life member of the society joined the Wilson Society in 1972, and graduated from Wilson Central School in 1966. She is now Librarian at the Pres. Rutherford B. Hayes Library in Fremont, Ohio.

Christmas will be here soon---Sketchbook II would make a nice gift for that "Hard-to-buy-for" relative or friend of your family

Please address your mail orders to Sally Smith, Ways & Means Chrm, 4559 Chestnut Road, Wilson, NY 14172. Please make all checks payable to the Wilson Historical Society.

If you liked Sketchbook I, you'll LOVE Sketchbook II.

* * * * *

MEMBERSHIP NOTES:

Sandy Holden, Chrm., reports that renewals in the Society for 1999 are coming in nicely, and wishes to thank all for cooperating so well. We also have a few new members to report including Eleanor Harrington of Wilson, (courtesy of Edna Robinson); Richard and Carol King of Lockport, NY; William AND Pearlina Burdette of Marbleton, Georgia; and Julie Smith of Seven Valleys, Pa. Also, junior members: Chelsea Smith, daughter of Mark and Julie Smith of Lockport, NY; and Adam and Stephanie Gaskill, children of Kevin and Colleen Gaskill of Middleport, New York.

We would also like to report a generous \$500 donation for the Building Fund received from Lee W. Bickford of Niagara Falls, NY; also many generous donations from the following members: Beverly Woolson of Wilson; James Harold of Arlington, Va.; Ernestine Walpole of Arlington, Va.; Ruth and John Zauner of Wilson; Justice Robert & Ann Botzer of Wilson; Norm and Patricia O'Brien of Wilson; Rachael Flagler of Lockport, NY; Dr. George and Susan Cruickshank of Newfane, NY; Leah Bigalow of Lockport, NY; LaMont and Tullia Ridley of Albion, NY; J. Bruce Lederhouse of Orleans, Ma; Bernice J. McLaughlin of Ransomville, NY; and James and Marlene Schotz of Wilson. The Society is grateful for your fine response.

* * * * *

SPEAKING OF CARS:

The year was 1928 and we were 16 years old when we had our first and last ride in an air cooled Franklin automobile. We recall that it was a smooth-riding, quiet-running car, but although it outperformed water cooled cars, apparently wasn't able to compete with them.

Franklin's "little six" a small 6 cylinder car, cost no more to run than a 4 cylinder water cooled car of the same size and power.

In fact, in economy tests conducted by the Automobile Club of Buffalo, the Franklin got 46.1 miles on one gallon of gasoline, while tests conducted in Philadelphia on cars with water cooled engines averaged 22.7 Miles per gallon of gasoline.

The Franklin was quite a car, but evidently it wasn't able to compete financially with Detroit's famous high production lines.

* * * * *

NOVEMBER MEETINGS:

Nov. 11th: Board of Director Meeting, 7:30 PM at the Museum.

Nov. 23rd: Regular Meeting at museum, 7:30 PM. Jean Neff will give talk on "Flax".

Refreshment arrangements unannounced at this time.

* * * * *

1858 WILSON;

Have you ever wondered what Wilson may have been like when the village was incorporated in 1858? According to the 1869 Niagara County Directory it had a population of 1,000 persons. The area was thickly forested and most of the trees cut down then were sawed into lumber at the Barber Steam Saw Mill located at the Marsh Settlement, (Beebe & Chestnut Rds.) or the Freeman Saw Mill which was located 4 or 5 miles south of the village on the Wilson/Cambria Road.

The village of Wilson had 3 dry goods stores; 3 groceries; and several mechanic Shops. There was also the J.C and McCarty Lumber Yard; the F.C Moore Sash and Door Manufactory; and the Sanford Coal Yard.

Daniel H. Crosby was Postmaster in the village, and Aaron Beebe was Postmaster at the Marsh Settlement in East Wilson. There was also a Postoffice at the Ide Settlement on Maple St. Guy Loomis, Postmaster; and Mathias Covert was Postmaster of the South Wilson postoffice.

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SOUNDINGS: Don't give up on anyone---miracles happen everyday.

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MEN OF THE SEA:

The late Merle Wilson built his own Boathouse in 1949 just north of the present Wilson Boathouse Restaurant. There he could be generally found renting out his fourteen rowboats or selling other boats and motors.

His life as a commercial fisherman began when he was 15, and he left school to help his father, "Billy", and brother, Fred, operate their fishing boats.

Merle was frightened when he first went out on the lake, but as he grew older the stormy weather didn't bother him. He did, however, respect the Lake and wouldn't take a boat out on real bad days.

That may have been the result of a real rugged experience he had in January, 1902, when, on a cold, windy, and snowy morning, he set out to fish with his brother and father in a 24 foot rowboat/sailboat.

Five miles offshore they managed to haul in a half ton of herring when the southwest wind and snow increased in intensity. They realized it would be difficult in the blinding snow to get back to Wilson, so decided to try to row to Olcott which they finally managed to reach. There they were able to slowly work their way back along the shoreline until they reached the Wilson Piers.

An anxious group of friends helped pull the boat with its cargo of half frozen men and fish over the ice to shore and safety.

In 1934, Merle realized that the Wilson Harbor might soon be closed because of the ever encroaching sand bars, so he got permission from the village board to go to Washington and talk with the U.S. Corps of Engineers. It was 1936, however, before the Corps of Engineers finally agreed to dredge the harbor and build two piers at a cost of about \$350,000.

In 1942, the fishing was still pretty good, and the most blue pike the Wilsons ever netted in one day was 2,800 pounds. At the going price of 33 cents a pound, this amounted to almost a thousand dollars for a day's catch.

Unfortunately, fishing in Lake Ontario began to decline because of water pollution which killed off most of the white fish and trout. The lake also became contaminated with salt water smelt and lamprey eels which further put a damper on commercial fishing.

In 1962, the harbor had to be dredged again, and an eight foot channel was also dug for the proposed new State Park at the west end of Sunset Island.

In recent years, a serious effort was made to clean-up and stock the lake waters, and fishing has again made a tremendous comeback in both the lake and waters leading into it.

Merle Wilson served many consecutive terms on the Wilson Village Board, and was a leading contributor to the town's progress. He lived on McChesney Street with his wife, Margaret, and their daughter, Nancy Jane.

* * * * *

PROGRAMS:

Wilbur Dunn, a Social Studies teacher at Newfane for many years, gave a very good talk at the September meeting on the history of WNY's 8th Heavy Artillery, known as the "Bloody 8th".

Refreshments were provided and served by Sally Smith, Sara Berry and Shirley Hunter.

At the October 26th meeting, Wanda Burrows is having a program on the Randall Rd. School, and this meeting is being held in the schoolhouse. (Early arrivals had their choice of school desks) We also wish to emphasize at this time that the general public is always welcome to all program meetings of the Wilson Historical Society.

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MEETINGS:

November 11th: Board of Directors, Patterson Room, 7:30 PM.

November 23rd: Monthly Meeting, There may be nothing prettier than fields of blooming flax in the Dakotas. Jean Neff's talk on the 23rd should be interesting.

* * * * *

SOUNDINGS:

A "Flea-marketeer's" home is where they keep stuff while they're out getting more stuff.

* * * * *

1999.....MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION.....1999

NEW..... RENEWAL.....

NAME.....

ADDRESS..... PHONE # () _____

BOX #..... CITY..... STATE..... ZIP CODE.....

PLEASE CHECK BOX IF ADDRESS/NAME HAS RECENTLY CHANGED

PLEASE INDICATE PREVIOUS LAST NAME, IF APPLICABLE _____

JUNIOR (UNDER 18) \$1.00 EACH COUPLE \$8.00 _____

NAME _____ AGE _____ SINGLE \$5.00 _____

NAME _____ AGE _____ LIFE \$150.00 _____

NAME _____ AGE _____ LIFE (Couple) \$250.00 _____

HONORARY MEMBER (85+) FREE

BUILDING FUND DONATION \$ _____ TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED _____

* * * * *

APPLICATIONS AND MONIES ARE DUE BY JANUARY 1ST.

PLEASE MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO THE WILSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY, AND RETURN TO:

SANDY HOLDEN PO BOX 319 WILSON, NY 14172

DON'T MISS "OPEN HOUSE":

Shelly Andrew's "Christmas Open House, which will be held on Nov. 6,7, and 8th from 10AM to 5PM, might well be one of the biggest attractions in Wilson. Her new "Garden Gate" florist and gift shop is perhaps the prettiest floral shop to make Wilson Scene in many a year, so be sure to see it---you won't be disappointed.

The gala event will feature Silk FLoral arrangements; garden statuary; bird houses; stationary & unique cards; antiques, collectibles, framed prints; gift baskets; Caswell MASSEY Beauty Products; village candles; gourmet food; painted glass; and much more. There will also be refreshments and a free drawing on any purchase of \$10 or more.

Plan to spend "Open House" at Shelley's Garden Gate on Young St.,---you'll be glad you did.

** * * * * *

MUSEUM HOSTS & HOSTESSES:

Museum Hosts and Hostesses, as submitted by Virginia Strablow, Chrm., are as follows:

November 1st: John and Jane Demmin & Mary and Floyd Clark: Open up, Floyd Clark.

November 8th Tom & Gail Walder & Micky and Shirley Hunter. Open up, DON Burrows.

November 15: Elton and June Kropp & Cheryl Brown. Open up, Elton Kropp.

November 22nd: Walter and Jamie Moxham & Walter and Shirley Evans. Open up, Gordon Strablow

November 29th: George and Susan Cruickshank & Sara Berry and Don Croop. Open up, Don Croop.

* * * * *

BOARD ACTION/REPORTS:

The Oct. 14th meeting of the Board of Directors convened at the museum at 7:30 PM with Gary Fitch, President, presiding. Gary reported that he and Don Burrows are monitoring the societies electric bills which appear higher than normal.

Discussion was held regarding planting of Memorial trees, also planting of evergreens along the north border of the new property. Gary will make necessary arrangements.

Dorothy Maxfield reported that we need old clothing for our childrens' mannequins, sizes 4-5.

Wally Goodman asked for and received permission to purchase A NEW BATTERY FOR the Ford Mustang.

It was reported that the Fellowship Class of Exley United Methodist Church donated \$100 to the Society in appreciation of having used the Building and grounds for their Labor Day "Flea Market".

Don Burrows reported that Jim's Auto Service of Niagara Falls, NY,, who repaired the motor on the 1959 Cadillac, picked up the car with their car carrier and transported it back and forth to Wilson at no charge.

An interested group of Officers and Trustees attended the meeting including Micky Hunter; Elton Kropp; Marilyn Allgeier; Norm MacAskill; Don Croop; Gary Fitch; Gordon Strablow; Floyd "Red" Clark; Richard Schmidle; Pam Groff; Don Burrows; Wanda Burrows; Darrell Smith; Sally Smith; Daniel King; Judy King; Dorothy Maxfield; Lois Barnum; Art Schnoor; Wally Goodman, AND Bill Rose.

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ACQUISITIONS:

Don Wiltse: one 1932 New York State Dog Tag (metal) #235179

Estate of Howard Croop, Rapid City, SD: Complete U. S. Airforce Uniform with MSGT STRIPES and metals attached. Also, complete Navy Uniform worn while serving aboard aircraft carrier "The Intrepid". Howard graduated from Wilson Central School in 1957; served 3 years in Navy; then joined U.S. Airforce. (24 years)

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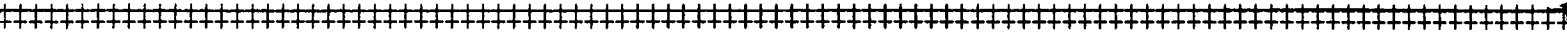
1998 SUMMER HOT?:

HOW ABOUT 1901; According to "Wilson Star" "The way the sun's been shining of late--every cornfield in Niagara County has been filled with "roasting ears". This isn't a joke. It is a red hot fact."

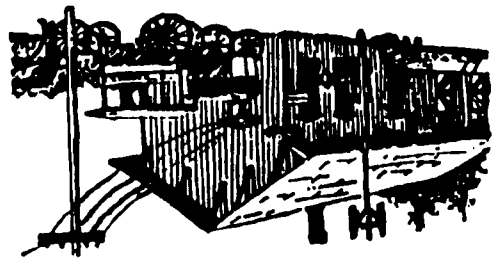
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QUIPS: You can't get much done by starting tomorrow.

* * * * *



December 1998

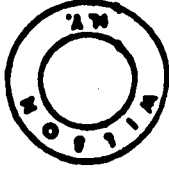
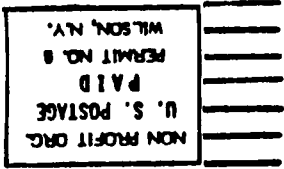


(Coleman Printing)
December 1998 VOL. 27 No. 11

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

NEWSLETTER

WILSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY
WILSON, NEW YORK 14172-9763



Dec 1998

FIREMEN CELEBRATE 75TH ANNIVERSARY:

The Wilson Hist. Soc. extends its congratulations to Wilson Volunteer Fire Co. #1 which is celebrating its 75th year serving the people of the Wilson area.

The Company was organized Sept. 17, 1923 with Ernest Horton, Pres., and Charles Crawford, Fire Chief. When the Company's By-laws were signed and notarized by Bethel Johnson on August 22, 1924, the first elected officers were: A.E. Horton, Pres., HARRY Biggins, Fire Chief, Frank Lashner, Ass't. Fire Chief, L. Clare Coe, Treas., and William H. Smith, Secretary.

Other firemen who helped establish the Company were: Merle Wilson, Bill Scheffler, R.E. Wright, Roy DeNeau, Harris Holden, Lee Ward, James Wilcox, W.G. Leetch, C.W. Baker, G.H. Reeves, Edward Rockwood, Chester Demmin, Walter Wheeler, Harold Teague, Carl Wilbur, Frank Dietrick, Leslie McClellan, Andrew Wright, Elton Armstrong, Clifford Schultz, F.H. Duxbury, Fred Ganshaw, Dewey Fisk, Paul Winter, Thomas Rodgers, Ray Nevins, Louis Wiepert, Carl Hausman, Earl Armstrong, William Schnoor, Courtland Feigehen, Bernard McClellan, Dr. Kenneth Moore, and V.M. & J. Pearce.

The new Company was badly in need of money for equipment, so a number of shows and Public Dances were held. Since they had no firehall to meet in, some of the 1st meetings were held over Horton's Hardware store, and Jesse Biggin's Blacksmith shop. The 1st annual Fieldday was held on Aug. 30, 1924, and it was very similar to an Old Fashioned Picnic--little resembling Fielddays of today.

The big celebration started at 10Am. with races for horses and ponies. Winning riders were given \$20 cash prizes., also bicycle races for boys under 12 years were very popular. Other contests included tug-o-wars, balloon races, and 3-legged races with boxes of candy for prizes. Tug-o-wars between Fire Companies saw boxes of cigars awarded to the winning Company. There were also pie-eating contests, honeymoon races for young couples, and nail-driving contests for the ladies. Other popular events were a Penny Scramble for children, Peanut races for women, horse shoe and quoit-pitching for both men and women, and a greased pig scramble for everyone with the pig as the Prize.

At 1Pm. the parade started and consisted of 5 fire companies and 6 bands interspersed with Civic and Church Floats. The parade route started at North Lake St. south to the railroad depot. From there they backtracked to Young Street, then proceeded West to Youngstown Road.

Afternoon concerts were performed by the Ontario Band, and a 7 to 12 Midnight Streetdance rounded out the busy Fieldday.

The Fire Company's first equipment consisted of two Hose Carts borrowed from the Town of Newfane, but on March 14, 1925, the Company was able to purchase its first Fire Truck--a La France Pumper. Eight of Wilson's Volunteers signed notes so the purchase could be made. The truck is still in very good condition to the present day, and it is said that "Old Betsey" could still "hold her own" at any fire. Bill Scheffler was one of the first drivers.

The Ladies Auxiliary of Wilson Vol. Fire Co. #1 was organized in 1932, and ever since then has been an important "arm" of the Company--always heavily involved in dinners or other activities vital to the progress of the Company. Some of the early members who helped organize the Auxiliary were: Hattie Hausman, Mildred Toenniessen, Florence Lort, Ida Erion, Leah Nevins, Emma Schrader, Norma Wilson, Dorothy Thilk, Dorothy Allgeier, Ida Dietrick, Lena Scheffler, Mrs. J.D. Duxbury, Mrs. James Wilcox, and Bernice Smith.

Bill Ganshaw urged the Fire Co. to start up an Ambulance service because he figured it would be good for the Community, and in 1943 an inspection was made of a 1934 Buick in the shop of Robert A. Barnes at Syracuse, NY. The Buick was purchased and the necessary papers such as insurance were acquired. On Nov. 14, 1943, the converted Buick made its first run as an ambulance, and Bruce Fittro was the first patient carried in it.

The surviving volunteers who organized Wilson Fire Co #1 in 1923 can be very proud of the well-equipped fire hall and equipment that stands guard on Young Street, but most of the credit should go to today's volunteer men and women who carry on the tradition.

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REMINDER:

The Board of Directors will meet Wednesday evening, December 9th, at the museum.

Program Meeting at Museum on December 28th. (Dulcimer Concert--folk songs and Carols.)

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BON MOT: Don't worry about temptation--as you grow older, it begins to avoid you.

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Life has meaning when one is needed.

* * * * *

GHOSTS & GOBLINS PARTY AT MUSEUM:

Everyone seemed to have a good time at the Wilson Hist. Soc. Halloween Party held in the Barnum Building on Oct. 25th. The hall was nicely decorated, and a large black "Cauldron" contained gallons of "Witches Brew" for those who "dared" to try it. There were plenty of snacks and candy to go around making the society's 2nd annual Holloween Party a hit with the ghosts and goblins who attended.

A guessing contest was held to discover how many pieces of candy were in a jar, and Tyler Strassburg was the winner. Tyler guessed there were 301 pieces--actually there were 302. Door prizes were also awarded as follows: Tim CondES, small pumpkin; Judy King, large pumpkin; Kathy Pearce and Tyler Strassburg both won Avon Halloween Pins; and Don Delesi received a Holloween Tin of Popcorn. Costumed participants lined up by age groups & judged as follows:

Up to 2 yrs: Kevin Wiesinger won 1st prize as an Indian; Anthonena Delisi was a Mouse; and Daniel Rohring was dressed as "Big Bird".

3-4 yrs: Korena Wise was a ghost with top hat; Jason Delisi dressed as a "Butterfly"; and Sara Hunter was disguised as a Pumpkin.

5-6 yrs: Trevor Wendt impressed the judges as a "Pile of Leaves"; Adam Robins was a "Werewolf"; and Shawn Baker was a "Bat".

7-8 yrs: Tara Plagino was a "Med eival Girl"; James Baker was very animated as the "Phantom"; and Kaitlyn Smith was a "Punk Rocker".

9-10 yrs: Emmalee Pearce as the "Pilsbury Dough Boy"; Kate Cornell as "Raggedy Ann"; and Michelle Evans dressed as a "Girl Pirate".

11-12 yrs: Lauren Scalzo as a "Bunny"; Laura Evans as a "Scarecrow";, and Susannah Wisby dressed as a "Housewife".

13-14 yrs: Joshua Smith dressed as "Freddie Krueger"; and Andy Evans was a +Phantom+.

Only 3 adults dressed in costume this year. Mary Jane Ziehm won 1st dressed as a "Bee-Keeper"; Sally Smith was "Mrs. Claus" and Darrell Smith imitated Wyatt Erp.

Judges, who had to make some tough decisions were: Stephanie Fracassi, Leah King, Nancy Schaal Simmons, and Carol C. Smith.

The society's Holloween Party is a modest way of showing appreciation to the Community for its generous support in the past, and we'd also like to thank all those who helped set-up, clean-up, and make the occasion a happy one for all: Don and Wanda Burrows; DarRELL AND Sally Smith; Andy Evans; Stephanie Fracassi; Leah AND Kevin King; Judy and Savannah King; Susanne Paglino; Kaitlan Smith; Bill & Carol Smith; Joshua Smith; and Mary Jane Ziehm.

* * * * *

OCTOBER SCHOOLHOUSE MEETING:

The meeting was well-attended, and everyone seemed content in the cozy, lamp-lit building. After a short meeting by Gary Fitch, Pres., Wanda Burrows gave an excellent presentation on the moving and renovation of the Randall Rd. School outlining how the project received wide support throughout the Community. She also said that plans are underway to apply for a grant from the Niag. Co. Council of the Arts to help the schoolhouse comm. make up information packets for distribution to area schools. She announced that Elaine Moon, Principal of Thomas Marks School, has volunteered to head-up the project.

Highlite of the evening was when Principal Moon conducted an old-fashioned Spelling Bee with the help of some of Wilson's best spellers: Carole Schnoor, Sara Berry, Janet Sporleder, Marion Campbell, Celeste Crawford and Helen Stevens. And guess who stood up the longest--Janet Sporleder, retired teacher and long time member of the Wilson School Board of Education.

After the meeting, delicious Gingerbread and locally made sweet cider were served, courtesy of Don and Wanda Burrows.

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BOARD ACTION & REPORTS:

Attendance: Micky Hunter, Norm MacAskill, Don Croop, Elton Kropp, MaRILYN Allgeier, Gordon Strablow, Red Clark, Pam Groff, Judy King, Dan King, Dorothy Maxfield, Lois Barnum, Don Burrows, Wanda Burrows, Darrell Smith, Sally Smith, Wally Goodman, Art Schnoor, and Bill Rose.

Don Croop reported that "Sketchbook II" is now available and may be purchased either at the Museum, Wilson Town Hall, the "Garden Gate" in Wilson, or by mail order. Norm MacAskill made motion, seconded by Dorothy Maxfield, that printing cost bill be paid. Motion carried.

Motion made by Wanda Burrows, seconded by Marilyn Allgeier, to approve request by Mr. and Mrs. Kevin King to use Barnum Building for family gathering Nov. 14th. Motion approved.

Pres. Fitch announced that further action is being taken to determine the high cost of our electric bills.

Dorothy Maxfield asked for volunteers to help her move furniture in Patterson Room.

Motion made by Darrell Smith, seconded by Gordon Strablow, to permit Elton Kropp to plant 4 Memorial Trees in old section.

Motion made by Darrell Smith, seconded by Micky Hunter, to allot \$1,000 to plant donated evergreen trees along north line of museum grounds. Approved.

Don Burrows made motion, seconded by Lois Barnum, to authorize \$200 to purchase 200 Watt Amplifier for use on Fair Days. Present Amplifier is too small. Motion carried.

Gary Fitch appointed Don Burrows, Art Schnoor, and Darrell Smith to study and make recommendations for facilitating some areas in museum for handicap persons.

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CONTRIBUTIONS:

Occasionally THE Society receives contributions from Bus Tour Companys and other organizations who request use of the museum or services. The Society gratefully received a recent contribution of \$100 from the Fellowship Class of Exley United Methodist Church who requested the use of the Society's Buildings and Grounds for their annual Labor Day Flea Market.

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NEW DRUGSTORE:

Leanne Haley-Brown, RPh, recently opened the "Wilson Community Pharmacy" at 272 Pettit Street. The drugstore features a professional Pharmacy Service, Homeopathy, Herbs, and Nutritionals.

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IN MEMORIAM:

Lucille E. Upton, 78, retired teacher, died at home Oct. 29, 1998, A native of Wilson, she was an active member of the 1st Baptist Church where she served as a Diaconate; Sunday School Supt., and teacher. She was also Pres. of the WNY Baptist Ladies Assoc., and Sec. of the Niag. Co. Teachers Association. Other interests included the Gnostic Guild and Wilson Hist. Soc. where she served as Tourism Chairman.

She is survived by 6 children, Tom(Karen) Upton of Norfolk,Va; Terry(Gail) Upton ofAppleton, NY; Dennis(Adele) Upton of Grand Island,NY; Robert Upton of Drexel Hill, Pa; Cynthia (R'ch) Vincelette of Norfolk, Va; and Roger(Judy) Upson of Pittsford, NY; alsoa sister, Francis Diez of Ransomville, NY. Eleven grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

A burial Service was conducted at the 1st Baptist Church, Wilson, and internment was in the North Ridge Cemetery with Rev. Jeffrey Dunham officiating.

* * * * *

HOSTESSES FOR DECEMBER:

Virginia Strablow, Chrm., reports that the following members will serve: Dec. 6th, Adrian and Kathy Frericks & Darrell and Sally Smith.(Open) Darrell Smith: Dec. 13th, Marilyn and Edward Allgeier & Anne and Bob Botzer.(Open) Celeste Crawford; Dec. 20th, Lisa and Larry Bulmar& Helen and Milton Clark (Open) "Ollie" Clark.

The museum will be closed to Sunday visitors, Jan., Feb., & March, 1999, but will open as usual for Board of Director meetings and Monthly Program meetings.

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DECEMBER 28TH MEETING:

Miles Linnabery, Chrm., has announced that Mitzie Collins of Rochester will play "Folk Songs & Carols on the Hammer-Dulcimer" . Mitzie is associated with Sampler Records,Inc., and from what we hear, this will be a program you won't want to miss. Why not bring a friend--our program meetings are always open to the Public.

* * * * *

MAKING "FAIR" PROGRESS:

Our reliable "quilt lady", Betty Stimson, has quilted and returned the 1999 quilt for the Memorial Day Fair. She has been staying in Virginia with her daughter, Jill, so will no longer be able to accept your quilt stubs & donations. Sandy Holden, however, has graciously agreed to take over that responsibility, so after you receive your quilt tickets in a future Newsletter, please return them to Sandy at P.O. Box 319, Wilson, NY 14172.

More good news: Judy Rose has consented to handle the quilt ticket sales on Fair Day. This will be great because our Ways & Means Chrm., Sally Smith, will be very busy that day with the popular Funnel Cake Concession.

While we are on the topic of cooperative people, we wish to thank Bob Scherer who has been donating Wood Carvings for many years. Also, we shouldn't overlook Lois Barnum, Fair Chrm, the Gal who "Makes these things happen."

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REMEMBER WHEN?

In 1972, the 1st Christmas celebration of the Wilson Hist. Soc., was held in the Town Hall. Joe Higgins and Betty Stimson decorated a tree with old-fashioned ornaments; strands of cranberries; strings of popcorn; and carefully placed candles. Betty rounded up a few "Hysterical Players" for a program, and Becky Baker, playing the part of School Teacher, tried to line up her incorrigible students so that the cards each one carried would come together to spell "Merry Christmas". Perhaps some of you remember those disruptive students: Karl Wright, Joe Higgins, Ed & Eloise Culverwell, Don & Millie Croop, Ella Mae Baker, Dorothy Tracey, Millie Middleton, Helen Borngraeber, Dora Wakeman, and Anna Mae Nevins. Well, "Corny" as it was, people made their own entertainment in those days before TV and Home Computers.

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QUIPS: Christmas is the day of the year when Mother has to separate the men from the toys.

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A "Flea-marketeer's Home" is where they keep stuff while they're out getting more stuff.

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1999.....MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION.....1999

NEW..... RENEWAL.....

NAME.....

ADDRESS..... PHONE # () _____ - _____

BOX #..... CITY..... STATE..... ZIP CODE.....

PLEASE CHECK BOX IF ADDRESS/NAME HAS RECENTLY CHANGED

PLEASE INDICATE PREVIOUS LAST NAME, IF APPLICABLE _____

JUNIOR (UNDER 18) \$1.00 EACH COUPLE \$8.00 _____

NAME _____ AGE _____ SINGLE \$5.00 _____

NAME _____ AGE _____ LIFE \$150.00 _____

NAME _____ AGE _____ LIFE (Couple) \$250.00 _____

HONORARY MEMBER (85+) FREE

BUILDING FUND DONATION \$ _____ TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED _____

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APPLICATIONS AND MONIES ARE DUE BY JANUARY 1ST.

PLEASE MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO THE WILSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY, AND RETURN TO:

SANDY HOLDEN PO BOX 319 WILSON, NY 14172

NEW MEMBERS;

The society welcomes the following new members: Donn and Willamae Wagner of Long Beach, CA. Donn edits the Wagner Genealogical Newsletter:

- Elaine W. Moon of Lockport, NY. Elaine is the new Principal of the Thomas Marks School.
- Charles T. Michel, Wilson, NY Charles has provided some good information about the caboose.
- Elizabeth Stevens of Lowell, MI. Elizabeth is researching the family of Adam & Mary Stevens of Canada. Their sons, George W., Abram, Elizabeth, Luther, Sarah, and John were all born in Niag. County and are in the 1820-1830 Census. Got any clues?

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MEMBERSHIP NEWS:

Congratulations to Jack Terry of Wilson who was recently inducted into the Athletic Hall of Fame at Mansfield College, Mansfield, Pa. Jack was a 3-letter athlete and played on Mansfield's football, baseball, and basketball teams.

Pat Stacy Ferrington has sent \$100 to have two Memorial trees planted for her mother and father, Winifred and Rex Stacy.

Kenneth and Dorotha Welker have also arranged for Mark's Nursery in Wilson to plant a Memorial tree on the museum grounds "In Memory of Loved Ones".

Veronica Ranson of Melbourne, Fl., became an Honorary Member of the society in August, 1998, and has been a faithful member since 1978. She was the wife of the late Max Ransom, who had a Barber Shop in Wilson across from the Methodist Church. He expanded his shop into a Billiard Parlor, but we know the premises today as the IGA Lakeside Market.

The Society is grateful to the following members who have contributed \$50 or less for the Bldg. Fund: Kay Ness, Wilson; Elma McGrath, ~~Lockport~~; Janice & Richard Zipp from Wilson, New York. \$25.00 or less: Norm & Martha Macaskill, Niagara Falls; Elaine Moon, Lockport; Mrs. Iola Sherrie, Pembroke Pines, Fl.; Winona Hamblin, Niagara Falls; Helen Stevens, Wilson; James and Carole Cornell, Boston, Ma; Elizabeth Stevens, Lowell, Mi; Vincent and Richard Loomis, Ocala, Fl; Tom and Helen Rodgers, Wilson; Verna and Richard Adams, Tonawanda, NY; Mary Margaret Young, Springfield, Ma; Pauline Kurtz, Wilson; Janetta Fredericks, Wilson; Helen M. Covey, Deming, NM; Celeste Crawford, Wilson; Ruth Lampman, Wilson; Malinda & Jack Hutchins, Sanborn, NY; and Arthur and Lillian Ulrich, PALM Bay, Fl. Sandy & Lloyd Evans, Fl; Larry & Lisa Bulmer, Wilson.

Congratulations are in order for two of our Historical Society members, Wanda Burrows, and Nancy Schaal Simmons, who were easily elected to office in the recent Elections.

Wanda was elected to continue as Wilson Town Clerk, and Nancy Schaal Simmons was returned to office as a member of the Wilson Town Council.

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CUBS INVADE MUSEUM:

Mary Ziehm, Leader of Den 6, Cub Pack 21 of Wilson, visited the Wilson Museum with about 10 Cubs and their fathers on November 10, 1998.

The boys were very interested in artifact displays from the Civil War, and World War I&II also how Wilson started and the history of the Cobblestone houses in the area.

After spending about an hour examining exhibits in Depot, they were served Rootbeer and cookies by hostess, Sara Berry.

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NOMINATING COMM. MEETS:

Eleanor Myers, Chrm., called a meeting of the nominating committee in November to prepare a slate of officers for 1999 to present. at the Nov. 23rd Monthly meeting. The officers will then be voted on at the December 28th meeting.

As previously announced, current officers will be considered for re-election unless they notify chairman 3 months in advance that they do not wish to run for office. Results of the December 28 meeting will be published in the January Newsletter.

Attending the nominating committee meeting were, Eleanor Myers, Chrm., Arthur Schnoor, Bruce Muck, Miles Linnabery, and Don Croop.

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SOUNDINGS: The happily married couple doesn't worry who the "better half" is.

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MERRY CHRISTMAS & A HAPPY NEW YEAR

RECENT ACQUISITIONS:

Pat and Polly Burns of Clarence, NY, donated the following items related to Dr. John Burns, a Wilson Physician for over fifty years: 1 High School A-13 Extra; Picture of the Kentucky University Medical Department; Paper article; and Masonic Certificate in case.

Ray and Pam Groff: School Desk.

Marion Campbell: Wilson-Niagara County Newspaper articles and clippings; Booklets; and 8 books for schoolhouse. Also, cigarette Case.

Estate of Howard D. Croop: Navy Uniform & Cap (Intrepid); U.S. Airforce Uniform & Cap; School Day Gallery from Wilson High; East Wilson Wildcat softball jersey; Ration Books, 1-2; Wilson Centennial Booster Certificate.

Arthur Schnoor; Glycerin Bottle from McPherson Pharmacy, Wilson.

Carole Schnoor: Wilson Souvenir (glas tub?); also Ink Well found under the Wilson Depot many years ago.

Kenneth Springer, N. Tonawanda: 8 Books for the Schoolhouse.

Mary E. Allgeier, Mt. Pleasant, NC; Clippings from the scrapbook of Mrs. John Stone.

Mrs. Bjorn Gudmestad, Phoenix, NY: Quilt once owned by Ida Erion.

Thomas Singer, Appleton, NY: Genealogical Materials on the Bush and Singer Families.

Mr. Paul Harold, Chatham, Va.; Tylenol Tin; Kodak Medal (KAD)(1880-1980); "Rocky" Campaign Button; Tonawanda Dog Tax Medal (1911) Brass; Brass NYS Dog Tag (1919); 6 misc. Aluminum dog tags; also other small items.

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THE RARE OLD CABOOSE:

It seems like the museum's rare old caboose has been standing by the depot forever, but it was really 1975 when Doc Argue talked Robert Stephanski Jr., into donating the railroad car to the museum.

Getting a place for it was no easy task, but Whit Barnum managed to corral together a strong group of volunteers to prepare a roadbed for it. They had to be strong in order to wield the sledges and crowbars used to fasten the rails to the ties. As we can recall, those men were Ollie Clark, Earl Swann, Bob Rohring, Tom Sharpe, Don Kirwin, Lloyd Albright, and Fred Berry. When the roadbed was completed, Red Clark lowered the car onto the wheel carriages.

Gary Jacobs, Delbert Pfohl, and Bob Rose laid out plans to renovate and paint the caboose, then some of the old siding was removed, new added, and Carol Smith painted the NYC Central insignia on the side. Gary Jacobs was helpful in obtaining blue prints of the car which showed that #18567 was built in the Rochester Car Shops in 1903.

The rare old caboose was restored under the direction of Burt Jennings, but being exposed to the weather, the caboose has deteriorated fast. However, plans are now proposed to reside the car with cedar, and paint it with a long-lasting paint. Work will also have to be done on the roof and cupola.

Once used as the control center for train operations, it is being replaced by high tech computerized systems. Since no more cabooses are being built, they are fast becoming as obsolete as the Dinosaur. Keeping the old caboose in good shape should be a priority.

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"CHRISTMAS LIST"

I have a list of folks I know, all written in a book
And every year at Christmas time I go and take a look.
And that is when I realize that these names are a part
Not of the book they're written in, but of my very heart.

For each name stands for someone who has crossed my path sometime
And in the meeting they've become the Rhythm of the Rhyme.
And while it sounds fantastic for me to make this claim
I really feel that I'm composed of EACH REMEMBERED NAME.

And while you may not be aware of any special link
Just meeting you has shaped my life much more than you can think.
For once you've met somebody, the years can not erase
The memories of a pleasant word or of a friendly face.

So never think my Christmas greeting is just a mere routine
Of names upon a Christmas list forgotten in between.
For when I send a Christmas greeting that is addressed to you
It's because you're on that list of folks I'm indebted to.

For I am but a total of the many folks I've met,
And you happen to be one of those I prefer not to forget,
And whether I have known you for many days or few,
In some way you have had a part in shaping things I do.

And every year when Christmas comes I realize anew
THE BIGGEST GIFT life can give is MEETING FOLKS LIKE YOU.
And may the Spirit of Christmas that forever and ever endures
Leave its richest blessings in the heart of you and yours.

(Christmas Greetings-Bd. of Directors) ---Submitted by Judy King.

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FINAL WORD: Warm thoughts like sunshine, brighten the day and lighten the heart.

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