

Wilson Historical Society

WILSON, NEW YORK 14172

NEWSLETTER

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

LIBRARIAN
WILSON CENTRAL SCHOOL
WILSON, NY 14172

JANUARY 1985 Vol.14 No.1
(Coleman Press)

CHILDHOOD MEMORIES:

Today, as another New Year approaches, many oldsters cherish joys and memories of childhood years that will ever be denied to their grandchildren. Many recall the thrill of seeing a mile-long circus parade with its great array of gold and red wagons with cages of wild animals, prancing horses in 10 to 20 rein teams, bands, clowns, beautiful girls, and the man on horseback who would always cry out, "Hold onto your horses, the elephants are coming." And once having heard it, who could ever forget the wheezing, coal-fired piano that always marked the end of the colorful spectacle.

Although today's youngsters have many wonderful, technical and scientific discoveries to relate to their grandchildren, none will ever have seen a horse-drawn trolley car, or known the thrill of riding behind a steam-powered locomotive; or seeing, (unless in a museum) a bootjack, cast iron steamkettle, a wood chunk range with reservoir in back, or the old wooden washtub that set in the middle of the kitchen for Saturday night baths.

Only grandma can tell today's generation about writing numbers on a school slate, or drinking water from a cup chained to the district schoolyard pump, or the red welt on her hand from teacher's ruler when she got into mischief. And grandpa, with a twinkle in his eye, might describe those sleigh ride parties when he and his best girl "snuggled" under a Buffalo robe, or hopped bobs with the other boys and went on straw rides, or played that wonderful old party game, "Postoffice." (The male never went astray then).

Sadly enough, today's generation will never know the value of a penny or the joy of doing an errand to earn one; and they'll never know the fun of licking the ice cream dasher, or cleaning the molasses from mother's baking bowls. They may be better off for never having experienced those days, however, they should never miss an opportunity of hearing about them from their grandmas, and watching the glow in her face as she tunes back her memory to those happy, childhood years.

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JANUARY MEETING:

Shirley Urtel will be guest speaker at the January 19th meeting of the Wilson Historical Society, and her subject will be, "Wilson's Currency and Banking in the 1800's". The meeting is scheduled to start Monday evening at 7:30 PM.

Margaret Wilson, Refreshment Chrm., has asked the following members to provide refreshments after the meeting: Lillian Evans, Helen Dinse, and Lorine Allgeier.

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FIRST ROADS IN WILSON:

The 1st road in Wilson was cleared along Lake Ontario for wagons in 1811. The Youngstown Road and 1st Townline Road were opened in 1816. The Maple Road, formerly known as Slash Rd., was cut through slashings in the deep woods in 1818--thus the name, Slash Road.

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MUSEUM CLOSED FOR WINTER:

This is another reminder that the Wilson Museum will be closed to Sunday afternoon visitors during the months of January, February, and March. Special tours by school children or other groups may be arranged by contacting Lois Jennings (751-9783) or Millie Croop (751-9827)

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THE MAILBAG:

Anne Welker Teiper has given her sister, Mary Margaret Young, a membership in the Wilson Historical Society. Anne lives in Albany and is presently teaching Nursery School 3 days a week. She has a 13 year old son, Matt, in the 8th grade, and a daughter, Christy, 10, in the 5th grade. Years ago, Anne and Mary Margaret were Intermediate Scouts in Millie Croop's Troop #1. Anne recalled that they liked to attend parties at the Croop home, and the overnights in the barn on Memorial Day weekends when the scouts painted the trash barrels placed around village streets. Some of those scouting days must have rubbed off on Anne as she has been a Den Mother for 3 years, and is presently helping her daughter's troop with craft project and cookie sales.

Anne visited the museum this past summer and says she was really impressed. "You have done a fine job with the depot, and I hope to visit it again soon." Thank you, Anne, from all of us who have contributed time and labor to make it so.

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YOU HAVE BEEN IN WILSON a long time if you remember when the sash and blind factory was located near the Tabor Bridge on Lake Street.

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A LETTER FROM BELVA:

Royalton's famous lady, Belva A. Lockwood, 1st lady to run for the Presidency of the United States, wrote an interesting letter to the editor of the New York World after the election campaign of 1884. It was in response to an item that appeared in that paper which read as follows: "Belva Lockwood, who was nowhere in the election but somewhere in Washington--has been several women in her day--originally Tillie Wilkins, next married to a man named Craig, then separated from him to marry Lockwood."

The rightfully indignant Belva responded: "I was born at Royalton, Niag. Co., NY, on Oct. 24, 1830 as Belva A. Bennett, and on the 8th of Nov., 1848, married Uriah H. McNall, a young farmer of that town, who died at the same place on the 4th of May, 1853, after which I graduated in Genesee College, taking my 2nd degree in Syracuse, NY as Belva A. McNall. On the 11th of March, 1863, I married the Rev. Ezekial Lockwood, a minister of the Baptist denomination, and at one time chaplain of the 2nd Dist. Regiment at Washington, D.C., graduated to the National University Law School and was admitted to the bar Sept., 1873, and the U.S. Supreme Court April, 1877. I have never been married to any person except the above named; was never separated from them except by death, as stated, and have never been known or passed under any other name or names. Both of my husbands were good men, kind and devoted husbands, lived honored and respected and died lamented, and I trust that I shall never cast dishonor on their memory. Yours for the truth, Belva A. Lockwood, Washington, DC, Dec. 12, 1884."

Mrs. Lockwood grew up in a world dominated by men, and overcame great obstacles to become the 1st woman to practise before the Supreme Court and run for the Presidency of the United States. She was a pioneer in the suffrage movement and was nominated to head the Equal Rights Party in 1884. Though the subject of much wit and humor from columnists, cartoonists, and reporters, Belva contributed a great deal to the cause of women's rights.

Belva was well known throughout Western New York. She attended the Gasport Academy and later taught in the old Union School at Lockport. When 18 years old, her path crossed Wilson when she delivered an essay at an anniversary celebration of the Collegiate Institute. The Royalton Historical Society is presently backing a movement to have their native daughter recognized by having the U. S. Postal Service issue a commemorative stamp in her honor. In July, 1983, she was inducted into the Women's Hall of Fame at Seneca Falls, NY, for her work with the Women's Suffrage Movement.

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WINDMILL WORKS WELL:

Erection of a windmill on the museum grounds was just a dream a few years ago when Whit Barnum arranged with Jim Reynolds to donate a windmill to the society. The project became stalled until "Chuck" Messersmith took on the task of repairing and acquiring the parts needed. Working closely with Art Schnoor, the windmill was finally repaired and assembled with help from Ed Hastings, Don Sinclair, Fred Fowler, Carl Johnson, Harold Mosher, Ed Seefeldt, Ray Allgeier, and "Bud" Ward. Floyd Salisbury donated a pump jack and force pump with surge chamber, and in the spring it is planned to hook up a gasoline engine so pumps may be operated--wind or no wind.

The pump supplied by Mr. Salisbury has an interesting history. At one time it was used to pump water into a large supply tank where farmers could fill up their spray rigs. The old windmill on the Salisbury farm had been cut off about 15' above the ground and a 1,000 gallon tank fastened on top of it. The force pump was able to generate up to 200 lbs. pressure allowing water to flow high enough to fill the tank. The storage facility was used by most of the area farmers who also joined together to service and clean the tank and pump. According to Mr. Salisbury, Stanley Crossman was the 1st to fill a spray rig from the overhead tank. As time went on, the tank was abandoned and farmers used water from open ponds to their rigs.

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NEW MEMBERSHIP LIST:

A new membership list including phone numbers of all local members is being mailed to all current members in good standing. We suggest that you keep your copy for future reference. 1985 Fair Committee Chairmen are especially advised to keep their copies as a new list will not be published.

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CHRISTMAS TREE TRIMMED:

A beautiful 12' spruce tree was furnished by Carol and Bill Smith for the annual tree-trimming party in the Patterson Room on December 2nd. Darrell Smith and Bobbie Vaughn wired the tree in position, and about 30 persons assembled Sunday afternoon to decorate the tree under the guidance of Flossie Lortz, Chrm. Frances Goldthorp livened up the occasion with a wide selection of Christmas music, and Edna Robinson, dressed as Mrs. Santa Claus, dispensed cookies, cake, nuts, and fruit juice to all. Everyone agreed that this year's tree is the prettiest one to date.

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ONTARIO HOUSE BURNED IN 1894:

An item in an old Lockport Daily Journal described the "Ontario House" as one of Wilson's oldest and best known village hotels. It was totally destroyed by fire in early July, 1894. The fire, believed to be of incendiary origin, started around 2:00AM, and was first discovered in the barns adjoining the hotel.

There was no fire engines or apparatus of any kind in town, so all residents turned out to form bucket bigades and fight the fire. Their efforts to contain it were futile and flames soon spread to the Ontario House itself. The fire spread so rapidly it soon engulfed the sheds behind the Presbyterian Church which also was destroyed. Unable to save the hotel and church, people were obliged to turn their efforts to saving the surrounding property.

At the time of the fire, the hotel was owned by James C. Bradley. It was replaced about one year later by the Sutherland Hotel.

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POLICE RECORDS SHOW that no woman ever shot her husband while he was doing the dishes.

TOPS IN HER PROFESSION:

Lydia Berlin Southard, daughter of Victor and Edith Hamblin Berlin, was an educator in the Wilson school system for 42 years. She learned the meaning of hard work at an early age when she got up before sunrise and did farm chores before walking 4 miles (in all kinds of weather) to the one room school at Daniels and Brayley Roads.

She graduated from the old Union School, then attended Buffalo Normal School where she earned her teaching credentials. While there she was proud of having earned a varsity letter on the "bloomer girl" basketball team.

After college, Lydia returned to Wilson and taught 8th grade replacing Carrie Martin, the teacher who had taught her when she was in that grade. She considered Mrs. Martin to be a fine instructor of great intelligence and a good sense of humor. She felt that Carrie stood for the things that later helped Lydia lead a better life.

In 1927, she married Donald C. Southard, an engineer with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and they had one son, Richard C. Southard.

During World War II Lydia taught social studies and boys' physical education, and she later accepted a job as teacher-principal of the Olcott School. In 1950 she became teacher-principal of the Ransomville school when it joined the Wilson Central School District. In 1961 a large addition was made to the building, and she accepted the position of full time principal--the post from which she retired in 1980.

Mrs. Southard has been very busy ever since. She loves to travel, swim, do gardening, and especially enjoys her grandchildren. It was no accident that we met her at an organ recital in the Rialto Theater at N. Tonawanda. Having taken organ lessons herself, she didn't wish to miss an opportunity to attend a performance with the Newfane Golden Agers.

Lydia is a member of the Retired Teachers Association, the Wilson Chapter of Inter-Community Hospital Auxiliary, St. John's Episcopal Church at Wilson, the Wilson Historical Society, and a Past Matron of the Wilson Chapter of the Eastern Star.

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MISSION ACCOMPLISHED:

The required number of plastic coffee can tops were collected by our members, and the museum now has a brand new 30-cup percolator--compliments of Maxwell House Coffee. Once again it has been proven that a concerted effort by everyone really pays off.

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MORE VISITATIONS:

Lois Jennings and Millie Croop were hostesses for seventy 3rd graders at the museum on December 10th when youngsters walked from Thomas Marks School to the old railroad depot. The children were accompanied by their teachers, Mrs. Mary Budde, Mrs. Patricia Lash, and Mrs. Carol Fabin, also Mrs. Loretta White. After looking at the exhibits, which featured childrens' china tea sets, the youngsters enjoyed the beautifully decorated tree and were served cookies provided by their teachers and fruit juice from the Wilson Hist. Society.

A repeat performance was held on Thursday, December 20, when children from the two 2nd grades of Mrs. Susan Cruickshank and Mrs. Kathy Kraatz also visited the museum. The Wilson Historical Society is pleased that the school is encouraging Wilson's youngpeople to visit the Town's facility to share in their heritage and history.

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CALENDAR FOR JANUARY:

Jan. 9th: Trustee Meeting at Dr. Singh's Office, 400 Lake St. 8:00PM Wednesday.

Jan. 21st: Regular monthly meeting at museum, 7:30PM Monday.

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RECENT ACQUISITIONS:

Marietta Goodman, Beechwood Retirement Home, has donated a collection of 7 hats from the 1950-60 period; also a Woven Coverlet received by her parents (Mr. and Mrs. Alex McClelland) as a wedding present, January 10, 1883.

Norman Thilk: A Stereopticon and 34 slides; also 2 change makers.

Dr. & Mrs. John F. Argue: Seven pairs of childrens Kid Button Shoes; 1 pair rubbers; 1 pair child's silk shoes; 2 pr. child's long wool stockings; Baby's Flannel Slip; Baby's Band Wrapper; Baby's Wool Bonnet; Rattle; 2 small Bisque Dolls; and 3 pieces of Lace.

LaSalle Antiques, Niagara Falls: Swivel Railroad Chair.

Don Croop: Copy of the "Log of the Fleetwing".

"Chuck" Bulmer: Antique "Pathfinder" Auto Tire (31"x14")

Floyd & Hazel Salisbury: Force Pump with Surge Chamber for use with windmill.

Floyd W. VanBuren, Lockport: First Aid Textbook.

Lyle G. Van Buren, Lockport: Vacuum Sweeper that belonged to either Mrs. John Freeman or her mother, Mrs. Staats; also 3 old postcards.

Ralph & Elizabeth Millard, Lockport: 1958 Wilson Centennial Wooden Nickel; Wooden nickel from Middleport 1959 Centennial; also picture of Wilson Belles-1958.

Floyd Clark: Peanut Roaster with Hot Plate.

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POPULAR BREAKFAST:

Senior Citizens of the Wilson School Dist. were feted at the 3rd annual Senior Breakfast held at the Junior-Senior High School, Tues., Dec. 18th. The morning event was sponsored by the Teachers' Assoc., students, and staff, and elderly guests were treated to musical selections by the Wilson Band; a delicious breakfast prepared by Home Economic students, and examples of student achievement in gymnastics, music, robotics, and computer technics.

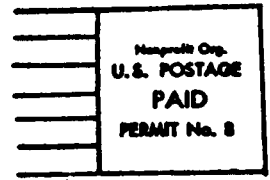
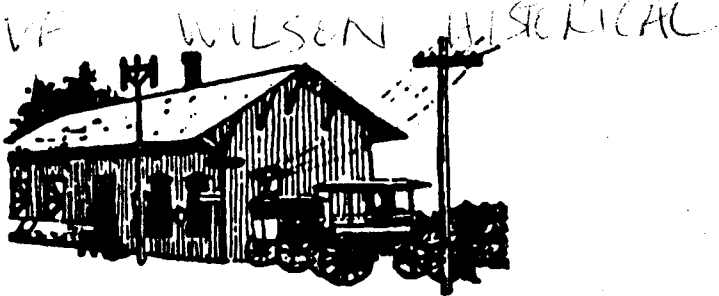
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NEW MEMBERS:

It is a pleasure to welcome: Mrs. John Young, Springfield, MA; Mrs. Bonnie Lewis & son, Michael, Newfane; Mrs. William Teiper, Albany, NY; Bobbie Vaughn, Grand Island, NY; Donald & Retha Munch, Irving, NY; William & Rita Munch, N. Tonawanda, NY; & Vira Munch, Lockport, NY.

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HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL:



Wilson Historical Society

WILSON, NEW YORK 14172

NEWSLETTER

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

FEBRUARY 1985 Vol. 14 No. 2

(Coleman Press)

LIBRARIAN
WILSON CENTRAL SCHOOL
WILSON, NY 14172

LET'S REFRESH OUR MEMORIES:

When, on rare occasions we hear someone ask, "What has the Wilson Historical Society done for the town of Wilson?", the thought comes to mind, "Where has this person been the past 12 years?" Perhaps we should all refresh our memories.

The 1st meeting held to discuss the organization of a historical society in Wilson was at the home of the late Dorothy Thilk, Town Historian, on April 18, 1972. In attendance were Whitney Barnum, Supervisor; Harold Mosher, Mayor; Jane Moxham, Justice; Dr. John and Jean Argue; Norman and Dorothy Thilk; Joseph Higgins; Anna Mae Nevins; and Mildred Middleton. It was decided to call another meeting at the Town Hall on April 24th, and with 40 persons present, the Wilson Historical Society was officially organized with the purpose of "Preserving for posterity the historical records and memorabilia of the village and town of Wilson."

At first, monthly meetings were held in the Town Hall. On October 16, 1972, Dr. Argue gave the old railroad depot to the Town for use as a museum and meeting place for the new society. During the next 12 years, a great volunteer effort was put forth by the members to improve the premises--their accomplishments were a little less than miraculous.

The initial undertaking was to scrape and paint the building, inside and out, but the greatest outpouring of volunteer labor went into the renovation of the old freight room (Patterson Room), which was turned into a meeting hall and exhibit room. Floor joists were placed over the original planks, then filled with 4 inches of insulation and covered with 3/4 inch plywood flooring. Heat runs were built in and the entire floor was covered with wall to wall carpeting. The inside walls were then covered with masonite, packed with insulation, and covered with rough planking pried from area barns. Heating and lighting was also installed during the remodeling process, and the ceiling was lowered, covered with Upson Board, and beautifully stippled by the ladies.

Other projects included the installation of 2 gas furnaces; two rest rooms and a library were built in; A large room at the west end of the freight room was renovated for exhibits and 2nd story storage (Schnoor Room); The south dock was enclosed for exhibits and storage; A room was extended from the west end of the building to display farm equipment; A 60' steel flagpole was acquired and set in place at the east entrance; All new electrical wiring was installed throughout depot; A new kitchenette was built into former express office with overhead storage; the Wick barn was painted and movie room set up for youngsters attending Fair. Four acres of land was acquired for the Town from Dr. George Badger of Lockport who also donated and planted 40 blue spruce along north border. A new 40x60 cement block building for antique cars was erected with most of the labor donated by the society including wiring and two new rest rooms; a 1904 NYC Caboose was acquired in Lockport, moved to Wilson by truck, set on rails, painted inside and out; a rare windmill was acquired including jack and pumps, repaired and erected on grounds; two doz. hardwoods, several Memorial trees, and landscaping was performed on "Hojack" Park; and 13 historic markers have been placed around the town.

The society has accomplished many things by prudent use of funds which have been provided principally from the annual "Country Fair", Dues, Bake Sales, and proceeds derived from cash donations and the sale of souvenirs, booklets, etc. In addition to the thousands of hours of labor donated for the renovation program, the society has spent \$23,888.00 for building supplies and other related materials.

The Town has also been supportive of the society, and each year has allotted \$500 for expenses. The Town also contributed \$10,000 toward construction of the car building, provided stone when needed, kept parking lot open in winter, and mowed lawns in summer. Starting this year, Harold Mosher, Supervisor, has notified Millie Croop, Treas., that a \$3,500 allotment will be given to the society (subject to adjustment). From now on, any services provided by the Town will be billed to the society, who will then be expected to reimburse the Town from this fund. Any unused balance at year's end will remain in society's treasury for improvements.

In 1972, the newly organized society started with nothing. Now, in 1985 (on behalf of the Town of Wilson), the society has developed a 5 acre museum complex with an estimated value of \$95,000 (County est. for water tax). In addition, members and friends have donated artifacts and memorabilia with an appraisal value of over \$500,000.00.

These are just a few of the things that pass through our mind when someone says, "What has the Wilson Historical Society ever done for the Town of Wilson?"

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THOUGHT FOR TODAY:

Someone who thinks the world is always cheating him is right--he is missing that wonderful feeling of trust in someone or something.

--Andrew Mason, M.D.

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IN RETROSPECT:

Today, few young people could even imagine a time when it wouldn't be possible to hop into a car and drive to a nearby McDonald's Restaurant for a hamburger and french fries. Now, well-paved highways are an accepted phenomenon, and it is a little hard (even for adults), to realize that in the early 1800's, most highways on the Niagara Frontier were just clearings in the woods with the tree stumps removed.

Ca. 1807, a few enterprising individuals decided that the best way to recoup the cost of building roads would be to charge fees for their use. Thus, about the time Wilson was being settled, there were about 67 Turnpike Companies established in New York State. After the Barge Canal was opened up, more "paths through the woods" were built and more settlers from the east were able to find their way to Wilson. The small lake port grew slowly, however.

The World Atlas of 1853 listed Wilson as a thriving shipping port with a population of 2,955 people. It boasted 3 churches, a popular Seminary, a steam flour mill, 2 lumber mills, 2 hotels, an iron foundry, cabinet shop, and numerous machine shops. Surprisingly, by 1951 (nearly 100 years later), the population had grown to 3,685--an increase of only 730 people or ca. seven and one half persons a year.

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NEW LIFE MEMBER:

It is a pleasure to welcome Wilberta Moody Hardy of Lancaster, Pa., into the Life Membership Class of the Wilson Historical Society. Wilberta is the daughter of Chester A. and Mabel Cartland Moody, and was born March 21, 1921. She graduated from the Concord, NH, High School and then attended Swarthmore College where she earned her B.A. in Biology. She was an analytical chemist for the Armstrong Cork Co., and was also engaged as a Planned Parenthood Field-worker. She is a Quaker, and has also served with numerous community organizations such as the League of Women Voters, Contact (Hotline), etc.

Her father, Chester, and brothers Arthur, Winfred, and Wilfred, were raised on the Moody Homestead, and learned the willow-weaving business while living home. Much of their handiwork (baskets and furniture), was carted to Rochester by their father, Arthur, and also shipped to Buffalo and New York City. Louis Swick remembers the family well and can recall how they used to gather willows along the creek on his former Willow Rd. farm.

In spite of their humble beginning, the Moody family attained prominence in their chosen fields. Chester became an Educational Administrator; Arthur, a Methodist Minister; Winfred, a Presbyterian Minister; and Wilfred, a school superintendent. Their sister, Mildred, graduated from Syracuse University and married Dr. Frank Eakin of Pittsburg.

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HEADS COUNTY FEDERATION:

Congratulations to Norman MacAskill, newly elected President of the Niagara County Federation of Historical Societies. Norm is 2nd Vice-Pres. of the Wilson Society, and has served as Program Chairman, and member of the Museum and By-Laws Committees.

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IN MEMORIAM:

Friends and parishoners of the late Rev. Rae L. Brothers of Dunkirk, sadly noted his passing January 9, 1985, following a long illness. Mr. Brothers served as Pastor of the Exley United Methodist Church for 8 years before accepting the Charge at Dunkirk last summer. He was a member of Lodge No. 376, F&AM, and served as Grand Chaplain of the Niagara-Orleans District. He was also a member of the National Rifle Association and loved to hunt and fish. He is survived by his wife, Hildred Clearwater Brothers; a son, Rev. Fletcher Brothers of Lakemont, NY; a daughter, Mrs. Richard (Carol May) Noble of Fulton, NY; and 3 grandchildren.

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Elizabeth Duxbury, daughter of Henry and Ida Scholtz Giles, died at Inter-Community Hospital on January 13, 1985. Wife of the late Harvey Duxbury, she leaves a daughter, Mrs. Donald Yvonne Smithson of Ransomville; a sister, Mrs. Edmund (Donna) Burk of Albany; also 5 grandchildren and 5 great grandchildren. Mrs. Duxbury taught at Wilson and North Tonawanda, and was a member of Exley United Methodist Church, honorary member of the Delphic Circle, and member of the Wilson Historical Society. Interment was in Greenwood Cemetery with Rev. David Palmer and Rev. David Wacker officiating.

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Marion Sheelar died at Inter Community Hospital on Monday, January 14th. She was the wife of the late Leo Sheelar, and is survived by a daughter and two sons, Lucy Zeitz of Lockport; Charles Foote of Batavia; and Dean Foote of Lockport. Mrs. Sheelar was a member of St. John's Episcopal Church, the Wilson Golden Age Club, and Wilson Historical Society. She was buried in Greenwood Cemetery with Rev. John Paul Boyer officiating.

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Jack B. Perry, 55, well-known barber and auctioneer, died January 16, 1985, at Buffalo General Hospital. He was a member of Ontario Lodge No. 876, F&AM, exempt member of Wilson Vol. Fire Co. #1, and owner-operator of the Perry Sales Pavillion in Wilson. He is survived by his wife, Nancy, and 3 daughters, Mrs. James (Sue) Stapf of Wilson; Mrs. Kent (Sonja) Cowles of Tampa, FL; and Kim Perry of Springfield, IL; two sons, Scott Perry and P.J. Brent Perry; two stepchildren, Mrs. Norman (Denise) Orzel, of Wilson, and Darrell Yochum of Cattaraugus, NY; also two grandchildren, Jason and Jaimi Stapf of Wilson; also his mother, Mrs. Pearl Perry of Wilson. Interment was at North Ridge Cemetery with Rev. Wayne Jagow officiating.

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ACQUISITION:

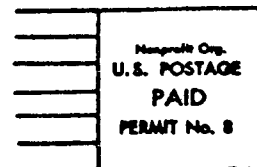
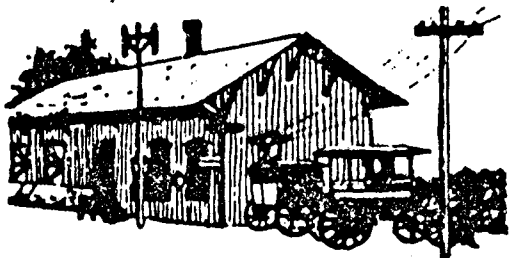
Mrs. Janet Sporleder, Chrm. of the Historical Sites Comm., has framed and donated a town of Wilson map showing the location of 13 historical markers erected by the Wilson Society. Each site is pinpointed by a numbered tack corresponding to a legend below..

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YOU'RE NOT YOUNG ANYMORE.....when you stop caring how fast your car will go, and start worry-how long will it last.

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VF WILSON



Wilson Historical Society

WILSON, NEW YORK 14172

NEWSLETTER

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

MARCH 1985 Vol.14 No.3

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LIBRARIAN
WILSON CENTRAL SCHOOL
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REMEMBERING AN EARLIER WILSON:

Wilson's older generation were youngsters during those turbulent years when "flappers", bobbed hair, and speakeasies were making the headlines, and some can recall when "bootlegging" was common along Wilson's shores. Most old timers, however, probably remember Wilson as a town of comparative tranquility.

The Model-T Ford was becoming one of the country's most popular new playthings about the time the Townline Rd. (Route 425), was paved, and a celebration was held on November 13, 1920, to observe the auspicious occasion. Even members of the Buffalo Automobile Club motored to Wilson to try out the new concrete highway which, up to then, had been muddy and rutted. State Congressman Wallace was invited to speak, and the Ontario Band provided music while members of the Wilsonian Club served a standing lunch.

Rail travel was popular in the 20's, and several trains stopped at Wilson every day. Basket-boarding students from Ransomville to Barker commuted to the Wilson High School each week, and many shoppers would take the train to Burt where they could catch a trolley for the Lock City. There they could patronize such stores as Williams Bros., Ruhlman's, Carls, or Olsens.

There was a variety of entertainment in the town of Wilson, and baseball games were always a popular Sunday afternoon sport. Horse-drawn carriages, autos, and people on foot, would follow the tree-lined road to Lake Island Park to watch familiar figures like Seymour Erion, Mike Sweeney, and Floyd, Walter, and Dwight Wilson perform on the ball diamond. There was never any admission charge, but a hat was usually passed for donations. Wooden bleachers lined the playing field where spectators could watch the games, and those who didn't care to watch could always rent a canoe at John Wilson's Boatdock and paddle up the Tuscarora Creek. Children also found much enjoyment in the wooden box swings hung around the park.

Middleton's Hall was the recreation center where many of the first movies were shown. Viewers sat on folding wooden chairs after paying the nickel admission charge. Later, the Gem Theater was built across from Middleton's replacing it as a movie house. Middleton's was still used for a number of years for roller skating parties and dances, and up to the late 20's "Country Fairs" were held there with all churches and organizations sponsoring booths. Street dances were also sponsored by the Village on Thursday nights when Lake St. was roped off and music provided by the Ontario Band.

Another popular spot was Timothy Wilson's Bowling alley which was located just west of the Marine Bank on Young Street. While in operation, many youngsters were able to earn spending money by setting up pins. It later became the site of the Swann Bakery.

The 1st Firemens Fieldday was held August 30, 1924. It was a gala affair featuring a parade and many competitive attractions. Of particular interest was a greased pig contest. The "porker" was donated by Ellsworth Bigalow, and the firemen made sure it was well greased. The prize was the pig itself, and it was won that year by Ralph Evans--a young man who would someday serve his community as Town Supervisor.

Those were the days before refrigeration was heard of, so cutting blocks of ice at the harbor was an active occupation in the winter months. Men with teams of horses would draw the blocks from the river to ice houses where, packed in sawdust, they'd keep until summer. Since horses were still very much in use, sheds were built behind the churches where members could leave their buggies. Farmers driving to town would also tie their teams there while shopping at the J.W. Hackett or Miller and Brown grocery stores. Another familiar sight was Cuddeback & Coopers black hearse with glass windows drawn by a team of black horses.

Many of the buildings on Young St. that were once familiar are no longer here. Some were lost to fire--others renovated for other purposes. Generally speaking, however, we believe the village has stayed in tune with the times and improved its outward appearance and image.

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MARCH MEETING:

Miss Celeste Crawford, Librarian at Thomas Marks School, will be the guest speaker at the museum, Monday, March 18th, at 7:30PM, and her topic will be "Wilson Children's Reading in the 1800's." Miss Crawford is an active member of the society and serves as chairman of the Library and Genealogical committees.

Refreshments will be served after the meeting by Lucy Monroe, Chrm., Maryanne Sharpe, and Edna Rose.

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SIGN IN BARBERSHOP:

Young adults and teenagers: If you are tired of being hassled by unreasonable parents, now is the time for action. Leave home and pay your own way while you still know everything.

EARLY RAILROADS ON THE FRONTIER:

When the British controlled the Niagara Frontier, the portage around Niagara Falls was very important. In order to carry loads up the Lewiston Hill more easily, they constructed a tramway from the river bottom to the top of the hill. Two cars were joined by a cable that turned around a drum, allowing one car to go up while the other went down. Some historians have referred to the tramway as being the 1st railroad in America. The first steam railway on the Niagara Frontier, however, was one operating between Buffalo and Niagara Falls in 1836.

In the Pekin area there is still evidence of another one of Niagara's early railroads-- the old "strap" line that connected Lockport and Niagara Falls. It was opened to regular horse car service in 1837, but steam locomotives took over soon after.

The 24 mile railroad carried many passengers on their way west--not without some hazards. The train often left the track, and one time on the way to Niagara Falls, Pres. Van Buren and other passengers were thrown to the ground when their car rolled over on its side. Sometimes the locomotive would run out of fuel (wood), and it was said that the engineer would gather posts from farmers' fences to keep the train operating.

Part of the railroad passed through the Tuscarora Preserve, and the story was told how young Indian Braves would challenge and race the wheezing engine and beat it on their ponies.

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EARLY HISTORY RELIVED AT FORT:

The Old Fort Niagara Association has posted a preliminary schedule of events at the fort:

June 1-2 The King's Birthday: British, Loyalist, and German troops of the Revolution celebrate the birthday of King George III.

July 5-7 French & Indian War Encampment: British, French, and Indians, re-enact the 1759 Siege of Fort Niagara.

July 20-21 The War of 1812 re-visited: Fort Niagara in the "Second War for Independence" participation by both U.S. and British forces.

Aug. 10-11 Fifes and Drums at Niagara: 18th Century concerts by colorful ancient fife and drum corps.

Aug. 24-25 Soldiers of the Revolution: Both sides demonstrate 18th century military life.

Oct. 19-20 Revolutionary War Fall Encampment: Patriot and Loyalist forces return for another encounter.

There will also be daily demonstrations scheduled each week of musket firings, military drill, cannon firings, cooking, tours, crafts and archaeology.

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NOTICE TO OUT-OF-TOWN MEMBERS:

Enclosed with this Newsletter are 5 quilt tickets which are being sent to all members living outside of Niagara County. The response that we received last year indicates that most of our "away-from home" members appreciate the opportunity of being able to participate in the annual drawing.

This year's Log Cabin Quilt will truly be a collector's item, and as past winners will attest, the quality of workmanship by our quilting experts is unsurpassed.

Please make your checks out to the Wilson Historical Society and return with ticket stubs to: Mrs. Betty Stimson, Ticket Chrm., 58 Harbor Street, Wilson, NY 14172.

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COULD USE TRAILERS:

The Fair Comm. is considering locating one or two trailers that could be made available to the society on Memorial Day if needed. Please refer any possibilities to Lois Barnum, Chrm.

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FEBRUARY MEETING:

Many persons in the area have gone out of their way to see the Christmas display of small houses each year at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Elwin Upton, Brayley Rd., Wilson. Few, however, may realize that Elwin's unique hobby includes the building of many miniature doll houses and hand-crafted furniture.

He displayed many of his creations at the Feb. meeting including miniature sofas, chairs, tables, clocks, dressers, pianos, etc. All items are built to scale and many have moving parts such as sliding drawers, cupboard doors, tilt top tables, grandfather's clocks, etc. The center of one small checkers table is inlaid with over 65 individual pieces of wood.

Elwin may be considered a self-taught craftsman from the time in 1920 when he built his sister a piece of furniture from a cigar box. Now retired, he has made hundreds of pieces of doll house furniture as well as numerous doll houses in which to display them.

He cuts out all his wood parts on a 7" bench saw, and though any wood is usable, much of his handiwork is fashioned from cucumber wood or black walnut.

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CALENDAR DATES:

March 4th: Museum Committee meeting at museum, 1:00 PM.

March 13th: Trustee Meeting at doctors' office, 400 Lake St., 8:00 PM.

March 18th: Regular monthly meeting, at museum, 7:30 PM.

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STORY RECALLED:

We remember a story told to us by the late Dorothy Thilk about one of her ancestors, John Ames, who came to Niagara County in 1833 and settled on the Daniel's Road. It seems that Ames had a spirited team of horses, and one time when plowing a field foolishly put the reins around his neck instead of his waist. When the team suddenly bolted, he luckily escaped serious injury, but he had a sore neck for weeks.

Ames had a well in his front yard from which water was drawn by fastening a bucket to a rail. When the rail was raised, the bucket dropped into the water, and when the rail was lowered the bucket was raised. This was a common practise in the early days until more satisfactory methods were devised to pump water from a well.

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FIRST VISIT TO CATARACTS RECALLED:

We were about 8 years old when we saw Niagara Falls for the first time. Even at that early age we were impressed by the plunging rapids and thundering cataracts. At Prospect Point the Falls were but an arm's length away, and the spot where we stood has long since crumbled into the Gorge. Fascinating as the cataracts were, there was yet another attraction in Niagara Falls that left a lasting impression on this young visitor--namely, "The Home of Shredded Wheat."

The Natural Food Factory was really a showplace, and no trip to Niagara Falls could be complete without a visit to this unique, industrial complex. At the time, the manufacturing plant attracted over 100,000 people a year, and once having been there you could see why.

It was one of the cleanest, most hygienic food factories in the world. Located on Buffalo Avenue, it was considered to be in one of the best residential areas of the city. You entered the building into a spacious reception room where (on either side), visitors might enjoy the use of reading or writing rooms furnished with beautiful rugs and heavy oak furniture with leather upholstery.

At one end of the reception room special lunches were served consisting of samplings of shredded wheat, milk, and sugar. There, pretty guides would usher you through the immaculate, brightly-lit building, and as you walked around over head balconies, you could look down and watch as employees processed and assembled thousands of boxes of Shredded Wheat.

The shredded wheat factory had several other interesting features that made it unique in its day. There was a spacious dining room where employees received a free noon day meal; lavatories were equipped with needle showers; girls' restrooms were beautifully furnished; and there was a spacious auditorium with seating capacity of 1,000 people. There, if you were lucky, you might catch a concert by the nationally famous Shredded Wheat Band.

On top of the factory was a beautiful roof garden overlooking the Niagara River where one could obtain a bird's-eye view of the upper rapids, cataracts, and city of Niagara Falls.

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RECENT ACQUISITIONS:

Marietta Goodman of Beechwood, has donated a large number of items from her former Ide Rd. home, including picture of 50th reunion, Class of '16; Assembly Song Book used at Wilson High prior to 1918; Pictures of Teacher's Training Class, 1903 and Ide Rd. Dist. School #2; also many other items which are recorded on 6 acquisition slips and accession book.

Winifred Fischer: Three books of tickets stubs from the Rome, Watertown, Ogdensburg, New York Central Railroad--1896.

Millie Croop: Girl Scout Game Book, 1929.

Dr. John Argue: 1963 "Avanti" Super Charged Studebaker; Complete Medical bag with contents; medical bottles, and wide variety of auto memorabilia including maps, pictures, etc.

Henry Donner of Cleveland Heights, Ohio: One of the first rugs made on the Donner Loom.

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TOWN OFFICIALS:

Charles Buchner, Rt. 425, Ransomville, has donated a photograph of Wilson Town Board members taken in 1962. The Board was then made up of Whitney Barnum, Supervisor; Howard Pease, Town Clerk; Lawrence Pease and Arnold Karsten, Councilmen; Lee Farquharson, Highway Supt.; and William Buchner and Earl Armstrong, Justices of the Peace.

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CORRECTION:

The phone number for Elwin Upton in the 1985 directory is incorrect--please change to 9417.

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PERSONNEL SET FOR "COUNTRY FAIR":

Lois Barnum, Gen. Chrm. of the Wilson Hist. Soc. "Country Fair" to be held Monday, May 27th, has announced that the following persons will be in charge of various activities:

Food, Wanda Burrows; Tables, Barb Johnson; Food supplies, Mary Mawhiney and Rena Rohring; Hot Dogs, Art Schnoor; Sausage, Tony & Terry Moley; Chili, Jan Sporleder; Popcorn, Sue Schultz; Funnel Cakes, Carol Smith; Drinks, Fred Berry; Cheese, Sara Berry; Coffee and Donuts, Judy Zauner; and Kitchen, Helen Dinse.

Set-up and Cleanup, Ed Hastings; Log Cabin Quilt, Florence Schultz; Quilt tickets and Cashiers, Betty Stimson; Dealers, Nettie Stimson; Parking, Whit Barnum & Don Burrows; Flea Market, Edna Rose; Antique cars, Bob Rose & Dr. Argue; Audio-Electric, John Myers; Ways and Means, Winifred Fischer; Registration, Membership, Christine Kelman; Advertising, Millie Croop; Publicity, Karen Hasley; Announcements, publications, Don Croop.

Special Entertainment, Clark Stimson; Museum Display, Lois Jennings; Special Display, Eleanor Myers; Caboose Display, Burt Jennings; Genealogical Display, Celeste Crawford; Movies, Darrell Smith; Games, Shelley Andrews; Fishpond, Emma Lou Reppentine; and Balloons, David and Linda Palmer.

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IN MEMORIAM:

Doris K. Tarr, 84, a secondary schoolteacher, died at Medina Memorial Hospital on Thursday, January 24, 1985. Mrs. Tarr was the wife of the late L. Ernest Tarr, a former supervising principal in the Wilson Central School District. She leaves a son, John G. (Evelyn) Tarr of Medina, and three grandchildren. She was a member of Exley United Methodist Church in Wilson, an honorary member of the Delphic Circle, also a charter and life member of the Wilson HHist. Society. Funeral services were held at Exley United Methodist Church with Rev. David Palmer and Rev. Earl Bell officiating. Interment was in the Cortland Rural Cemetery at Cortland, NY.

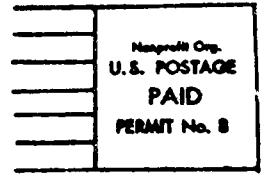
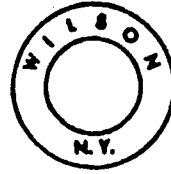
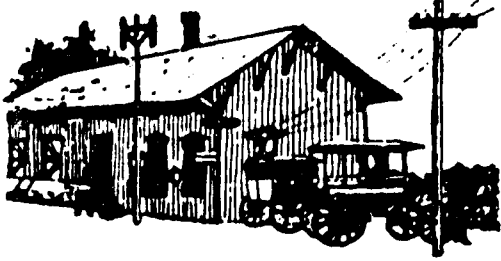
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NEW MEMBERS:

We welcome two new members into the society, Mrs. Virginia Moot of Parson, West Virginia, and Mrs. Malcolm McCuaig of Wilson, NY.

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IT SEEMS LIKE we've had a lot more winter than we need this year.



Wilson Historical Society

WILSON, NEW YORK 14172

NEWSLETTER

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

LIBRARIAN
WILSON CENTRAL SCHOOL
WILSON, NY 14172

APRIL 1985 Vol. 14 No. 4
(Coleman Press)

WINTER REFLECTIONS:

Today, highway departments have some of the best snow-fighting equipment available, yet they are virtually helpless when it comes to battling high winds, drifting snow, and the "white-outs" of a bonafide blizzard. The Blizzard of '85 emphasized the fact that bad winter storms do visit the Niagara Frontier, and though not as severe as the Blizzard of '77, this year's storm did close a number of highways and paralyzed the city of Buffalo.

Elderly persons may remember hearing about the heavy snowstorms of earlier years such as the one in January, 1852, when rural towns were isolated; stage coaches were stuck in snow-drifts; and Lockport was without mail for a week. Again, in 1884, a newspaper article tells how Niagara County was covered with 3 feet of snow with all roads blocked and railroads at a standstill.

When the infamous Blizzard of 1888 blew into the area, it also affected much of the eastern seaboard making it, perhaps, one of the most severe blizzards on record. In 1902, another bad storm occurred and 2 feet of wet snow collapsed the roofs on many barns in the area.

Automobiles were still a novelty in the early 1900's, and most owners would jack them up on blocks during the winter while removing battery and tires for storage. Also, there were no large motorized trucks for plowing streets so a great deal of manual labor was required to clear the highways.

Since most transportation was by horse and sleigh, it generally fell upon the farmers to break open the highways with their teams of horses and bobsleds. The big snows were a time of fun for us youngsters, and we liked to run after the bobsleds and hitch rides by standing on the runners. Most drivers didn't seem to mind, but occasionally we'd pick on an old grouch who'd yell at us and drive us off by cracking his whip.

In most villages, horse-drawn wooden plows were used to clear the sidewalks which were generally kept open quite well--no doubt because so many people walked more than they do today. The first tracks in the street, however, were usually made by the early morning milkman. As his horse-drawn sleigh approached, people would meet him with large containers which he'd fill by dipping milk from a can with a one quart ladle. Sometimes he'd carry his milkcan door to door to fill containers left on front porches, first removing change or milk tickets from them. It was always amusing to see how his well-trained horse would plod along by itself, drawing the milk sled behind him, and always knowing at which house to stop.

Many persons had their groceries delivered to their homes from the local store, and it was great fun to hop on the delivery boy's sleigh and help him make his rounds. His low, flat-bed sled had long steps on either side where two or three youngsters could stand, and each would take turns carrying groceries to a customer's house each time a stop was made.

The local Baker, in his covered sleigh, also delivered wrapped, unsliced bread. We think it must have been ca. 1926 when the first sliced bread was delivered to our home. We recall that our grandmother was quite disturbed when she was informed the price of bread would jump from 5 to 8 cents a loaf if sliced. She opined she'd "go back to baking her own bread before she'd pay such an outlandish price."

One of our most pleasant memories of winter fun were the occasional sleigh rides when a dozen or more of us would bundle up and crowd under blankets in a straw-filled bobsled. With sleigh bells ringing in our ears, we'd happily drive down the highways--our voices ringing out in song in accompaniment to the clippity-clip-clop of horses hoofs on the hard packed snow.

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FROM THE MAILBAG:

Speaking of blizzards, Fred and Sara Berry are glad they were in Florida. Sara writes that Fred has done some remodeling and installed a new ceiling fan. They like to watch old movies at the local library, and always look forward to the annual get-to-gether of Wilsonites which was held this year at Leesburg. They will be home in May and plan to celebrate their Golden Wedding Anniversary at the Wilson Museum on June 9th.

Lester Clark of Haywood, Cal., writes that some of the "Newsletter" items helps him to re-live many of his earlier days in Wilson. Says he grew to maturity in the thirties, and had a good life in and around the village. (Thank you, Lester, Wilson is still a good place to live.)

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CULTURE VS PLEASURE:

In 1912, voters in the town of Wilson were asked to raise \$300 to support the Wilson Free Library. The appropriation was voted down by 27 votes. Later, when voters were asked to approve \$300 for 10 band concerts, the proposition was approved by 15 votes.

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HOUSING PROJECT PROPOSED IN WILSON:

ITC Corporation, a "Christian human services organization", has announced its intention to build a senior housing and multiple family housing project in Wilson, NY.

The ITC Corporation, located in Niagara Falls, is currently negotiating an option on property in the village of Wilson.

The corporation is applying to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Farmer's Home Administration, to operate the facility under the Housing Act of 1949. Its goal is to provide housing that combines shelter with services to meet the needs of the residents.

Christine DeLuca, an ITC member, indicated that the corporation is presently conducting a survey of the needs of area persons interested in rental housing and that anyone interested in the project who would like to fill out a market survey can do so at the Town Hall by contacting Jean Seefeldt, Village Clerk and/or Emma Lou Reppentine, Deputy Clerk/Treasurer. ITC Corporation organizers will make themselves available to interested individuals.

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MUSEUM MANEUVERS:

Many changes are taking place at the museum in an effort to make it presentable for its re-opening date on April 14th. The committee has moved some of the display cases for better presentation, and many artifacts are being grouped together in permanent exhibits. In the reception room, for instance, a doctor's corner has been set up featuring equipment and supplies once used by Dr. Argue, Dr. Slocum, Dr. Burns, Dr. Mudge, and Dr. Plane.

Another case is being used for old toys and displayed at a level where small children can enjoy seeing them. Another case will be used for changing exhibits, and starting in April will feature items of the roaring twenties under the theme, "Aint She Sweet".

The Schnoor Room has had a new tile floor put down and present exhibits have been arranged to include the Donner Loom which is expected to be in operating condition by Fair time.

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OBSERVE ANNIVERSARY:

Congratulations and best wishes to Merton and Lillian Evans who celebrated their 50th Golden Wedding Anniversary, March 1, 1985. They have resided on the Randall Rd. since 1935, and are members of the Exley United Methodist Church and Wilson Hist. Society. Lillian is also a member of the Wilson Volunteer Fire Co. Auxiliary. They operate a 60 acre fruit farm, and are the parents of 7 children (one deceased), 16 grandchildren (one deceased), and 6 great-grandchildren.

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ANOTHER "GOLDEN" ANNIVERSARY:

On August 4, 1935, the U.S. Congress passed the historic "Social Security Act"--the old-age insurance system that guarantees you a 'steak after your teeth are gone. Now, 50 years later, the Act helps provide economic security to more than 120 million elderly Americans.

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DUES ARE DUE:

It's that time of year again... Annual memberships in the Wilson Hist. Soc. expire on April 30, 1985. It would simplify everything and make a lot less work if you would please submit your payment at your earliest convenience. Couples rate is still \$5.00; Singles, \$3.00; junior members under 18, \$1.00 each. An application is enclosed for your convenience. Please make all checks payable to the Wilson Historical Society.

Before re-newing your membership, consider the option of being a Life Member. Your \$100 donation will be deposited in a special bank account from which only the interest may be drawn. Also, your name will be engraved on a brass plate and mounted on a beautiful Life Membership Plaque which hangs on the museum wall. Actually, your \$100 donation serves as a permanent, personal memorial, and will benefit the Wilson Historical Society in perpetuity.

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POPULAR TRIP:

The society's bus tour of the Royal Botannical Gardens was enjoyed so much last year, it has been suggested we might repeat the trip again this summer. Shelley Andrews, tour chairman, would like to get some idea how many would approve, so either call her or tell her how you feel about it. As you may recall, the 2,000 acre floral and woodland gardens are located at the west tip of Lake Ontario in Hamilton, Ontario.

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APRIL PROGRAM:

Rev. Robin Wadsworth, pastor of the 1st Baptist Church of Wilson, will be guest speaker at the April 15th, Monday evening meeting of the society at 7:30 PM. The topic for his presentation will be "Reed (parlor) Organs and their music." Since the Reed organ donated to the museum is not in playing condition, Winnie Fischer has offered the use of hers for the program.

Following the meeting, refreshments will be served by Susan Schearer, Chrm., Tess Conrad, and Margaret Goodman.

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YEARS OF SERVICE RECOGNIZED:

Three members of the masonic lodge in Wilson were honored at a dinner on Feb. 19th, in recognition of their many years of service in the Lodge. Guests honored were Fay Campbell, a member for 65 years; Edward Marks, with 57 years; and Ora Pettit with 50 years. All are members of the Wilson Historical Society.

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"FAIR" NOTES:

Due to an oversite, two fair chairmen were not listed in the last Newsletter, namely, Lucy Monroe who will have charge of the candy booth, and Doris and Leo Klees who will handle the plant booth...the next meeting of the entire fair committee will be held at the museum, Wednesday, April 24th, at 7:00 PM.

* * * * *

WITH THE RUSH to wood-burning stoves, one must conclude, "There is no fuel like an old fuel."

TROPHY FISH FINDING HOME IN WILSON:

It seems only a few years ago that polluted waters and the lamprey eel began to play havoc with the game fish in Lake Ontario and its tributaries. The once abundant fishing industry of the Wilson Brothers slowly dried up as pike, bass, trout, and other popular species disappeared.

Those who longed to "wet a line" and experience the thrill of hooking into a "big one", had to be content to fish for the lowly bullhead or sucker as other varieties became scarce. These were often caught in the early morning or late evening hours, and it wasn't uncommon to see the banks of 12 Mile Creek lined with fishermen--lights from their lanterns reflecting over the smooth waters. Many would build small fires to provide warmth, then patiently wait for their lines to draw taut--a sure sign that a bullhead was sucking in the bait.

Game fish were destined to make a come back, however, as Conservation and Environmental groups looked for a solution and began to make things happen. It was discovered that the lamprey eel could be controlled by attacking its spawning beds in small streams, and as the lamprey began to disappear, great fish-stocking programs were started.

During the past four years, the D.E.C. has heavily stocked Niagara's waters with trout and salmon, and in 1984 alone, released about seven and a half million fish. The results have been gratifying as trophy size fish of over 30 pounds are now being caught from Wilson to Golden Hill State Park. Coho salmon up to 20 pounds can be caught during April, July, August, and September, and Brown trout may be taken in the lake during July and August. Brown Trout can also be caught from the Wilson piers in September, also Rainbow and Steelheads in October.

As the battle goes on to try and rid all waters of chemical pollutants, fishing derbies have begun to spring up. Fishermen are attracted to the area because of them, and local towns are beginning to realize how important the new fishing industry can be. Benefitting will be restaurants, grocery stores, gas stations, motor boat sales, tackle shops, bait shops, and charter boat services. In some areas motels and restaurants are being built, and many persons are taking advantage of the new bed and breakfast concept. Restrooms have been put at popular fishing sites, and in Wilson, public launch ramps have been built at Wilson Harbor as well as Tuscarora State Park. Stream rights to some areas of 12 Mile Creek have also been acquired by New York's D.E.C.

The impact of fishing on Niagara County can be seen in the number of derbies now scheduled. The 1st one locally is on March 30-31 when the Wilson Conservation Club and local merchants will sponsor a free derby open to all ages. Miscellaneous prizes will range from \$25 to \$100.

Statewide contests will include the ESLO (Empire State Lake Ontario) Derby which is divided into three pay off periods. The ESLO Cortland Trout and Salmon Derby, April 25-28th; the ESLO Busch Brown Derby on May 4th through July 28th; and the ESLO Shakespeare King Salmon Derby on August 24th through September 2nd. A weigh station will be at the Wilson Boatyard, and tickets may be obtained at the Wilson Bait and Tackle Shop. Prizes in the ESLO Derby will total close to a half million dollars.

A Sitex Lake Boat Tournament is scheduled for May 17-19th for Salmon and Trout with land and sea communications. Also, a Great Lakes "Regional" contest will be held on June 20-23rd at Ports of Wilson and Olcott Beach. (More information on this derby may be had by contacting the Niagara County Tourism and Fishing Office at Lockport.)

One of the best locally known contests is the Niagara, Fall Derby held in September in which both boat and bank fishermen may participate. Trying to land trophy size fish can be a battle as well as fun. For the less aggressive angler, however, a lot can be said for just pulling a few pan size friers from the water. (Derby dates from "Travel & Industry News".)

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MUSEUM TO REOPEN:

The Wilson Museum will be open to visitors on Sunday, April 14th, from 2 to 4 PM. There is no admission charge, but donations are gratefully accepted.

Hostesses for the month of April will be, April 14th, Norman and Martha MacAskill; April 21st, Leo and Doris Klees; April 28th, Don and Millie Croop.

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NEW MEMBER:

It is a pleasure to welcome Rev. and Mrs. Gordon Loomis of Hornell, NY, as members of the Wilson Hist. Society. Rev. Loomis is a former pastor of Exley United Methodist Church, Wilson.

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WORD OF APPRECIATION:

The "new look" in the Museum, Schnoor Room, and Library, was accomplished through the combined efforts of Art Schnoor, Leo Klees, Ray Allgeier, Don and Millie Croop, Clark and Nettie Stimson, Bob Rose, Lois and Burt Jennings, Jean Argue, and Norm and Martha MacAskill.

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APRIL CALENDAR:

- April 10th: Trustee meeting at Wilson Museum, Wednesday, 8:00 PM.
- April 15th: Regular Monthly Meeting at Museum, Monday, 7:30 PM.
- April 23rd: Meeting of the Niagara County Federation of Historical Societies, Museum, 7:30PM
- April 24th: Fair Committee Chairmen at Museum, Wednesday, 7:00 PM.

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INTERESTING PROGRAM:

Celeste Crawford, guest speaker at the March meeting, discussed the history of childrens' reading materials dating back to the "Horn Books" of 600AD. She noted that many books that were written for adults like Robinson Caruso or Treasure Island became popular with children. We find that books like the New England Primer dominated the classroom up to the 19th century, and books like Alice in Wonderland or Grimm's FairyTales, popular in the 1800's, still are today. Of particular interest is the fact that the 1st dime novels were printed in Buffalo ca. 1860, and in their day served the same purpose that paper back books do now.

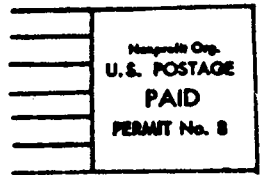
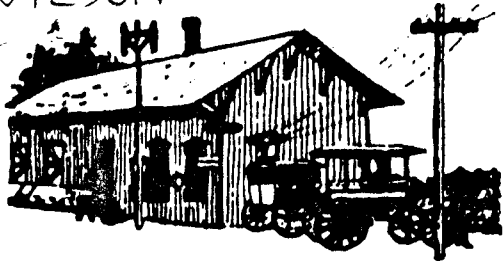
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FINAL THOUGHT: It is children only who enjoy the present; their elders live on the memory of the past or the hope for the future. --Sebastien Chamfort.

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Wilson Historical Society

WILSON, NEW YORK 14172

NEWSLETTER

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

LIBRARIAN
WILSON CENTRAL SCHOOL
WILSON, NY 14172

MAY 1985 Vol. 14 No. 5
(Coleman Press)

THE LITTLE RED SCHOOLHOUSE:

The former District No. 7 property on Chestnut Rd., Wilson, was originally given for a school by Herman Halsey in 1843. Records kept by trustees reveal that, in keeping with early tradition, the 1st school was painted red. It was not, however, the 1st rural school in the township.

The 1st school was built of logs in 1819 about two miles east of the village on Lake Road. Dr. John Warner was the 1st teacher and taught an average of 12 pupils a year. The 1st schoolhouse in the village was also built of logs and was erected in 1820 on the site of the present Wilson House Hotel. Almira Welch was the 1st teacher there.

The log school on Lake Road was very rough and plain. A wide hearth along one side had a chimney built on the outside of sticks, stone, and clay. The only furnishings were an unpainted pine table, a single chair, and desks with suitable seats fastened to the inside walls. The school was also used for public worship when seats were brought in and set up in the middle of the room.

Records show that by 1821 the town of Wilson was divided into 5 school districts which were increased to 17 by the year 1859. Districts operated independently within their own areas with each having a trustee responsible for hiring and disbursing funds. Though poorly paid, teachers were highly dedicated to the educational needs of their pupils--many of whom later became leaders in politics and industry.

In 1906, the District No. 7 teacher received \$340 a year, and when the District voted to join the Wilson Central School in 1942, the salary had only increased to \$912 per year. Trustees operated on a tight budget so it wasn't surprising that teachers furnished most of their own materials--it was easier than trying to convince trustees that certain items were necessary. Other expenses in 1906 included \$2.40 for furniture, and \$2.10 for school supplies. The other big yearly expenditure was \$11.90 for a janitor to clean the building and light fires each day in the school's pot-belly stove.

Some Wilson Historical Society members who taught in the town's district schools include Hazel Salisbury, Beatrice Salisbury, Laura Eick, Helen Stevens, Dorothy Lort, Dora Wakeman, Eloise Culverwell, Lydia Southard, Ernestine Walpole, Bessie Crawford, Blanche Wilson, and Margaret Wilson. A relative of this writer, now deceased, taught in a rural school at the turn of the century. We have some notes that she wrote in her declining years which give some indication of conditions in the rural school in her day, and we quote:

"Kindergarten was unheard of years ago. Hardly anyone started school before the age of seven, and it was not compulsory until age eight. When the heat of summer gave way to the cool of autumn, youngsters walked--sometimes several miles--to their little schoolhouse where grades one through eight were taught by one teacher. No books were furnished by the district, and each pupil brought his or her own slate and other equipment necessary for their education. The only supplies the teacher could be sure of was a school register, box of chalk, couple of erasers, rubber-tipped pointer, dust pan, and broom.

Inside sanitary facilities were unheard of, and a tin washbasin, water pail, dipper, and outside "privy" (with Sears Roebuck catalog) were all that was considered necessary. Heating was done with an old wood stove that could cope with chunks of wood 3 to 4 feet long, but temperatures were seldom comfortable--either too hot or too cold.

Recreation and physical training were left to the individual pupil, but the long walks to and from school plus games thought up by the youngsters were quite enough to keep everyone in good physical condition. School hours were from 9:00 AM to Noon with a mid-morning recess. The afternoon session lasted from 1 to 4 PM with a recess of 15 minutes. Not all districts had their own wells so it was sometimes necessary to get water from a nearby farm. My pupils considered it a great privilege to "fetch water" as a reward for good behavior or good deed.

School vacations were few and far between with the 1st on Thanksgiving and sometimes the Friday following. The week between Christmas and New Years was next, but if we had severe winter weather, Easter vacation was eliminated. Arbor Day was a holiday by order of the State Commission of Education. An Arbor Day Proclamation was read, songs were sung, and recitations given. This was followed by a trip to the woods for a tree which was planted with proper ceremonies. Light refreshments followed, then everyone was dismissed for the day.

The last day of school was the biggest event of the year. There were always good things to eat followed by a variety of games. The climax came when final examination marks were revealed, and promotions to higher grades were announced. "

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BON MOT: Parents are people who bear babies, bore teenagers, and board newlyweds.

ACTIVITIES OUTLINED FOR "COUNTRY FAIR":

Lois Barnum, Gen. Chrm., reports that all committees are working hard to make this year's "Country Fair" better than ever. The fair will be held on Memorial Day Monday, May 27th, from 10:00AM to 5:00PM, and several new attractions are planned.

Wagon rides will be given by Peter Rohring and his Belgium draft horses, Terry and Berry, and there will be wood carving exhibitions done by Bob Schearer and his students. Jim Robaar of Lockport will demonstrate blacksmith techniques, and Winnie Fischer will demonstrate rug making on the Donner Loom.

Entertainment is being planned by Clark Stimson who already has commitments from the Wilson High School Band and the Niagara-Orleans Chapter of the "Sweet Adelines." Members of Wilson's American Legion Post will conduct a brief ceremony at 12 Noon to honor servicemen who gave their lives for their country.

Children will be able to watch free Walt Disney movies all day long in the Wick Barn, and there will also be games and fish pond provided. The small fry will be able to get free balloons from our friendly neighborhood Clowns (while the supply lasts.)

Special historical exhibits will be set up in the museum based on the theme, "Ain't She Sweet", and a genealogical table will be available to all interested in their family trees. A main attraction will be the beautiful hand-made "Log Cabin Quilt" which will be on display at the east end of the depot. Donations for the 5:00 o'clock drawing will be accepted by members of the Ways and Means Comm., who will also have a variety of booklets and souvenirs.

Another main attraction of the fair will be the antique car show which will be arranged this year with help from honor students at Wilson High who have also agreed to assist with parking.

Dealers from all over Western New York will be setting up in the four acre "Hojack Park", and more than ever are expected this year. In addition, the society's own "flea market" will be held in a tent between the old caboose and the Wick Barn. Also, Klee's Plant Booth will have a variety of home-grown and nursery plants to serve the needs of all "green thumbers."

Another major attraction will be the society's Food Building where delicious Chili, Salads, Home-made Pies and Baked Goods will be served at reasonable prices--a long established policy. For instance, where in Niagara County can you still get a good cup of coffee for 25 cents? In another outstanding display of co-operation, students from the Home Economic's Class at Wilson Central School will join society members in serving foods.

There will be no need for fair visitors to go hungry this year as the food barn will be supplemented by other concessions serving top grade Hot Dogs, Polish Sausage, Funnel Cakes, Popcorn, Drinks, Home-made Candies and Cheese.

For those with heavier appetites, a Chicken Bar-B-Q will again be served by Wilson's "Little League", and their tent will be set up just north of the Food Building.

Fair planners have designated a special area this year for the handicapped so they may have easy access to the fair. They also wish to emphasize that parking will be adequate if visitors will take advantage of our overflow parking facilities in the village, and ride the FREE Shuttle busses to and from the Fair grounds. Busses will pick up passengers at the Wilson High School, Exley United Methodist Church, Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic Church, and Wilson Town Hall. Busses may also be flagged down anywhere enroute between the village and Fair Grounds.

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WILSON LIONS TO SPONSOR CLINIC:

The Wilson Lions Club, in conjunction with Inter-Community Hospital, will sponsor a free Diabetes Screening Clinic at Thomas Marks School on May 11th from 10:00AM to 2:00PM. The Lions have extended a personal invitation to all Wilson Historical Members living in the town to participate. Free transportation will be provided if needed. These numbers may be called on the day of the Clinic only: 751-6777 or 751-6146.

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MAY CALENDAR:

- May 8th: Trustee meeting at museum, 8:00PM.
- May 11th: Lions Club Diabetes Screening Clinic, Thomas Marks School, 10AM to 2PM.
- May 20th: Regular monthly meeting at museum, 7:30PM.
- May 27th: "Country Fair", Memorial Day Monday, 10:00 to 5:00PM.

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Saturday, May 25th, and Sunday, May 26th, the buildings and grounds will be made ready for the Fair. All comm. chrm. should be present, and all members of the society are urged to try and volunteer some help during these two critical days.

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MAY PROGRAM:

The meeting on May 20th will feature one of our own active members, Winnie Fischer, Chrm. of the Ways & Means Comm. The subject of Winnie's program will be "Adult Parlor Games of Victorian Times."

Refreshments will be served at the close of the program by Leona Hunter, Chrm., Flossie Lortz, and Marie Getman.

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THUMBNAIL SKETCH:

Douglas Farley, son of Van and Mildred Hasley Farley, was born May 25th, 1952, at Niagara Falls, NY. He graduated from Newfane High and the University of Buffalo and is currently Manager of the Bell's Market. He married Lois Geist of Newfane, and they have 3 children, Kathryn, Jennifer, and D. Michael. Doug is a member of the society, and also belongs to the 1st Baptist Church of Wilson, the Niag. Co. Genealogical Soc., and New England Historical and Genealogical Society. He has extensive genealogical material dating back to the 1600's in England and Holland, and the 1700's in Germany and France. He would like to exchange information with anyone in Wilson having the family surnames of Farley, Gifford, Sears, Pettit, Van Wagoner, or Newman.

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NEW LIFE MEMBERS:

Walter E. Moxham, Jr., son of Walter Edwin and Jané Brennan Moxham, was born June 23, 1946. He graduated from Wilson Central in 1964 and Univ. of Notre Dame in 1968. He completed his education at the University of Buffalo Law School in 1972, and is now an attorney in the firm of Miskell & Moxham in Lockport. He resides in Wilson and is a member of Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic Church, the Wilson Lion's Club, and the Lockport Chamber of Commerce.

His family have been involved in the Wilson area since the early 30's when his grandfather purchased property here for a summer home. His mother, the late Jane Moxham, served as Justice of the Peace until her demise, and was also active in the BPW Club of Wilson.

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W. Edgar Culverwell, son of William E. and Mabel Miller Culverwell, was born in the town of Lockport, Sept. 9, 1909. He grew up in the town of Newfane, and graduated from Newfane High School in 1928. He worked for the Carborundum Com. in Niagara Falls for 36 yrs., and married Eloise Smith in 1946. He is a member of Exley United Methodist Church, charter member of the Wilson Hist. Society, Newfane Senior Citizens, Ransomville Retirees, and Retirees Bowling League. He also served in the U.S. 9th Airforce for 3½ years during World War II.

Edgar has an interesting family background. His g-grandfather, Robert Culverwell, Sr., was born in England, but went to Canada because he could not marry Lady Moore of the Moore Estate, where he had charge of the hunting hounds. However, he married her aboard ship, and was given a Crown Grant of land in New Market, Ontario. It is said that Lady Moore received a dowery once a month from England so she wouldn't have to soil her hands.

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Eloise Smith Culverwell was born in Wilson, Nov. 30, 1914, and attended Wilson High School and Brockport State Normal. She received her B.S. in Education at Buffalo State, and then taught in the Wilson school system for 10 years. She is a member of Exley United Methodist Church, Gnostic Guild, Maple Rebekah Lodge, Newfane Senior Citizens, Ransomville Retirees, and charter member of the Wilson Hist. Society. In 1983 she wrote up the history of the Wilson Free Library for publication by the Society.

Her father, Lewis J. Smith, was a well-known builder and contractor, and her mother, Grace Smith, was a schoolteacher, town of Wilson Historian, and Librarian at the Wilson Free Library. Her grandfather, Fred H. Smith, who emigrated to America in 1848, held positions as highway superintendent, assessor, and county committeeman. In his late years he served as a Court Officer in Lockport.

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Laura Alvers Eick, daughter of Edwin and Myrtle (Salisbury) Alvers, was born July 18, 1901, in the village of Wilson. She graduated from Wilson High School and the Teachers Training Class, and taught for 6 yrs. in Wilson and another 2 yrs. in Orchard Park. She married Dr.

Norman J. Eick, and they had 3 children, Donald of Wilson; Charles of Rochester; and J. David of Tulsa, Oklahoma. She is a member of Exley United Methodist Church; Charter member and 1st Secretary of the Wilson Hist. Society; Delphic Society; Wilson Chapter, Order of the Eastern Star; and Golden Age Clubs of Wilson, Newfane, and Ransomville.

Both parents were born in Wilson, and her father once worked in an old lumber yard located at the Wilson Harbor where lumber was shipped by boat to Toronto. Her great-grandfather emigrated from France to aid the Americans against the British in the War of 1812. A seaman, he fought under Capt. Perry in the Battle of Lake Erie. An ancestor on her mother's side, Gideon Salisbury, fought in the American Revolution during Burgoyne's Invasion, and her grandfather, William H.H. Salisbury, volunteered for service in the Civil War. He was a good friend of Ira Pettit of "Diary of a Deadman" fame, and they both lived on the "Slash" (Maple Rd.)

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John Eastman, son of Paul and Cora (Glauser) Eastman, was born Dec. 19, 1929, at Rochester, NY. He attended Monroe High School in Rochester, and was appointed Letter Carrier in the Postoffice in 1960. He belongs to the Lutheran Church; is a member of the Y.M.C.A.; Sons of the American Revolution; and Western N.Y. Genealogical Society.

His ancestor, John Eastman, accompanied Reuben Wilson with their families to the shores of Wilson in 1810, and with the help of Gilbert Purdy, built cabins on the landing site which was near the intersection of Route 18 and Maple Road. John and Clarissa Eastman had one son, Henry, born to them before they left Wilson, and it is from this son that the John Eastman family of Rochester is descended.

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FROM THE MAILBAG:

Beatrice Mensch of Buffalo writes that Edna Regnet's husband, Ray, is seriously ill in Veterans Hospital after having one of his legs removed. The Regnets live on Campbell Blv.

Lester Clark of Haywood, Cal., remembers those good old fishing days at Wilson before they were ruined by pollution and the lamprey eel. Says he got the surprise of his life one time when he wrestled a sturgeon on Walt Wilson's dock---and lost. Remembers how he used to spear suckers near Coombs Bridge, and could fill his bag in one evening. Brother Wes used to clean fish for Walt and Emerson Wilson, and must have fillet a hundred pounds or more a day. Lester used to help Walt pull in his nets which were 500 feet long and 4 feet wide--that was when the blue pike and white fish were plentiful.

Bea Hicks of S. San Francisco recalls the time Eddie Moore used to drive a truck from the Postoffice to the depot each day to pick up the mail. She and a half dozen other youngsters enjoyed riding in back, and would sing-a-long with Eddie as he whistled all the latest tunes.

The Goodrichs try to keep up with things in Florida. They watch pre-season ball games, learn how to grow strawberries the modern way, watch hundreds of planes at airport "fly-ins", also attend band concerts, church events, and reunions. They say that, "In between we loaf".

Jim Harold of Washington, DC, says that the "Newsletter" lets him know what some of the folk he knew are doing, and adds "I'm learning more about Wilson's history than I ever knew." (Well, Jim, Wilson has been making history since 1810---so hang on.)

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TOURISM DEFINED:

In a recent article, Dr. Steve Illum, Niagara Univ. Professor and Chrm. of the education committee of the Niagara Co. Tourism Advisory Board, noted that there are two kinds of tourists--those who travel to specific sites like Disneyland, or those who tour the countryside looking for interesting places to stop. He believes Niagara Co. is especially suited to the "touring tourist" who may wish to enjoy the county's many fine festivals, boating and fishing, nature and walking trails, historic cemeteries, antique shops, and beautiful old homes.

He specifically notes that Wilson has one of the outstanding museums in the county just south of the village in the old railroad station, and in a reference to antique shops states, "I particularly enjoy one that is a little off the beaten path, the Old Country Barn in Wilson."

We support Dr. Illum's views and would like to add that Wilson is also becoming one of the best boating and fishing sites on Lake Ontario; has a "Cobblestone Trail" from which 12 of the 13 cobble houses in town may be seen; and has 14 historical sites identified with markers erected by the Wilson Hist. Society.

Unique among these is the grave of "Billy Sherman", the confederate Civil War horse that was captured by Wilson's GAR Veteran, Lorenzo Pratt, and ridden by him on "Sherman's March to the Sea." (Dr. Illum's article submitted by Norm MacAskill.)

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RECENT ACQUISITIONS:

John and Diane Bieda of Orinda, Cal., have donated an oil painting with gold frame of the early harbor at Wilson. It was given in memory of Margaret and John Bieda and Paul Reid, also in honor of Mrs. Cloe Reid.

Eleanor Canfield: Large Bible in good condition with Mudge family history in it.

Jean Halstead Hayes: Hurlburt's "Carroll Brand" Pickle Jar, also Brass Shaker containing "Chloroseptene Healing Powder."

Dorothy Tracey Maxfield: "Dobbs" Derby with hat box, owned by the late Dr. John Burns.

Town of Wilson (per Marilyn Allgeier): Map of Coolidge Beach (a925); 1924 Index of Town of Wilson; Book of Property Values (a954); and Book of Nominees for Elections (1897 to 1954).

George and Dorothy Linnabery: Gas Ration Stamps from World War II, Basic "A" and "C".

Judy Okoniewski: 1940 Girl Scout Uniform; Issues of "Current Events" (1947-1950).

Dr. John Argue: Books, Primer Arithmetic (1858); Index to Practical Medicine, (1884); Encyclopedia (1847); and German Book, Title unknown.

Hildred Brothers: "One Maid's Mischief" by G. Manville Fenn (late 1800's).

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MAY HOSTESSES:

Sunday afternoon hostesses for May will be: May 5th, Ray and Lorine Allgeier; May 12th, Mert and Lillian Evans; May 19th, Wes and Nan Johnson; and May 26th, Ken and Dorothy Welker.

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A SINCERE "THANK YOU":

Membership renewals have been pouring in by mail, and our treasurer gratefully acknowledges the fine response. Prompt payment of dues greatly simplifies record-keeping.

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ATTENTION!!! ALL CULINARY EXPERTS:

We need your help. Please start thinking FOOD. In 4 more weeks the "hungry hordes" will be upon us. Why?--because they know that Wilson is the best place to eat on Memorial Day. That is where they'll find delicious home-made pies, chili, baked goods, salads, and baked beans--all prepared by members of the Wilson Hist. Society.

So please be generous, because only you can insure that an adequate supply of food will be available. Parking attendants will direct you to the food building to unload.

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NEW MEMBERS:

It is a pleasure to welcome the following new members: Lois Farley of Burt; Donald and Yvonne Smithson of Ransomville; Sherman and Mary Elizabeth Allgeier of Naples, FL; and Sue Linnabery of Laramie, WY.

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APRIL PROGRAM DELIGHTS AUDIENCE:

Lovers of organ music had a real treat at the April meeting when Rev. Joseph and Robin Wadsworth of the 1st Baptist Church of Wilson, presented an interesting program on the history of the once popular reed organ. Rev. Wadsworth explained that pan pipes were experimented with in Greece as early as 100 BC, and were the first type of organ instrument. In the generations following, large and expensive pipe organs were developed, but it wasn't until the 1800's that organs reasonable enough for home or church use were manufactured.

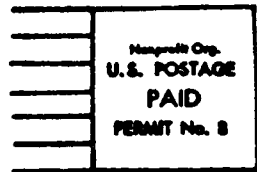
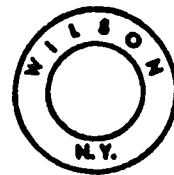
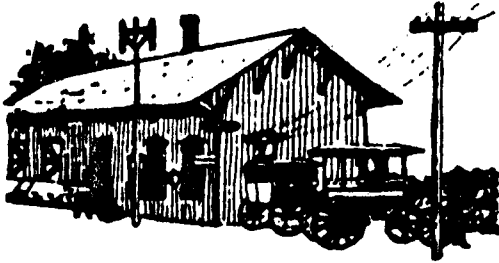
The reed type organ duplicated the sounds of the pipe organ, and one of the 1st successful models was the Harmonium which was developed as a household instrument in 1840. This was later followed by the Melodian type which used suction bellows instead of pressure. Mrs. Robin Wadsworth gave an illustrated description of the working parts of the Melodian, then played several stirring numbers including the William Tell and Poets and Peasant Overtures. This was followed with a lively sing-a-long of 10 old Gay Ninety favorites such as "The Band Played On", "Good Old Summertime", and "You're a Grand Old Flag."

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NIAGARA FALLS JOURNAL, July 7, 1894:

Wilson.--Sunday morning after service at the Presbyterian Church Mr. H. Sanford arose and explained to the audience that they were back \$400 on pastors salary and that it must be raised at once. In just 20 minutes the whole amount was raised.....Mr. Seymour Ereon, the sixteen year old son of Jacob Ereon, living on Youngstown road, had the sad misfortune to shoot off one of his fingers and part of his jaw Saturday afternoon while carelessly handling a gun. Dr. W. L. Draper was called who dressed the wounds and he says he thinks the boy will pull through all right..... (Submitted by Donald Loker)

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Wilson Historical Society

WILSON, NEW YORK 14172

NEWSLETTER

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

LIBRARIAN
WILSON CENTRAL SCHOOL
WILSON, NY 14172

JUNE 1985 Vol.14 No. 6
(Coleman Press)

MEMORIAL DAY IS "COUNTRY FAIR" DAY IN WILSON:

According to Lois Barnum, Gen. Chrm., expectations are running high for another successful Fair on Monday, May 27th, from 10:00 to 5:00PM. Since the big event is only days away, we are asked to remind you again that FOOD is essential. Especially needed will be Salads, Pie, Cake, Fruit Breads, Cookies, and Baked Beans. The food concession will be supervised by Wanda Burrows who urges everyone to try and furnish something.

Lucy Monroe, the candy lady, will again dispense delicious home-made candies, and is counting on you to help her out by a furnishing a pound or two of your own special confections.

Other foods will include Art Schnoor's Hot Dogs; Moley's Sausage' "Jan's" Chili; Carol Smith's Funnel Cakes; Sue Schultz's Popcorn; Sara Berry's Cheese; and Judy Zauner's Coffee and Donuts. There will also be a good supply of soft drinks and Pfeiffer's Loganberry juice.

New This year will be a Cotton Candy machine, (Courtesy of William Bartz) and Melinda Hutchison will be in charge of this concession.

The society's own "flea market" tent will be located east of the depot, but Edna Rose, Chrm., would like to get as many "fleas" as possible to her home before Fair Day.

Clark Stimson has arranged for a special Memorial Day Service by the American Legion of Wilson, also appearances by the Wilson High School Band, The Sweet Adelines, the Banjo Pickers; and the MacKenzie Highlander Pipes and Drums. Performances will be staged west of the depot.

Other attractions will include an antique car show arranged by Doc Argue and Bob Rose; Regular museum exhibits by Lois Jennings and her committee; a 1920 "Aint She Sweet" exhibit by Eleanor Myers, Tw. Historian; Genealogical Table by Celeste Crawford, Librarian; Wood Carving by Bob Schearer; Blacksmith Techniques by Jim Robaar; and rug making by Winnie Fischer. There will also be a drawing at 5:00PM for the society's beautiful hand-made "Log Cabin Quilt".

Childrens' attractions will include free Walt Disney Movies shown by Darrell Smith; Free Balloons distributed by Rev. Dave Palmer and his lively neighborhood clowns; Free Wagon Rides by Peter Rohring; also Diane Albright's Fishpond and Shelley Andrews Games.

Be sure to take advantage of the free parking, free admission, free shuttle bus service, and, if any problems arise, "Races" and the Wilson Vol. Fire Co. First Aid Truck will be on the grounds to help you. See you at the Fair, and please pray for a sunny day.

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NEW LIFE MEMBERS:

Sara Holmes Berry, daughter of Leonard and Clara Mayes Holmes, was born Sept. 6, 1915, at Bradford, Pa. She married Fred Berry in 1935, and they had 3 children, Judith (Jennejahn) of Spencerport, NY; Rev. Daniel Berry of Williamsville, NY; and Pricilla (Smiley) of Rantoul, IL. They have 9 grandchildren.

Sara attended Bradford High School and lived there until 1942, then moved to Niagara Falls until 1952 when they moved to Wilson. Both she and her husband, Fred, are members of Exley United Methodist Church, Charter members of the Wilson Hist. Society, Newfane Senior Citizens, Ransomville Retirees, and Retirees Bowling League. Sara is also a member of the Gnostic Guild.

Her father owned a machine shop at Coreyville, Pa., from 1912 to 1924, and her grandfather, Richard Mayes, was with the Army Corps of Engineers. While in the Phillipines in 1902-04, he helped install the dynamos on Corregedor. He was also a semi-pro ballplayer with the Pittsburg Alleghenies, forerunner of the Pittsburg Pirates. In 1936-40 he played with the Kids and Kubs at St. Petersburg, Fla.

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Fred L. Berry was born at Duke Center, Pa., the son of Fred L. Berry, Sr. and Grace Kahle. He attended Bradford High School, Chesborough Academy, and Greenville College. He worked in the Bradford Oil Fields until 1942, then went to Niagara Falls where he was with E. I. Dupont for 31 years.

Both of Fred's grandfathers were pioneers in the Bradford Oil Fields, and O.H. Berry owned an Oil Well Supply Store at Duke Center, Pa., for many years. His father was in business with Fred's grandfather until he died in the Flu Epidemic of 1918.

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FROM THE MAILBAG:

David Blemaster sent some copies of the 1820-40 census showing heads of families in Wilson. Familiar pioneer names include Reuben Willson, John Eastman, Joshua Williams, Andrew Brown, Abram Hutchins, Nathan Pratt, Simon Sheldon, Otis Tower, Sam Cole, Joseph Barnum, David Pettit.

He recalls riding on the "Docksetter" when he was a boy. Has since crossed the Atlantic 3 times, the Pacific 6 times, and Indian Ocean once. Has never experienced anything to improve on memory of those boyhood rides on Lake Ontario.

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PHYSICIAN, COUNSELOR, AND FRIEND:

It was no accident that Dr. John F. Argue decided to have a medical career. A younger sister contracted meningitis in 1922, and when she died a few days later he decided to become a doctor. He was the son of Frederick and Louise Bower Argue, and after graduation from Lockport High School he attended the University of Buffalo. Money was scarce and it wasn't easy to go to college in the days of the great depression, so Doc learned to cut hair in his father's shop and was able to earn enough to get his degree in the School of Medicine. (His old barber chair is an interesting exhibit in the Wilson Museum today.)

His decision to practice medicine in Wilson might be considered an act of providence, or it may have been just a co-incidence that he and Jean were visiting her parents, the Kaisers, in Wilson when Dr. Harvey Slocum approached him with the idea of taking over his practice at 400 Lake Street. Dr. Slocum, the local physician, had received a Fellowship at the Waters Clinic at Madison, Wis., and planned to leave the village soon.

John and Jean had spent many summers in Wilson where they had become childhood sweethearts, also Jean's ancestral roots were firmly established through her great-great grandfather, Andrew Brown, who had given the land on which the 1st Methodist Church was built in 1838. They were fond of the little lakeside village, and were pleased to accept Dr. Slocum's offer.

When Dr. Argue took over his new office, the line of medical continuity went smoothly with the help of Edna Small, Dr. Slocum's nurse and assistant, who stayed on to help the new young doctor. He likes to recall those early days when office calls were \$1.00, and \$35.00 was the fee for delivering a baby. He also made numerous housecalls and remembers one in particular when Mildred Middleton was his nurse.

An urgent early morning call came in and Doc grabbed his O.B. Sachel, picked up Mildred, and headed into the night on West Youngstown Rd. Suddenly his carlights picked up a flock of geese stretched across the entire highway. Unable to stop, he sped through the middle where the flock appeared thinnest--needless to say, feathers flew in all directions.

Drugs were limited in the early days of his practice, and there were no anti-biotics. Diagnostic equipment was primitive by today's standards, and a great deal depended on a doctor's own senses and mental alertness.

Pearl Harbor had a great impact on the career of Wilson's young doctor, and he felt that he should enlist. The town also had Dr. John Burns, so he felt justified in making that decision. When his intentions became known, petitions were circulated in an effort to keep him home, but it was to no avail--doc's sense of patriotic duty to his country won out. The war years were rewarding, however, because in addition to enhancing his medical skills, he made many life long friends.

He graduated from the School of Aviation Medicine at Randolph Field, Texas, and was then assigned to the Navy Bombardment Squadron at Rapid City, SD. He received his overseas training with the 484th Bombardment Squadron at MacDill Field in Florida, and in March, 1944, sailed for Europe on a Liberty Ship. By the time they reached Gibraltar he had treated one case of pneumonia, 2 cases of scarlet fever, 2 cases of measles, and an appendectomy.

While stationed in Italy, he served with the 15th Airforce, and received a Presidential Citation when his squadron participated in the fatal Memmengin Mission. In 1945 he was honorably discharged at Camp Dix with the rank of Captain, then returned to Buffalo where he and Jean made the decision to continue his general practice in Wilson.

In 1950, death and retirement took their toll of physicians in Niagara County, and as doctors like Burns of Wilson and Plain of Ransomville left the scene, Doc travelled further and further to make housecalls. Nearly every day he'd drive to Niagara Falls, stopping to see patients on the way, then would visit Mt. St. Mary's Hospital and Memorial Hospital, and finish up at Lockport City Hospital before returning to Wilson. He drove over 100,000 miles a year to make his rounds, but his love of sports cars helped to lighten the burden.

With the introduction of 3rd party payors like Blue Cross, Blue Shield, Medicare, and Medicaid, paper work became heavy and he was obliged to hire two full time secretaries in addition to a nurse. Secretaries and nurses who helped him over the years have been Edna Small, Evalyn Bickford, Mildred Middleton, Marion Horton, Rosa Flagler, Evelyn Draper, Susan Argue, Phyllis Hurst, Marlene Dinse, Betty Hausman, Pearl Brewster, Sonya DeBiase, Eloise Culverwell, Anne Argue, Gerry Swann, Jean Seefeldt, Betty Bulmer, and Ella Mae Stevens, Office Manager. Current employees are Cheryl Brown, Office Manager, Terry Stephenson, LPN, and Linda Pease, Secy.

Dr. Argue is one of the founders of the Wilson Hist. Society, and considers it to be one of the most rewarding experiences of his life. He gave the old railroad depot to the town of Wilson after an offhand remark by his son that the station would make a fine museum. He has since initiated a number of activities, and devoted the past 12 years putting the museum and society on a firm foundation.

In September, 1974, 400 persons attended an Appreciation Dinner in the South Wilson Fire Hall to honor Dr. Argue for his service to the community. He was cited again in 1978 at a meeting of the New York Medical Society when he was chosen Physician of the Year and given a "Presidential Citation" and standing ovation by the 300 delegates assembled.

Doc probably has cured as many patients with his engaging personality and warm understanding of their problems as he has by dispensing pills and anti-biotics. Dora Wakeman may have summed it all up recently when she observed, "Wirt gets feeling pretty bad sometimes, but after a visit to Doc, he seems like a new man."

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FLAG DAY CELEBRATION PLANNED:

The W. H. Stevenson Elementary School in Ransomville will celebrate Flag Day on June 14th at 1:00PM on the school grounds. The unique Flag Day Program, initiated in 1969, is headed up by Michael Ioannone and Raymond Forsyth. The student body will participate in the ceremonies which will feature new flags donated by patrons in the community as well as flags from all fifty states.

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IT'S A FACT: Today is the tomorrow you worried about yesterday.

NOMINATIONS (1985-86)

Dr. John F. Argue has decided to step down as President of the Wilson Hist. Soc., after having served in that capacity since 1972. We wouldn't go so far as to say doc is superstitious, but he feels that 12 years is enough. He will continue an active roll in the society as a member of the Board of Trustees, changing places with Whitney Barnum who has been nominated for the Presidency.

The nominations committee presented the following slate of officers to be voted upon at the June meeting:

President, Whitney Barnum; 1st Vice-Pres., Norman MacAskill; 2nd Vice-Pres., John Myers; Treasurer, Millie Croop; Rec. Sec., Judy Zauner; and Cor. Sec, Flossie Lortz.

Trustees to June, 1988: Carole Schnoor, Donald Croop, and Arthur Schnoor.

Committee Chairmen: Lois Jennings, Acquisitions; Antique Cars, Bob Rose; By-Laws, Don Croop; Caboose, Burt Jennings; Country Fair, Lois Barnum; Genealogy, Celeste Crawford; Grounds, Elwin Upton; Historical Sites, Jan Sporleder; Sunday Hostesses, Clara Marcks; Housekeeping, Maryanne Sharpe; Museum, Lois Jennings; Librarian, Celeste Crawford; Planning, Arthur Schnoor; Program, Dorothy Linnabery; Publications, Don Croop; Publicity, Karen Haseley; Quilt, Betty Stimson; Refreshments, Emma Schrader; Tours, Shelley Andrews; Ways & Means, Winnie Fischer; Photographer, Edna Robinson, Nominations, Lois Barnum, Memorial, Millie Croop, and Study Group, George Linnabery.

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JUNE PROGRAM:

A box supper will be featured at the annual meeting of the society on Monday, June 17th, at 6:00PM. Everyone is invited to bring a decorated box of "goodies" for their own family. It is planned to have awards for the most original, prettiest, etc. Coffee, tea, and juice will be furnished. Refreshment hostesses will be Jan Sporleder, Beryl Tovell, and Emma Lou Reppentine.

The annual business meeting will follow supper when officers for next year will be elected, and Committee Chairmen will be asked to report on their activities.

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HOSTESSES FOR JUNE:

The following members have agreed to serve as hostesses on Sunday afternoons from 2 to 4PM: June 2nd, Kathryn Frerichs and Helen Dinse; June 9th, Tom and Gail Walder; June 16th, Miss Kalene and Leona Hunter; June 23rd, Howard and Freda Lederhouse, and June 30th, Robert and Bobbie Hull. The service and devotion of our Sunday hostesses is greatly appreciated. Not only do they make it possible for the museum to be open to the public, they also serve as "Good Will Ambassadors" for the town of Wilson.

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RECENT ACQUISITIONS:

Howard Schultz of Chestnut Rd., Wilson, has donated a 1st page from the 1st issue of the Buffalo Evening News, Vol.1-No.1, dated October 11, 1880. It was the 4 o'clock 2nd edition, and sold for 1 cent a copy. The headlines for the day were about the next day's election, Tuesday, October 12th, and a disastrous railroad collision in Pittsburg when 22 were killed and 40 injured. E.H. Butler, publisher and editor, stated that the policy of the paper would be to "Keep abreast with the times, to be free, independent, and outspoken, and to champion the right, no matter who stands in the way."

Janet Sporleder: 1984 issues of "Colonial Homes" and "American Heritage."

Margaret Wilson: Toy covered wagon made by prisoner during leisure time while working on a road in Topango Canyon, Cal. Beautifully done and in excellent condition.

Michael E. Evans: Copy of 1945 issue of the Union Sun & Journal.

Neal Brown of Niagara Falls: Books belonging to former lady Principal in Wilson Schools--obtained in a house sale on 7th St., Niagara Falls.

Dr. John Argue: I.B.M. Clock to be used in Transportation Building; also Charcoal-burning footwarmer--restored.

Carol Schnoor: Brochure of car museum at Bridgewater, Conn.

Barbara Johnson: Hinged box on rollers, also 1908 newspaper cover.

Village of Wilson per Keith Dixon: Notes of village business (1901-1935); also street records of repairing and oiling (1952-1961).

Charles Buchner, Ransomville: Newspaper photo of 1962 town officials; also 8 photos of historic value.

Richard Palmer of Syracuse: Photo of the "Eurydice" of Lake Island Park, Wilson, NY.

Maynard Pettit: 2 Buttons from Home Defense Reserve, Co. F, of Wilson (1917-1918); also, "Collier's New Photographed History of World War I" (1918).

Arthur Schnoor: Liquidation check from Wilson State Bank in amount of \$1.21; also magazine, "Retail Coalman" (1923).

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NEW MEMBERS:

The society is pleased to welcome its latest new members: Jack Maxfield, Wilson; Kristina Mawhiney (1½ yrs. old), Wilson; Julie Burrows, Burt; Ellsworth and Bess McKelvey, Niagara Falls; Sumner and Betty Stacey, Vista, Cal.; Deborah Eastman, Rushville, NY; and William Kirchoff, Sanford, Fla.

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GOLDEN ANNIVERSARIES TO BE OBSERVED:

The family of Fred and Sara Berry plan to hold a reception for their parents at the Wilson Museum on June 9, 1985, to honor them on their 50th Golden Wedding Anniversary.

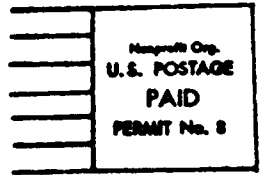
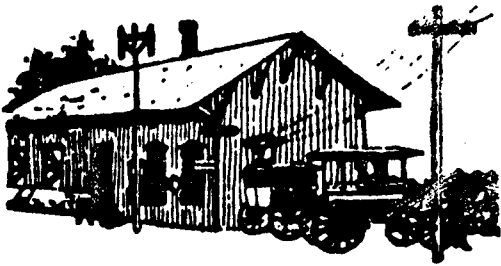
Dr. John and Jean Argue will also be honored by their family and friends in a reception to be held at the Wilson Museum, June 26, 1985, in celebration of their Golden Anniversary.

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BON MOT:

The hardest thing in the world to understand is the income tax. --Albert Einstein.

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Wilson Historical Society

WILSON, NEW YORK 14172

NEWSLETTER

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

JULY-AUGUST 1985 Vol.14 No. 7
(Coleman Press)

LIBRARIAN
WILSON CENTRAL SCHOOL
WILSON, NY 14172

WALTER WILSON, FISHERMAN AND WOODCARVER:

Walter Wilson was born in Wilson in 1897 and died November 5, 1984 at 87 years of age. He was one of 8 children and, when quite young, worked in various business enterprises of his father, Timothy Wilson. On week nights he set pins at the bowling alley, or assisted with the sale of popcorn, soft drinks, and candy at the Pavilion. In winter he trapped muskrats; gathered bulrushes to sell; or cut blocks of ice at the harbor where he lived. They drew the ice by horse and wagon to an ice house where it was packed in sawdust for summer use.

His father was a commercial fisherman, so at the age of 10, young Walter began to learn the often dangerous business. Timothy's boat had a small sail and 3 pair of oars, and they fished anywhere from a half to 6 miles out on Lake Ontario. At the time, they were catching herring which sold for 5 cents a pound, netting them \$50 to \$75 a week--a considerable sum those days.

They fished from April through June, and the rest of the summer, Walter had the responsibility of taking customers on sunset boatrides aboard the "Sunrise Bell." They first cruised northwest into the setting sun and, after sundown, would circle north and back east to the harbor using the stars and moon to navigate.

The little free time Walter had was spent on the ball diamond, and many spectators would line the field when he performed. In fact, he was scouted by several professional ball clubs.

He married Ida E. Southcomb in 1924, and they had one daughter, Barbara. Shortly after, his father passed away and Walter and his brothers, Emerson and Floyd, became owners of the Wilson Brothers Boathouse. About this time, Walter, with local help, built a new fishing boat, "The Docksetter", which was a great improvement over earlier boats. It was broad in beam and very seaworthy, but nets still had to be pulled in manually. Walter's hands would often be cracked and bleeding from the cold lake waters--especially if the fish were running good.

The brothers mainly navigated by landmarks along the shoreline, and it was 1941 before they finally had an automatic net puller installed. This reduced some of the physical effort, but fish still had to be removed from the net by hand, seaweed pulled free, and the nets wound on reels to dry. Rain or shine, stormy or calm, Walter was at the wheel by 5:00AM, and at 9:30AM he would be back in port to clean and fillet the fish, pack them in ice, and await the arrival of a distributor. At 4:30PM, they'd set out to set the nets for the next day's catch.

In the early days of his career, Walter caught many species including perch, trout, whitefish, pike, and sturgeon, but by the 1930's fishing began to fall off drastically. During the following years he rented rowboats, canoes, and moorings for private boats, and also ran a ferry service to "Sunset Island". One of his last big fishing days was in 1957 when the blue pike were running. All nets were filled, and his catch weighed over 1800 pounds.

Walter gave up commercial fishing in 1962 as lake pollution and the Lamprey eel finally destroyed the once abundant fishing industry. As the bass, pike, trout, and other species disappeared, the Boathouse Restaurant became the mainstay for the family's income.

Walter Wilson was not only a good fisherman, but a good friend to both young and old as well. Many persons today will remember the thrill and excitement of being invited along to watch the net-pulling process, and at dockside it was a common sight to see him sitting in a rocking chair with youngsters and oldsters gathered 'round to listen to his adventuresome tales and homespun philosophy. As he talked, he would have always have a jack knife in one hand and a piece of wood in the other, and as one watched, a duck or bird would take shape.

The wood he used was often found on the beach after a "northwester", and though Walter was not trained in the arts, he carved out hundreds of pieces in his lifetime. He also liked to do oil paintings of a nature oriented theme, but his real fascination was with all types of water fowl.

The Wilson Historical Society will eventually house about 100 of his beautiful wood carvings in the museum along with fishing nets and other equipment already on display.

(Submitted by Barbara Wilson)

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HAPPY DILEMMA:

It has been the policy to award \$25 on Class Night to the Senior having the highest grade in American History. This year, the society voted to make the award to both a girl and boy.

When Principal Ted Grocki notified us who the winners were, he wrote, "I have a pleasant dilemma. Three students have attained a 98 on the History Comprehensive Regents Examination."

In view of the tie, the society decided to award all three students a \$25 award for their fine achievement. Recipients are Kevin King, John Pisello, and Heidi Truschell.

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BON MOT: Life is like a ten speed bike. Most of us have gears we never use. (C. Schultz)

NEW LIFE MEMBERS:

Alice N. Nelson of Oriskany, NY, has joined the Life Membership Class of the Wilson Historical Society. She grew up in Wilson and graduated from the Wilson High School in 1923. She is a descendent of one of Wilson's early pioneer families. One year after the War of 1812, her great-great grandfather, Benjamin Nelson, purchased 150 acres of wilderness lands where the present Nelson Rd. and Rt. 425 intersect. Benjamin's father, Pomphrey, who served in the Revolutionary War, came to Wilson with him. The sword he carried is on loan to the Oriskany Museum. Both Benjamin and his father were buried in the old section of Greenwood. Alice is also descended from Francis Cooke and Richard Warren who came over on the Mayflower, and two other ancestors, Thomas Nelson and Stephen Hopkins, were signers of the Declaration of Independence.

Frances Morrison Cook was born Jan. 10, 1919, at Duluth, Mn., and she completed high school at Denver, Col. After graduation from the University of Denver in 1941, she married Warren Cook, an F.B.I. Agent for 34 years. They have two children, Warren F. Cook and Thomas D. Cook, also 5 grandchildren. They love to travel and covered 10,000 miles last summer in their Airstream trailer. Their mutual hobby is genealogy, and she is descended from the Robinsons, Burches, and Sincleas (Sinclairs) who lived in Niagara County and Wilson during the first half of the 19th Century. Their home is in Escondido, California.

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HONORARIUM:

Charles and Beatrice Mensch of Mesa, Arizona, have given a \$50 donation to the Wilson Hist. Society in honor of Dr. John F. Argue, and in recognition of his 50 years of medical service.

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FROM THE MAILBAG:

Dan Albright, son of Harold and Esther Albright, dropped us a note and said he enjoys reading the "Newsletter". Dan retired from the U. S. Airforce with the rank of Lt. Colonel, and is now living with his family in Wichita Falls, Texas.

Mary Weiler of Raleigh, NC, writes that daughter Jenny has completed her 1st year in college and is doing real good--made the Dean's list and plans to take up Physical Therapy. Beth hasn't chosen a college yet, but enjoys acting and dancing in musical productions. Both girls are holding down waitress jobs for the summer. Dave Weiler's work keeps him close to Raleigh, and Mary finds time to visit nursing homes with the "Singing Manicurists", a church group.

Virginia Crossman Moot donated some interesting snapshots which appear to have been taken in the early '20's. Some of the persons photographed include her cousins, Jack and Tom Teague. (Tom, now retired, was a Senator from Maine for 10 years.) Other snaps show Virginia and Anna Hamilton, Miss Thomas (Mrs. Clines), Mrs. Blackwell, Helen Higgins, and Jane Ward. Scenes of an early Memorial Day parade show old cars (ca. 1920 models), and one pictures an old Socony Gasoline Pump that once stood on the curb across the street from the Hub Hotel.

Virginia, better known as "Ginny", was a member of the Class of '35, and believes it was the last to graduate from the old brick high school. Her class held a Valentine dance at Middleton's Hall, Feb. 15, 1935, and music was provided by the "Indigoers", a local musical group composed of Harry and Ronald Hamblin, Willie Rockwood, Lowell Fitch, Dick Loomis, and Larry Pease.

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IN MEMORIAM:

The society extends its condolences to the family of Dorothy (Mudge) Gick of East Aurora who passed away at Roswell Park, May 14, 1985, following a long illness. She is survived by her husband, Sidney Gick and daughter, Debbie. The late Mrs. Gick was raised in Wilson and was the daughter of Fred and Ethel Mudge.

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JOB WELL DONE:

A plaque has been mounted on the windmill donated by James Reynolds in 1980. Names of the men involved in its assembly and repair are inscribed on it along with the businesses and persons who donated parts. Chuck Messersmith led the way putting the windmill in operation.

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EXPIRATION NOTICE:

If there is a RED STAR by your address label, it indicates your membership is 3 months in arrears and our by-laws will not permit us to send you the "Newsletter" until your membership is renewed. Your support of the Wilson Historical Society has been appreciated.

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SENIOR CITIZENS' LAMENT:

Thought I'd let my doctor check me, 'cause I didn't feel quite right.
All those aches and pains annoyed me, and I couldn't sleep at night.
He could find no real disorder, but he wouldn't let it rest--
What with Medicare and Blue Shield, it wouldn't hurt to do some tests.
To the hospital he sent me, though I didn't feel that bad,
And arranged for them to give me every test that could be had.
I was fluoroscoped and cystoscoped, my aging frame displayed
Stripped upon an ice-cold table while my gizzards were X-rayed.
I was checked for worms and parasites, for fungus and for crud,
While they pierced me with long needles, taking samples of my blood.
Doctors came to check me over, probed and pushed and poked around,
And to make sure I was living, they wired me for sound.
They have finally concluded; (their results have filled a page)
What I have will someday kill me, my affliction is old age.

--author unknown (Submitted by Lois Jennings)

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AFTER THIRTY, a body has a mind of its own. --Bette Midler

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HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 1985 "COUNTRY FAIR":

Umbrellas were a hot item at the fair this year, but smiling faces were everywhere as thousands flocked to the museum grounds and partook of the tasty home-made foods, excellent displays, great entertainment, and huge "flea" market.

Inside the museum, visitors were attracted to the rug-weaving demonstrations by Winnie Fischer who also gave a history of the Donner Loom. Much attention was directed to an exhibit set up by Eleanor Myers, Town Historian, showing the dress styles and assorted items of the early twenties. Old sheet music of that era was provided by Frances Goldthorpe.

A display of Wilson High School Yearbooks were eagerly thumbed through by graduates while former teachers answered questions and encouraged them to register. Regular museum exhibits, including some of the wood carvings of the late Walter Wilson, also received much attention.

A crowd pleaser outside the museum were the wood-carving demonstrations by Bob Schearer and Gary Hacker, and the blacksmith techniques displayed by James Robaar on his portable forge and anvil. Those closely associated with fair preparations can appreciate the work done by Bob Rose and Doc Argue in preparing the antique car exhibit which was enhanced this year by a number of old Buicks from the Antique Buick Club of the Niagara Frontier.

The Wilson High School Band, directed by Keith Schesel, played several numbers following a noontime tribute to America's war heroes by members of Wilson's American Legion Post. Comdr. John Demmin reminded fair-goers that we are able to enjoy events like the "Country Fair" because of the sacrifices made by American veterans to protect our freedoms and way of life.

Darrel Smith estimated over 1,000 children and adults watched the free movies, and the society is grateful to the Wilson Free Library and Nioga Systems for providing films and projector. Also, for the 1st time, free balloons were given to the youngsters, and Dave Palmer and his helpers were hard pressed to keep up with the demand. The tank and helium gas were provided by Strate Welding of Lockport for the 13th consecutive year. Another free attraction was the wagon rides given by Peter Rohring and his Belgium Draft horses. Also doing real well were the childrens' games operated by Sandy Wilson, and the fish pond run by Emma Lou Reppentine.

The society's "flea" market tent, newly located east of the depot, did a land office business under the capable management of Edna Rose, assisted by Jane Demmin.

The well organized food concession, under the supervision of Wanda Burrows, had an adequate supply of Chili, home-made pies, salads, and baked goods, and people were seen happily munching on Art Schnoor's delicious hot dogs right up to closing time. Other popular foods included the Moley family sausage concession, and Carol and Sally Smith's "Dutch Country" funnel cakes. Pfeiffer's savory loganberry juice was also in big demand.

The home-made candy did especially well--no doubt due to the mouth-watering confections made by Lucy Monroe and other contributors. A jelly bean guessing contest was won by Robert Sax of Wilson who received two pounds of candy as a prize. Cotton candy, a 1st this year, went over big thanks to Melinda Hutchison, operator, and Bill and Mary Bartz who donated use of their cotton candy machine. The Bartz's also permitted the society to use their popcorn machine which was operated by Sue Schultz.

The beautiful log cabin quilt made by Florence Schultz, Betty Stimson, and Beryl Tovell, was won by Judy Guenther of Lancaster; the Crocheted Doll by Mary Anne Schultz of N. Tonawanda; the woven loom place mat by Isabel Canfield of Ransomville; and the Society Cookbook by Norrie Desso of Wilson.

Cash awards for the pie contest organized by Faye Pisello were given in the junior division to Nadine Oliphant, 1st; Traci Spanton, 2nd; and Michele Young, 3rd. In the Senior division Kim Hunter was 1st; Sharon Schotz, 2nd; and Jude Bendt, 3rd.

The fair poster contest attracted 100 entrants from the school, and judges awarded 1st place to Linda Mayer, and 2nd place to Brian Mayer. All entrants received tickets for 2 free bowling games at Allie Brandt Lanes in Lockport.

About 75 Wilson Businessmen helped finance ads for the fair, and several sponsored commercials on WLVL-Radio who broadcast from the fairgrounds. Radio sponsors were Lakeside Food, Village Meeting Place, Nutcracker Sweet; T & R Corner, Ray and Bob Thilk, Scheffler's Restaurant and Jackie's Flowers. In addition, 15 local nurseries contributed plants for the society plant booth chaired by Doris Klees.

Parking facilities were provided by Pfeiffer's Foods, Ontario Orchards, Wilson Central School, Exley United Methodist Church, Our Lady of the Rosary R.C. Church, & Farm & Garden Supplies. Other services and supplies were donated by places such as the Wilson Boathouse, the Wilson Fire Co., Exley Methodist Church, Wilson School, and R.A.C.E.S. We are also grateful to the Wilson Fire Co. for providing ambulance and first aid services on the grounds. Special discounts were provided by Durwood Park Store, Lakeside Market, and Pfeiffer's Foods.

Early birds Judy and Ron Zauner were on the grounds at 4:30AM to prepare coffee for dealers and Nettie Stimson and her helpers were directing dealers to their "spots" at 6:00AM. We also give a "tip-of-the-hat" to Whit Barnum and his rugged parking crew who stuck it out, in spite of showers, directing visitors to free parking and free shuttle bus facilities. Ed Hastings and his men did a fine job setting up tables and chairs as well as cleaning up when the fair was over--we just couldn't "pull it off" without men like these. We also would like to mention Frank Massing who, with his faithful hound, stayed in the caboose all night to keep an eye on the museum grounds and antique cars.

If any one reason could be given for the success of this year's fair, it would have to be the organizing ability of Lois Barnum, General Chairman, the 40 work area chairmen who assisted her, and the more than 200 workers, both members and friends, who pitched in to help out.

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MEMBERS CELEBRATE GOLDEN WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES:

Rev. and Mrs. Gordon Loomis of Hornell, N.Y., celebrated their 50th Wedding Anniversary on June 9, 1985. Rev. Loomis was a former pastor of Exley United Methodist Church.

Fred and Sara Berry also celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary on June 9th at the Wilson Museum, as did Doctor John and Jean Argue on June 23rd.

Harold and Clara Marcks will celebrate their Golden Anniversary on August 4, 1985.

STURDY MAID:

The 1st "Maid of the Mist" was built to carry passengers on the Niagara River in 1846. A larger and better boat replaced her in 1854, but the project lost money and the owner decided to sell out. The new owner wanted the boat delivered to the mouth of the river, but it was not easy to find someone with enough courage to steer it down Niagara's turbulent waters.

Joel R. Robinson finally stepped forward and offered to command the boat, and James Jones and James McIntyre helped him. They managed to crowd the Canadian shoreline and avoided the worst of the rapids, but were drawn into the Whirlpool where they spent some anxious minutes before the ship broke free. Experiencing only slight damage, the rest of the trip was fairly easy, and the entire run took 17 minutes before they docked at Queenston.

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NEW MEMBERS:

Many new members joined the society last month including Terry Swann of Spain, (23 years with the U.S. Navy); Ken Henderson, Burt; Rosanna Schultz, Youngstown; Mrs. Patricia Bury, Buffalo; Myrtle and Harold Fisher, Albany; Cecelia Wallen, Fredonia; Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Brewer, St. Petersburg, FL; Gail and Thomas Jeacock, Fort Erie, Can; and from Wilson, Cathy Shook; Dudley Secor; Evelyn and Robert Draper; Elizabeth and Robert Schearer; Heather Bradley; Richard and Peggy Shards; and Terry and Mitchell Stephenson.

New Junior Members are: Amy, Mark, and Sara Smiley, Rantoul, IL; Mathew Jennejahn, Spencerport; Sharon Berry, Williamsville; and Heather and Nathan Stephenson of Wilson.

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BUDGET APPROVED:

The proposed budget for 1985-86 was approved at the May meeting as follows: Caboose, \$100; Historic Sites, \$200; Library, \$100; Museum Upkeep, \$5,000; Museum Comm., \$300; Office Supplies, \$100; Programs, \$100; Publications, \$800; Ways & Means, \$250; Total, \$6,950.

The above figures indicate why the Memorial Day "Country Fair" is so vital to the operation of the Wilson Museum and Wilson Historical Society.

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HAVE YOU NOTICED:

How nice the caboose looks since Burt Jennings repaired and attached new steps on the west end. The long bolts needed for the job were donated by Chuck Schlyer.

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THUMBNAIL SKETCH:

Cecelia Gifford Wallen of Fredonia, NY, was born in 1940 at Pomfret, NY., and graduated from Brocton Central School and Jamestown Business College. She and her husband have 2 sons, Richard, 16, and John, 10, and all are members of St. Anthony's R.C. Church. Cecelia is currently Vice-Pres. of the Fredonia Garden Club and is joining the N.S.D.A.R.

Her father, Bruce Gifford, was born in Wilson, and her grandfather, Charles Gifford, spent his early years there. Her great grandfather, Elmer Gifford, operated a coal business in Wilson for many years, and her great-great grandfather, Jerome B. Gifford, is buried in Greenwood Cemetery. Her Revolutionary ancestor, Captain Joseph Gifford, was known as a great Indian fighter, and the British offered a 20 guineas reward for his scalp.

Some other members of the society descended from Captain Gifford are, Esther Pope, Douglas Farley, and Eloise Smith Culverwell.

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SUNDAY HOSTESSES FOR JULY-AUGUST:

Clara Marcks has accepted the office of Hostess Chairman, so please make her job easier by saying "yes" when she calls you for help. If you haven't served as a museum greeter, you might be pleasantly surprised if you did. It's a nice way to spend a couple sociable hours on Sunday afternoon, and visitors are always friendly and interested in Wilson's heritage.

July 7th, Jean Hayes and Larry Halstead; July 14th, Julia and Lawrence Bulmer; July 21st, Bessie and Fenton Cole; July 28th, Ada Giles and Ruth Rawlings.

August 4th, Dorothy and George Linnabery; August 11th, Lucille and Cliff Upton; Aug. 18th, Edna Robinson and Maryanne Sharpe; and August 25th, Dora and Wirt Wakeman.

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ELECTION OF OFFICERS:

The following officers of the Wilson His. Soc. were elected at the Annual June Meeting: Whit Barnum, Pres., Norm MacAskill, 1st Vice-Pres., John Myers, 2nd Vice-Pres., Judy Zauner, Rec. Sec., Flossie Lortz, Cor. Sec., and Millie Croop, Treas.

Trustees to June, 1988: Carole Schnoor, Don Croop, and ARTHUR SCHNOOR; to June, 1987: LEO KLEES, Ed Hastings, and Burt Jennings; to June, 1986: DR. JOHN ARGUE, Nettie Stimson, and George Linnabery. Honorary trustees: HELEN BORNGRAEBER, Harold Mosher, Supervisor, and Eleanor Myers, Town Historian.

Committee Chairmen: Lois Jennings, Museum; Lois Jennings, Acquisitions; Bob Rose, Antique Cars; Don Croop, By-Laws; Burt Jennings, Caboose; Lois Barnum, Country Fair; Celeste Crawford, Library; Elwin Upton, Grounds; Jan Sporleder, Historical Sites; CLARA MARCKS, Sunday Hostesses; Maryanne Sharpe, Housekeeping; Celeste Crawford, Genealogy; Art Schnoor, Planning; Dorothy Linnabery, Program; Don Croop, Publications; Karen Haseley, Publicity; BETTY STIMSON, Quilt; EMMA SCHRADER, Refreshments; Shelley Andrews, Tours; Winnie Fischer, Ways & Means; George Linnabery, Study Group; Edna Robinson, Photographer; Millie Croop, Memorial; and Lois Barnum, Nominations.

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NO REGULAR MEETINGS IN JULY AND AUGUST:

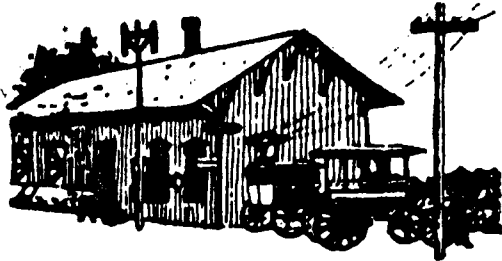
Trustees will meet at the museum at 8PM on Wed., July 10th, and Wed., August 14th.

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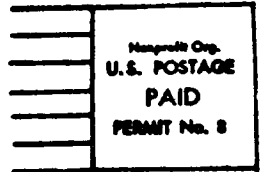
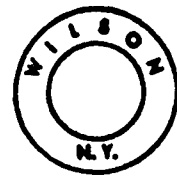
BEUTEL NURSERY DONATES FLOWERS FOR BOX SOCIAL:

Table decorations were donated by Donald Beutel and sold to members with proceeds turned over to Treasurer. Prizes for "prettiest" were awarded to Lois Barnum and Martha MacAskill; Most unique, George Linnabery and Judy Zauner; and "funniest", Millie Croop.

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V.F.
Wilson
Historical



Wilson Historical Society

WILSON, NEW YORK 14172

NEWSLETTER

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

LIBRARIAN
WILSON CENTRAL SCHOOL
WILSON, NY 14172

SEPTEMBER 1985 Vol. 14 No. 8
(Coleman Press)

THE WORLD OF ASAHEL STAPLES:

(Note: In 1848, Asahel Staples was hired to teach the Ide Settlement School. He kept a diary of his daily pursuits, and excerpts from it give an interesting insight on the life of a rural schoolteacher in the mid 1800's.)

On October 4, 1848, Asahel Staples hitched up his horse and buggy and invited Sarah Harwood to go to the Wilson Academy to attend a meeting of the "Philadelphians". The cultural society was called to order by Mr. Brazee, Pres., and the principle speaker was I. M. Aldrich. After the meeting, the society adjourned for a social hour and, before returning to the Ide Settlement, Asahel and Sarah drove to Cooper's Inn in Olcott for a glass of lemonade.

It was a time for celebration. Young Staples, having passed a four hour examination given by Supt. Davis of the Wilson Schools, had been hired by Elder Ide to teach the Ide School for \$17 a month. His schedule was four full weeks including every other Saturday and all Holy days.

The Ide School was built of logs and daubed with mortar, dirt, and tobacco. There were two temporary desks or benches fastened to the logs, and one of the five movable seats had no legs. There was also a stove, chair with board bottom, shovel, broom, water pail, cup, and blackboard.

School opened with 10 scholars, and they were lectured and talked to for about half the morning with the remaining time spent in spelling. The afternoon was devoted to reading, spelling, and writing.

Asahel boarded with the Loomis family, and attended the Methodist-Episcopal Church at the "Corners" where he sang in the choir. He enjoyed Rev. Wilbur's sermons, and the influence exerted on young Staples by Rev. Wilbur, Loomis, and Elder Ide, helped him in teaching moral values to his young pupils.

He also worked in many agricultural pursuits and often referred to "working on our burnt off piece of land." Sometimes he did logging with the use of Mr. Woodward's oxen, and also cut buckwheat on shares and helped sow wheat in the fall on the Harwood farm. In addition to his regular duties, he was expected to visit at homes in the community such as the Salisburys, Cushings, and Richmonds.

Asahel used a horse and buggy for most of his travels, but once he decided to walk to Lockport to buy a pair of boots. On the way, he was given a ride by Alfred J. Moody, and after purchasing his new boots for \$3.50, caught a ride home with a Mr. Nobles of Somerset.

Staples kept order in his school and occasionally mentions flogging an unruly student to maintain discipline. One time he and his students attended a Christmas program at the District #12 School on Slash Road, (now Maple). He apparently wasn't too impressed as he critically observed, "A Mr. Brookins taught the school and he had 17 unruly, noisy, students."

Some of the Ide Rd. pupils mentioned in his diary were Royal Ide, Miss A. Danch, Henry Ide, Justice Brown, Miss C. Bidding, Miss R. Smith, Clark Miller, J. Salisbury, H. Hulbut, C. Loomis, Jane Hayne, John Gillet, Orra Akin, and Lucena Thayer.

March 3rd was the last day of school for the winter term, and Staples wryly noted, "I was still trying to collect my pay on April 9th, and when I went into Wilson to see about it, I didn't get any of it." In spite of the tight-money situation, he never-the-less taught school for many years, and ten years later mentions taking his family to Lockport to visit Aunt Mary Harwood.

In August, 1858, he attended a three day meeting of the NYS Teacher's Association in Lockport, and the highlight of the event was on the evening of August 5th when Prof. Davies of Albany announced that the Submarine Telegraph had just been completed across the ocean, and two continents were now united.

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CONGRATULATIONS...

to Harold and Clara (Bishing) Marcks, who celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary on August 4th; also Ora and Marion (Wilson) Pettit, who celebrated theirs on July 21st. The Pettits were married on August 8th. Both couples live in Wilson and are His. Soc. members.

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FULFILLMENT FOR A RETIREE:

Every phase of life is different--sometimes it may be hard to cope,
But you can make it easy with faith and trust and hope;
And it's so very nice to know that as you ease along
Friends you have and those to be produce a lovely song--
A song of joy and fellowship, 'tis never far away,
It's caring for each other that makes a brighter day!

--Edna Regnet October 10, 1984

NEW CAPTAIN AT THE WHEEL:

Whitney Barnum, Pres., will be at the helm as the Wilson Historical Society begins its 14th year of historic preservation and related activities in the town of Wilson. He will carry on the work started by Dr. John F. Argue in 1972, and has been one of the prime movers behind the society having served as a trustee until accepting the Presidency at the annual June meeting.

Whit is a native of Wilson, and attended the old district no. 13 school and Wilson High School where he graduated in 1932.

His family has been active in the business and political history of the town since 1862 when his great-grandfather, Fred Foster Barnum, settled on a farm on route 425 south of the village.

He recently announced his candidacy for Niagara County legislator of the 14th district which encompasses the towns of Wilson, Cambria, and part of Lewiston. His political experience includes 23 years service as Supervisor of the Town of Wilson, and 11 years on the Niagara County Board of Supervisors. While serving on the Board he was a member of the committee investigating the need for a Community College, and later served on the Board's college committee.

Until recently he was one of the town's leading dairy farmers and member of the Niagara County Milk Producers, Dairy Improvement Association, and Farm Bureau. He also served on the Niagara County Water Commissioner Board, and is currently Chairman of the Community Resource Development Committee. In 1976, he was appointed Clerk of the Niagara County legislature, and served in that capacity until December, 1981.

He is a member of Exley United Methodist Church in Wilson where he serves as Chairman of the Administrative Board, and he and his wife, Lois, and daughter Melanie, reside on their Maple Road farm in the town of Wilson.

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RECENT ACQUISITIONS:

Mrs. Lela Zeitz of Wilson-Youngstown Road, has donated old photos of John B. Litchard, Frank Litchard, and the U.S. Transport, "Hancock"; also a scrapbook of the Wilson Centennial.

John B. Litchard was a Civil War veteran and was wounded 3 times during combat. His son, Frank Litchard, enlisted in 1898 during the Spanish-American War, and served in the Medical Corps until 1901. The "Hancock" is the troop ship on which Frank served when he returned to America from the Philippines in 1900. Frank's son, John A. Litchard, also served his country in the U.S. Airforce during World War II.

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Dr. John Argue: Framed and matted pictures of a 1914 Mercedes Benz and Duesenberg; Old camera and tripod; and a variety of books.

Mrs. Roberta Taylor and the Class of 1985: 1985 Yearbook, the "Crest".

John D. Grieg of Niagara Falls: Three railroad calendars published by the Orange Empire Railway Museum, 1982, 1983, and 1984.

John Fitch: 1915 License Plate needed for Canadian transportation; New York 1914, 1915, 1916, 1920, and 1922.

Marlene Schotz: Bi-centennial project completed by South Wilson Pioneer LH Club showing the Cobblestone Trail in Wilson.

Don and Wanda Burrows: Bridge for use at annual fair.

Mrs. E. W. McKelvey of Niagara Falls: Eastlake Armchair.

Bill Bartz: Old original faucet from Dr. Berry's house on Lake Street.

Ida Wilson: 32 pieces of wood carvings autographed by the late Walter Wilson; 12 snapshots of the Wilson Harbor; book, "Game Bird Carving" by Bruce Birk; 2 jackknives used by Walter Wilson and 5 pictures painted by him; also one water color, "The Boathouse", painted by Joseph Higgins; and Prayer Stool made by Walter.

William Strassburg, Ransomville: Prayers and Devotion Book, "All For Jesus", 1884.

Nelson Schultz of N. Tonawanda: Official Scrapbook of the Future Farmers of Wilson, 1942-43.

Andrae Sporleder: Four-15' heavy duty extension cords for use at the annual fair.

Leslie Beukema: Box of sheet cut nails, 1850; also sign, "Davis Sewing Machine Company, Wilson, NY--Arthur Barger, Agent."

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SEPTEMBER HOSTESSES:

The following persons have agreed to serve as Museum greeters on Sunday afternoons from 2 to 4PM: Sept. 1st, Clarence and Lucy Monroe; Sept. 8th, Leonard and Marion Tabor; Sept. 15th, Dorothy Lort and Grace Singer; Sept. 22nd, Roger and Mary Mulwhiney; and Sept. 29th, Berne and Nancy Kent. Should any emergency arise, hostesses are asked to please notify either Clara Marks, Hostess Chrm., or Lois Jennings, Museum Chrm.

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FROM THE MAILBAG:

The recent addition of David and Ann (Weiler) Perkins to our membership rolls stirs up old memories. Ann, a former member of Intermediate Girl Scout Troop No. 1 of Wilson, once joined with her friends in celebrating the annual Memorial Day weekend outing held at the Croop farm.

It was a happy occasion. A cook-out was held the 1st evening; the girls slept overnight in the barn, and the following morning trash barrels were painted for the village of Wilson, (their good turn project.) In the afternoon they enjoyed beating the boys at softball; fishing in the pond, and, (though the girls were not supposed to swim) some would always manage to "fall in". Archery was also enjoyed by the scouts, and it was here that Ann outshot all competitors.

She apparently is still hitting the bullseye. Ann now teaches Russian at M.I.T. in Cambridge, and her husband, David, is a Project Zero Manager for Research in Education at the Graduate School of Education at Harvard University. They have 3 children, Theodore 14; Alice 10; and Tom 6.

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DIRECTORS of the Wilson His. Soc. will meet Wed. evening, Sept. 11th, at 8PM in the museum.

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THE MARSH SETTLEMENT:

The community known today as East Wilson was originally established in 1824 by Joseph Marsh, who erected a cabin on lot no. 65 near the corner of Chestnut and Beebe Roads. Most of the land between there and the Ridge was covered by large swamps, so access to the settlement could only be made by using Chestnut Road--then known as the Marsh Settlement Road.

Marsh was closely followed to the area by other pioneers including William Woodcock, Reuben Streeter, Potter Roberts, John Pollard, and Barabas Whitney. In 1834, Stephen Stockwell brought his family to East Wilson, and the crossroads became known as Stockwell's Corners.

By the late 1800's, the settlement had become quite a thriving community and at one time boasted a steam saw mill, grocery store, two cooper shops, blacksmith shop, wagon shop, and cider mill.

The saw mill, which burned down in 1897, was run for many years by Aaron Beebe, while the wagon and blacksmith shops were run by the Stockwells. Nearby was the grocery store started by Augustus Lampe ca. 1861, and a cider mill was located on the site of the former Boyd Wilson farm.

In 1900, another cider mill was opened by Harry Halstead on his Beebe Road farm one quarter mile south of the corners, and stories handed down give an interesting picture of the cider making process.

Farmers brought their apples and empty barrels by horse and wagon to the cider mill where they often lined up in two directions. They had to wait their turn and sometimes found it necessary to come back the following day. Making cider was a slow process because the 9 horse Fairbanks-Morse engine was first used to operate the apple grinder, then was attached to the cider press so juice could be squeezed from the unwashed apples.

On Sundays, a steam engine tractor, ordinarily used for threshing grain, would be fired up to make hot water for washing out the pressing cloths which were then dried on clothes lines strung behind the cider mill.

Huge piles of apple pulp were accumulated each fall, and when covered by winter snows, made a fine place for the children to go sleigh riding.

The Halstead Cider Mill was sold in 1919 during prohibition, and the new owner set it up at the corner of Sunset and Niagara Streets in the town of Lockport.

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SEPTEMBER MEETING:

Regular monthly programs will resume at the museum on September 16th at 7:30PM when Mrs. Shirley Gregory (Urtel) will discuss "Early American and Wilson Currency."

Refreshments and social hour will follow with the following hostesses serving: Emma Schrader, Laura Eick, and Edna Robinson.

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LIBRARIAN RETIRES:

Marie Swick Reynolds retired as director of the Wilson Free Library on July 20, 1985. She is the granddaughter of the late G. Herbert Swick, one of the first trustees to serve on the Board when the library was sponsored by the Delphic Circle in 1910.

Marie has been honored by the current Board with the title of Librarian Emeritus in consideration of her 24 years of loyal, dedicated service. She is also a charter member of the Wilson Historical Society, and was helpful in the publication of several of the society's historical booklets.

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NOTICE:

Lois Jennings, Museum Chrm., wants all members to know that newsletters and publications of other historical societies and organizations are kept in the museum library and available to anyone who wishes to look at them. Cracked glass has been replaced on all our display cases.

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NEW MEMBERS:

The society welcomes its latest new members: Oscar H. Munch, Jr., Branford, Florida; James D. Munch, Wilmington, Delaware; Ann (Weiler) and David Perkins, Arlington, Mass; Katherine and Waldron Hayes, Buffalo, NY; Mr. and Mrs. Robert Kelsey, Lockport, NY; and Wanda and Ronald Thompson, Newfane, NY. Also, Junior Members Theodore, Alice, and Tom Perkins.

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IN MEMORIAM:

The Wilson His. Soc. sorrowfully acknowledges the demise of Leona Beutel, daughter of William and Ida May Bendt Schnoor, who passed away at Millard Fillmore Hospital, Wednesday, July 10, 1985, following a short illness. She is survived by her husband, Waldo F. Beutel, two daughters, Mrs. Randall (Janice) Zahno and Mrs. Glenn (Susanne) Zahno, both of Ransomville, also a brother, Arthur Schnoor of Wilson and four grandchildren.

She was a member of Exley United Methodist Church; U.A.W. Retiree, Local 686-5; and member of the Wilson His. Soc. since 1975. She was interred at North Ridge with Rev. David Palmer officiating.

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BUS TOUR:

Fifty-three persons left the Wilson Museum at 8AM, August 10th, to enjoy an all day trek to the Mennonite country at St. Jacobs, Ontario. A Pennsylvania Deutch home-cooked luncheon was served at the Stone Crock, and everyone had ample time to visit the Snider Mill and other fine shops which featured Mennonite hand crafts, baked goods, quilts, pottery, ceramics, etc.

The trip was arranged by our tour chairman, Shelley Andrews, and the customs and life styles of the Mennonite people were interestingly told by Sue Harnden, tour guide, who was born and raised in St. Jacobs and well versed in their customs and accomplishments.

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TOPS FRIENDLY MARKET of Lockport, who recently expanded their Transit Rd. facilities, has donated a quantity of used shelving to the Wilson Museum.

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HISTORIC BRIEFS:

Thanks to Don Loker, History Specialist at the Niagara Falls Public Library, we have acquired several pages from a scrapbook kept by Edward F. Williams, former correspondent from Wilson and Somerset to the old Lockport Daily Union. His items give an interesting picture of Wilson in the late 1800's.

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Sept. 2, 1886: The fall term of the Wilson Union School commenced under very favorable circumstances on Monday, Aug. 30th. Prof. C.L. Luther, who has been very popular with the people of this village during his one year residence here, has been re-engaged as Principal with Miss Annie Hayward of Lewiston, a graduate of the Lockport Union School, Preceptress. The grammar department is in charge of Miss Kittie Lyons also of Lewiston.

The Board of Education is to be congratulated upon the wisdom it has displayed in the selection of teachers who are well qualified to fill the position to which they have been assigned. With such a corps of instructors, and the advantages which this school affords for a good practical education, there is no reason why the attendance during the coming year should not exceed that of the past year. We rest assured that it will.

S. J. Swann has sold his billiard rooms to A.O. Johnson, who is running them in fine style. Mr. Swann will engage in the same business at East Aurora, N.Y.

Mr. Fred Barger, formerly with Hackett Bros., has purchased the bakery business of S.J. Swann, and assumed control of the same.

Sept. 9, 1886: The abutments for the new iron bridge over the west branch of the Twelve-mile Creek are now in the course of construction.

Sept. 15, 1886: Mr. George Wadsworth, the genial agent and operator of the Wilson Station, was united in marriage on the 8th inst., to Miss Eila Hutchins. The nuptial knot was tied by the Rev. F.D.T. Bickley of Painted Post, after which a bountiful repast was served. The happy couple started on a wedding tour followed by the best wishes of a host of friends.

The Prohibitionists of this town elected the following delegates Saturday to attend the county and district conventions to be held at Lockport: S.H. Halsey, R.L. Lamb, T. Allen, J.B. Gifford, A.B. Arnold, and J.C. Griffin.

An adjourned school meeting was held in the academy Saturday evening, and a tax of \$800 was voted to be levied upon the taxable property of the Union School District for the purpose of building a school house in Primary #4, the present structure being totally unfit for use.

Sept. 22, 1886: Mr. C.S. McChesney, our wide-awake druggist, has secured the services of a watchmaker and jeweler, who will accommodate customers desiring anything in that line.

Acting under the advice of our most esteemed contemporary, the Wilson Star, we take the liberty to inform the people of Niagara County that the highways, in places, are in a very bad condition.

Mr. Fred Seeley has gone to Cherry Creek for the purpose, we have been informed, of buying fruit for our enterprising townsman, Mr. Miles S. Vosburg, who is running an evaporator at that point. Wilson has four evaporating establishments, but only two of them will run this fall, and from the present outlook it is exceedingly doubtful whether enough fruit can be secured to supply these.

The annual meeting of the Wilson Musical Union will occur next Tuesday at Pike's Hall.

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CLASS REUNION:

The Wilson High School Class of 1935 will hold its 50th reunion at Pembroke Meadows, town of Lockport, Saturday, Sept. 21, 1985. A social hour is scheduled for 5:00PM with dinner following at six.

The Class of '35 was the last to graduate from the old brick high school which stood on the site of the present town hall. Harry Hamblin was President, Lowell Fitch, Vice-Pres., Walter Harris, Secretary, and Evelyne Cornell (Burgasser), Treasurer. Other members were Virginia Crossman (Moot), Clayton Allen, Betty Galbraith (Storms), Alfred Stevens, Jennie Myers, Robert Draper, Chester Zeitz, Ethel Schultz (Strassburg), Phylliss Litchard (Edminster), Agnes Wilson, Juliet Wilson, Frances Benedict (Ives), Helen Salisbury (Covey), Winifred Wright (Miller), Eleanor Pickel (Aseltine), and Esther Burton (Woodard).

Mrs. Milburn (Marion) Campbell, Class Advisor, has been invited to attend, also former teachers Angeline Rice (Wood), Marjorie Crossman (Hurlburt), Lydia Berlin (Southard), Maxine Fitch (Gnage), Winifred Berry (Byerly), and May Schnyder.

Deceased members of the Class are Herman Byerly, Richard Loomis, Lee Farquarson, and Dorothy Mudge (Gick). Reunion planners have been unable to locate Marion Johnson.

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LOOKING TO THE FUTURE:

Whit Barnum, Pres., has appointed the following committee to investigate the possibility of using computer technology to correlate the records of the museum library: Celeste Crawford, Chrm., Carole Schnorr, and Lois Jennings. They would appreciate hearing from any of our members who have knowledge of software programming that would be applicable to our needs.

It was also decided to conduct the society's business under a Board of Directors; install 24 volt emergency lighting in the museum; and investigate possibility of placing museum signs north and south of building on Rt. 425. Permission was also granted to the Wilson Branch of Inter-Community Hospital to hold their annual card party in the museum on Oct. 2nd, and allow Delta Kappa Gamma to meet there on Dec. 4th. Thank you notes were read from John Pisselo and Keven King, who received awards from the society on Class Night for their excellent showing on the Regents Examination in history at Wilson Central School.

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WE'RE INVITED TO A PICNIC: The Newfane Hist. Soc. has invited us to join with them in a box social picnic at their Creek Rd. museum grounds, Friday, Sept. 27th, at 6:00PM. Boxes, which will be auctioned off, should contain 2 individual salads and desserts, also plastic forks and spoons. Hot dogs and beverages will be provided. The program will feature an old fashioned spelling bee between the ladies and the men.

GOOD OL' "CLIFF":

That remark in Phil Brown's letter about Bill Slocum's coon dogs, (September Newsletter) evoked a response from Bea Hicks of California which we believe rates repeating.

Seems one of Bill's coon dogs was named "Cliff", and he used to lie down and let Bea's little sister, Marty, climb on his back and ride around on him as though he were a pony.

Bill could also attach a note to Cliff's collar, and the dog would run home and then return with an answer. "Cliff was one smart coon dog".

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THE WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE:

Winnie Fischer, Chrm., has been doing a good public relations job for the society. On Labor Day, \$61.25 was realized from a table set up to sell booklets and souvenirs at Little League Park, but the goodwill promoted did more for the society than the money taken in. The society's table was tended by Winnie, Millie Croop, and Helen Stevens.

The society will also have a table when St. John's Episcopal Church holds its "Harvest Home Sunday" at the church on Sunday, October 26th, from 11:30AM to 7:30PM.

The "Fall Apple Fest-'86" will get under way following morning worship service, and will feature apples, apple products, and fall produce. There will also be a variety of baked goods and craft tables. A noon luncheon will be served including chicken chowder, and it is planned to have a dinner menu available around 4:30PM. The homecoming event promises to provide a sociable good time for everyone, and the public is invited.

The Ways & Means Comm. would also like to remind all our Bakers, (both men and women) that our annual Bake Sale will be held at the Town Hall on Election Day from 9:00AM until sold out. Please furnish your favorite recipe whether it be breads, cake, pie, baked beans, or what have you? Remember the date.....Election Day, Tuesday, November 4th.

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THUMBNAIL SKETCH:

Henry J. Perry, son of Dr. Henry and Winifred (Freeman) Perry, was born in Boston on March 12, 1908. He married Marguerite Clark of Albany in 1932, and attended the Lynn English High School, the University of Maine, Alexander Hamilton Institute, and the Industrial College of the U.S. Armed Forces.

During World War II he served with the 1st Chemical Regt., and is a member of the American Legion. Now residing in Lockport, he once was a Justice of the Peace at Croghan, NY; Fire Comm. at Beaver Falls, NY; Chief of Rescue and Director of Disaster Control at Chatham, NJ; and member of the Planning Board here in Wilson. He is a Professional Consultant and has served with the Counsel's Office, Internal Revenue Service, U.S. Administration for Industrial Development, and the Argentine Naval Commission-Natural Resources.

The Perry family came to Boston, Mass. in 1632, and the Freemans founded Sandwich, Mass. in 1635. They are progenitors of some of America's historically famous Americans including Pres. Franklin D. Roosevelt, Gen. Douglas MacArthur, also Commodore Oliver Hazard and Mathew C. Perry of the U.S. Navy.

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MEETINGS FOR OCTOBER:

Brian Leigh Dunnigan, Director of the Old Fort Niagara Association, will be guest speaker at the regular monthly meeting of the society Monday, October 20th, at 7:30 PM. Mr. Dunnigan will talk about the involvement of the old fort in the history of the Niagara Frontier and Wilson during the War of 1812.

Mrs. Emma Schrader, Chrm., has announced that Lois Jennings and Winnie Fischer will be hostesses and serve refreshments after the program.

The Board of Directors will meet at the museum, Wednesday evening, Oct. 8th, at 8:00 PM.

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NEW MEMBERS:

It is a pleasure to welcome the following new members: Gregory Mandeville, Jr., Hartford, Conn.; George and Mary Nash, Tonawanda, N.Y.; R. D. and Barbara Leach, Syracuse, N.Y.; and Keith and Ruth Moore, Ransomville, N.Y.

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BUILDING PROGRESS:

Thanks to Ed Hastings and a crew of industrious volunteers, cement work on the new transportation building has been completed. Ed is a whiz when it comes to laying cement blocks, and we think anyone who has worked with him will agree.

Ollie Clark will supervise erection of the new roof and, subject to delivery of materials, hopes to see the job completed by November.

It seems reasonable to conclude that the building would probably still be in the talking stage without the leadership and "know-how" of men like Whit Barnum, Leo Klees, Art Schnoor, John Myers, Elwin Upton, Ed Hastings, and Ollie Clark. They, along with other members of the society have donated their time and labor to make the new facilities possible.

Those who have helped were mentioned in the September Newsletter, but the following must also be added to the growing list of volunteers: Fenton Cole, Clifford Upton, Bud Monroe, Larry Andrews, Ken Briggs, George Cruickshank, Donald Smithson, Fred Berry, Jim Cornell, Jack Maxfield, Tom Walder, Bill Bartz, Harold Swanson, William Jones, "Chuck" Campbell, and Ray Groff.

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OCTOBER HOSTESSES:

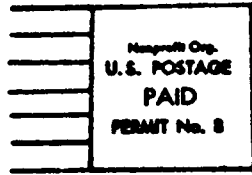
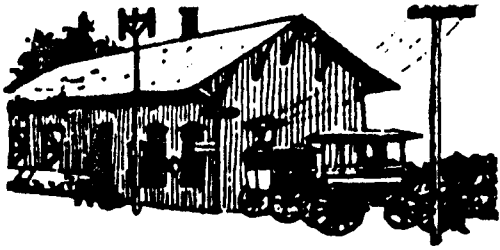
Clara Marcks, Chrm., announces the following museum "greeters" for October: Oct. 5th, Sidney and Donna Pettit; Oct. 12th, Thomas and Maryanne Sharpe; Oct. 19th, Norm and Martha MacAskill; and October 26th, Jean Swanson and Laura Clark.

All prospective hostesses: If you agree to serve and can't, please call Clara, 751-9928. Our guests should not face a locked museum door during visiting hours.

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BON MOT: Courage is being scared to death--and saddling up anyway. --John Wayne

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Wilson Historical Society

WILSON, NEW YORK 14172

NEWSLETTER

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

LIBRARIAN
WILSON CENTRAL SCHOOL
WILSON, NY 14172

OCTOBER 1985 Vol. 14 No. 9
(Coleman Press)

REMARKABLE LADY:

Jennie Bigalow has been a resident of the Fairchild Nursing Home at Lewiston for nearly four years, but it is still easy to picture her sitting in a rocking chair on the porch of her former home on Lake Street.

She has been active all her life, and though nearly 100 years old, we venture that the word "retirement" has never entered her head.

She was born in 1886, the daughter of Alice and William Haner, who operated a farm on route 425 about one mile and a half south of the village. That is where Jennie grew up and attended the nearby rural school.

In 1906 she was married to Fred Bigalow who later became Sheriff of Niagara County. During his tenure in office they lived in the old sheriff house that was once attached to the old jail in Lockport.

After her husband was killed in the line of duty, Jennie returned to her home on Lake Street where she lived out most of her life. She was always a familiar figure around the village and was always seen walking around the streets or going to the postoffice to pick up her mail.

At Exley United Methodist Church she is remembered as a tireless worker for the "Ladies Aid", forerunner of the present United Methodist Women, and she was also an active member of the Eastern Star in which she held several offices.

She has always been an avid reader and patron of the Wilson Public Library, and until recently enjoyed putting together jig-saw puzzles. Although now confined to a wheelchair, she still enjoys visiting with friends and taking occasional trips in the nursing home van.

Members of the Wilson Historical Society unite to wish their honorary member a Happy Birthday on September 28th, and will look forward to helping her celebrate her 100th next year

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THE LEGEND OF THE CANADIANA:

Having once sailed on her, who could ever forget her? It was the "fun-ship" way to get to Crystal Beach, and much better than bouncing over rough roads in a Model-T Ford. We know-- as a teen ager of the mid 1920's, we used both methods.

The Canadiana was built in Buffalo in 1910, and was primarily used to carry thousands of visitors to the amusement park in Ontario. Also known as the "Crystal Beach Boat", the majestic steamer could accomodate 3,500 passengers on her regularly scheduled runs which ended in the year 1956.

In the early 1960's, she was used for excursion service at Toledo, Ohio, and later was remodeled into a floating restaurant at Cleveland.

In 1981 it appeared that her days were numbered when, neglected and in disrepair, she was allowed to sink to the bottom of the Cuyahogo River. About a year and a half later the ship was raised and towed to Ashtabula, Ohio, where she remained until a group of Western New Yorkers organized the "Friends of the Canadiana", and launched a drive to purchase the "Buffalo Legend" and tow her back home.

The feat was accomplished with a lot of volunteer labor, and today many "Friends" are busy working to raise funds and restore the ship to its original condition.

You may also be a part of this historic preservation project by sending a contribution to The Friends of the Canadian, c/o Robert Kelsey, M&T Bank, One M&T Plaza, Buffalo, NY, 14203.

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NEW MEMBERS:

Please welcome the following new members into the Wilson Historical Society, Edna Cowan McGrath of Lockport, and John and Ruth Moore of Clarence Center, New York.

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LOOKING AHEAD TO OUR BAKE SALE:

The annual bake sale will be held at the Town Hall on Election Day, November 5th, from 9AM on. Please bring your culinary specialties to the hall as early as possible, and if you have any delivery problems, please contact Winnie Fischer, Chrm. Pies, cakes, cookies, cupcakes, breads and salads will be gratefully accepted.

When one stops to think about it, when you cast a vote for your favorite political candidate, someone always loses, but when you patronize the Wilson Historical Society Bake Sale there are no losers.

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BON MOT:

The greatest reward for doing anything is the opportunity to do more.

OLD CHARTER PRESERVED:

A Charter granted on February 10, 1868, to the Independent Order of Good Templars; Chapter 527 of Wilson, has been turned over to the museum by the Wilson Free Public Library. Although brittle, yellowed by age, and torn into three pieces, it was possible to mount it on light cardboard for framing.

The document is quite legible and the officers listed on it are, James G.O. Brown, Worthy Chief Templar; Sarah M. Miller, WVT; Rev. R.C. Brownlee, W Chaplain; William H. Holmes, W Secretary; Philinda Seeley, WAS; J.S. Wilson, WFS; Helen McChesney, W Treasurer; L.C. Davis, WM; Amelia M. Scott, WDM; Josephine Barger, WIG; Ira Carter, WOG; Eliza Hutchins, WRHS; Jennie P. Holmes, WLHS; and Guy M. Saulsbury, PWCT.

Other members on the charter include David L. Barnum, Elizabeth Barnum, S.C. Davis, Eduard C. Brown, William H. Mix, H.B. Tabor, Albert Pettit, Vincent Seeley, Clarisa Seeley, Joseph F. Smith, Sarah A. Davis, William Smith, Mary Reilly, Jennie P. Holmes, Carrie Barnum, Nettie M. Goddard, Ruth Hackett, and H. George Miller.

The purpose of the Good Templars was to encourage the principles of temperance, and give assistance to its members in case of serious injury or death.

Various chapters sprang up throughout Niagara County as early as 1846, and there were four chapters in Lockport alone. In addition to the Wilson chapter, others were formed at Hartland Corners, Newfane, Ransomville, Somerset Corners, Middleport, and Niagara Falls.

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FORMER RESIDENT HONORED:

Verna E. Bergemann, a former resident of Ransomville, was honored recently when she was nominated Teacher of the Year at the University of North Carolina. She also received a Commendation from the International Reading Association for her many contributions to Literacy.

Miss Bergemann, a typical country girl, was born in Ransomville and received her early education in the Daniels Road School. She is especially remembered by one of her teachers, Mrs. Wirt (Dora) Wakeman, who taught her in the 7th and 8th grades.

Verna came from a large, farm family and much of their substance was derived from a small vegetable and baked-goods stand which her parents operated on route 104. Her mother was especially well known for her delicious pies, cakes, and breads.

She graduated from Wilson High School in 1939, and two of her classmates are presently members of the Wilson Historical Society, Elton Kropp and Mrs. Mary Stone Allgeier. She continued her education at 5 different colleges and universities where she majored in Elementary Education and Reading and Language Arts. She earned her B.S. at the State College at Brockport; her M.A. at the State College at Buffalo; and her Ed. D. at the University of Maryland.

Her long career as a schoolteacher and professor of education reached a climax in 1975 when she was retained as a Professor and Chairman of the Education Department at the University of North Carolina.

Miss Bergemann retired in 1985 and was honored with the title of Professor Emeritus, UNC, Asheville. She was also presented with a Roster of Names of Distinguished Educators who have served at the University--with hers among them.

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MUSEUM GREETERS FOR OCTOBER:

The following members have agreed to serve as hosts and hostesses at the museum Sunday afternoons from 2 to 4PM: Oct. 6th, William and Lois Davis; Oct. 13th, Gregory and Dana Mandeville; Oct. 20th, Helen Stevens and Celeste Crawford; and Oct. 27th, Larry and Shelly Andrews. Clara Marcks, Chrm., wishes to remind all greeters that the entrance door will not automatically lock when closing it--the key must be used to open and lock the door.

* * * * *

RECENT ACQUISITIONS:

Paul Harold of Chatham, Va., has given several documents including a Niagara County Beach Erosion Study from 1943 78th Congress; World Fair Brochures from 1851-1964; 4 Maps from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers pertaining to Lake Ontario Surveys in 1963; also 1969 Map of Great Lakes and water levels and depths of connecting channels.

Jack Maxfield: Violin and wooden "coffin case". 2 violins and cases.

Mrs. Warren Morrison Cook of Escondido, Cal.; Family Genealogy.

Judith Okoniewski: One dress of the 1940 era. Good condition.

Antique Reproductions of Confederate Currency issued by southern states during Civil War.

Purchase: 4 new 6x 30" Coleman tables for museum.

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SPECIAL DATES FOR OCTOBER:

October 2nd: The annual Card Party of the Wilson Branch, Inter Community Hospital, will start with a 7 o'clock dessert at the Wilson Museum. Tickets, \$1.25 per person. Door Prizes.

October 6th: Harvest Festival of the Newfane Historical Society, Sunday, noon to 5 p.m. at their Creek Road Museum grounds.

October 9th: Regular monthly meeting of Officers, trustees, and Comm. Chrm., at the Wilson Museum, Wednesday, 8 p. m.

October 20th: The Cambria Historical Society "Open House" will be held at the Cambria Fire Hall, Rt. 425, on Sunday from noon to five.

October 21st: Regular Program Meeting of the Wilson Hist. Soc., Monday, 7:30 p.m.

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SOME FACTS ABOUT THE EMPIRE STATE:

Mount Marcy is New York State's highest mountain; Oneida is its largest lake; the Hudson is the longest river; Taughannock is the highest falls; and there are 8,000 lakes and ponds within its borders. The N.Y.S. Thruway is the longest toll expressway in the world, and Albany is the oldest chartered city in the United States.

* * * * *

THE BEST TIME to think about your retirement is before the boss does.

LOCKPORT DAILY UNION, Oct. 6, 1886:

Wilson, NY: While in Lockport a few days since--it was our privilege to visit the large printing and publishing establishments of the Lockport "Union" and "Niagara Weekly Democrat." Their facilities for executing first class work far exceeded our expectations, and the courteous manner in which callers are treated bespeaks for them the patronage of the people of the old "Cataract County". The "Daily Union" and "Niagara Democrat" have a big list of subscribers in Wilson.

Oct. 27, 1886: The programme of the weather for the past few days has been such as to challenge the admiration of the most changeable individual. It has been rain, heat, wind, and cold, following each other in such rapid succession that it requires all of a person's time to change from a linen duster to a heavy ulster. If a person is going twenty miles from home with a team he should carry a large Saratoga in which to pack the enormous wardrobe necessary to have on hand in order to be prepared for the various climate changes.

The two iron bridges built by the town this season are now complete.

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MORE ABOUT ASAHIEL STAPLES:

In last month's Newsletter we described some of the difficulties experienced by Asahel Staples as a rural schoolteacher in the mid 1800's. In answer to several inquiries, we wish to point out that his career did not end in Wilson as a schoolteacher.

Asahel was a young man when he came to Niagara County with his parents and settled on the Hess Road. At the age of 22 he graduated from the Wilson Academy, and taught school during the following 14 years. While teaching, he studied privately for the ministry.

He was ordained into the Methodist Conference in 1861, and his first charge was at Jerusalem in Yates County. After 2 years, he returned to Niagara County where he served churches at Chestnut Ridge, Youngstown, Newfane, and Somerset.

In 1873, Rev. Staples presided at the 2nd Methodist Church in Lockport, and later had charges at Knowelsville, Clarendon, Royalton, Middleport, and Cambria. In 1889, he returned to Wilson where he served 4 years as pastor of Exley Methodist-Episcopal Church.

His last charge was at Warrens Corners and East Wilson where he remained until 1897. He completed 31 years in the ministry and was widely known throughout the Niagara District.

Robust and healthy to the end, he died at his home in Lockport and was interred in the Cold Springs Cemetery.

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EXPANDING FLEA MARKET:

Nice weather and a large crowd combined to make the Labor Day flea market at Little League Park a sociable success.

The flea market originated many years ago when Art and Gertrude Schnoor invited their neighbors to set up tables in the yard of their home. Refreshments were served by members of the Fellowship Class of Exley United Methodist Church.

By 1983, the event was attracting so many people it began to present a traffic hazard at Schnoor's Corners, so the following year all activities were transferred to nearby Little League Park where ample off road parking could be provided.

As in past years, a table was set up by Winnie Fischer, Chrm. of the Historical Society Ways & Means Comm., and approximately \$100 was realized from the sale of books and souvenirs. She was assisted by Millie Croop and Edna Robinson.

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PROGRAM FOR OCTOBER:

Dorothy Linnabery has announced that Floyd (Red) Clark will be our speaker at the October 21st meeting, and the subject for his presentation will be "Watches".

Following the meeting, refreshments will be served by Marion Campbell, Chrm., Christine Kelman, and Eleanor Myers. Coffee and tea is provided, but hostesses bake and serve their own favorite recipes. This year, Emma Schrader is chairman of the hostess committee.

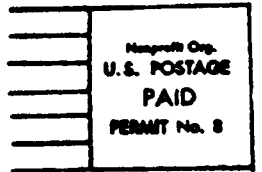
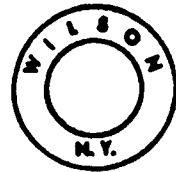
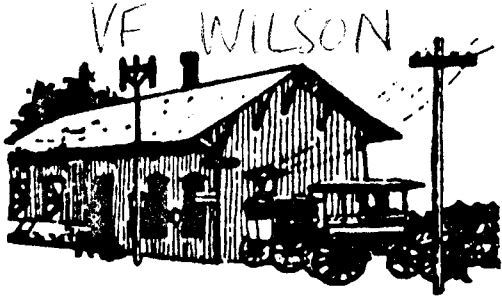
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SOME INTERESTING DATES IN WILSON'S HISTORY:

- June 8, 1901: Fire wipes out Masonic Block. All village records destroyed.
- 1904: Electric Power comes to town--also telephones.
- 1908: Water and sewer lines run from lake to Fredonia Preserving Co. by the Fredonia Pressure Company.
- 1910: Speed limit of ten miles per hour set for autos in the village.
- 1911: Scarlet fever epidemic breaks out in village.
- 1912: First Constable, Albert Swick, appointed for the village.
- 1915: \$3,000 bond issue voted for cement highway on Young St., 16' wide. Old GAR cobblestone building purchased for storage of fire apparatus.
- 1916: Speed limit for cars in village raised to 15 miles per hour.
- 1918: No parking allowed on Young St. Tuesday evenings so Home Guard can drill.
- 1919: First traffic signs purchased.
- 1921: First bus line franchise given out.
- 1922: Water and sewer lines voted for village. (158 yes--19 no). Bids let to Philip Agrios for water, \$21,171.00; sewers, \$49,688.99.
- 1923: Wilson Vol. Fire Co. No.1 organized under chapter 595, law of 1916.
- 1924: First Volunteer Fire Co. Field Day held.
- Aug. 22, 1924: Fire Co. By-laws adopted and notorized by Bethel Johnson.
- Feb. 1926: Firemen and village board meet to establish fire district, compensation, and also sign contract with the town of Wilson.
- March 1926: First Fire Commissioners are Walter Wheeler, Delbert Singer, & Clyde Putnam.
- 1927: \$500 appropriated for fire company to purchase used truck.

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FINAL THOUGHT: Isn't it strange how much you've got to know before you realize how little you know.



Wilson Historical Society

WILSON, NEW YORK 14172

NEWSLETTER

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

LIBRARIAN
WILSON CENTRAL SCHOOL
WILSON, NY 14172

NOVEMBER 1985 Vol.14 No.10
(Coleman Press)

VOLUNTEERS BUILT SIDEWALK:

The late Earl Armstrong grew up in Wilson and later became a Niagara County Deputy Sheriff. In his later years he liked to reminisce about things that happened in his home town during his lifetime. The following item is compiled from notes he made about how a much-needed sidewalk was built in Wilson.

* * * * *

When the Park was at its best, and many excursions came to Wilson, there was nothing but a cinder path from the depot to the village.

There were only two busses, one to the Tower Hotel and one to the Sutherland, so hundreds of people had to walk. When it rained it was pretty sloppy in places and a sidewalk was badly needed.

The people who owned property along the road could not afford to build a cement walk as their frontage varied from 100 to 800 feet, and there was no way to divide the cost fairly. Also, since the proposed sidewalk was to be built outside the village limits, the village board couldn't help.

In those days it was a case of help yourself, so a meeting was held and a group was appointed to raise money. They decided to hold dances at Middleton's Hall, and after some haggling to get the price down, made arrangements to rent the hall, (or skating rink).

On the night of the first dance, the only light in the rink was an artificial tulip bed placed in the center of the floor. It contained 250 tulips with a light bulb in each. There was also a large artificial moon at one end of the hall, and when it was turned off the glowing tulip bed was beautiful to see.

Two hundred dollars was cleared on that first dance so another was planned for the following month.

When the project was started, labor for building the walk was all donated, and since nobody was paid, the money raised from the dances went a long way.

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NOVEMBER MEETING:

On Monday evening, November 18th, Miss Flossie Lortz and others will present the topic, "Who was Estelle Lenning?" Wilson's own Mae Stacy wrote verse under this "nom' de plume" which had a wide influence locally.

Emma Schrader, Chrm., has announced that refreshments will be served after the program by Dorothy Lort, Lucy Monroe, and Maryanne Sharpe.

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DON'T FORGET THE BAKE SALE:

The society's annual Bake Sale will be held on election day, November 5th, from 9AM on--- at the town hall. Pies, cakes, breads or salads gratefully accepted.

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MUSEUM ATTENDANTS:

Clara Marcks, Chrm., has selected the following members to greet visitors at the museum on Sunday afternoons from two to four: Nov. 3rd, Helen Horton and Jan Sporleder; Nov. 10th, William and Maxine Jones; Nov. 17th, John and Jean Kress; and Nov. 24th, Gertrude and Carole Schnoor.

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WILSON GIRL RETURNS HOME:

Kathy Horton, daughter of Bob and Helen Horton, returned to Wilson recently following several years of Missionary work in Nepal. She is taking theology courses in Toronto this fall, but will be available for speaking engagements until late 1986 when she expects to return to Nepal.

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NEW MEMBERS:

We are pleased to welcome the following new members, Mrs. Shirley Gregory Urtel and Mrs. Irene Gregory, North Ridge & Ridge Road, Lockport, NY.

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THE LOCKPORT DAILY JOURNAL:

Nov. 17, 1886: "The R.W. & O. R.R. Co. have given the depot at Wilson a new coat of paint. The railroad company has changed their time table so the eastern-bound train due here at 2:30 PM, does not arrive until 4:31 PM."

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FOURTH GRADERS STUDY HISTORY:

Jackie Lynn Luff's 4th grade class at Thomas Marks School visited the Wilson Museum recently, and spent two hours examining artifacts and memorabilia of Wilson's past. They were brought there by bus and greeted by Lois Jennings, Curator, who gave them a guided tour of the premises.

The pupils had been learning about local history during the previous two weeks, and the museum visit was a fitting climax to their studies.

They were especially interested in the "Story of Billy Sherman", Wilson's Confederate Civil War horse, because their teacher, Miss Luff, is a great-great granddaughter of Pvt. Lorenzo Pratt, who captured the horse at Chattanooga while serving with Battery M, 1st New York Light Artillery. Pratt rode Billy through the Atlanta Campaign to the war's end, and named his horse after the commanding officer, General William Sherman.

When the conflict ended, the horse was brought to Wilson where it died of old age and was buried on the Pratt farm with military honors by members of Wilson's Peter Porter Post, G.A.R.

In 1973, the Wilson Historical Society placed a marker near the burial site on the former Pratt farm which is now owned by Ron and Judy Zauner.

Lorenzo Pratt was also a member of the first Board of Education when the Union Free School District No.1 was organized in 1869.

The Wilson Historical Society encourages visits to the museum by local students as part of an on-going program to foster better understanding of Wilson's heritage among young people in the community.

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YEARLY PROGRAMS, 1985-86:

Dorothy Linnabery, Program Chairman, has submitted a list of programs to be presented at the regular monthly meetings throughout the coming year:

Sept. 16th: "The Money in their Pockets", Shirley Gregory Urtel*. Currency (paper) circulating in Wilson area in 1800's. Mrs. Urtel is a collector of many things-among them, U.S. Script and paper money.

Oct. 21st: "Watches, Watches", Floyd "Red" Clark. An enthusiastic collector talks about his hobby.

Nov. 18th: "Who was Estelle Lenning?", Flossie Lortz and others. Wilson's own Mae Stacy wrote verse under this "non de plume" and had a wide influence locally.

Dec 16th: "Toys that Move", Harold and Dorothy Applegate*. Alive (and lively) showing of many antiques from Tonawanda-wind-up-toys.

Jan. 20th: "Pickles and Vinegar", Helen Stevens. The story of Wilson's famous products.

Feb. 17th: "Fighting Wilson's fires before the Wilson Volunteer Fire Co. was Organized", William Ganshaw*. Bill is currently giving his 48th year of service to Wilson Volunteer Fire Company No. 1.

March 17th: "Memories and Mementos of a Bergen Country Store", Hal Buell. Hal recalls the store of his grandfather, Halsey Buell, Sr.

April 21st: "Songs of the E-ri-e Canal", Frances Goldthorpe; and "Something about its Building", George and Dorothy Linnabery.

May 19th: "Wilson's Early Roads-How they were Built", Don Croop. Report of the Nominating Committee, Lois Barnum, Chairman.

June 16th: "A Road-Worker's Meal", (an "eat together" meal). Details and Committees to be announced. Annual Meeting, Reports, and Election of Officers.

(*) designates guest speaker. All other programs by historical society members.

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OPEN HOUSE AT LIBRARY:

There will be an "Open House" at the Wilson Free Public Library on October 26th from 3 to 5 PM to honor Marie Reynolds, Librarian Emeritus, who resigned as Librarian on July 20, 1985, after serving the Wilson community for 24 years. The library board wishes to emphasize that everyone in all age groups will be welcome at the "open house".

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SYMBOL OF LIBERTY:

On October 28, 1985, the Statue of Liberty marks its 99th year as a symbol of hope and freedom to the millions of immigrants who came to these shores in search of freedom and new opportunities. The stately "lady", with her torch of liberty held high, was built by Bartholdi and presented to the United States by the people of France. The date also signals the beginning of a year long centennial and rededication of the "Lady" which was erected on Bedloe Island and dedicated by President Grover Cleveland on October 28, 1886.

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MUSEUM ACTIVITIES:

One hundred tulip bulbs have been planted around the flagpole and tree next to the museum by Millie Croop. The bulbs were purchased and donated by Arthur Schnoor....The refrigerator in the kitchenette burned out during a "brownout", and one stored in the transportation building was moved in to replace it by Whit Barnum and Leo Klees....Burt Jennings has offered to examine the south dock roof and try to determine what is needed to repair several bad leaks.

* * * * *

A GIFT SUGGESTION:

With Christmas on the way, it is suggested that you consider filling out your shopping list with one or two of the ever popular Wilson Historical Society Recipe Books. Nearly 1,000 of the cookbooks have already been sold, and another 500 are in the process of being printed.

The cookbook has been liked by many because the recipes are old favorite "standbys" with most of the ingredients used generally found on everyones kitchen shelf. All recipes were submitted by Wilson Historical Society members.

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BON MOT: By the time a man gets enough experience to watch his step, he isn't going anywhere.

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PRESIDENTS AND MAYORS OF THE VILLAGE:

The Village of Wilson was incorporated May, 11, 1858, and the first President of the Board of Trustees was Luther Wilson, son of Reuben Wilson.

In 1901, all village records were destroyed by fire, and there appears to be no documents available showing officials up to that date, however, the 1821-78 History of Niagara County lists Oscar S. McChesney as President when that history was published.

F. F. Barton was president of the village in 1901, and he was followed by W.L. Draper, 1902; F.F. Barton, 1904; E.H. Tugwell, 1905; A.O. Bonesteel, 1906; William Albright, 1909; G.M. Smith, 1911; A.O. Bonesteel, 1912; J.G. Wright, 1915; M. Bell, 1916; V. Parsons, 1920; and Allen Hinchliffe, 1925.

The first designated Mayor of the village was A.H. Gotz, 1928; H.S. Stockwell, 1930; Alexander M. McIlroy, 1932; Richard M. Patterson, 1936; Julian J. Lutz, 1938; Robert J. Horton, 1956; Harold Mosher, 1969; and Kenneth Welker, 1976 to present.

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RECENT ACQUISITIONS:

Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Tabor of Burt have donated a Mortar and Pestel that belonged to Dr. Tabor of Wilson, Leonard's great grandfather, also some rare old books including an 1845 Methodist Hymnal; "Works of Josephus Flairus, 1828; "Arithmetic, 1841"; "Psalms of David, 1818, (leather bound); "Story of America", 1893; New England Primer; Old German Bible; Geography, 1911; and whole collection of songs by John Wesley in 1845 Hymnal.

Dr. John Argue: Last Edition of "Courier Express" and 1930 Crossley Radio and Record Player; also 100 pieces of sheet music, ca. 1900.

George Linnabery: Man's Swallow Tail Coat.

Marvin Myers: Fifty year old Wicker "Pottie" Chair, and two business listing books.

Lori Myers: Homemade Old Fashioned Dress in excellent condition.

"Chuck" Messersmith: A variety of 1967 Master Plan for town of Wilson, Proposed Zoning Ordinances, Subdivision Regulations, and recommended improvements for control of subdivisions.

Donald Streams: Two child's dresses, Nativity Scene, Bible, History, and Heidi Book, all in good condition.

Harold Argue, Lockport: Pump Organ, and two bookcases.

Jean Hayes, Newfane: Pair of blue-grey spat s in good condition. ca. 1900.

Willma Marian Welch, Deming, NM: Three pictures of Marian's piano students-now deceased.

Anna Mae Nevins: Pocket Nasal Douche and Criss Cross Razor Stroppler.

Dr. Dan Berry, Emlenton, PA: Early manually operated hair cippers.

Bob and Helen Horton: Skis, and corn planter; also 1940 Volunteer Fire Co. #1 Uniform.

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DATES TO REMEMBER:

October 26th: Open House at the Wilson Free Public Library. Saturday, 3-5 PM.

November 5th: Election Day Bake Sale, Town Hall, 9 AM until sold out.

November 13th: Board of Directors Meeting, Wednesday, Wilson Museum, 8:00 PM.

November 18th: Regular Meeting, Monday, Wilson Museum, 7:30 PM.

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HOLIDAY RAFFLE:

Carole Schnoor has ordered three large stuffed animals for the Ways and Means Comm. to raffle off at the December meeting. Donation tickets will be available during the months of November and December, and the cute, fluffy animals will be a welcome sight under some lucky youngster's Christmas tree. They stand about 15" tall, and each contains a music box which will play 16 Christmas melodies.

* * * * *

APPLE FEST:

A historical society table was set up by Winnie Fischer and Jane Demmin at the recent Apple Fest held Oct. 6th by St. John's Episcopal Church of Wilson. A good crowd enjoyed the large variety of delicious apple deserts provided by the church.

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BOX SOCIAL:

We got tangled up in October with hurricane "Gloria", and didn't arrive home in time to attend the box social held by the Newfane and Wilson historical societys, but we were pleased to learn that Lois and Burt Jennings walked off with top honors in the spelling bee.

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CORRECTION:

Our apologies to Elma McGrath. We listed her as a new member in the October Newsletter as "Edna", and though Edna is a nice name, we're sure she prefers Elma much better.

In case you don't remember, Elma grew up on the Maple Road where she attended the District No. 12 School. She graduated from the "New" Wilson High School in 1936, and moved to Lockport when she was married in 1941.

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OUR FUTURE IS IN YOUR HANDS:

The continued progress and expansion of Wilson's museum facilities is directly dependent on the success of the annual "Memorial Day Fair". That is why we must have the support of all our members when plans are made for next year's event.

Fortunately, Lois Barnum has most of her chairmen, but she's still in need of three good people to handle the Dining Room, Kitchenette, and ordering of Supplies. If someone reading this would like to help out, please pick up your phone and let her know. By helping her you will be helping the society. She hopes to schedule a meeting of all fair chairmen in January.

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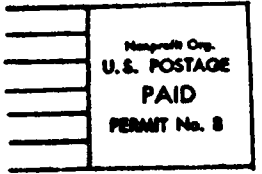
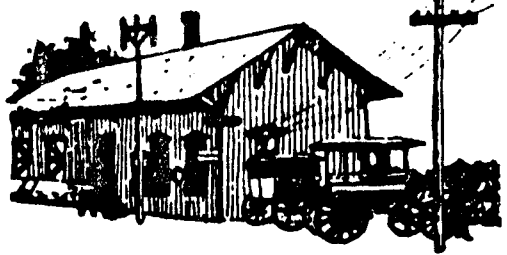
A FINAL THOUGHT:

It is better to wear out than to rust out.

--Bishop Cumberland.

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VF WILSON



Wilson Historical Society

WILSON, NEW YORK 14172

NEWSLETTER

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

LIBRARIAN
WILSON CENTRAL SCHOOL
WILSON, NY 14172

DECEMBER 1985 Vol. 14 No. 11
(Coleman Press)

FROZEN ASSETS:

Many elderly residents can remember those days when every kitchen had an ice box, and electric refrigerators were still a thing of the future--an era when perishable foods were preserved with ice cut from rivers, creeks, and ponds.

The horse-drawn ice wagon was a familiar sight in most communities, and children liked to gather 'round and watch as the husky ice man would chip off a block of ice, pick it up with ice tongs, and swing it to his leather padded shoulder for delivery to his customers. As he made his rounds, youngsters would "snitch" frozen morsels from the wagon, and on a hot summer day, they were a real treat.

Most farmers recognized that ice was a good winter cash crop, but the trick was to keep it from melting. They soon discovered that if ice was put in a tight building and covered with sawdust, it could be stored all summer.

The late Earl Armstrong once noted that cutting ice was a good way to earn a few bucks. A farmer, with team and wagon, could get a dollar for every load, and if he worked from dawn to dusk could make five or six dollars a day.

Much of the ice cut in Wilson came from 12 Mile Creek--especially around Plumb's Bridge. It was generally sawed into 24x36x12 inch blocks with a cross-cut type saw with handle on one end. As the blocks were cut, they were "fished" out of the water with pole-hooks and ice tongs, and it usually took 12 to 14 "cakes" to fill a wagon box.

Fay Campbell, who has seen many changes in Wilson, also remembers those ice-cutting days, and readily admits it was pretty hard work. The ice was "harvested" when it was bitter cold, and according to him, "It was a good idea not to stand on the block you were sawing or you might end up in the icy water."

There were a number of ice houses around town, and one was behind the grocery store that Fay operated on Young Street, (later known as Nevy's). When ice was drawn in, the blocks were placed eight or ten inches from the outer walls, and the space between was packed with sawdust. Additional blocks were then chipped and stacked together until the required number were set in place and covered with a thick layer of sawdust.

This ice, as well as ice stored at Hackett's grocery, was not sold to the public but was used to cool meat and perishable goods. Since there was always a certain amount of shrinkage of the blocks in storage, it was sometimes questionable whether the supply would last until summer's end.

Merle Wilson had a large ice house near the lake, and he supplied much of the ice used in the village. Each summer he could be seen driving his pick-up truck around making deliveries. Use of the ice box began to decline in the 1920's as use of the electric refrigerator became more widespread, however, some were still around up to the mid 1930's.

It is believed to have been in the late 1920's when artificial ice was first made at the Loomis Cold Storage in Wilson. Railroad refrigerator cars were backed into a room at the plant where ice was sent down a chute to fill compartments built into each end of them. Peaches and other perishable fruits were then packed into the cars and shipped to cities around the country.

Wilson's picturesque ice-cutting business was very useful in its day, but it is unlikely many people would care to venture back in time and give up the conveniences they now enjoy--thanks to electricity and artificial refrigeration.

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DECEMBER MEETING:

Harold and Dorothy Applegate of Tonawanda will be the guest speakers at the regular meeting on December 16th, and their topic will be "Toys that move."

Emma Schrader, Chrm., has announced that refreshments will be served after the meeting by Lois Davis, Celeste Crawford, and Carole Schnoor.

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MUSEUM GREETERS FOR DECEMBER:

Clara Marcks, Chrm., has submitted the following list of persons who will greet visitors at the museum Sunday afternoons from two to four: Dec. 1st, Joe and Marguerite Geiser; Dec. 8th, Don and Wanda Burrows; Dec. 15th, Bill and Peg Fritton; Dec. 22nd, Sue Schearer and son, John; and Dec. 29th, Edna Robinson and Helen French.

The museum will not be open to visitors during January, February, and March.

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BON MOT:

Life is like riding a bicycle. You don't fall off unless you stop pedaling. -- C. Pepper

OUT OF THE PAST:

Dec. 8, 1886: The winter term of the Wilson Union School began Monday, Dec. 6th, with a largely increased attendance. The total number of students in the academy department is seventy-three, of which number twenty-one are non residents of the Union District. The following are among those from out of town: Cicero F. Stout, Olcott; Grace L. Britton, Lewiston; Delmar Gaskill, Newfane; George E. McCollough, Ransomville; and Lemuel Payne, Oneida.

Mr. Spencer Carver, who has been sailing on the "Fleetwing" during the summer months, is again seen in Wilson. Capt. O. Quick, owner of the schooner "Fleetwing", and his son, Fred, have returned to Wilson to spend the winter, having left the "Fleetwing" at Detroit, Mich.

Dec. 23, 1886: Joe Hess, the reformed pugilist, commenced a series of 10 meetings in the town hall Monday evening. The meetings, thus far, have been well attended. This temperance revival has been brought through the efforts of the W.C.T.U. here.--(Lockport Daily Union)

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RECENT ACQUISITIONS:

Leo Klees has donated a 1952 Jeep to the museum which should be useful for moving cars and equipment at future Memorial Day Fairs.

Dr. John Argue: 1946 Chrysler Imperial Classic Limousine; US Airforce Officer's Jacket.

Millie Croop: Two sets of folding doors to be used to enclose storage area on south dock.

Eleanor Brydges, Niagara Falls: Eleven volumes of "The Proceedings of the 1967 Constitutional Convention" in memory of her husband, Senator Earl Brydges.

Victor A. Rossen: CLS-NYS (Consolidated Laws) up to 1975. Moore's Federal Practice.

Clarence Monroe: Brass Grave Marker for the "Woodmen of the World".

Jack Maxfield: World War II Army Uniform.

Gregory Mandeville: Glycerin Bottle from Middleton's Drugstore.

Harold Donner, Ithaca, NY: Genealogy of the John Grose and Augusta Werth family.

George Kenneda, Hurley, NY: Controls for "Docksetter" which once ferried passengers from the Wilson Boathouse to Sunset Beach.

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MUSEUM NOTES:

Our treasurer has forwarded a check to the Statue of Liberty Rehabilitation Fund in response to a vote by the membership to send 20¢ for each member on the rolls.

The Board of Director meeting for December has been cancelled. Meetings will be resumed on January 8, 1986.

Whit Barnum, Burt Jennings, and Leo Klees have extended the sump pump discharge pipe to the open drainage ditch north of the caboose, and made repairs on the south dock roof.

The society plans to participate in Wilson's first attempt to "Light up the Village". An evergreen tree donated by the school will be placed outside the museum on December 8th.

The Bake Sale on election day was a resounding success according to Winnie Fischer, Chrm, who was assisted by Jane Demmin and Edna Rose. The society wishes to thank everyone who participated and provided a large assortment of delicious baked goods.

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LIFE MEMBERS:

The Board of Directors has voted to give Life Memberships to Dr. George and Rosemary Badger in recognition of their valuable support of the society.

Dr. Badger, a graduate of the Franklin Academy at Malone, NY, received his veterinarian degree at Cornell University, and started practising his profession in Wilson in 1935. He and his wife, the former Rosemary Gafney, moved to Lockport in 1946 where they now reside on Locust Street Extension. Mrs. Badger was a home economics teacher at Wilson High School.

In 1978, they donated 4¼ acres adjoining the museum which was designated as "Hojack Park". The additional acreage made it possible to erect a transportation building and expand activities at the annual Memorial Day Fair. The Badgers also donated over 40 blue spruce evergreen trees which they had planted along the north property line.

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NEW MEMBERS:

A friendly welcome is extended to our latest new members, Mrs. Harvey Wince of Vienna, WV; and Mr. and Mrs. Bruce LaMantia of Wilson, also Sam and Mary McCoy of Burt, NY.

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GREAT PERFORMANCE:

Wilson's scrappy football team made history this year when they qualified for the sectional play offs at Rich Stadium on November 9th. All Wilsonians can be proud of the young men who represented their school in the widely publicized event. We congratulate two junior members of the historical society who were on the squad, Jeff Dinse, and Jonathon Zauner.

Congratulations are also in order for Laurie Albright, Gloria Pisello, and Jeff Dinse, who were among the 18 students inducted into the Wilson Chapter of the National Honor Society.

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PUPILS VISIT MUSEUM:

Another 4th grade at Thomas Marks School visited the museum recently to supplement their study of local history. The 19 youngsters were accompanied by their teacher, Mrs. Karen (Smith) Welch, who graduated from Wilson High in 1958.

The children learned about the founder of their town, Reuben Wilson, and after being shown pictures of early Wilson, were guided through the museum by Millie Croop who pointed out other items from Wilson's past.

A few days later, thank you notes were received from the youngsters who listed things that caught their attention. Among these were the old music box, stagecoach horn, old toys, old fashioned clothes, horned owl, cannon balls, Dr. Burn's desk, and 1903 caboose.

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DO YOU REMEMBER...

...when "freeze-dried" meant the family wash had hung all day on the clothesline?

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