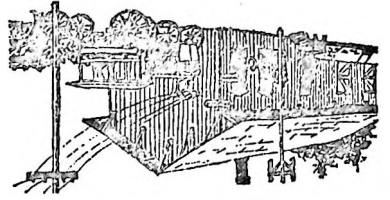


MR. & MRS. DONALD CROOP
4550 CHESTNUT ROAD
WILSON, NEW YORK 14172

LOCKPORT, N. Y.
CAMBRIA REPRODUCTIONS
JANUARY 1975 VOL. 4 NO. 1
DONALD W. CROOP, Editor
NEWSLETTER
WILSON, NEW YORK 14172
400 LAKE STREET

Wilson Historical Society



Jan. 1975

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RURAL POSTOFFICES IN THE TOWN OF WILSON

There were four main areas of growth in the town, outside the village of Wilson, from the middle 1800's to the end of the century, and each had its own Postoffice.

The largest settlement was East Wilson where the first Postoffice was established June 14, 1856, with D. H. Sweet as the Postmaster. Succeeding him were: Joseph Bull, February 20, 1862; and Aaron Beebe, June 24, 1863. The office was discontinued July 13, 1871, but reopened one month later and the following Postmasters appointed: Susan L. Schouten, August 14, 1871; Wes Qua, April 3, 1872; and Herbert Stockwell, January 5, 1874. Mr. Stockwell was Postmaster when the office was discontinued October 15, 1901, and the mail included with Lockport.

The South Wilson Postoffice was established June 26, 1849 with Micah Anderson as the first Postmaster. He was succeeded by John Morse, July 29, 1853; August Swick, August 17, 1854; Elry Randall, January 13, 1857; Marcus f. Colt, March 19, 1861; Mathias Covert, March 4, 1865; George Gaskill, September 1, 1871; Deloss Nelson, January 14, 1875; Edward Oliver, April 23, 1883; and Mary C. Baylis, July 1, 1896. This office was also closed October 17, 1901, and the mail included with Ransomville.

North Wilson was located in the northeast portion of town, and a Postoffice was established there on June 20, 1855, with Emulus Stacy appointed Postmaster. It was discontinued December 27, 1829, but re-established in 1876 when Gerret Gifford was appointed Postmaster. He was followed by Martin Atwood, 1879; Bridget Burk, 1897; Anna Wood, 1898, and Ismael J. Perkins in 1901. The office was closed October 17, 1901.

Guy W. Loomis was Postmaster of the Maple Street Office on June 14, 1867. He was succeeded by Silas Gordon, February 1, 1870; Lucy E. Loomis, May 25, 1871; Herman Green, June 11, 1874; Jacob Treichler, December 30, 1874; Isaac Smith, January 31, 1876; Walter Hayne, August 29, 1882; John J. Cushing, January 21, 1886; Isaac Smith, September 9, 1886; John J. Cushing, July 17, 1896; and John C. Miller, March 14, 1899. The office closed October 17, 1901, and the mail was included with Wilson.

Rural Postoffices were generally located in homes of the Postmaster. For instance, John C. Miller's Daughter-in-law, Mabel Miller, can show a cupboard in her kitchen that once contained the "pigeonholes" that were used to sort out mail for the boxholders in the area. She claims that the door to this room was never locked when the Millers were away so anyone wishing to pick up their mail could walk into the kitchen and get it. Mrs. Miller recently gave the Wilson Historical Society a record book that was used by Isaac Smith when he was the Maple Street Postmaster.

Years ago, according to Herman Thilk, East Wilson Sage, mail was brought by stagecoach from Molyneaux Corners across Irish Road to Chestnut Street and to his home which was the site of a Postoffice and stagecoach stop linking Wilson with Lockport.

Mrs. Alice Bull Carter also recalls that one of the East Wilson Postoffices was set up in a room of the old Bull Homestead at the corner of Irish and Chestnut Roads.

* * * * *

JANUARY MEETINGS: Board of Trustees will meet Wednesday evening, January 15th at the Museum at 8PM.

Regular meeting will be held January 20th at the Museum, Monday evening at 7:30 PM. Sound movies taken of Society activities during this past year by Don Croop will be shown, featuring Tree trimming, Batavia trip, Lion's Club, '74 Fair, Canal trips, Annual Picnic, and Appreciation Dinner.

Refreshments will be provided by Anna Mae Nevins, Verna Caufield, and Joseph Higgins.

Quilting Bee starts Sun. Jan. 5th at Museum from two to four.

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"HE DID IT" If anyone ever thought that getting a caboose was an impossible dream, they may have underrated Doc Argue's capacity for getting things done, but "He did it", and now, thanks to the generosity of Robert Stephansky Jr. of Lockport, the Society is the proud owner of a former Penn Central caboose.

Whitney Barnum and an energetic group of men prepared a place for it by exposing the original roadbed for the spur that ran north of the depot, and laying new ties and rails that had previously been brought there by Ollie Clark, Earl Swann, and Bob Rohring. Before Tom Sharpe 3rd, Donnie Kerwin, Lloyd Albright, and Fred Berry drove the last spikes in place, there was some question as to who would play out first, the sledge wielders or Doc's movie camera.

The Society owes a special word of thanks to "Red" Clark who donated his time and equipment to bring the caboose to Wilson from Lockport; also Gary Jacobs who provided valuable information for locating and evaluating the cars considered. We should also like to acknowledge the help received from local Penn Central people in Lockport including John Connelly, trainmaster.

* * * * *

COMMITTEES: Dorothy Think is Chairman of the Historical Sites Committee, and is assisted by Marion Campbell, Eleanor Myers, Winifred Stacy, Gerry Swann, and Don Croop.

Marker dedications have been held for John Hamblin, only Revolutionary War soldier buried in Greenwood Cemetery, and "Billy Sherman", Wilson's famous Civil War horse. A plaque was also acquired for presentation to Dr. and Mrs. John Argue when the Society sponsored an Appreciation Dinner honoring the doctor for his many years of service to the Wilson area.

Tours have included a trip to Sunset Island with Bessie Crawford as guide. Area cobblestone houses were also visited with special "open houses" along the route. Four separate boat trips through the canal locks on Cap't. Harrington's home made paddle wheel ship, "The Sundowner" were also made.

Present and former artists of Wilson have been invited to submit entrees for an art exhibit to be on display at the spring Fair in May. It is also hoped to mark at least one historic site in town each year.

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IN MEMORIAM: We sadly acknowledge the recent passing of one of Wilson's best known citizens, Stanley W. Borngraeber. The Society extends its sympathy to the members of his family.

* * * * *

NEW MEMBERS: We are pleased to welcome 2 more Wilson families to the membership rolls: Mr. and Mrs. Harold Swanson, and Mr. and Mrs. Jerald Pearce.

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THUMBNAIL SKETCH: Bert C. Ward, a retired farmer, was born at Newfane, in 1879. He settled in Wilson in 1900 and had three children, four grandchildren, and seven great grandchildren.

He attended the country school on Lake Road at Olcott, and is a member of the 1st Baptist Church of Wilson, Farm Bureau, Dairyman's League, and Wilson Historical Society.

Bert is the son of Donald C. Ward, and a direct descendent of General Artemus Ward, first commander under General George Washington during the American Revolution. Bert's mother was Electa Jane (Jennie) Pettit.

Mr. Ward is a resident of the Newfane Nursing Home, and would enjoy receiving cards or visits from his friends.

* * * * *

MUSEUM GIFT: The fine woodworking tool display which has been on loan from Mr. and Mrs. Robert Lewis of Newfane, has now been given to the Wilson Historical Society. The collection, acquired by Mr. Lewis for many years, will become a permanent and valuable exhibit in the Museum.

* * * * *

BOARD OF TRUSTEES: Suggestions proposed by the Planning Committee, and approved at the December meeting, include placing a light pole by the Power Co., on the northwest side of the Museum. This will not only light up the parking lot but also act as a deterrent for possible vandalism or burglary. The Board, recognizing fire protection as being our first concern, will investigate the cost of installing a sprinkler system in the building.

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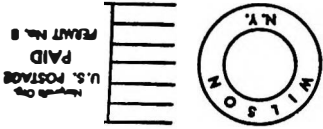
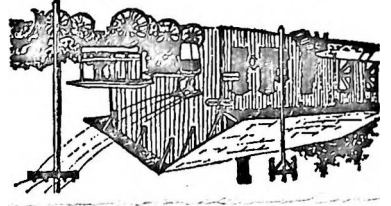
CONGRATULATIONS: Henry (Hank) Jones has been recognized by Eastman Kodak for filming an original story, "The Three Fertnuckles", which he entered in the Kodak teen-age movie awards sponsored by the company. The six-minute movie, with sound added, was filmed on super 8 color movie film. The action was filmed on a piece of plywood on top of the bedframe in his room.

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FAIR TIME AGAIN: Millie Croop and Ella Mae Baker have consented to take charge of the '75 annual "Old Fashioned Fair". They hope that everyone will give them the same wholehearted co-operation as in the past.

BON MOT: Cherish all your happy moments; they make a fine cushion for old age. (Booth Tarkington)

Feb. 1975



SAVE THE "HOJACK"

Efforts by Assemblyman John B. Daly, Officials of local towns, and members of the Niagara County Legislature, to save the old "Hojack" line, emphasizes the growing concern of all residents of Niagara and Orleans Counties that abandonment of the lake shore line could adversely effect the business and agricultural interests of everyone in our area.

Today, when we see trains limping over the long neglected Penn Central tracks at less than 4 miles per hour, we are reminded that it was not always so.

The railroad was organized in 1870 with most of the towns along the route bonded to build it. Wilson's share was \$117,000, and Reuben F. Wilson was one of the first Directors. Work progressed slowly, and when tracks were finally laid from Rochester to Kendall, the line was an insignificant little railroad consisting of two second-hand locomotives, two passenger cars, and about 50 to 60 freight cars. The lake shore road never came close to prospering until the Rome, Watertown, and Cgdensburg railroad bought it on the block at Oswego in 1876.

In that same year the line was completed from Kendall to Lewiston, and passenger trains passed through Wilson for the first time on June 12, 1876. However, the R.W. & O. fell upon hard times until 1883 when it was reorganized under Pres. Charles Parsons, who proceeded to make the "Hojack" one of the most prosperous lines in the east. Earnings went up and up until finally the New York Central, not unaware of the railroad's success, leased the entire road and property on March 14, 1891.

The single track line continued to prosper under the N.Y.C. who operated many excursions and famous high speed trains over it such as the "Wabash" and "White Mountain Express". Special fruit trains were scheduled in season to Boston and other eastern cities and thousands of barrels were shipped from Wilson each week. On November 8, 1900, the largest train to ever enter Niagara Falls from Wilson and points east, contained 57 cars of apples and cabbage. In addition to the thousands of tons of cabbage and fruit shipped each year from Wilson, lumber products, and extensive coal, grain, and poultry operations were carried on.

After 1900, students and shoppers commuted both east and west of the village on local passenger trains, but by the early 1930's, changing times and changing transportation methods brought new financial worries to the New York Central. It finally merged with the Pennsylvania Railroad under the name Penn-Central, but today the line is bankrupt, and efforts are being made to abandon the once prosperous lake shore road.

The energy crisis has brought new meaning and new hope for the failing line, however, and if Assemblyman Daly and his committee can convince the people who control the old "Hojack", that the rail line is not dead, but merely waiting for another chance to prove its worth, it is possible that it may once again become a vital link in the economic growth of not only Wilson, but Niagara and Orleans Counties as well.

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READY TO GO: Ollie Clark has presented an estimate of what it would cost to remodel part of the freight room into a new meeting room. The approximate cost would be \$800 for a 20' section, and this would include all materials except floor covering and labor. The Board of Trustees have voted approval and it is hoped most of the work can be done with volunteer help under Ollie's supervision. It is hoped that all historical men who can "Hit the hammer 'mit the nail", will step forward and give of their time and talent so that this worthy project can be completed.

"Oil your tools, sharpen your saws; say 'bye to your wife, it's for a good cause."

* * * * *

BON MOT: There is no real wealth but the labor of man. (Shelley)

COMMITTEES: One of the Society's most important committees is the Ways and Means Committee, for upon their shoulders lies the responsibility for devising methods of raising funds for all our needs. Ed Lonsbery is Chairman, assisted by Millie Lonsbery, Sara Berry, Dorothy Lort, Nettie Stimson, and Bessie Cole.

A variety of useful items have been provided through their efforts such as ceramics, water glasses, note paper, purse calenders, booklets, etc., and it is expected to have postcards and brassards available soon.

Booths have been set up at Fireman Fieldays, neighborhood flea markets, and the Old Fashioned Fair. There will soon be ticksts ready for the window fan donated by Mae Hecht, and beautiful quilt coverlet given by Joe Higgins.

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FAIR COMMITTEES PLAN FOR '75: Millie Croop and Ella Mae Baker have announced that all committee chairmen for the 1975 "Old Fashioned Fair" have been selected: Dealers, Anna Mae Nevins and Verna Caufield; Museum Exhibits Joe Higgins; Ceramics, Millie and Ted Lonsbery; Food, Lois Barnum; Cheese, Sara Berry; Candy, Bessie Cole; Balloons, Tom Sharpe, 3rd; Coffe and Donuts, Millie Middleton; Coffee and Pie, Betty Stimson; Clean up, Tom Rodgers; Fish Pond, Sue Toenniessen; Flea Market, Sharon Monroe; Hot Dogs, Art and Gertrude Schnoor; Lemonade and Popcorn; Sue Cruickshank; Parking, Bill Smith; Membership, Marion Campbell; and Publicity, Don Croop.

It is hoped to feature new attractions this year, and anyone with ideas or suggestions could help by advising any of above committee chairmen. The Fair is our main fund raising event, and its success will insure financing of part of our remodeling plans.

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"THUMBNAIL SKETCH": Louis J. Swick was born in Wilson in 1889. He attended Wilson High School, and later devoted his life to farming. He married the late Florence Pickle, and they had two children, Mrs. James Halstead, and Mrs. Emmet Sweet. He also has three grandchildren.

Louis, now retired, is a long devoted member of the 1st Baptist Church of Wilson, Niagara County Extension Service, Former Chairman of the ASCS, Agricultural Delegate to a special United Nations Conference in 1948, and member of the Wilson Historical Society.

He is the son of C. Edgar Swick and Alice M. Dobbs.

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DID YOU KNOW that in 1850 there were 199 gentlemen and 140 ladies enrolled in the Wilson Collegiate Institute which stood where the present town hall is located? Of these, 56 male and 61 female students came from Wilson.

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NEW MEMBER: It has often been said that our future lies in our young people, so we welcome Jeffrey Swann of Wilson, our 35th Junior Member.

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RAILROAD BUFF: Mr. Gary Jacobs of Sanborn has consented to supervise restoration of our newly acquired caboose. He, and Delbert Phoffl of Pekin, are presently determining what should be done. Both are members of the Buffalo Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society.

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A GENTLE REMINDER: We have been asked to remind all our members who may serve as hostesses Sunday afternoons, or use the museum facilities for meetings or other reasons, to please be responsible for turning off lights or reducing thermostat when leaving building. If, through carelessness, this is not done, lights and fuel may be wasted for a week before noticed.

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MUSEUM EXHIBITS: Some excellent displays have been on exhibit since last October when the Museum Committee innaugurated a plan of monthly themes which have included "Decoy Ducks", "Tinware", "Toys and Dolls", and "Ironstone China". This month, "Indian" artifacts are on display, and we feel that if future exhibits are as good as those already shown, all our members would enjoy paying a visit at least one Sunday afternoon each month. It is hoped that after our meeting room is completed, the many beautiful gifts that have been donated may be permanently and properly displayed.

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QUILTING BEE: An appliued coverlet called the "Tree of Life" was made and donated to the Society by Joe Higgins. Weekly quilting parties are now in progress each Sunday afternoon, and all ladies (or men) who would like to quilt are cordially invited to join in. It is hoped to have it completed for the "Old Fashioned Fair" on May 26th when some lucky person will own it.

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MEETINGS:

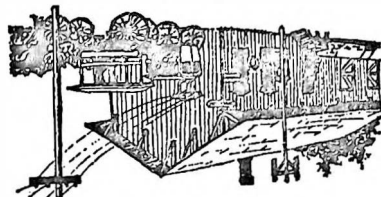
February 12th: Board of Trustees at the Museum at 8:00 PM.

February 17th: Regular Meeting "Raggedy Ann and Andy", a doll making demonstration and exhibit by our guest, Mrs. Dorothy Schultz of Amherst. It is believed that the children will especially enjoy this program and are urged to attend.

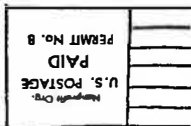
Refreshment Hostesses will be Marion Campbell, Mary Gamble, and Susan Goodnight.

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NEWSLETTER
WILSON, NEW YORK 14172
Wilson Historical Society



March 1975



AN OPTIMISTIC LOOK TO THE FUTURE

Mr. Karl S. Wright, Vice-Pres. of the Wilson Historical Society, and former Traffic Manager for the Carborundum Co., recently wrote a resume of the Society's achievements over the past three years which we feel should be shared with all our members:

"Probably the most valuable asset our Historical Society has realized since its founding in 1972, has been the enthusiastic response received from its members. It would be impossible to place even a close estimate on the amount of money these willing and skilled volunteers have saved us. The record is truly impressive.

At the Museum, a wall was moved to enlarge the area for two rest rooms and a library. It is estimated that at least \$1500 was saved. Our women then scrubbed and painted walls and ceilings; the men laid carpet, flooring and tile; volunteers (not always members) answered every call for clean-up or major moving jobs---and there have been many.

An estimate of \$2300 was judged to be too high to sandblast the building in preparation for painting, so volunteers responded to the call to scrape the exterior, and they were followed by a crew of skilled painters. What was once a dull building became an attractive asset, and perhaps \$3,000 could be calculated as the amount saved.

I say these united efforts are not unlike the determined spirit of our hardy forebears who joined together to carve their homes out of the wilderness.

I salute the diligent efforts of the Library and Museum Committees who, as the volume of acquired contents and need for their display become ever greater, create steady week-by-week progress within the Museum. No doubt this has contributed to the interest and encouraging remarks from our visitors and own members.

We can't help being optimistic as we look ahead and contemplate plans for a new and larger meeting room; prepare and plan for our 3rd "Old Fashioned Fair" in May; and restore our most recent acquisition, the old caboose, to its original state.

I have a friend who, when presenting proposals or reports, uses the expression, "How does that grab you?". Well, the achievements already reached by our Society really "Grabs me!".

Recently a guest, after attending one of our meetings and listening to the reading of the minutes turned to me and said, "There's nothing wrong with this organization."

How does that grab you?"

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NEW MEMBERS: The Society extends a welcome to the following persons who now bring our total membership to 383: Mrs. Jean Hayes, Newfane; Mr. and Mrs. Delbert Pfohl, Sanborn; and David Adams and Edward Kent of Wilson.

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IN MEMORIAM: O. Floyd Wilson, a native of Wilson and resident of the Fairchild Nursing Home at Lewiston, died recently after a three month illness. The Society extends its sympathy to members of the family.

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THUMBNAIL SKETCH: Ruth Mudge Stedman was born in 1896 at Newfane, N.Y. She had two children, William Stedman, and Mrs. Lois Barnum---also eight grandchildren. She attended Wilson High School and is a member of the Wilson Historical Society.

Her father, William Mudge, was an assistant to Assemblyman Draper at Albany. Her grandfather, Adelbert Mudge, was the last surviving Civil War veteran in this area.

* * * * *

BON MOT: Grandchildren are God's way of compensating us for growing old. (Waldrip)

"OLD FASHIONED FAIR": The Fair Committee has decided to have a cafeteria type food service this year. If, somehow, you are not asked to furnish, will you please try to make a contribution anyway. The food tent can use pies, cookies, cupcakes, salads, beans, and breads.

Bessie Cole, Chairman of the candy booth, would appreciate as many cash donations as possible for purchasing sugar.

Sharon Monroe, Chairman of the flea market, suggests that anyone with items to donate should please bring them to the Museum any Sunday afternoon from 2 to 4. She and Jim will also gladly pick up items on Saturday from any of our elderly members with no means of transportation. If you wish to contribute and need this service, don't hesitate to call Sharon: 751-6853.

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MUSEUM GIFTS: An old and unusual wooden egg carton with springs to hold the eggs in place, was donated by the Paul Reid family.

One of the more beautiful acquisitions received recently is a pastel drawing of Reuben Wilson by Gregory Swann. The portrait is tastefully mounted in a frame supplied by Joe Higgins. The Society is fortunate to have this picture of Wilson's Founder, and grateful that an artist with Gregory's talent was willing to do it for the Museum.

Miss Mabel Wilson located the picture from which he made the drawing, and presented it to the Society. She also donated a beautifully framed collection of photographs of other members of the prominent Wilson family.

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ROOTS GO DEEP: One often hears about families with their roots well established in a community. We came across a very good example of this while reading over some old church histories.

On March 27, 1966, Amy Rebecca Schearer, daughter of Ronald and Susan Schearer, was baptized in the Exley Methodist Church---the very church that her eighth generation ancestor, Andrew Brown, helped found.

Squire Brown donated the lot on which the present church is standing, and was a loyal and faithful member thruout his lifetime.

Amy's ancestors are on the female side, and the line of descent, starting with Mr. and Mrs. Brown is through Mrs. Hackett, Mrs. Smith, Mrs. Houston, Mrs. Charles Kaiser, Mrs. John Argue, Mrs. Ronald Schearer, and now Amy.

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MUSEUM PROGRESS: Things have moved quickly since Doctor Argue arranged to have Don Kerwin and Ron Schearer transfer the last two trucks and auto from the old freight room. Next, the museum gifts were moved to the basement for storage by Millie Middleton, Nancy Kent, Kay Ness, Sharon Monroe, Tom Sharpe Jr., Millie Croop, Jeff Monroe, and Daniel Wiepert. A work crew then removed all remaining obstacles, and this group included: Elwin Upton, Fenton Cole, Dick Adams, "Chuck" Campbell, Edgar Culverwell, Ed Feigenbaum, Dennis Horvath, Art Schnoor, and Douglas Smith. The men were served coffee and donuts by Millie Croop and Kathy Feigenbaum.

The Planning Committee met with Doctor Argue and laid out the groundwork for starting the project, and Art Schnoor agreed to take charge of ordering all materials for the new meeting room. Ollie Clark agreed to supervise the operation assisted by Art Schnoor, Elwin Upton, and Don Croop.

Work crews of about 6-8 men are being organized each Saturday morning as needed by Millie Croop. Men residing in the area will be called on to volunteer their services in alphabetical rotation so as to share the work load. This does not mean, however, that anyone wishing to help out more often won't be more than welcome.

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BOARD ACTION: Trustees have approved installation of a telephone in the museum for convenience of members and emergency use. It was also agreed that some form of liability coverage should be taken out to protect the Society from any law suits that might evolve from having the museum and grounds open to the public.

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MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE: Marion Campbell, Chairman of the membership committee, is ably assisted by Gwenn Wright, Doris Tarr, Dorothy Tracey, Sara Berry, and Bessie Cole. Working quietly behind the scenes, they have kept a firm grasp on their duties, and the steady growth in membership is evidence of their endeavors.

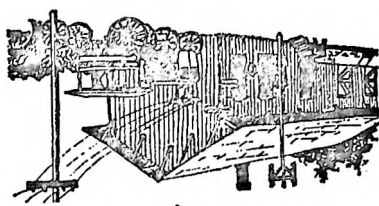
At each annual Fair, the ladies, dressed in old fashioned gowns, have graciously represented the Society and enrolled many new members. At year's end they also gently remind those who may be delinquent in their dues, that though the Society likes to get new members, we are more interested in keeping our old friends on the rolls. As a result, the Society has lost less than 3 or 4 members each year.

The attractive cards which each member receives upon payment of dues to the Treasurer, are also provided by the membership committee.

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MEETINGS: Trustees, March 12, 8 PM at museum: Regular meeting, March 17, 7:30 PM at museum: Mr. Harold Hoople, local geologist, will demonstrate rock specimens common to the area. Hostesses will be Celeste Crawford, Ellen Golde, and Eloise Culverwell.

April 1975



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RECOLLECTIONS OF THE EARLY 1900's

Mrs. Anna Huebner Karsten wrote down many of her early recollections up to the time of her demise, June 19, 1959. They are a nostalgic reminder of an era when life moved at a much slower pace. We are grateful to Mrs. Kira Karsten Woodruff for making her grandmother's memoirs available to us. We especially liked her description of the family car and making apple butter:

"Our first new car cost the fabulous price of \$500 dollars. There were no improved roads, only dirt ones, and they were smoothed by a great road scraper pulled by horses. In the wintertime the car was jacked up and left on blocks until the following spring. The car was started on a magneto then switched to the battery. The tires were as smooth as a garden hose, and the auto also had gas lights and a rubber "honker" horn. Gasoline was 13¢ per gallon, but after World War I started, it was three times that much. It was bought in 50 gallon drums and stored on the farm.

Dad used to drive but it was a fearsome ordeal for all of us who rode with him. We made several excursions a year. One was to the Pioneer Picnic at Olcott. Another was to the "Old Home Week in Lockport. There the Main Street was roped off to make a mid-way extending over the "Big Bridge". Dad spent all his money trying to win a canary--he used to have one in Germany, and wanted so hard to win another.

In the early days we made apple butter in an iron kettle outdoors. We took our own apples to the cider mill. Few of them were wormy, and we did not need to spray. One bushel made four gallons of cider, and it was necessary to hitch your team to the horse-powered grinder of the cider mill. You had to wait your turn, sometimes even finding it necessary to return the next day.

When we were ready to make apple butter, many of the neighbors would come to help peel bushels of apples. The huge kettle was filled with cider and boiled down about halfway. Apples were then gradually added, and the contents constantly stirred and fires kept going to keep the kettle boiling. If the contents appeared to be getting too thick, more cider was added. It was a 24 hour job, and some slept while others kept the fires and stirred. We made about 50 gallons at a time, and it was stored in earthen crocks. I remember how the smell of apple butter would fill the air for miles around."

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HISTORIC APPLETREE: When John Holmes, Daniel Holmes and wife Sally came from Saratoga County to Wilson in 1818, they brought their personal effects in a sled while also driving two cows and an ox team. They settled on 160 acres of land on East Lake Road, Lot # 63. The property is known today as the Floyd Salisbury Farm.

Daniel planted an apple orchard with seed taken from his father-in-law's farm, Judge Taylor, of Saratoga County. The last of these trees, planted in 1819, was removed in 1974 by Mr. Salisbury who gave several of the limbs to the Wilson Historical Society. They were cured and cut into suitable pieces for making decoupages by Art Schnoor. Any one with talents along this line is urged to see Art and make up one or two to sell at the Fair. Considering the source of the applewood, the decoupages might well become valuable.

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MEMBERSHIP DUES FOR 1975-76 are renewable now: If you pay by mail, make checks out to the Wilson Historical Society % Mildred E. Croop, Treas. 4559 Chestnut Road, Wilson, N.Y. 14172; Couples \$5.00; Single \$3.00; Jrs. \$1.00. The Society's progress depends on your continued support.

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NEW PHONE: The museum's new phone number is 751-9886. It was installed for emergency use and convenience of the membership.

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BON MOT: You cannot do a kindness too soon, for you never know how soon it will be too late. (Ralph Waldo Emerson)

NEW MEMBERS: The Society cordially welcomes the following new members: Mrs. Ralph Dinse and Mr. and Mrs. Harold Hoople of Wilson; Mr. Lawrence Halstead of Newfane; and Mrs. Neil Robinson of Lockport.

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MUSEUM ACTIVITY: Eleanor Myers is in charge of the "Beaded Bags" display now showing at the museum. The exhibit in May will be "Majolica ware", and if you have pieces to enter please contact Ella Mae Baker.

The Board of Trustees will meet at the museum Wednesday evening, April 16th at 8:00 P.M.

The regular meeting will be Monday evening, April 21st at 7:30 P.M.

Frances Goldthorpe will talk about antique sheet music followed by a "Song Fest" with Frances at the piano. "Bookie" Wilson is also planning to demonstrate his old fashioned gramophone.

Hostesses will be Nancy Kent, Frances Goldthorpe, and Winnie Fischer.

* * * * *

COMMITTEES: Dora Wakeman has been responsible for scheduling hostesses at each regular meeting since the Society was organized. It is to her credit that not one meeting has ever been held without this service being provided.

Two other unsung workers who have quietly performed their duties are Gerry Swann, who has provided hostesses for museum visitors each Sunday, and Flossie Lortz who serves as chairman of a special phone committee.

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THUMBNAIL SKETCH: Alice Bull Carter was born in 1890 at East Wilson. A retired school teacher, she attended Wilson High School, Buffalo State Teachers College, and Summer School at Boston. She has three daughters, Mrs. Roger Jerge, Mrs. John Williams, and Mrs. Donald Tolson; also 10 grandchildren.

Mrs. Carter is a member of Exley United Methodist Church, Eastern Star, Womens' Association, and Wilson Historical Society. Her great grandfather, Herman Halsey, donated the land for the old District #7 school on Chestnut Road where three of his granddaughters later taught, as did Mrs. Carter in the following generation.

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PFEIFFER FOODS, INC., one of Wilson's leading industries, is a modern food processing plant rivaling any in the country. Stuart L. Aiken, Jr., is manager and optimistic about the plant's future. Salad dressings made here have nationwide distribution and are produced on a modern high speed line that fills, caps, labels, and packs 250 bottles per minute.

Pfeiffers has made it possible for the Society to obtain sugar at nominal cost for this year's candy making for the "Old Fashioned Fair". They have also generously donated use of their parking facilities for Fair visitors.

We won't suggest you purchase Pfeiffer salad dressings as a way of saying "thank you", because they are so tasty and of such high quality, everyone is probably already using them.

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FAIR NOTES: Doc Argue and Ken Tracey are planning another antique car show this year's Fair, Monday, May 26th. Other events scheduled are Square Dance demonstrations at 1:00 and 4:00; exhibition by 7 Clan Bowmen at 2:00; First Aid demonstration by Wilson Volunteer Fire Co. at 3:00; drawing for Historical Society quilt and electric fan at 5:00; and Ron McCarty will again provide Fair goers with his pleasing style of Country-Western background music. Marilyn Allgeier will chairmen the "Sunshades" booth which will feature colorful crocheted novelty hats and evergreen seedlings.

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BICENTENNIAL NOTES, The Wilson Village and Town Boards have designated the Wilson Historical Society to act in their behalf in all Bicentennial planning or observances. The committee includes Dorothy Thilk, Chrm.; Eleanor Myers, Co-Chrm.; Lois Barnum, Sec'y.; Mildred Croop, Treas.; also Whitney Barnum, Harold Mosher, Marion Campbell, Donald Croop, Winifred Stacy and Gerry Swann.

A brochure is being published with a map showing points of interest in the town. A "Historic Cobblestone Trail" is also featured and will show the location of some of Wilson's beautiful old stone homes. The "Yorkers" have agreed to help out by marking sites along the trail. A booklet with pictures and descriptions of the old houses will also be published, and these along with ceramics and other items will be available at Nettie Stimson's "Country Barn Shop", information center for the cobblestone trail.

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"HONOR ROLL": The following men volunteered at least 3 hours of work or more on the new meeting room between February 15th and March 8th: Lloyd Albright, Fred Berry, Fenton Cole, Don Croop, Edgar Culverwell, Bob Dinse, Ray Forsyth, Anthony Frieri, Wally Goodman, A.J. Hathaway, Joe Higgins, Howard Hunter, Walter Hutchinson, Burt Jennings, Elton Kropp, Al Rankin, Tom Rodgers, Art Schnoor, Tom Sharpe Jr., Tom Sharpe IIIrd, Elwin Upton, also Jr. members, Doug and Darell Smith, Rhodes Barclay, Stuart Forsyth, Randy Cowles, Howard Hunter, Jr., and Tom Rodgers, Jr.

The honor roll does not include members who, because of their residence, age, illness, or type of work, have not been asked to help out. We know they would if they could.

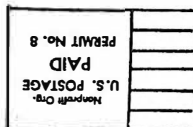
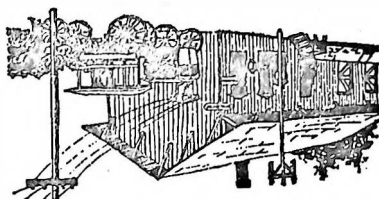
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DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

NEWSLETTER

WILSON, NEW YORK 14172

Wilson Historical Society



"THRESHING TIME & HUSKIN' BEES"

Mrs. Anna Huebner Karsten recalled that, "Harry Halstead and his boys did most of the threshing in the East Wilson community, and he would first check with all the farmers to see when they would be ready for him. Then their big black engine would come chugging along spewing out great puffs of black smoke. They usually 'set up' at night after much maneuvering and yelling, and the next morning before dawn, Harry would stoke up the fire in the boiler. By sunrise, farmers would come from every direction. Everyone helped everyone else, and money never passed hands during the threshing season. The monstrous noisy machine did a good job as the yellow grain flowed into bushel baskets and the straw chaff blew out into the barnyard where it was shaped into a mammoth yellow stack.

At dinner time the dirty, sweat-covered men would wash outside at a stand with soap and nice soft rainwater. They would then set under a shade tree and have a cooling glass of hard cider. When they sat down to eat dinner there was never a lagging appetite. We used some of our own cured hams, and it seems as though there were mountains of mashed potatoes and gravy as well as several kinds of vegetables, pickles, home made breads and butter, cherry or apple pie, and gallons of hot coffee.

It was hard work but a joyful occasion with plenty of laughter--usually at the expense of the younger boys just learning. Chores were done late at night, and when the cows were brought in from pasture, they always reminded me of children as they ran gaily 'round and 'round the new straw stack until wearing it down until it looked like a huge mushroom.

Another social gathering that young people especially looked forward to were the corn huskin' bees. The husks were pulled from the corn and stuffed into bags which were then sold for bed ticks. The corn was put in a granary for livestock feeding. Around midnight a big meal was served, and square dancing generally took over on the barn floor with everyone joining in and having a wonderful time.

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MUSEUM ACTIVITIES: Month's Exhibit: Majolicaware (Ella Mae Baker). Next month, "Milkglass-Victorian": (See Anna Mae Nevins & Verna Caufield).

May 10th: First cleanup day for Fair. Joe Higgins hopes that everyone will pitch in at 9:30 AM to make the museum look "Kissing Clean".

May 14th: Trustee meeting, 8 PM Wednesday evening at Museum.

May 17th: Second cleanup for Fair. (Ladies--the men have turned out faithfully for weeks. Here's your chance to help too. Start at 9:30 AM.

May 19th: Regular Meeting, 7:30 PM Monday evening at museum. Guest will be Mrs. Ruth Ginther from Niagara County Historical Society. Her topic will be "Yesterday, today, and tomorrow's heritage". She will model lingerie and hats of 100 yrs ago.

Hostesses will be Lois Jennings, Chris Kellman, and Doris Tarr.

May 26th: "OLD FASHIONED FAIR". All Day.

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THANKS A LOT: The Board of Trustees has authorized Millie Middleton and Dorothy Thilk to purchase a suitable clock for the meeting room from money donated to the Society during the past two years by Mr. W. H. Moody of Connecticut. We are indebted to Mr. Moody for this much needed addition to the museum.

Millie Croop, Treasurer, has been asked to contact all committee chairmen for their recommendations in order to make up next year's budget.

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HISTORICAL NIGHT: The 3rd International Historical Night will be held at the Holy Trinity Anglican Church, Chippewa, Ontario at 7:00 o'clock Wednesday evening, May 7th. Included in the program will be a tour of the church and refreshments at 9:45 PM.

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FAIR MONTH: The month of May is becoming known as Fair Month in the town of Wilson. This year its importance to the Society is especially significant. Work to remodel a new meeting room and kitchenette is now under way, and though donations of both material and labor have been generous, many items will be needed. These needs can be met if the membership supports the Fair this year as well as in the past two years.

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NEW MEMBERS: The Society extends a cordial welcome to the following new members: Mrs. Edna Haner, Howard Hunter, Jr., and Randy Cowles, Wilson; Cpt. Melinda Langdon, New Jersey; Mrs. Floyd Hicks, California; Mrs. H. J. Kirkland, Florida; and Mrs. Kenneth Langdon, Niagara Falls.

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MUSEUM PROGRESS: With approval of the membership a thermal and ionic sensor system has been ordered to protect the museum building from fire. The floor of the new meeting room is completed, covering the entire area of the old freight room. Sleepers, consisting of 2x4's donated by Whitney Barnum, were nailed over a vinyl insulating sheet. The space between the studding was then filled with insulation and a 3/4" plywood floor nailed over it. Heat runs were built into the floor along the outer walls with a cold air return down the middle. At the same time the walls of the building were lined with masonite sheets cut to fit between the uprights in order to provide an air space between the outside wall and the insulation which will be placed over it. Electrical work is being done by John Myers and Art Ness.

Men who worked March 15th through April 12th included Dave Barclay, Fred Berry, Merritt Cake, Don Croop, Edgar Culverwell, Berne Kent, Edward Lort, Mr. Newland, (in place of Chas. McManus), Jim Monroe, John Myers, Art Ness, Archie Petty, John Rodgers, Art Schnoor, Dick Schultz, Tom Sharpe III, Harold Swanson, Bob Thomas, Erwin Upton, Wally Ward, and David Weiler. Juniors assisting were Rhodes Barclay, Randy Cowles, Howard Hunter, Jr., and Jeff Monroe.

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BICENTENNIAL NOTES: A brochure has been designed by the committee and printed through the courtesy of Mr. Thomas Fare of the Wilson Central School faculty. It will be available at Nettie Stimson's Country Barn Shop, Information Center for the "Cobblestone Trail". Trail signs and markers are being made and erected by the "Reuben Wilson Yorkers" under direction of John Rodgers and Fred Fowler, also of the Wilson faculty.

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INFORMATIVE: Many of Niagara County's Historical Societies publish News Letters and some are quite informative. For instance Niagara Falls Historical Society, organized in 1897 and the oldest in the county, had a very interesting article in their February newsletter on how to determine the age of one's house. The item stressed the importance of architectural styles as well as the use of old maps, directories, title searches and tax records for answering the question, "How old is your house?"

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ON EXHIBIT: The applique spread donated by Joe Higgins has been expertly quilted under the watchful eyes of Betty Stimson and Florence Schultz. It is on display now at Hamilton and Clarks, and will be an attractive addition to some lucky person's home. Members are urged to account for all the tickets they can before the Fair.

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RAIL BUFFS: Gary Jacobs has obtained blueprints for the caboose showing it to be #18567, built in the Rochester Car Shops in 1903. Gary, Tom Sharp, Delbert Pfohl, and Bill Smith have been delayed by cold spring weather but hope to have restoration under way soon. Any others who wish to help in this project should contact Tom Sharpe.

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THUMBNAIL SKETCH: Mildred Sherman Yingling Faraday, a retired school-teacher, was born and raised in the town of Wilson. She graduated from Lockport High School and Buffalo State Teacher's College. She was married to Laurence Yingling in 1920 and George Faraday in 1942. She has one son, Robert Yingling, and four grandchildren.

Mildred has been an active member of the community for many years, and is well known for her services in the following organizations: Exley United Methodist Church, South Wilson Fire Co. Auxiliary, American Legion Auxiliary #873, Elbertas Mother Club, Auxiliary Board of the Community Hospital, and Niagara County and Wilson Historical Societies. Mrs. Faraday was given a pin in recognition of 1,000 hours volunteer service to the hospital.

Her family records can be traced back to General William Sherman of Civil War fame, and Capt. John Sherman of the American Revolution.

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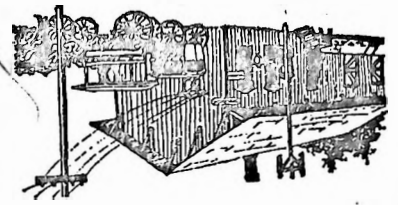
TALL TALES: When Bill Smith served in the U.S. Army at Raffin Bay, he said the mosquitos were so big they often mistook them for Jets and tried to refuel them. This matches a story told in Wilson about the fog being so thick on "Sunset Island", carpenters sometimes shingled four feet into space before discovering their mistake.

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WILSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY
NEWSLETTER
WILSON, NEW YORK 14172
DONALD W. CROOP, Editor
JUNE 1975 Vol. 4 No. 6
CAMERIA REPRODUCTIONS
LOCKPORT, N. Y.

June 1975



PERMIT No. 8
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OLD FASHIONED FAIR

Beautiful weather and an overflow crowd combined to make this year's Old Fashioned Fair a resounding success. More than 40 dealers displayed their antiques, ceramics, and collectibles, while a large variety of foods were dispensed cafeteria style by the Society. Home made candies and Laffler's cheese were also featured this year.

Attractions included archery demonstrations and instruction by the 7 Clan Bowmen; square dance demonstrations by the "Grand Squares"; a bigger and better antique car show; free movies for children provided by the Wilson Free Library; and an art show with paintings submitted by former and present artists of Wilson. Day long demonstrations of artificial respiration were provided by Wilson volunteer firemen, and Ron McCarty's band provided background country music. The quilt was won by Mrs. E. C. Shedd of Niagara Falls.

A "liberty tree" was planted by the Wilson Conservation Club to commemorate our Nation's Bicentennial, and in a brief ceremony, shovels full of dirt were placed around the tree by Fred Lampman, representing the club, and Dr. John Argue, Pres. of the Wilson Historical Society.

The Society is grateful to all members who served on committees or in any way helped to make this year's fair a huge success. Junior members were also very active and helped out in many areas. The grounds were spotless one hour after the fair closed thanks to Tom Rodgers, his clean-up committee and others who pitched in.

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IN THE NEWS: They said it would never happen in Wilson--but it did. A hold-up man entered the Wilson Branch of Marine Trust and walked out with \$1200. Sue Toenniessen faced the stick-up man with such cool composure, fellow employees were unaware of what was going on. She quickly notified the Sheriff's department while Jerry McAvoy, with little thought for his own safety, pursued the bandit in his car. The thief was apprehended because of their good work. Sue and Jerry are members of the Historical Society--we mention the bank robbery because it rates as a "first" in the history of Wilson.

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INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP: Joe Higgins, Dorothy and Norman Thilk, and Millie and Don Croop represented the Wilson Historical Society at the annual meeting of the International Historical Societies held in Chippewa, Canada, and hosted by the Willouby Historical Society. A tour of the old Anglican Church highlighted the evening followed by pictures of early Chippewa shown in the parish school.

In reference to our Bicentennial celebration, one of our Canadian friends suggested that the Revolutionary War was a war between Englishmen, and that the winners called themselves Americans. Then, in some light bantering about the War of 1812, in response to a remark that the Americans were't too welcome in Canada after they burned Newark, Joe Higgins rose to his feet and said, "I would like to point out that some of your boys liked to play with matches also."

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THUMBNAIL SKETCH: Eloise Smith Culverwell was born in Wilson and went to Wilson High School, Brockport State Normal, and Buffalo State University where she earned her B.S. degree in education. She taught in Wilson for ten years and was later employed for 11 years as medical secretary to Dr. John Argue. She is a member of Exley United Methodist Church, Gnostic Guild, Maple Rebecca Lodge, and Wilson Historical Society.

Her father, Lewis Smith, was a well known Wilson builder and contractor. Her mother, Grace Smith, was a teacher, Town of Wilson Historian, and Librarian for the Wilson Free Library.

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ECN FCT: Plan ahead--it wasn't raining when Noah built the Ark.

FAMOUS SCNS: Some of Wilson's progress at the turn of the century can be attributed to the initiative of Mr. Charles Tugwell. Mr. Tugwell was the owner of the old Fredonia Canning Co., and through his efforts a water line was laid along Lake Street to the plant, which also supplied water to homes on the route. He was active in bringing electricity to the village and getting a good road built through the town as well.

His son, Rexford Tugwell, attended school in Wilson and Buffalo. In 1922 he earned his PhD at the University of Pa., and later became a professor of economics at Columbia University. He joined the "Brain Trust" in 1932 as an advisor to Pres. Franklin Delano Roosevelt. He was named Under Secretary of Agriculture from 1934 to 1937, and was appointed Governor of Puerto Rico in 1941. From 1942 to 1957 he served on the Caribbean Commission. He now resides in Santa Barbara, California.

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A REMINDER: Considering all the exciting plans for the future, membership in the Society takes on new importance this year. To be a member, however, means that one's dues must be paid. Take a minute to ask yourself, "Have I paid my dues for '75-'76?" The answer should be yes! All memberships were renewable May 1, 1975.

* * * * *

NEW MEMBERS: The Society extends a welcome to the following new members: Mrs. Ruth Kerr, Newfane; Lisa Stimson, Ransomville; Mrs. Martha Kross, Lockport; Kathleen Horton, Minn.; Mr. and Mrs. James Woodruff Machias; and Mrs. Helen Smith, Mrs. Leroy Heidenfeldt, Mr. and Mrs. Mike Moyer, Kalene Hunter, and Brian Lonsbery, Wilson.

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MUSEUM GIFTS: A teakettle, donated to the museum by Harley Wilson, was obtained by him from hoboes who apparently stole it from a train. They used to camp in Mr. Wilson's woods where they cooked corn and potatoes in it.

A photograph, donated by Mrs. Herman Thilk, taken in front of the old district #7 school in East Wilson. Identified in the picture are the late Jenny Thilk, mother of Norman, when she was about 7 years old. Also white-haired Herman Halsey, great grandfather of Mrs. Alice Carter, who gave the land on which the school was located.

Another rare item, given by Mr. Oscar Munch, is the 1st account book of the East Wilson Methodist-Episcopal Church, dated 1871. The first ten annual meetings of the church are recorded in it.

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NOMINATIONS: The nominating committee composed of Joe Higgins, Helen Borngraeber, and Nettie Stimson, have selected the following slate of candidates to be voted on at this month's meeting: Officers, Dr. John Argue for President; Karl S. Wright, Vice-Pres.; Sue Cruickshank, Secretary; Ella Mae Baker, Rec. Sec'y.; and Mildred Croop, Treasurer. Trustees for 3 years: Whitney Barnum, Norm McGaskill, Dorothy Lort, Sharon Monroe, Rex Stacy and Elwin Upton.

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"THANK YOU": The Society truly appreciates the backing of the 48 business men in town who sponsored ads to advertise our fair in the Union Sun and Journal, Courier Express, and Niagara Gazette. Their response helps insure Wilson will someday have a museum of which the entire community may be proud.

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MUSEUM WORKERS: Over 40 members responded last month to work at the museum. Since space is limited we are listing only the names of those that did not appear before: Lois Barnum, Verna Caufield, John Goodrich, Gary Jacobs, Lois Jennings, Ted and Millie Lonsbery, Gerald McAvoy, Delbert Pfohl, Gertrude Schnoor, Carole Schnoor, Bill Smith, Rex Stacy, Betty Stimson, Norman and Dorothy Thilk, Art Zortman, Mike Feigenbaum, Brian Lonsbery, and Tammy Monroe.

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STATISTICS: 258 Newsletters were mailed out last month: 144 to Wilson residents; 91 to members in surrounding towns and state; and 23 to families living out of state. Also, during the past three years, 160 donors have contributed over 650 items for display in the museum.

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PUBLICATIONS: Helen Borngraeber has joined the Publications Committee and will be in charge of making cards or signs for exhibits and displays.

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STUDENT AWARD: The Society will present an award of recognition to the graduate in this year's Senior Class receiving the highest grade in American History.

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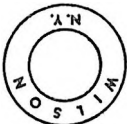
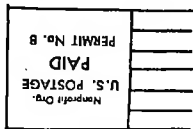
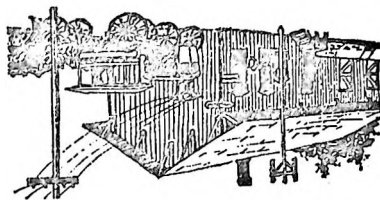
JUNE MEETINGS: June 11th: Board of Trustees at museum, 8 PM
June 16th: Regular meeting at museum, 7:30 PM. Elections; Program, Willard Dittmar's Circus. Hostesses: Gertrude Schnoor, Carole Schnoor, and Betty Stimson.

STATE LISTING: The Wilson Museum now has statewide publicity in the 1975 publication, "New York State Vacationlands".

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July 1975



THE VALIANT MEN OF BATTERY "M"

According to the records of former Wilson Town Clerk, Arthur Dobbs, nearly 100 of the 260 men who served in Battery M during the Civil War were from the town of Wilson. A total of 380 Wilson men served in the war, making it, it is believed, the highest service record per capita for any town in New York State.

When war broke out, many local men belonged to an artillery Co., of the 66th regiment, N. Y. S. Militia, under Cap't. Luther Wilson. The 66th regiment, organized under the State Militia Act of 1830, did not serve in the civil war as a unit, but many of its officers and men joined other units.

One afternoon in Lockport a little band of patriots, less than 130 in number, quietly assembled and boarded a train for Rochester. No fanfare heralded their gathering or departure, but on November 15th, 1861, this small band of earnest young men from Niagara County mustered in at Rochester and became the nucleus of Pattery "M", 1st Regiment, New York State Light Artillery. On the 21st of November, 1861, they left New York to defend Washington D.C., where they were attached to Fank's Div., Army of the Potomac. From then until June, 1865, the artillery unit served in most of the major campaigns and battles of the war.

Battery M's Service Record was distinguished. At Beverly Ford, August 20, 1862, they replaced another Battery that had been practically demolished and driven from its position. General Gordon ordered Battery M to retake and hold the Ford. After one of the most gallant artillery duels fought anywhere, Generals Gordon and Panks, speaking in the highest terms of praise, commended Battery M for its achievement.

Later at Antietam, September 16-17, Generals McClellan, Williams, and Gordon gave Battery M credit for a feat such as never had been accomplished before by a field battery---the repelling of repeated infantry charges at point blank range without the slightest support of any kind.

Battery M came to Gettysburg from Chancellorsville and was attached to the 1st Div., 12th Army Corps under General Meade. Having had two cannon dismantled and being undermanned because of the severe action at Chancellorsville, Battery M was placed in reserve on Powers Hill and the McAllister Farm to guard the Baltimore Pike--vital supply line for Meade's forces drawn up along Cemetery Ridge. Battery M's right section was commanded by Lt. John D. Woodbury, and the left section by Lt. David L. Smith. Battery M was notified that Col. Colgrove's 27th Indiana infantry regiment was suffering heavy casualties from Confederate sharpshooters holed-up in the Zeb Taney house. Battery M immediately opened fire on the Southerners and dislodged them from their position. Although Battery M was in the path of Confederate cannonade prior to Pickett's famous and fatal infantry charge, it received no musketry fire thru-out the battle. Of historic interest is the fact that Battery M was the only all Niagara County unit on the field at Gettysburg.

The 11th and 12th Army Corps was later detached from the Army of the Potomac and sent to bolster the beseiged Union Army at Chattanooga. In a matter of 11 days, 25,000 men including 10 batteries of artillery, 100 cars of baggage and 1,000 horses were transported 1200 miles by train. Battery M participated in this great migration and while near Chattanooga, 1st Bugler Pratt captured the confederate horse, later to be known as "Billy Sherman".

Pratt rode Billy on Sherman's March to the Sea and during the Campaign of the Carolinas. Following the war, Billy was brought to Wilson by his new master. A monument to his memory stands near his gravesite beside the Wilson Burt road east of the village.

Battery M participated in over 60 campaigns and battles of the war yet miraculously lost only 13 enlisted men killed, and one officer and 11 enlisted men by disease. Wilsonians may justly be proud of the valiant men of Battery M, who not only served their country well, but helped preserve it as "One Nation under God".

NEW MEMBERS: It is always a pleasure to welcome new members. This month we greet: Mr. and Mrs. William Rose, Virginia; Mrs. Marion Chalmers, Town of Tonawanda; Charles Farclay and Walter Moxham, Jr., Lockport; Mr. and Mrs. Gary Keefer and Thomas, Newfane; Mr. and Mrs. Walter Johnson, Niagara Falls; also, Mr. and Mrs. Willard Rose, Mr. and Mrs. Waldo Buetel, Mr. and Mrs. Herman Stiegler, Gary Seefeldt, Patrick Cowles, Andrae J. Sporleder, Mrs. Edith Diez, Mrs. Laura Clark, Mrs. Sheila Barmasse and Marquette, James Reynolds, Mrs. Joseph Connors, Mrs. Eleanor Canfield, Mr. and Mrs. Adorno Johnson, and Ralph Dinse--all from Wilson.

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ELECTION RESULTS: Officers elected at the June meeting for '75-'76 are as follows: Pres., Doctor John Argue; Vice-Pres., Karl S. Wright; Rec. Sec'y, Sue Cruickshank; Cor. Sec'y, Ella Mae Baker; Treas., Mildred Croop; Trustees elected for three years are Whitney Barnum, Rex Stacy, and Dorothy Lort.

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COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN: Doctor Argue has appointed the following members to head various work areas within Society: Ways and Means, "Chuck" Campbell; Museum, Peggy Ward and Millie Croop; Historical Sites, Dorothy Thilk; Membership, Marion Campbell; Program, Norman MacAskill and Lois Jennings; By-Laws, Karl S. Wright; Planning, Whitney Barnum; Publications, Don Croop; and Caboose, Gary Jacobs. Eloise Cuiverwell will serve on the program committee as Hostess Chairman.

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MUSEUM PROGRESS: If blue ribbons were handed out for achievement, the Wilson Historical Society should have one. Since starting the remodeling program, over \$3,000 has been spent for materials alone. Also close to \$3,000 in lumber has been donated by Whitney Barnum and Doctor Argue. In addition, over 300 hours of labor has been volunteered--and you know the price for labor today. Thanks to Art Schnoor's supervision, the new meeting room is coming along nicely.

At the present time the Society has the necessary funds to operate on a close budget next year, but the annual fair, bake sales, ceramics, books, and glass sales can not keep pace with our projected improvements. If the remodeling program is to be completed this year, we will need new ideas and sources of income. The biggest outlays facing the Society would be for materials to build a drop ceiling, wall paneling, floor covering, fire place, and kitchenette.

It has been decided that a special building fund be set up so that any members who wish to help out may do so. Contributions may be given or mailed to Mrs. Mildred Croop, Treasurer.

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THUMBNAIL SKETCH: Janet Miller Sporleder was born in Kansas City, Mo. She is a homemaker and schoolteacher, and settled in Wilson in 1949. She has two children by her marriage to Andrae B. Sporleder, Lisa Andra, and Andrae Jeffrey. Janet attended the N.Y.S. College for Teachers at Buffalo, and the University of Colorado. She is a member of St. John's Episcopal Church, Delphic Circle, Lockport Concert Assoc., Girl Scouts, and Board of Education.

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"DOCKSETTER" Most Wilsonians can recall the familiar "Docksetter", so named because so many people sat on the Wilson boathouse dock while the boat ferried people to and from the "Island". It was first used in 1938 and was built of cypress from Louisiana. It was 30' long with a 9' beam and drew 28" of water. Its capacity was 30 to 40 people or one and a half tons of fish.

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GIFTS TO THE MUSEUM: Check-writer, locomotive oil can and lantern from Dr. John Argue; Invitation to Mr. and Mrs. Ambrose Hane's 50th wedding anniversary, 1864-1914, from Miss Esther Casselman; Picture of "Grandmother Mathew's chair", carried to Batavia from Buffalo to escape British burning of Buffalo in 1812. (Mrs. Mathew was the maternal great grandmother of Mr. W. H. Moody of Hamden, Conn.)

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BICENTENNIAL: Helen Borngraeber has placed an attractive sign in the Wilson Free Library on which dates of scheduled Bicentennial activities in the town will be placed.

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OUTSTANDING SERVICE: Words cannot express the appreciation of the membership to those who, for various reasons, relinquished their offices in the Society: Trustees, Joe Higgins and Anna Mae Nevins; Ways and Mean, Ed and Millie Lonsbery; Museum, Joe Higgins; Program, Lois Barnum; Hostesses, Dora Wakeman.

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SORRY: We are on a tight budget. Newsletters may no longer be sent to members who have not paid their dues. All dues were payable May 1, 1975.

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JULY MEETINGS: Trustees, July 16th, 8PM at museum. Regular meeting, July 21st, 7:30 PM at museum. Program pending. Hostesses, Dorothy Lort, Marilyn Allgeier, and Marie Luff.

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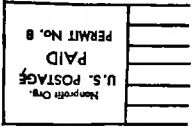
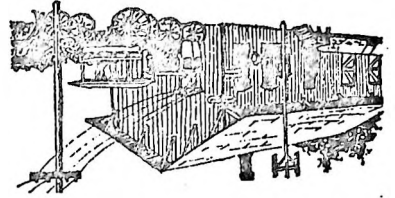
BON MOT: The true source of cheerfulness is benevolence. (P. Godwin)

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NEWSLETTER
DONALD W. CROOP, Editor
AUG 1975 Vol. 4 No. 8
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LOCKPORT, N. Y.

Wilson Historical Society

Aug 1975



TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT

The area we know today as the town of Wilson was once occupied by the Neuter Indians, so named by the French because of their desire to stay neutral in the tribal wars waged on their borders.

When the French struck deep into the St. Lawrence and Mississippi valleys, most of the territory was claimed for "New France", but when the English captured Fort Niagara in 1759, the Niagara Frontier came under British control. It had been subject to the British Governor in New York as part of Albany County from 1683 to 1771, however, until overthrow of the French in battle, no British subjects would venture into the area.

The Frontier was included in Tyron County from 1772 to 1784, and from 1784 until 1789 was still under British control as part of Montgomery County. In 1789 through 1802 it became a part of Ontario County, and during this period in 1796, the British gave up control to New York State. Ontario County included all of New York west of the Phelps and Gorham pre-emption line.

In 1791, Robert Morris purchased most of the lands west of the Phelps-Gorham purchase and acquired the Indian titles in 1797. About this same time, Joseph Ellicott, associated with Augustus Porter in the interests of Robert Morris, started survey of the tract which became known as the Holland Purchase. It was divided into ranges 6 miles wide extending from Penn. to Lake Ontario.

On March 30, 1802, the area became part of Genessee County by act of the N.Y.S. Legislature, and the entire Holland Purchase west of the east transit line was set up as the town of Batavia.

In 1804, according to Christfield Johnson in his Centennial History of Erie County, the N.Y.S. Legislature again divided the "Purchase" into four new towns named Batavia, Willink, Erie, and Chautauqua. All, except the latter, extended from Pennsylvania to Lake Ontario and all are plainly outlined on an 1804 map of the Holland Land Purchase. The easternmost town was Batavia, comprised of the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd ranges. Next to it on the west was the town of Willink, comprised of the 4th, 5th, and 6th ranges, while the town of Erie was made up of the 7th, 8th, and 9th ranges as well as the State Reservation and adjoining waters. The rest of the purchase made up Chautauqua township. Thus from 1804 to 1808, the area we know today as Niagara Co., was once the northern parts of the towns of Erie and Willink.

On March 11, 1808, Niagara County was organized from all the territory of the Holland Purchase (excluding Chautauqua). The area was again divided into three new towns called Cambria, Clarence, and Willink. Cambria included all lands north of Tonawanda Creek (our present Niagara County), Clarence was comprised of the lands between Tonawanda Creek and Buffalo Creek, and Willink included all lands south of Buffalo Creek to Cattaraugus Creek. The new Niagara County seat was established and built at Buffalo, New York.

On April 2, 1821, Niagara County (as we know it today) was organized from all the lands north of Tonawanda Creek which at the time was comprised of the towns of Cambria, Porter, Niagara, Hartland, Royalton, Lewiston, and Wilson. The towns of Somerset, Newfane, Lockport, Pendleton, and Wheatfield were added after that date giving our present Niagara County 12 townships.

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IN MEMORIAM: The Society extends its condolences to the family of Mrs. Jennie E. Treichler, 90, who passed away recently at Inter Community Hospital. Jennie was a graduate of Wilson High School and Oswego Normal, and taught in Newfane and Wilson for many years. She was a member of the 1st Baptist Church, and charter member of the Wilson Order of Eastern Star and Wilson Historical Society. She was born in the town of Wilson in 1884, and married the late Howard Treichler. They had four children, Lucille, Jean, Helen, and Howard. She is also survived by 13 grandchildren.

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BON MOT: Earth hath no sorrow that heaven cannot heal. (Thomas Moore)

WELCOME: Greetings to our latest new members: Mrs. Gladys S. Clark of Cleveland, Ohio, and Mrs. Doris A. Clark of Kenmore, New York.

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MUSEUM GIFTS: Recent gifts to the museum include a Paper weight picture of Harris Cottage by Myra Karsten; School bell used in Porter and Burt, picture of Myrtle C. Norton and painting by her at age 16; two old saws given by George A. Clark; brass handle donated by Albert N. Olmstead; material for making sign to advertise annual fair by Frank Rodgers; 2 vol. vitology, (Prof. Woods-Ruddock) and one Fortune Teller (Marchand), donated by Mary Upton; 1869 Stories of Forest and Frontier by Old Hunter, donated by Anna Belle Freeman; Minutes of Greenwood Cemetery Association from 1850 to 1881, donated by Richard Sage and Gertrude Loomis; "Wilson Stars" from 1956 through 1957, donated by Lucille Upton; and 15 religious prayer books, bibles, and hymnals dating back to 1889, donated by Judy George.

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"OOPS": We inadvertently left out the name of Millie Middleton when listing committee chairmen in the July "Newsletter". The library comm., under her direction, meets twice a month and has been doing an outstanding job cataloging and identifying the hundreds of gifts donated to the Society.

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AWARD: The first Historical Society award for excellence in the study of American History was presented to Wilson graduate, Michael Waite.

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ANNUAL PICNIC: The annual picnic will be held on the museum grounds, Monday evening, August 18th, from 6PM on. Each family should bring their own table and chairs, table service, and a generous dish to pass. (buffet style.) Beverages will be furnished. Elderly Wilsonites will be invited as guests of the Society, and movies taken at last year's picnic will be shown.

The program committee comprised of Norm MacAskill, Lois Jennings, and Eloise Culverwell have selected an enthusiastic committee to hostess the affair as follows: Jim and Sharon Monroe, Chrm.; Rod and Sue Toennissen; Ernie Walpole; Dorothy Thilk; Lois Jennings; Millie Croop; and Elwin and Garnet Upton.

The Board of Trustees will meet Wednesday evening, August 13th, 8PM.

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MUSEUM EXHIBITS: The August exhibit on display in the museum will be, "Sewing Crafts" under the supervision of Jean Argue. An "Old Tool" layout was featured by Tom Sharpe, Jr. during the month of July, and Flossie Lortz will be in charge of the "Education in Wilson" display scheduled for Sept. All members of the museum comm. are to be congratulated for the outstanding exhibits that have made the museum an interesting place to visit Sunday afternoons during the past year.

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CHARTER MEMBERS: A list of Charter Members of the Wilson Historical Society has been compiled from attendance rolls and includes all persons who attended two meetings out of the first five starting May 9, 1972. The list will be published on the bulletin board at the museum until January 1, 1976 when it will be considered complete, correct, and final. Corrections may be made by contacting Ella Mae Baker.

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THUMBNAIL SKETCH: Stella Croop Stinehoff was born in a log cabin in the town of Clarence, December 18, 1880. She graduated from Parker High School, Buffalo Normal, and did extension work at the University of Buffalo and University of California at Berkley. She taught in the Clarence and Harris Hill schools until retirement in 1940 when she took up painting as a hobby.

Mrs. Stinehoff, a resident of Williamsville View Manor Nursing Home, is 95 years of age. She is the oldest living member of the Hunt's Corners Baptist Church, a member of the Grange, Honorary Charter member of the Clarence Historical Society, and member of the Wilson Historical Society.

She is descended from Abraham Carmer who fought in the revolution as a private in the New Jersey Line of the Continental Army. His discharge papers were signed by General George Washington.

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BUILDING PROGRESS: Electrical wiring in the new meeting room was temporarily halted when John Myers went to the Inter Community Hospital for tests. We are happy to report that he is now feeling better and will undoubtedly be able to resume and complete the work soon.

The Planning Comm. proposed that a cathedral type ceiling be built in the new room utilizing lumber which we already have. The Board of Trustees approved the recommendation and work may start as soon as the material is exchanged and work crews volunteer to start the job.

The Museum Comm. met to lay plans for the coming year and a work session held Thursday, July 17th, saw most of the items removed from the basement, cleaned, and put in the garage for storage. Museum exhibits each month will be continued, and Helen Borngraeber will have charge of selecting hostesses for Sunday afternoons from 2 to 4 PM. Instructions for all hostesses will be found in the top desk drawer.

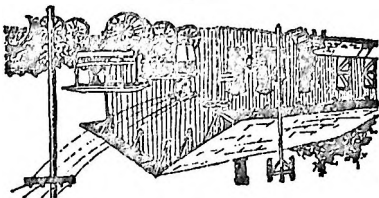
The Bicentennial Comm. has placed a marker to identify the "Liberty Tree" planted on the grounds by the Wilson Conservation Club.

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THE EXLEYS

The Thomas Exley family came to Wilson from Lincolnshire, England, in 1849. They made their home at the corner of Maple and Ide Roads where they purchased two farms. The Exleys lived in a cobblestone house facing Maple Road which later became known as the William Singer home, and more recently, The Glenn Goodman place.

The late Lewis and Grace Smith lived near the Exleys in the 1890's and were well acquainted with them. Mrs. Smith's mother did sewing for Mrs. Exley when Grace was a small girl and accompanied her mother to the Exley home. As a youngster, Lewis, who lived across the road, also visited the Exleys and he enjoyed lighting Mr. Exley's pipe. Mr. Exley apparently thought well of the youngster as he not only used to give the boy apples, but an old accordin as well.

Mrs. Exley's sister and daughter lived in the north rooms of the house, and since there was no door on this wing, went in and out through a window by means of a small ladder.

Abraham Hutchins built some rooms on the back of the house three steps lower than the main part, where Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Gifford lived and cared for the Exleys. Lewis Smith enjoyed watching Mr. Hutchins build on those extra rooms.

Mrs. Exley, who was quite wealthy, always referred to her husband as "The Gov'nor", and it was said that at the time of their marriage, he served as her coachman.

The Exley family is principally remembered for a \$5,000 gift to the Wilson Methodist Church, with the stipulation that the amount be matched by the congregation. Their gift led to the building of the original brick edifice which was named for them.

Thomas Exley died in 1893 at the age of 83, and his wife, Charlotte, died in 1899 at the age of 87. Both are buried in the Exley Mausoleum in Greenwood Cemetery, Wilson, N.Y.

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THUMBNAIL SKETCH: Elizabeth Russell Cole was born in the town of Collins and is a retired food service employee of the Wilson Central School. She married Fenton Cole at Jamestown in 1933, and they settled in Wilson in 1943. They have two children, Robert L. Cole, and Mrs. Audrey E. Orr; also three grandchildren.

Elizabeth attended Cattaraugus High School. She is a member of Exley United Methodist Church, Inter-Community Hospital Auxiliary, and Wilson Historical Society.

Her father, Eber Russell, was a historian and authority on Indian culture. (See October 1974 "Newsletter") Her mother, Ruth Bull, was born in Central City, Colorado, once known as the richest square mile on earth. Her grandfather Bull was a silver miner, and later worked in the famous "Teller House".

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NEW MEMBERS: We extend a welcome to the following new members, Mr. Joseph Geiser, and Mrs. David Smith of Wilson.

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SEPTEMBER MEETINGS: The Board of Trustees will meet Wed. evening, Sep't. 10th in the museum at 8PM.

Regular monthly meeting will be Monday evening, Sep't. 15th in museum, 7:30. Hostesses will be Helen Borngraeber, Sheila Barmese, and Betty Belschner.

Dorothy Dehn, an American Lineage Specialist, will be guest speaker at the Sep't. 15th meeting Monday evening, 7:30 PM. She received her training at Washington National Archives and is 1st Vice Regent in the Abigail-Fillmore Chapter, D.A.R. Mrs. Dehn will be remembered locally as a teacher of history at Wilson Central School from 1940 to 1947.

THE BICENTENNIAL COMMITTEE has marked the "Liberty Pole" donated by the Hathaways, and dedicated at ceremonies conducted by B.S.A. Troop 66 of Wilson.

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"THE MILLS GRIND SLOW": The Wilson Historical Society has received notice that its status as a non-profit organization has been approved by the I.R.S. Donations or gifts to the Society may now be claimed for tax purposes.

A special word of thanks to Ella Mae Baker, Mildred Croop, Doctor Argue, Richard Southard, and William McLaughlin who spent many hours preparing the necessary papers and records required by the government.

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SUITABLE EXHIBIT: The scale model Hudsons and Diesel engines that were hand-made by Norman Grundhoeffer, have proven to be an appropriate exhibit for the old Depot, and have also attracted quite a number of persons. Now that the trains are mentioned in the N.Y.S. booklet, "Vacationlands", it might be expected that more visitors will find their way to Wilson.

When work on the new meeting room is completed, not only the trains but other artifacts of Wilson's past could be permanently displayed.

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YOUNGSTERS VISIT MUSEUM: Mrs. Ruth Gates and 14 children from the 4th grade at Thomas Mark's School, recently visited the museum and spent an interesting 2½ hours learning about some of their Wilson heritage. Millie Croop, Co-chairman of the museum comm., entertained the youngsters telling them stories about the town's founder, Reuben Wilson, the stage coach horn, and the old cannon ball. She also explained about the old tool exhibit, model trains, caboose, and other items on display. The youngsters had a picnic on the grounds after the tour, and all indicated having had a wonderful time.

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RECENT GIFTS: Mrs. Lucy Sullivan of Olcott has donated a 100th Anniversary edition of the Union Sun and Journal, "Old Home Week, Lockport-1925", and pictures of the U.S. Army Band, Pres. Coolidge and wife congratulating Band Leader Stannard and Drum Major Ross.

Mr. Charles Boyer, Curator of the Lockport Niagara County Historical Soc., presented 4 vols. of a "History of the Niagara Frontier" by Merton Wilner.

Mrs. Mildred Middleton has donated "The Torch is Passed", and a copy of "Our Presidents and their Wives-revised 1948-by the Hoskin Service."

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COBBLESTONE TRAIL: Signs for the "Cobblestone Trail" were made by Rex Stacy and lettered by Carol Smith. One is placed at the four corners to direct tourists from the "Historic Niagara Trail" onto the town's "Mini trail". Nettie Stimson's "Country Barn" is the location for an "Information Center" sign where visitors may obtain brochures about Wilson and the trail, as well as find souvenirs and antiques.

The trail is marked with red arrows on a white background. The Bicentennial Committee wishes to express its thanks to the Town of Wilson, Niagara County, and New York State highway departments for their help.

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EXHIBIT: "Education in Wilson" is being featured this month at the museum. Flossie Lortz is in charge, but the museum comm. would like to emphasize that all persons handling the monthly displays are dependent on our members to provide materials for exhibit.

Hostesses who have agreed to serve at the museum on Sunday afternoons from 2-4 are as follows: Sep't. 7th, Sue Cruickshank & family; Sep't. 14th Shirley and Dave Smith; Sep't. 21st, Tom Sharpe and Dennis Horvath; and Sep't. 28th, Ruth Gale and Chris Kellman.

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IN MEMORIAM: We sadly note the passing of Mrs. Mae Hecht and Mr. Bert Ward, both of Wilson. Mrs. Hecht, 66, of Maple Road, died recently at Mt. View Hospital. She was born, raised and married at Depew, N.Y. She was a member of Exley United Methodist Church, United Methodist Women, Wilson Fire Co. Auxiliary, and the Wilson Historical Society.

Mr. Ward, 96, was a well known Wilson farmer. He was born in a log cabin in the town of Newfane in 1879. He lived in the town of Wilson for 75 years where he was a member of the 1st Baptist Church, Farm Bureau, Niag. Co. Fruit Grower's Assoc., Dairyman's League, and Wilson Historical Society.

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HEAT WAVE: The following item in a 1901 issue of the "Wilson Star" suggests that the editor was very alert to all the "burning issues" of his day. We quote: "The way the sun has been shining of late--every cornfield in Niagara County has been filled with "roasting" ears. This isn't a joke. It is a red hot fact."

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SUGGESTION: "Chuck" Campbell, Chrm. of the Ways and Mean Comm., suggests it would be helpful if all plans to raise money are channeled through the committee. This is essential because the committee feels it can only authorize payment of bills for projects they have approved.

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BON MOT: Automation is a technological process that does all the work while you just sit there. When you were younger, this was called "Mother". (General Features Corp.)

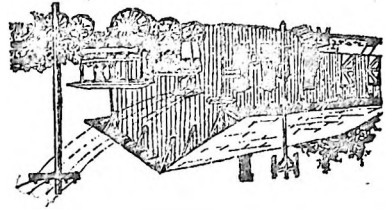
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WELCOME: Mr. and Mrs. Lynn Sherrie of Wilson, the latest new members to join the Wilson Historical Society.

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MUSEUM GIFTS: Mrs. Eloise Culverwell: white satin wedding slippers that belonged to Rachel M. Case who married Ellsworth Crampton Nov. 28, 1854.

Mrs. Bruce (Cindy) Wilson: tape, reel no 1, recorded at Wilson Centennial on August 29, 1958.

Miss Flossie Lortz: two old flat irons with "I" handles.

Mr. George Collins: 4 pictures of persons taken on "Sunset Island".

Identified by Bessie Crawford, thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Harry Brown.

Mr. John Sonker: Old steamer trunk.

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SEMAPHORE IS GREEN: Gary Jacobs wishes to announce that door hinges, paint, nuts and bolts for caboose are in the museum and anyone wishing to help restore it are welcome to do so. Gary has blueprints and information which he will gladly share with anyone interested. The roof has been covered by Delbert Phfol and Bill Smith. It is now planned to prepare side for painting, replace broken windows, and replace broken sill.

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PICNIC: The annual picnic was well attended with over 35 "Golden Ager" in attendance. All were recognized at the meeting which was the first ever held in the new (yet not completed) meeting room. Norma MacAskill, Program Chairman, pointed out that our guests have a wealth of information which our members should try to obtain for posterity.

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FIRE PROTECTION: The new fire protection system is now installed and working. Alarm horns inside and outside the building will be activated in case of fire. The sensor system is also connected by phone with the Fire Control Center and Wilson Fire Company.

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BICENTENNIAL NOTES: The Wilson Bicentennial Committee recently awarded two prizes for the best floats depicting the bicentennial theme in the Wilson Firemen Fieldday Parade. The first prize of \$25 went to the Wilson Ally Cats 4H Club; second prize of \$15 went to Cub Scout Pack #21.

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LIBRARY COMMITTEE: Since the Library Committee keeps a record of all gifts given to the museum, their work can be made much easier if all persons making donations will do so through the committee. Also, no items should be removed from the museum without notifying Millie Middleton or a member of her committee. Your co-operation will be appreciated.

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"FULL HOUSE": When the Niagara Historic Trail was recently dedicated, the Wilson Historical Society responded to a request by several communities to provide a "coffee and do-nut stop" at the museum as a break in the long tour. Hostesses were prepared to accommodate four bus loads but were totally overwhelmed when seven additional busloads arrived unannounced.

Eloise Culverwell and her committee labored hard against trying conditions, and deserve a word of praise for the way they handled the situation.

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OCTOBER MEETINGS: Board of Trustees: October 15th, 8PM at museum.

Regular meeting: October 20th, 7PM at Boathouse.

Program will include "Port of Entry" Marker Dedication with David Broderick, County Treas., as guest speaker. Hosts for this meeting will be Norm MacAskill, Arthur Schnoor, Harry Brown, and Joseph Higgins.

Monthly exhibit: Railroads, supervised by Delbert Phfol of Pekin. Included will be model R.R. display, artifacts, and sound movies each Sunday.

Museum Hostesses for Oct. 5th, Edna and Willard Rose; Oct. 12th, Christine Hutchinson and Chris Kellman; Oct. 19th, Leona Buetel and Gertrude Schnoor; Oct. 26th, Eleanor Caulfield and Millie Lonsbery.

THE WILSON HARBOR

Steady improvements at the Wilson Harbor tend to remind residents that, at one time, it was one of the busiest Ports on Lake Ontario. The first steamboat to visit Wilson was the "Ontario" in April, 1817. It was built the year before at Sackett's Harbor and was 110 ft. long with 24' beam drawing 8 1/2 feet of water. The "Ontario" plied the lake waters until the 1930's.

In 1817, butt staves and timber were shipped from Wilson to Cape Vincent and other harbors on the St. Lawrence where they were floated to Montreal and Quebec. Much of the heavy wood was shipped to England for use in building frigates of war. This industry flourished in Wilson until all the great oak forests between the Ridge and Lake Ontario became depleted.

One of the last remaining relics of that era is the old anchor which now stands in the yard of the A. J. Hathaway home on route 425. It was lost from the "Franklin Pierce" during a storm off the Townline Pier in 1840. The schooner was owned by John Kelly of Youngstown. The anchor was found in 1897 by Lawson Ackerman who recovered it and sold it to E. E. Stevens. Mr. Stevens, who owned the Hathaway home at that time, put it in the yard where it still stands 78 years later.

In 1846, Luther Wilson obtained permission from the Secretary of War to extend two 200' piers into the lake--one at each side of the mouth of 12 mile creek. Dredging of the channel was done by horsepower, and about this time, Wilson became a Port of Entry with Abram Vosburg first customs agent.

Mr. Wilson built a storehouse at the harbor and began buying and shipping grain and fruit. He also established a shipyard and his first vessel was a schooner, the "R. F. Wilson", which was used to run produce and fruit between Wilson and Oswego. Over 20 ships were built by Luther Wilson and others through 1876. Three were built in the Putnam Boatyard at the west end of "Sunset Island".

Many accidents, sometimes with loss of life, occurred in those busy days on the water front. The schooner, "Mary" was driven ashore and went to pieces just east of Wilson; in 1854 the schooner, "Isobel" went ashore in a snowstorm with loss of cargo; also that same year the schooner "Minerva" and "I.C. Biggs" were wrecked in storms. The "Fleet Wing", built in Wilson, capsized off shore. Captain Orren Quick and some of the crew were saved, but his wife, son, and ship's cook were drowned.

Commercial shipping at the harbor gradually diminished after 1876 when the Rome, Watertown, and Ogdensburg railroad came through Wilson, however, another lucrative enterprise took over. W. N. Harris acquired the beautiful pine groves on the shores of the inner harbor and "Lake Island Park", one of the outstanding summer resorts of Western New York, was born. A Pavilion was erected for dining and dancing, and there was a baseball diamond nearby and space for other sports. The outstanding day of the year was the last Saturday in July when the annual picnic of the Niagara County Farmer's Association was held there. Hundreds of farmers and their families converged on Wilson that day each year, coming before dawn and staying late at night.

Toboggan slides for bathers, fishing, boating, and other activities attracted thousands to Wilson each summer. Many came by railroad--others by excursion boats from Toronto. Crowds of Youngstown residents also used to go to Wilson on barges on which there was plenty of room for dancing. A familiar little steamer of that day named the "Annie F. Onen" was used to tow the barges.

One of the main attractions of those times was the frequent "parade of boats" held during the summer evening hours. Boats of all sizes and shapes were trimmed with Chinese Lanterns, and the beauty of the occasion was enhanced by the sound of soft music played on Mandolins and guitars.

William Wilson, a veteran fisherman, was said to have stated that he made as much as \$55 in one day rowing people to the island at 5¢ a person.

The combination of the Lockport-Olcott trolley and the automobile, however, were to be the cause for another decline in the once busy harbor.

Now signs of another boom are in the making. Many boaters are being attracted to the several fine Marinas and Yacht Clubs. Fishing is reported to be making a comeback, and a new boat launching facility will soon be available at the Tuscarora State Park which is being developed along the lake northwest of the village.

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THUMBNAIL SKETCH: Mildred Norma Lonsbery is a retired employee of the Wilson Central School. She has one son, Harvey E. Lonsbery, and four grandchildren. She attended Wilson High School and is a member of St. Paul's Lutheran Church. She is also a member of the Wilson Historical Society and serves as a member of the Ways and Means Committee.

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WEDDING BELLS: All members of the Society wish to extend their best wishes to Mr. and Mrs. Edward Peters who were recently united in marriage. Mrs. Peters is the former Ella Mae Baker.

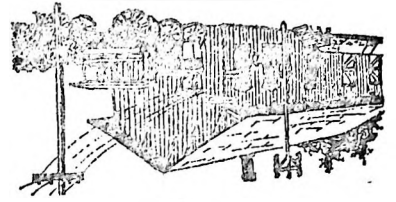
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BON MOT: Every young man should learn to take criticism. He'll probably be a parent someday. (Franklin P. Jones)

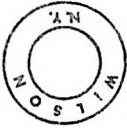
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THE SHELDON PIONEERS

Much has been written about Reuben Wilson and his family, and justly so, because much of the early development of Wilson was initiated by them.

The Sheldon family also played a prominent roll in Wilson's early history, in fact, Stephen Sheldon, who arrived here from Jefferson County, N.Y., came in 1909---one year earlier than Reuben. He had been previously assigned lots #8 and #9 by the Holland Land Co., and his first home was a rude dwelling on the west bank of 12 Mile Creek. A short time later he built another house at the mouth of 12 Mile Creek where he died in the fall of 1812. He is reported to have been buried in Wilson's first cemetery--a small unmarked plot at the eastern tip of "Sunset Island".

When the British burned the Sheldon home, the family fled but later returned and built another house nearby where they lived for many years.

Stephen's oldest son, Daniel, and a brother, George, were living in Kingston when war broke out. Both were drafted into the British army but managed to escape. They returned to Wilson where Daniel Sheldon and Joshua Williams built the first saw mill on 12 mile creek. The mill was later acquired by Reuben Wilson. George Sheldon located his home on lot # 17.

The Lake Shore Road, the first improved road opened in town, was laid out in July, 1916, by George Sheldon and Abner Crossman, road commissioners, under the survey of Joseph Aiken. The road extended from Youngstown to Van Horne's Mill at Burt.

Stephen's 3rd son, 13 yr. old Smith Sheldon, was captured by the British in 1814 while working for a Captain Brown near Four Mile Creek. All were taken to Quebec where Smith died aboard a prison ship.

Another brother, Simon Sheldon, built the first tannery in town at the northwest corner of lot #7. When the Collegiate Institute was established January 25, 1845, many prominent citizens pledged money to build it. One of them was Simon Sheldon, who not only made a substantial pledge, but also gave the land on which the school was built. (The Wilson Historical Society will soon place a marker near the site of the old school--now occupied by the Wilson Town Hall.

Mr. Kenneth Langdon, of Niagara Falls, is a direct descendent of Stephen Sheldon--one of Wilson's earliest settlers. His wife, Mrs. Marguerite Langdon and daughter Melinda, are members of the Wilson Historical Society.

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PROMINENT WILSONIAN: Walter Hutchison, former Wilson High School Athletic Director and member of the Wilson Historical Society, was recently feted at an "Appreciation Night" held in Cambria, at which time the football field at Wilson Central School was named the "Walter J. Hutchison Athletic Field".

"Hutch" was again honored Friday evening, October 17th, at a banquet held in Ithaca, N.Y., where he was named to the Hall of Fame at Ithaca College.

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RAILROAD EXHIBIT: The railroad display in the museum during October attracted many visitors suggesting that there might be more than just a nostalgic interest in America's limping transportation industry. Over 100 persons attended the first weeks Sunday showing and attendance remained high all month. Monthly exhibits sponsored by the Museum Committee have been outstanding. Themes have been varied and interesting with something for everyone. All have been expertly presented and talently displayed.

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THUMBNAIL SKETCH: Helen Annette Stevens is a retired school teacher from Wilson Central School. She received her early education at Wilson High and Brockport State Normal. She is a member of Exley United Methodist Church, Gnostic Guild, and Wilson Historical Society. Of English origin, her father, Lonson Smith Stevens, was a prominent local farmer. Her mother, Louisa Bickford Stevens, was a schoolteacher.

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NEW MEMBERS: We wish to extend a cordial welcome to Judge and Mrs. Frank Kronenberg, and Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Pettit of Wilson.

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MUSEUM GIFTS: The World's Work, Pictorial History of War with Spain, Blue Jacket of '76, National War Songs and Sunshine-Little Children, from Helen Borngraeber; History of Europe and History of Our Country from Iola Sherrie; Town Records, Cash Books, and Ledger Book from Marilyn Allgier; Eye glasses and cases labeled John Outwater, Lockport, from Gertrude Pollack (Dr. Argue); Wilson Centennial Booklet, 2 pictures Taggart & Stevens-1911, newspaper clippings, '46 Crest, from Rev. Ralph Hessinger; RR Lantern, 2 telegraph keys, 3 sounders, surrey tongue ends, from Lloyd Decker; Report pads, REA Directory, dust pan, signalman caution pad, '53-'54 Lockport Directory, and two Bills of Lading filing boxes, from Jeffery Wiepert.

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NEWLYWEDS: Cupid has been working overtime. Congratulations to Mr. and Mrs. Raymond Pease of Lockport. Mrs. Pease is the former Mrs. Myra Karsten.

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IN MEMORIAM: The Society extends its condolences to the family of Mr. Carl Ossman, 82, who recently passed away. Mr. Ossman, a member of the Wilson Historical Society, gave permission to erect the first historical marker in town on his property--the Civil War horse, "Billy Sherman".

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THE END IS IN SIGHT: Delbert Pfol and Bill Smith have been appointed Co-Chairmen, by the Board of Trustees, to take charge of the caboose restoration program. Gary Jacobs will act as a consultant. "Bob" Rose has also been taking a very active interest in the caboose and has put his talent to work replacing windows, doors, or whatever.

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SPECIAL GUESTS: Twenty-six members of the Cambria Home Bureau visited the museum last month and were given a guided tour by hostess, Betty Stimson.

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MUSEUM PROGRESS: Art Schnoor has connected the heat ducts to the new meeting room, and installed a blower over the entranceway. Two furnace type blowers were donated by Bob Rohring as well as six wall type register covers. a quarter horse motor was donated by Don Croop. Art "fired up" the system and says it will heat well. Upson board and insulation have been ordered to cover the ceiling. Rex Stacy helped Art saw 2x6's for ceiling joists. Art will try to get the job underway as soon as materials arrive.

Chuck Campbell's Ways and Means Committee have placed an attractive display case by the east entranceway for displaying the museum's saleable items. The new "Donation Box"--another good idea proposed by them--has already paid off well according to our treasurer.

Bill and Carol Smith donated a used refrigerator to replace the other used refrigerator which recently went "kaput". No one can ever accuse the Society of not accepting "historical" items. A thank you is in order for Wally Ward and Gordon Mahwiney who did the truckin' and the lifting.

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HISTORIC NOTES: We understand that the first power plant in Wilson was a firm called "Bryant & Doyle", and that they ran their generator in a building now owned by Donald Sinclair...and we heard that Beatrice Salisbury owns two tungsten light bulbs, in working order, that came from the 1901 Pan American Exposition...we also have learned that there was a I.O.O.F "Pike's Hall" on Young Street, and the first G.A.R. meeting room on Catherine Street. Can you identify their exact locations? Your comments are invited.

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ANNUAL BAKE SALE: Two bake sales will be held simultaneously on Election Day, Nov. 4th. One at the Water District building on 425 under Lois Barnum, and the other at the Wilson Town Hall with Sara Berry. They would especially like donations of pies, baked breads, or even canned relishes, pickles, etc. Sales will open at 10AM and on.

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Bicentennial Notes: At a meeting held at the home of Bicentennial Chrm., Mrs. Dorothy Thilk, notice was given that the Town of Wilson has been given recognition by the National Bicentennial Commission as an official Bicentennial Community. Area legislators have been notified and an appropriate ceremony will be scheduled in the near future.

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NOVEMBER EVENTS: Bake Sales--November 4th; Trustees meet Wed. evening Nov. 12th at museum-- 8PM; Regular meeting, Monday evening, Nov. 17th at museum, 7:30 PM.

The program will feature the "Hat Pin Lady", Mrs. Jean Craig, of Barker. Her collection includes over 300 pins and holders from all over the world. Hostesses will be Eleanor Myers, Leona Buetel, and Gwenn Heidenfeldt.

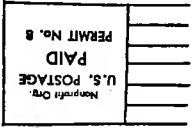
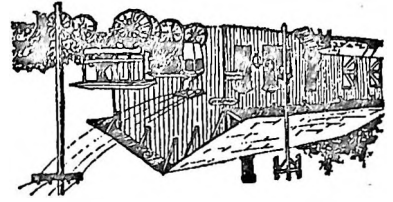
THE MONTHLY EXHIBIT will feature a display of old sheet music from the collection of Mrs. Frances Goldthorpe of Wilson. Frances will play the piano on three Sunday afternoons--this alone would be worth a visit to the museum. Museum hostesses for November are as follows: Nov. 2nd, "Chuck" and Marion Campbell; Nov. 9th, Lloyd and Dianne Albright; Nov. 16th, Art & Eva Zortman; Nov 23rd, Ed and Marilyn Allgier; Nov. 30th, Art and Kay Ness.

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NEWSLETTER
WILSON, NEW YORK 14172
Wilson Historical Society

Dec 1975



THE WILSON COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE

The Wilson Collegiate Institute was established January 25, 1845, when early citizens in town pledged money and labor to build a two story cobblestone building on land donated by Simon Sheldon. It was incorporated as the Wilson Collegiate Institute on February 19, 1846, and the first term of school was in the fall of 1845. Pioneers responsible for building the Institute were: Simon Sheldon, Luther Wilson, Stephen Wilson, Nathaniel Davis, Cpt. Morgan Johnson, George Pratt, Alfred Knowles, Otis Tower, David Tower, Enos Hamblin, William Hamblin, John E. Tower, Alexander Miner, Nathan Ashford, F. Dwight & Son, William Scarborough, Sylvester Hosmer, Thomas Farley, William Grout, Simon-Case, Volney Farley, Benjamin Sheldon, L.V. Barton, Joseph Tunnicliff, Daniel Bennett, Abram Pettit, J.S. Hamblin, Henry McChesney, Helock Sweet, Orin Cole, Rufus Robinson, Ethan Pettit, Curtis Pettit, Alexander Pettit, William Pettit, Aaron Mix, Calvin Pratt, David Kemp, R.L. McChesney, Ransom Tunnicliff, H.B. Tabor, Andrew Brown, and Jeremiah Leland. (Town Hall now stands on site which will be marked and dedicated by Historical Sites Committee.)

The building was 40x60 feet with classrooms and library occupying the first floor, and an auditorium on the second. The school library contained 333 volumes on literature, history, and philosophy. A few books covered the Sciences, but only one pertained to Agriculture. Philosophical apparatus included a skeleton, busts, diagram for understanding philosophy, and 300 specimens of minerals. The Academy received its main source of support from tuition and some forms of State Aid. A sample of tuition fees were: Common English and Natural Philosophy, \$4.00; Languages, \$8.00; Extra Music with use of instrument, \$10.00; and Painting and Drawing, \$2.50 per term.

The school year was divided into three terms of 15 weeks each, and the average student took three or four courses each term. Teaching methods are not known, but male and female students were instructed alike. Discipline demanded proper manners and morals be displayed both inside and outside of school. All students were required to be in their rooms by 7:30 at night, and permission to attend parties could be given only with written parental consent. All pupils were required to attend church on Sunday. Report cards were marked for both deportment and punctuality as well as scholarship. Public examination was held at the end of the school year-some written and some oral-and students had to know their subject matter well in order to pass. Regent examinations were introduced in 1868.

The Institute was one of 90 schools selected in New York to hold classes for teacher training. To be eligible, girls had to be 16 and boys, 18. Tuition was free and the school received \$10.00 per student from the State to cover expenses.

Many students lived too far away to commute, so roomed or boarded with families in the village. A good room could be had for 50 to 75 cents a week and board and room ran from \$1.75 to \$2.25 per week. A method of "basket boarding" was also practised by some students who went to their homes on weekends, and returned with enough food to last them all the next week.

It was all business at the Institute, and few extra curricular activities were allowed except for two societies named "Alpha Phi" and "Kappa Phi". They met bi-weekly under faculty supervision for rhetorical improvement. Their motto was "The pen is the lever that moves the world."

The first Principal was Benjamin Wilcox, Jr., whose duties included teaching language, natural sciences, and philosophy. His salary was \$700 a year. He was assisted by David C. Davis, who also taught and received \$350 a year. They were assisted by two young women teachers, Miss Elizabeth Merritt and Miss Adelein Nicholson, who each received \$180 per year.

Competition and inadequate receipts caused the Institute to merge with Wilson Union School District #1 in 1869, when the Trustees deeded over the property held by the school to the Union School District Board of Education.

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MUSEUM AQUESTIONS: Eight photos of "Sunset Island" footbridge and harbor, from George Collins; "Folk of the Mill District", by Elizabeth Steimer, from Lockport Historical Society; "Compiled Index of Niagara Trail", from Ronald Roberts, "Pahoa, California, 1916 edition of Webster's Dictionary and Medical Dictionary, (donor unknown); Unusual collection of photos, cards, and booklets from Mrs. Helene Borngraeber; and 26 booklets on domestic arts by Mary Brooks Picken(1916) and decorative designs by D.M. Campana(1913), (donor unknown).

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IN MEMORIAM: We sorrowfully acknowledge the passing of Ellen Adams, wife of Richard Adams, who succumbed recently after a long illness. The Society expresses its deepest sympathy to Dick and members of his family.

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PUBLICATIONS: A new booklet titled, "The Churches of Wilson", is now available at either the museum or Nettie Stimson's "Barn Shop". The booklet will sell at \$2.00 each, and will feature a picture and condensed history of each church in town. There are also brief accounts of extinct churches once in the town.

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MUSEUM NOTES: Things are happening so fast at the museum, we find it hard to keep our readers posted. For example, we noticed the new "Ways and Means" souvenir stand was recently stained--we understand that Joe Higgins was the gentleman who did it....Art Schnoor and his "Busy Beavers" have installed the new ceiling, covered it with insulation, and constructed the west wall and exit door. Workers on this project (in addition to Art and your editor), were: Bert Jennings, Rex Stacy, Tom Sharpe, Ed Peters, Fred Berry, "Chuck" Campbell, Ed Culverwell, Berne Kent, Tom Sharpe, Jr., Karl Wright and Whitney Barnum. Ollie Clark picked up and delivered Upson Board from Lockport....The Planning Board okayed a recommendation from the Decoration Committee to stucco ceiling and cover panel seams with strips of old barn wood giving it a Colonial-style Cape Cod effect. Walls of room are being enclosed with masonite and will be covered with old barn boards as soon as they can be accumulated. More barn wood is needed. Tell any member of the decorating committee if you have any or know where some is available. The Decoration Committee is composed of Peggy Ward, Dianne Albright, Lois Barnum, Nettie Stimson, and Millie Croop....Some material for kitchenette has been purchased and work on this project will also be under way soon. Plans for kitchenette were drawn up by Anna Mae Nevins and Nancy Kent.

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HISTORICAL BRIEFS: (From the pen of Marguerite Langdon) In 1831, all the area where Wilson now is was called the "Great North Woods"....The Frank Campbell home used to be a tenant house on a farm belonging to Samuel O. Idell. The main house, now owned by Wilson School District and adjacent to Dr. Argue's home, once stood where High School is now....The house at 266 Wilcox Street, where Peter Saggese lives, was old when Henry Stockwell was born there in 1844....The Wilson Upholstering Co., started in 1919 by Ray Clark and LaMott Hamilton, specialized in 3 piece over-stuffed living room suites. Salesmen covered retail trade in New York, West Va., Maryland, and Ohio....The D. L. Barnum Foundry, established in the mid 1800's, was home of the famous "Wilson Plow".

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DATES TO REMEMBER: Every Sunday "Childrens Furniture and Toy" exhibit, Museum, 2 to 4 PM.; Dec. 10th, Trustee Meeting, Museum, 8 PM; Dec. 15th, Regular Meeting, Museum, 7:30 PM; Program: Christmas Party featuring carol sing-a-long with Jean Weaver at the piano. Children especially welcome to enjoy Xmas stories and skit by Norm MacAskill. Everyone may bring \$1.00 gift to exchange. Mark gift for man, woman, boy, or girl. Only those bringing gifts may receive one in exchange. Hostesses for Christmas Party will be Dora Wakeman, Esther Albright, Marietta Goodman, and Edna Martin.

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THUMBNAIL SKETCH: Gladys Swick Clark, retired accountant, was born in Wilson in 1900. She attended Wilson High School and Kelly Business School at Niagara Falls. She was a member of the 1st Baptist Church of Wilson until 1928. She now belongs to 1st Presbyterian of East Cleveland. She is a member of the Y.W.C.A, a volunteer at East Cleveland Hospital and Nursing Home, and member of the Wilson Historical Society. She was a daughter of C. Edgar Swick and Alice Dobbs Swick, and her great great grandfather fought in the American Revolution. She is also a member of the Society of Mayflower Descendants through her ancestor, Elder William Brewster. Her brother, Louis J. Swick, has been a well known Wilson farmer for more than 50 years and now resides on Route 93, Lockport. (Editor's note: William Brewster, Miles Standish and John Alden, were leaders of the early Pilgrims. Elder Brewster organized the first Congregationalist Church in America in "Separatists" movement of 1620.

DECEMBER EXHIBIT: Museum will feature "Children's Furniture and Toys. If you have items to exhibit, please contact Jean Argue or Peggy Ward. Hostesses Note: Instructions are in top drawer of desk--please try to come before 2 PM.

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BON MOT: Will Rogers once said, "Even if you're on the right track, you'll get run over if you just sit there."

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