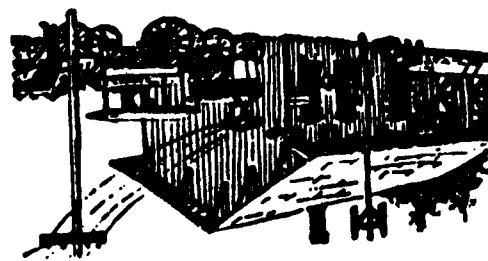


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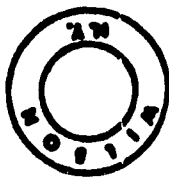
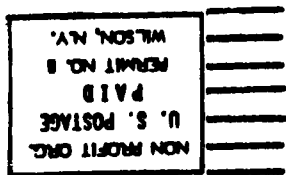


January 1991 Vol. 21 No. 1
(Coleman Printing)

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

NEWSLETTER

WILSON, NEW YORK 14172-9763
Wilson Historical Society



DECADE OF THE FORTIES:

We've often wondered why the 1940's were called the "fabulous forties"--they certainly didn't start out that way. Europe was already fighting World War II, but the full impact of that conflict really didn't effect us until Dec. 7, 1941, after Japan's infamous attack on Pearl Harbor.

We recall how quickly this changed the normal routine of our lives. Harrisons shut down some departments to retool for war production, and as the country geared up, thousands of men and women entered the work force to build tanks, ships, ammunition, and all kinds of war related items. Thousands more were selected to enter the armed forces and prepare to meet the enemy in both the Atlantic and the Pacific.

It was also a time when it was discovered that women could drive trucks, busses, do plumbing work, or collect garbage as well as men, and before long many jobs that had always been considered mens' work were capably being held by women. Soon, "Rosie the Riveter" was turning out fighter planes and bombers, and became the symbol of millions of women supporting the war effort.

The war taught Americans that no sacrifice was too great to support the 15 million men and women who would eventually enter the military. We soon became accustomed to rationing stamps and air raid drills, and even though we don't recall any enemy planes ever approaching our shores, black-outs and dim-outs became routine--just in case.

Many items were in short supply, so everyone pitched in to support rubber drives, scrap metal drives, and war bond drives, and many women turned in their stockings to hold powder for guns. Old stoves and iron of every kind were turned in to help the war effort, and Victory Gardens all over America, at one time, provided almost half the nation's food requirements.

And then there was rationing. An A stamp on your car's windshield would allow you to purchase 3 gallons of gas a week, but if you needed more for work you might qualify for a B Stamp. Food stamps kept the confused housewife crazy trying to figure out point values for food she wished to buy, and we recall that the system, although necessary, used to drive local shopkeepers "up the wall". Everyone did their best to cooperate, however, because the need to conserve food and energy was essential.

War security to protect loved ones over seas was foremost in every ones mind, and everywhere you looked there were posters warning that "Loose Lips Sink Ships".

There were hundreds of moral-boosting hit songs, but the one we liked best was "Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition." Although we may not be entirely correct in our facts, we believe the song originated when Pearl Harbor was attacked, and a Chaplain aboard one of the bombed ships told the crew he couldn't hold church services right then but suggested they "Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition."

Perhaps the first time we remember kids being referred to as teen agers was during the war. They were too young to enter the armed forces, but replaced older boys who did as soda jerks, etc., while teen age girls did their part as baby sitters for working parents on night shifts. Those "teen agers" are 65 or 70 years old today, and probably look back fondly on those "teen hops", "slumber parties", dances, and skating rink parties--to say nothing of the "Zoot Suits"

There was hope that life would return to normal after "D" Day, June 6, 1944, but the war raged on nearly a year until May, 1945, when Germany surrendered. Pres. Roosevelt died before the war ended, but his successor, Pres. Harry Truman, ended the war in the Pacific a few months later when the atom bomb was dropped on Nagasaki. Some questioned the president's decision to use the bomb, but others conceded that millions of Americans would have lost their lives if Japan had been invaded.

Life was not the same after the war. There were housing shortages, and cars and other major items not built during the war, were in short supply. As things picked up, sports, which had been in a slump during the war, regained prominence, and in 1947 Jackie Robinson became the first black man to play in the major leagues with the Brooklyn Dodgers. In football, Otto Graham became one of the outstanding quarterbacks in the All-America Football Conference, and thousands were able to watch him on TV as the new media "toy" filled more and more homes.

As new cars began appearing in auto showrooms again, two new models made their appearance, the Kaiser and the Frazer, but it was probably the demand for both housing and cars that caused a real change in America's life style. Developers began building tracts of houses around larger cities, and young couples and their families moved into them creating what we know today as "suburban living".

Well, looking back, perhaps they were the "Fabulous Forties."

* * * * *

BON MOT:

In the good old days, Uncle Sam lived within his income---and without most of ours.

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THOUGHTS FOR THE NEW YEAR:

"Our lives are what we make them. So what are we going to make of the remaining years left to us? Shall they be freighted with bitterness and wrong-doing, or shall they be bright and cheerful and full of joy and sunshine?

"Let us be courageous and hopeful; Let us be valiant for the conflicts and trials today, and reach out with resolute and expectant hands for the crowning blessings yet to come. Let us deal with our fellow man by the Golden Rule; write nothing in our ledgers or cash books that would shame us if blazoned on the sky; and in the pathway in which we shall tread, let us walk humbly, honestly, cheerfully, and hopefully.

"Then shall we all enjoy the coming New Year." (Wilson "Star", December 29, 1898.)

* * * * *

ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO:

With the New Year about to start, we decided to see what developments were taking place in Wilson's Business Community back in 1892. According to the Wilson "Star", however, there didn't appear to be too many.

It was February, 1892, when Jesse Biggins decided to open up a blacksmith shop on Maple Street, and about eight months later he moved into the village and set up shop on Wilcox Street. Also during that month, Hutchinson and Walker closed out their grocery business because Walker decided to move out west.

A little later, Smith and Moore bought the building on John Nelson's place which had been used as a paint shop, and moved it next to their blacksmith shop for use as a livery stable.

In March, 1892, Chet Clark and his brother moved to Wilson to operate the livery stable occupied by Arthur Berger, and Dr. J.O. Moore decided to rent the Barger Building on Main Street to open up an office there.

Lynford D. LeVan, Postmaster, had 400 new call boxes and 21 lock boxes installed in the postoffice, which was robbed during the summer. He and Mr. McChesney went to New York City to take a look at three suspects who were, unfortunately for them, identified as having been in Wilson the day before the robbery. The robbery, which netted the burglars \$150 in stamps and money, occurred on June 30, 1892.

On October 6, 1892, Andrew Bendt purchased the bakery and confectionary business on Main Street that had been owned by George Hutchings, and Dr. Moore decided to move his quarters into the former office of the late Reuben Wilson, also on Main Street.

Near the year's end, Benjamin Sutherland, who purchased the Tower farm, decided to fix up the old saw mill on Young Street and, as far as we can determine, that pretty much sums up the year's business activity in the village in 1892.

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ADVOCACY JOURNALISM:

Jim Cornell, Jr., sent us a report that he edited recently on "Advocacy Journalism" following a technical session of the American Association of Science at Cambridge, MA. The fine report reveals a lesser-known side of journalism that stresses the opinions of advocates of environmental beliefs on topics such as the Ozone Layer; destruction of tropical rainforests; pollution of the oceans; oil spills; and the disappearance of animal and plant life which is so essential to the very existence of the planet on which we live.

The interesting 56 page report has been turned over to the museum library so others may read it and learn more about the important work being done by journalistic reporters interested in environmental issues.

Jim, the son of James and Elizabeth Cornell of Wilson, graduated from Wilson Central School in 1956, and he and his wife, Carole, now reside in Boston Mass.

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RECENT ACQUISITIONS:

Walter V. Harris of Lockport, has given the Wilson Museum a copy of his genealogy of the local Willard Harmon Harris family of Ransomville, and, after looking it over, we believe it to be one of the more interesting genealogies acquired by the society.

Completed in October, 1991, Mr. Harris has compiled a work that not only traces the family tree of Willard Harmon Harris (1861-1923), but also includes a folksy history of the life and times of the Harris family documented with family notes, pictures, newspaper clippings, etc.

We find that the preservation of many personal aspects of an area's local history may often be attributed to the genealogical work performed by dedicated researchers such as Walter Harris.

* * * * *

Kathleen and William Coppings, Ransomville: a 1935 reel-type lawnmower that was originally purchased by Harry Shaw, father of Kathleen Shaw Coppings.

Robert Farley, Newfane: Photos and Newspaper clippings. One photo shows his great grandmother's house on Main Street in Wilson.

Robert Salisbury, S. Lake Tahoe, California: Updated copy of the Salisbury genealogy.

Kathleen Voekle, Waterford, Michigan: Photo of Byron B. Barber's discharge papers from the Civil War. Also, genealogy charts of the Armstrong/Barber families.

Mrs. Sidney (Donna) Pettit: Woman's Postal Uniform worn by her during the 30 years that uniforms were required by the Postal Service. Also zip code sign from burned out postoffice.

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MEMBERSHIP REMINDER:

Anne Faery, Membership Chrm., wishes to remind all members who paid dues to April, 1991, that they were carried on the rolls until December 31, 1991. These memberships are renewable for one year on January 1, 1992.

If your dues are paid to April 1992, this notice does not apply to you.

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SOUNDINGS:

A small town is a place where you don't have to go anywhere to get away from it all.

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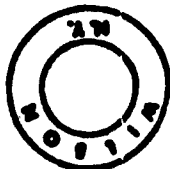
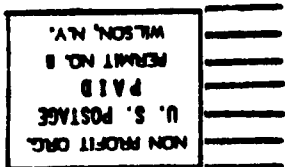
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February 1991 Vol. 20 No. 2
(Coleman Printing)

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

NEWSLETTER

WILSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY
WILSON, NEW YORK 14172-9763



VILLAGE GETS FACE LIFT:

Anyone driving through the village on Young Street today can't help but notice the Wilson Fire Company's new hall which was reconstructed. It took about a year to remodel the 15,200 square foot structure which now contains a new recreation hall, training hall, and space for trucks, ambulance, and other equipment.

When seen by some of Wilson's "old timers", the beautiful new facility might stir up some memories of the 20's and 30's when the block had a far different appearance. In those days the space between the bank and fire hall contained a bowling alley, bakery, two small homes, and the large Helen Knowles home.

On September 17, 1923, the Wilson Volunteer Fire Co. was organized with Ernest Horton, Pres., and Charles Crawford, Fire Chief. On August 22, 1924, the fire company's by-laws were adopted and the first officers elected were A.E. Horton, Pres., Bill Lashner, Vice-Pres., Harry Biggins, Fire Chief, Frank Lashner, Ass't. Fire Chief, Clare Coe, Treas., and H.W. Smith, Sec'y.

The first meetings were held in various places such as over Horton's Hardware, Biggin's Blacksmith Shop, and the former G.A.R. building next to the Wilson House.

On March 14, 1925, the Fire Company bought its first truck, a LaFrance Pumper which is still maintained to the present day. Residents all know the old truck by the name "Old Betsy", and the late Bill Sheffler was one of its first drivers.

A fire hall to house the truck was built east of Horton's Hardware and, in 1926 the Helen Knowles house was given to the fire company giving it room for future expansion.

Mary Swann Allgeier of Florida, daughter of Frank Swann recalled that the bowling alley was next to the bank and the bakery was right next door. West of the bakery was Emma Wilson's small house and next to her the large white house belonging to Helen Knowles.

It was ca. 1922 when Frank Swann purchased the former bowling alley, and opened up a bakery in it next to his old one. The former bakery was taken over by Jim Asseltine who made it into a butcher shop.

Earl Swann, Frank's nephew, helped install the bake ovens in the new bakery, and benches that were used for kneading bread, were made from the old bowling alley floor because the wood was so hard and smooth.

The bakery did a thriving business until 1940 and, at one time, had ten trucks delivering baked goods as far as Lyndonville in the east, Youngstown in the west, and Lockport to the south. Some of the drivers included Earl Swann, Harry Swann, Elmer Swann, George Eaton, and Ralph Piggins.

Fred Stickney, the baker, started up operations at 11PM, and drivers picked up their trucks at 5 AM, but before heading out on their routes, the bread had to be sliced and wrapped. Often it would be anywhere between six and nine in the evening before all trucks would return.

The Swann Bakery was sold to Clayton Tucker ca. 1940, and he continued to run it until 1960. Today, a parking lot and expansive new fire hall occupy the space where three homes and several former business establishments existed several decades ago.

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MEMBERSHIP ROLL:

Everyone should have received a membership list by this time, and it would be appreciated if you would notify Chris Kelman to make corrections.

Life Members and Honorary members of the society are not required to pay annual dues, so if you are 85 or older and have been a member of the society for at least one year, it would be to your advantage to tell Chris who she can give you your blue honorary membership card.

We would also like to remind you again that if you move or change your address, be sure to notify us so that your mailing plate can be changed. The Post Office will not forward 3rd class mail.

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FROM THE MAILBAG:

Elizabeth Kay of Dunnedin, FL, wrote that her brother, John Cable, shared his newsletter with her, and she was delighted to read about Bessie Crawford. She said that she lived on the "Island" next to Grace Cohen for several years not too far from Bessie. Having been an island resident, we think she will enjoy the two copies of "The Story of Sunset Island" which she asked us to mail to her.

* * * * *

BON MOT: Education replaces cocksure ignorance with thoughtful uncertainty.

SINGER COINCIDENCE:

Tom Singer's daughter, Michele, has been doing some research at the National Archives in Washin gton where she made some interesting discoveries about her great-great-grandfather, Thomas M. Singer.

Her ancestor served during the Civil War with Battery M, 1st New York Light Artillery, and shortly after going into action was confined to the Georgetown Hospital in Washington with the measles.

He was not fully recovered when he was released and his unit assigned to General Bank's army at the start of the Shenandoah Campaign. Exposure to the elements took its toll, and he got a bad cold and contracted typhoid fever which put him back in the hospital.

By strange coincidence, Michele and her family now live within a mile of that very same hospital. What makes the story even more surprising is the fact that her Civil War ancestor's great-great granddaughter, Claire Singer, was hospitalized there in 1978; and in 1987, his great-great-great grandson, Samuel Thomas Scott was born in the Georgetown hospital.

A pension related affidavit in the Archives shows that after his last release from the hospital, Thomas was returned to his command and nxt appears at Sandy Hook, Maryland. On October 23, 1862, he received his disability discharge at Albany, New York.

Thomas Singer was born in Buffalo in 1839, and after his discharge from the service he married Amy Staats. They acquired a large farm on Chestnut Road, South Wilson, in 1864. In spite of his impaired health, he became a successful farmer, and they raised a son, Roland R. Singer, who later became Supervisor of the Town of Wilson.

Roland's grandson, Thomas K. Singer, graduated from Wilson Central School in 1950. He and his wife, Jacqueline, now reside in Washington, and both are Life Members of the Wilson Historical Society. Tom's son, Mark A. Singer, also is a Life Member, and is presently serving as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Zinder, Niger, West Africa.

Tom's mother, Grace Singer, is an Honorary Member of the Wilson Society.

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IN MEMORIAM:

Freda Lederhouse, 72, a member of the society since 1984, died January 9, 1991 at Inter-Community Hospital at Newfane.

She is survived by her husband, Howard, of Wilson; a daughter, Mrs. Gary (Linda) Harrod of Wilson; a step-son, Bruce Lederhouse of Charlotte, NC; also 2 grandchildren; 4 step-grandchildren; and a great grandson.

Services were held at the Hamilton & Clark Funeral Chapel in Wilson with Rev. Jacob Denny officiating. Burial was at North Ridge Cemetery.

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NEW MEMBER:

Please welcome our latest new members: Mrs. Lillian Lauer of Wilson, and Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Strablow, also of Wilson.

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NEW LIFE MEMBERS:

Judith Ann Barnum of Barker, a member of the society since 1985, has joined the Life Membership Class of the Wilson Historical Society. Judy, who lives in Barker, is the daughter of Frederic Cross and Shirley (Woodside) Barnum, and was born December 13, 1949 at Lockport, NY. She is also the granddaughter of the late Frederic and Maude Barnum.

She graduated from Barker Central School in 1967, and in 1969 received an Associate of Arts Degree at Paul Smith. In 1971 she was graduated from the State University College at Brockport with a major in history and elementary education.

She has been a teacher at the Milford H. Pratt Elementary School in Barker for 19 years, and enjoys everything pertaining to local history.

She is a member of Faith United Methodist Church in Barker; the American Federation of Teachers, and the Barker Teachers Union; also the Town of Somerset Historical Society.

* * * * *

Gordon and Virginia Strablow were recently given Life Memberships in the Wilson Historical Society by their children, Martha Level, LaVerne and Liz Strablow, Lucille and Vince Zarbo, Margaret and Jacob Sapierzynski, and Linda and Paul Wziertek.

Gordon is the son of Edward and Maria (Wiepert) Strablow, and was born June 1, 1922 on their Maple Road home in the town of Wilson.

Virginia (Hillman) Strablow is the daughter of Clarence Hillman and Irene (Honick) Hillman, and was born April 30, 1927 at the Falls Memorial Medical Center.

The Strablows both attended the Wilson Central School, and are members of St. Peters Lutheran Church at North Ridge.

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FEBRUARY MEETING PROGRAM:

Bill Pils, who operates an automotive Parts & Supply business in Lockport, will be the guest speaker at the February 18th meeting of the Wilson Historical Society. Bill's subject will be "Old Time Movies and the History of Movies."

Light refreshments will be served after the meeting by Emma Schrader, Chrm., June Kropp, and Margaret Moyer. Coffee and tea are furnished by the society.

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MEMBER IN THE "SUN":

Nathan Groff, son of Pam and Ray Groff of Wilson, has been named student of the month at Wilson Junior High School.

Nathan is on the high Honor Roll; plays drums in the school band; plays "B" team basketball; and is on the golf and track teams. He is also a junior member of the Wilson Historical Society, and plans to take up a career in biology.

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SOUNDINGS: There's nothing like 20 below to make you appreciate 20 above.

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LIBRARY FUND GROWING:

So many Wilson Historical Society members have contributed to the Library Building Fund that we feel you would like to be kept up to date on the progress of the fund.

There is currently some concern that because of the State's budget woes, the two grants which Sen. John Daly and Assemblyman Joseph Pillittere are working for may have been put in jeopardy, however, the Library Board is hopeful that they will be successful in obtaining the \$58,000 grants promised. The importance of the grants cannot be underestimated because they are included in the \$220,000 contributions and pledges that have been made to date.

A recent editorial in the Lockport Union Sun & Journal stressed the fact that the success of the drive so far has been "especially impressive" because the Wilson Library, as a "free" library, can not fund projects like this through a bond issue as can public libraries such as Lockport or Lewiston. In addition, the outstanding fund-raising effort by Wilson's people has been cited by the Eastern Niagara Chamber of Commerce.

According to "Peg" Fritton, board president, the trustees continue to be encouraged by the generosity of not only Wilson's residents and summer visitors, but also by the hundreds of persons all over the country with ties to this area--many of whom have contributed more than once. Now, confident that the final goal will be reached, the board has directed architect David Guisiana of Lewiston to prepare specific ations for bid with the hope that construction can be started in the spring when weather permits.

A concerted effort by all "Friends of the Library" could put this project "over the top", so if you haven't made a donation to date, or would like to donate again, please send your contributions directly to the library, 265 Young Street, Wilson, NY 14172.

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OVERSIGHT:

Because of a mix-up in record-keeping this past year caused by the loss of three trustees and switching of three officers from one position to another, Wally Goodman was inadvertently omitted as a trustee from the list of officers put in last month's newsletter. Wally was appointed to replace Nettie Stimson In July, 1989 when she took the Vice-President position. Our sincere apologies, Wally.

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BOARD ACTION AND REPORTS:

Pfeiffers has offered to lease their property north of the railroad right-of-way to the society for \$1.00 a year and proof of insurance. Motion approved to have the Planning Board submit a detailed plan of the parcel's size; how it could be used on Fair Day; also what work will be needed to make it useable.

Emma Lou Reppentine started retyping "Wilson Sketchbook" in January, and it is hoped to have it available by Memorial Day.

Carole Schnoor reported that 61.00 was realized from the Christmas meeting raffle.

Ed Allgeier reported that work was to be resumed on the Fittro Shop the third week in January.

Dan King, Finance Chrm., said that budget figures will be ready for the February meeting of the Board which will meet on February 13th.

* * * * *

"ONE FOR THE BIRDS":

With every one's attention focused on the Gulf War, we almost forgot another Memorial Day Fair is fast approaching. Betty Stimson reminded us, however, when she announced that a new "Bird Quilt" has been completed, so we'd like to remind all our fair chairmen that we only have 4 short months to get ready.

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RECENT ACQUISITIONS:

Robert Salisbury of California has sent the museum a 13 generation chart of the Salisbury family dating from 1622 to 1990.

Pat and Sisie Lester of Ransomville; Roberts Bros. Flour Bag from Batavia, NY; also two Newfane Roller Mills Flour Bags (Fred Collins and Son). Fair condition and colorful.

Eleanor Schmitt, Niagara Falls: Framed photo of Hills/Myers Family (ca. 1909)

Barbara Farwell: Postal Dating Stamp.

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COPIES OF BY-LAWS:

Any officer or Chairman who has not received a copy of the by-laws may do so by contacting Don Burrows, Vice-President.

* * * * *

COMMITTEES ORGANIZED:

Ellsworth McKelvey, Caboose Chrm., has announced that his wife, Elizabeth, will serve as his vice-chairman. Ellsworth was named caboose chrm. after the death of Burt Jennings.

Bill Fritton, Chrm. of the Planning Board, says that his committee is organized and that Norm. MacAskill will be his Vice-Chairman. Other members of the group will be Al Waite, Dan King, Floyd Clark, Harold Mosher, and Dorothy Maxfield.

The reason committees should have a vice-chairman is so that in the event of illness or incapacitation a experienced person will be available to take over the duties of the chairman.

* * * * *

INTERESTING PROGRAM:

At the January meeting, Richard Zink of Four Seasons Travel in Lockport, gave a very interesting talk and slide presentation on the customs of the Amish living in Penn. and New York.

Should anyone be interested, a one day tour of "Windmill Market" and "Bully Hill Winery" is planned for Sat., May 11th from 8:00 to 6:00PM. For information call 434-2887.

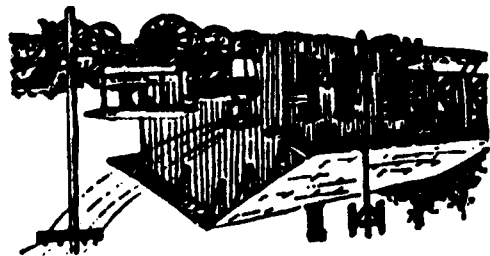
Delicious homemade cookies, coffee, and tea, were served after the meeting by Emma Schrader, Pam Groff, and Marguerite Geiser.

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FINAL THOUGHT: Keeping a bird feeder full is a great way to be entertained for chicken feed.

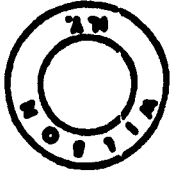
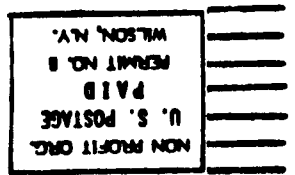
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WILSON, N.Y.



March 1991 Vol. 20 No. 3
(Coleman Printing)
DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

NEWSLETTER
Wilson Historical Society
WILSON, NEW YORK 14172-9763



REUBEN F. WILSON:

We received copies of some interesting old letters that were sent to Helen Heckes of Oyster-ville, Washington. Helen is a former school teacher and a granddaughter of Reuben S. Wilson, the son of Reuben F. Wilson.

The letters were written to Helen by her aunt Fanny, a sister of her grandfather, and we have slowly been trying to pick out some of the more interesting notations.

In order to show the Wilson family relationship a little more clearly we will submit some dates taken from the 1860 and 1880 census of Wilson.

- 1860: Reuben F. Wilson, 38, born in New York
- Hetty (Pease) Wilson, 38, born in New York. (1821-1875)
- Ella G. Wilson, 11, born in New York
- Harriet Adelia Wilson, 6, born in New York
- Reuben S. Wilson, 4, born in New York
- Stanley Wilson, 3, born in New York
- Fanny Wilson, 2, born in New York

- 1880: Reuben F. Wilson, 58, born in New York
- Eunice Wilson, 38, born in Ohio
- R. Stanley Wilson, 23, born in New York
- Fanny Wilson, 21, born in New York. (1858-1929)

When the ship-building industry started in Wilson in 1846, the first schooner was built by Luther Wilson, who named the ship after his first son, Reuben F. Wilson. The sailing vessel had a carrying capacity of 63 tons and plied the waters between Oswego and Wilson.

In the letters written to Helen Heckes by Fanny Wilson, she noted that her father, Reuben F. Wilson, was a member of the state legislature when her sister, Adelia, was a baby. Since Adelia was 6 years old in 1860, her father must have served in the legislature ca. 1855.

Mention is also made of the Wilson portrait that once hung in the foyer of the Wilson House. Helen acquired the painting from Fanny, and recently sent a photo of it to this writer. In describing the painting, Fanny wrote:

"It is in pretty good shape, and has been much admired as it hung in the "Club House"--the old Wilson House. It was painted in 1854, the year your aunt Adelia was born."

Fanny Wilson also made several other statements which we thought to be extremely interesting:

"When you (Helen Heckes) were six, your grandfather brought you to Wilson for a visit. I think you must have seen your grandfather's home as we were invited there to dinner.

"Mrs. Usher Parsons, who then owned the house, was a sister to my sister Ella's husband, and yes, the house was built of red brick and the road or street went past it. My father, Reuben F. Wilson, did not build the brick house, but I lived there when I was born.

"The house father built and where he went to housekeeping in 1845 was cobblestone, and it still stands in Wilson although years ago it was converted into a Club House."

Fanny Wilson, who was born in 1868 and died in 1929, raises some interesting questions if the statements in her letters are accurate, and it's very likely that they are.

In modern times the house at the corner of Lake and Young has generally been referred to as the Luther Wilson home. We know there had to be a close relationship between father and son since Luther named his first ship after him. We also know that both Luther and his son lived in the house, and we also know that in 1890 the double funeral for Luther Wilson, 92, and his son, Reuben F. Wilson, 68, was held in this historic old Wilson landmark.

* * * * *

HISTORIC NOTE:

An interesting notation in an edition of the old Wilson "Star" states that Clay Parsons, who was born in Wilson in 1873, was the son of Sylvester Parsons and Donna Wilson, daughter of Luther Wilson.

Mr. Parsons founded the Parson's Drug Company, and for many years managed the once-famous Merchant's Gargling Oil Company. He was also a trustee of the old Farmers and Mechanics Savings Bank in Lockport.

* * * * *

OLD-FASHIONED WINTER:

An item in Hazel Thilk's scrapbook dated Feb. 16, 1893, noted that all north and south roads needed shoveling to make them passable, and the Wilson Stage was unable to get to East Wilson and Lockport on Tuesday because of the blocked highways.

* * * * *

BON MOT: Life is short....Eat dessert first.

PROMINENT SON:

Henry Donner, who was born in Wilson in 1902, graduated from Wilson High School in 1921, and four years later received his B.S. in electrical engineering at the University of Michigan. At this time, he probably had no inkling that someday he would become a noted astronomer.

In his senior year he took three astronomy courses and became so intensely interested in the subject, he was invited by W.J. Hussey, head of the astronomy department, to pursue his studies firther on a research expedition to the southern hemisphere.

From 1927 to 1933, Mr. Donner discovered more than 1,100 double stars while at the University of Michigan's Lamont-Hussey Observatory in South Africa. Double stars are two stars thjat reolve around a common center of gravity.

He made two extended journeys to South Africa to do study in research and geology, and on both trips drove the entire length of Africa. On the second trip, he and his wife, Florence, traveled 9,000 miles in a well-supplied station wagon; often navigating by compass and encountering poisoness snakes, polluted drinking water, floods, elephants, and a new volcano that blasted them with steam. Some of the artifacts gathered on these trips were turned over to the Wilson Museum a couple years ago.

He returned to the United States in 1933 and took advanced courses in the field of geology, and received his doctorate in that science at the University of Michigan in 1936. That same year he joined the faculty of Case-Western Reserve University and, by the mid forties, had become a full professor of both astronomy and geology departments. He retired in 1968.

Henry never lost interest in his old home town, and one way he kept in touch was by reading the Wilson Historical Society Newsletter. In 1984, he and Ed Whitcop delivered the Donner Loom to the museum. The loom, built from a large single log by his grandfather, was used by his family at their Daniels Road farm in 1899 when young Henry was growing up.

Henry, 88, died at the Lake County Hospital in Willoughby, Ohio, on Jan. 1, 1991. He was a member of the Winderemere United Methodist Church and also listed in "Who's Who in America." He left a wife, Florence Mudge Donner; a sister, Mrs. Edward (Minnie) Whitcop of N. Tonawanda; and a sister-in-law, Irene Donner of Jamestown.

He was returned to his boyhood home for burial and was interred at North Ridge Cemetery, Cambria, with the Rev. Donald Foley of Exley United Methodist Church, Wilson, officiating.

* * * * *

WE PROUDLY SALUTE:

The following Wilson area men and women have volunteered their services in operation Desert Storm: LCPL Davis R. Christy; SPTC-4 Pauline Lilley; SSGT Robert McGraw; Daniel W. Brown; SPC Mary Anne Zastrow; SPC Cary A. Devole; Scott Benson; TSG Stephen P. Zurenda, Jr.; SM-SN Matthew Evans; SRA Randy S. Curry; AIC Allen Lederhouse, Jr.; HN Brian Myers; SPC Carrie Craig; SGT Mary (SKLAR) Zayac; SWCN Clifford Holland; SGT Timothy Ingalsbe; SPEC-4 Michael A. Schafer; Margaret Kopchick; Jonathan Dent; James E. Gamble; H.M. Beatty; LCPL Daryl E. Austin; SGT. Tracy Douglas; LT. Gregg Blanchard; USN, SPC Randy Craig; LT Mark Curran; CAPT Charles Salvo; MSGT Russell Kropp; SGT Ronnie Hillman; and PFC Jeffers Eshelman. May they all return safely.

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MARCH PROGRAM:

Our guest speaker on March 18th will be Mr. Howard Colby who will give a talk on the Erie Canal.

Emma Schrader, Chrm., announced that Judy Zauner and Christine Kelman will be refreshments hostesses for the evening.

* * * * *

BOARD MEETING:

The next meeting of the Board of Directors will be held at the Wilson Museum, March 13th, at 7:30 PM.

* * * * *

ACCEPTS NEW POSITION:

Members of the Niagara County Historical Society were sorry to learn that Miss Lorena Garmezy, curator of the Lockport Museum, has accepted a new position with the Margaret Woodbury Strong Museum in Rochester, NY.

* * * * *

IN MEMORIAM:

Barbara Wilson, 66, a native of Wilson, died February 11, 1991, at Buffalo General Hospital. She was the daughter of Ida Southcomb Wilson of Medina, and the late Walter T. Wilson of Wilson, and was a counselor in the Batavia school syste and member of the State Retired Teachers Assoc.

Services were held at the Hamilton & Clarl Funeral Chapel in Wilson, and burial was in Greenwood Cemetery.

* * * * *

DUES ANNOUNCEMENT:

A dues application form is being included at the bottom of page 3 of this newsletter. Please use this form and include it with your check when you mail or give it to Chris Kelman, Membership Chairman. It would be helpful if you would fill in all information requested. Chris's address is Harbor Trailer Park, Wilson, NY 14172.

* * * * *

ENJOYABLE EVENING:

As one member put it, "I never laughed so hard in a long time"--and she had good reason. Bill Pils of Lockport brought some of his old time movie comedies to the February meeting which were made even funnier by Bill's accompanying remarks during their showing.

Of even greater historic interest were a reel of scenes from the early 1900's showing old cars, wearing apparel, and newsworthy events of that period. Of exceptional interest were a series of scenes taken of the old Lockport area of the early 1930's.

* * * * *

SOUNDINGS:

With small children at the dinner table, you get used to whining and dining.

FAIR PLANS UNDER WAY:

The 1st meeting of the fair committee was held at the home of Lois Barnum on Feb. 6th, and plans were discussed for the 1991 Memorial Day Fair.

Darrell and Sally Smith, co-chrm., were glad to see about a dozen of last year's chairmen in attendance, and said that they would like to get as many of our junior members involved as possible. The suggestion was also made to have a patriotic theme this year in honor of the men and women serving in the armed forces overseas in operation Desert Storm.

Betty Stimson showed the beautiful new "Bird Quilt" that will be awarded to someone participating in the donation raffle. Additional prizes to be awarded will include an afghan; Pennsylvania Dutch Wall Hanging; Scare Crow Doll; and a Doll Quilt. Two society cookbooks will also be given as consolation prizes.

Quilt tickets are being sent to all our members in this newsletter, and Betty hopes that everyone will help support this very important part of the fair effort. Ticket stubs and donations may be returned to Betty at 58 Harbor Street, Wilson, NY., 14172.

Darrell and Sally Smith are the youngest couple to undertake chairmanship of the annual fair. They know it will be no easy task, but they are counting on the support of all former chairmen to bring yet another annual fair to a successful conclusion.

Since the income derived from the fair covers the society's annual operating expenses, they feel it is essential to make as much money as possible and keep all non-essential expenditures to a minimum.

* * * * *

RECENT ACQUISITIONS:

Arthur Schnoor recently donated some interesting items including a 1912 Program of a Men's Social held in the M.E. Church at Warren's Corners on February 2, 1912.

Other items included World War II Ration Books; Newspaper article about Case House; 1865 New York Herald article reporting the death of Abraham Lincoln; 1955 Couier Express item describing a Tour of Warrens Corners; and 1887 autograph book that belonged to Grace Carlton.

Two Photos of Stanley Giles, and Letter of Commendation to him from Expeditionary Force Headquarters in 1919; also 1974 Certificate of Recognition to Seva Giles Burns from Exley Methodist Church; also National Railway Historical Soc. Calendar of Photos of Trains, 1988; and a 1966 Buffalo Evening News Article featuring William Donner at the Donner Loom.

* * * * *

BOOKLET POSTAGE:

When combining booklets together, mailing costs are slightly lower, so if you order any from now on, please figure 50¢ per booklet. Thank you.

* * * * *

BOARD ACTION & REPORTS:

Ed Allgeier reported that the east end ceiling of the Fittro Shop has been cleaned, and his committee is moving items from the shop to the Fritton Barn for storage.

Motion was approved to ask town to proceed with leases for Basil's railroad right-of-way and Pfeiffer's land north of the former railroad. Gary Fitch offered use of his lift truck to help clear property, and Bill Fritton said that town is willing to level off dirt left when ditches were cleaned out. Don Burrows, Gary Fitch, and Bill Fritton will decide what to do with land to make it useable for Fair Day.

Carole Schnoor, Treas., reported that income to date has been \$19,086.65 and expenses for same period were \$14,868.57.

Clark Stimson, co-chrm. of the Argue Building requested permission to buy 1990 Craftsman air compressor for use with antique cars. Motion approved to make purchase.

Pres. Myers appointed Don Croop to call a meeting of the Veteran's Memorial Comm. to make some necessary decisions on the project. Other members of the committee include Ollie Clark, John Demmin, and Neva and Harold Benedict.

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FAIR COMMITTEE MEETING:

Darrell and Sally Smith, co-chrm., have called for the next meeting of the Fair Comm. to be held at the Depot, Thursday evening, March 7th, at 7:30 PM. Please try to attend.

* * * * *

FINAL THOUGHT:

The Federal Income Tax was introduced as a temporary measure.....on February 25, 1913.

* * * * *

.....Detach and Return.....
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION PLEASE CHECK NEW..... RENEWAL.....

NAME.....PHONE ().....

ADDRESS.....

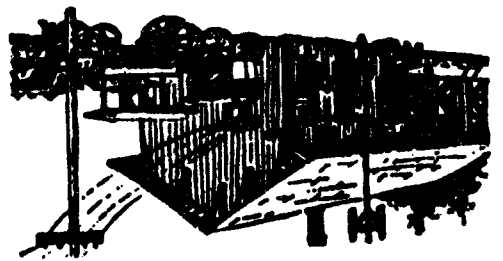
CITY, STATE, ZIP.....

COUPLE (please check)	\$8.00.....	<u>JUNIOR MEMBERS</u>
SINGLE	\$5.00.....	Name.....Age.....
JUNJORS (under 18) each	\$1.00.....	Name.....Age.....
LIFE MEMBERS each	\$150.00.....	Name.....Age.....
HONORARY (85 & Over)	FREE.....	Name.....Age.....
TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED	\$.....	

Make all checks payable to the WILSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY: Please return to:

CHRISTINE KELMAN, Harbor Mobile Park, Wilson, NY 14172

LIBRARIAN
WILSON CENTRAL SCHOOL
WILSON, N.Y. 14172



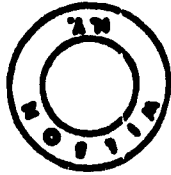
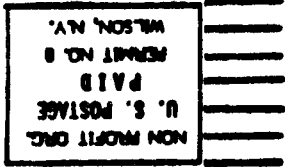
(Coleman Printing)

April 1991 Vol. 20 No. 4

DONALD W. GROOP, Editor

NEWSLETTER

Wilson Historical Society
Wilson, New York 14172-9763



CHICKEN ON SUNDAY:

When the old Hub Hotel burned down in Wilson in 1980, we did a little checking into its history and discovered that the once-familiar landmark had its beginning in the early 1900's. But the one thing that always seemed to "pop up" when mentioning the "Hub" were the recollections of some old timers about the chicken and biscuit dinners that used to be served there on Sundays.

The "Hub" had its beginning after the disastrous fire on June 9, 1901, when most of the business establishments on the north side of Young Street were consumed by fire. The only store to escape the flames was Milo Vosburg's General Store that stood where Sheffler's is today. Also saved was Cuddeback & Cooper's Furniture store which, at that time, was located on the second floor of Vosburg's.

The fire was discovered at 11:30 PM. by Freeman Emerson whos gas light flickered out while he was shaving a man in his barber shop. The fire spread quickly, and soon the entire block was engulfed in flames.

The scope of the fire may be well-imagined when even the Methodist parsonage and adjoining barns, a block away, caught fire. However, the many persons fighting the flames managed to not only save the parsonage but the Sutherland Hotel as well.

It was about this time that Hubert Ferrin, a barber from Springfield, NY, came to Wilson and acquired the Emerson property. He started up a barber shop and billiard parlor at the location--even using letters from the former Emerson Building sign to spell out the Ferrin name over his new shop. Rows of shaving mugs were lined up along the front of the shop while pool tables in the back were an attraction to all the "young blades" in town.

The Sutherland Hotel, saved in the big fire, was a popular place for salesmen and visitors to stay and get meals, but when it burned down in 1913 it is said that the hotel's former patrons used to go to "Hub's" barbershop and complain that there was no place to eat in town.

Hub's wife, Ida, decided to take advantage of the situation, and started making up light lunches for the visitors, and when business prospered, Hub decided to open up a restaurant. He hired his good friend, Bill Mudge, to enlarge the premises by adding on a dining room, kitchen, and third floor for living quarters.

The new Hub Hotel soon became a popular place to eat, and there must be some around who remember Ida's Specialty, chicken and biscuit which was served on Sundays. It is said that people from all around the area thought nothing of lining up in the street to get a taste of her famous dinners.

The Ferrins' daughters, the late Vera Pease and Almira Burch used to wait on tables, and other waitresses included the late Marie Reynolds, Jean Wilson Kress, and Phylis Chapman Hageman.

In more recent years, the Hub was run by Alex and Cecelia Andrasik, and continued its reputation as a good place to eat. For a number of years it was the site for the dinner meetings of the Wilson Lions Club and the Womens Business and Professional Club of Wilson.

* * * * *

RECENT ACQUISITIONS:

Esther Myers has donated a number of vintage undergarments including 4 "nighties" and window veil that belonged to her grandmother, apron, hankies, notebooks, and 4 Christmas cards; Also a note given to Earl Carrigan for his graduation in 1911, and a 1919 Yearbook. Also a Vacuum that once belonged to Minnie Schoal.

Arthur Schnoor: Man's Stovepipe Hat.

Carole Schnoor: Thomas Marks Year Book, 1989-90.

Kenneth Branch: Tuscarora Beach and Golf Club Score Card.

Jean Argue: Leather Medical Pill Case with Bottles.

Village of Wilson: Addressograph Unit with desk and stencils.

* * * * *

MUSEUM REOPENS IN APRIL:

The Wilson Museum, which has been closed during January, February, and March, will reopen to visitors in April with the following members in attendance:

April 7th, Fenton and Bessie Cole; April 14th, Edgar and Elloise Culverwell; April 21st, John and Jane Demmin; and April 28th, Dan and Judy King. Hours are Sunday, 2 to 4 PM.

* * * * *

BON MOT:

The best gifts are tied with heart strings.

* * * * *

EIGHTY YEAR LANDMARK:

When Thomas Marks purchased land from Arthur Pease in 1910, one of the best known nurseries in the Wilson area was established--the Marks Nursery on East Lake Road.

Thomas got into the nursery work when he was a young boy in Canada, and was able to save enough money to graduate from the Hamilton Business College.

One time, while on a visit to Toronto, he met Harriet Francis, and they were later married at St. Mark's Church, Niagara-on-the-Lake. They then moved to Rochester, NY, where he worked for the Ellwanger and Barry Nursery until 1905. The next five years he worked for the William Smith Nursery at Geneva, NY, where he improved his knowledge of the nursery business.

When he moved to Wilson in 1910, he started up his own nursery and also erected a large house and barn on the property. The family moved into their new home in 1914, and Thomas not only established a successful business, but also became prominent in civic affairs.

During his lifetime he became a strong advocate for better education in Wilson, and held the position of school board president for 21 years. In other community endeavors, he served as Pres. of the Wilsonian Club; Pres. of the Wilson Free Library; and treasurer of St. John's Episcopal Church of Wilson.

He was past master of the Masonic Ontario Lodge, and Grand Steward of the Grand Lodge of New York State. He was also active in many agricultural pursuits including the Farmers Comm. that started the Niagara Frontier Farmers Co-Op Market at Bailey & Clinton Ave., Buffalo.

One of the highlights of his career was when he was awarded the Master Farmers Gold Medal by Gov. Franklin D. Roosevelt, but perhaps the greatest distinction given him was when the new elementary school in Wilson was named the Thomas Marks School in his honor.

His son, Edward Marks, was born in Rochester in 1903, but grew up in Wilson and graduated from Wilson High School in 1921. He continued his education at Cornell University and the Kelly Business School in North Tonawanda.

Ed and his wife, Gertrude, operated the nursery until their recent retirement when their son, Thomas E. Marks, took over management of the business.

The Marks have been members of the Wilson Historical Society since 1982, and in 1988 they donated a large framed picture of the Thomas Marks School with an insert of Thomas Marks in it. In 1990, they also gave the museum a 100 year old buggy that once belonged to Ed's grandfather, Thomas A. Marks of Fonthill, Canada.

Ed and Gertrude are members of St. Andrews Episcopal Church on Wilson-Burt Road, and in February, 1991, they celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary together.

* * * * *

LIBRARY UP-DATE:

Despite efforts by state legislators, Sen. John Daley and Assemblyman Joseph Pilittere, a \$58,000 grant promised for the Library's expansion fund has been reduced to \$33,000. Considering the state's financial woes, it could have been worse, and the library board is grateful for the legislators persistence in the library's behalf.

Two thirds of the library's goal has been reached, but in view of the grant reduction, much work will be needed to make up the difference.

Historical Society members should be pleased to know that over one half of our members have supported the drive to date, with contributions coming in from all over the country with some members giving two, three, and even four times. The fund drive became international recently when Marc Singer, grandson of Grace Singer, sent in a contribution from Niger, West Africa. Marc, a Life Member, is fluent in French, and is teaching English in a French-speaking country with an Arabic population.

Considering the "set-back" in grant funds, it is more and more essential that local organizations lend their support to the drive. We note that the Lake Shore Mothers Club recently sponsored a Fashion Show at the Wilson House Inn for the benefit of the library with a comm. made up of Patricia Seefeldt, Chrm., Shirley Evans, Jan Zipp, Pat Evans, Anita Pearce, Elizabeth Schearer, and Diane Zabel.

As other community-minded groups like the Mothers Club lend their support, we will try to mention them to you.

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IN MEMORIAM:

With over 700 members on our membership roll, many of whom live outside Niagara County and New York State, it isn't always possible to know when someone passes away unless we are notified.

We now wish to extend the society's condolences to the families of loved-ones who died during the past year: Dr. Edwin Gates of Niagara Falls, a Life Member; Vera Cornell of Lewiston; Jean Haley of Tonawanda, and Donald G. Nash of Wilson, former operator of the Wilson House.

Frederick Oldenburg, although not a member of the society, died in February, 1991, at Clifton, N.J. "Fritz" gave some woodcarvings and painting to the museum recently, and his sister, Verna Barnum, lives in Lockport.

* * * * *

QUILT DRAWING:

Betty Stimson reports that quilt tickets are coming in good showing that the quilt project continues to be one of the Fair's most successful undertakings. If one recalls the beautiful hand-made quilts and other items that were awarded in past years, it is easy to see why.

Amazingly enough, the response from interested workers has been so great this year, we already have a hand-made tablecloth and doll quilt ready for the 1992 Fair. How about that?

Please mail your quilt ticket stubs and donations to Betty Stimson, Box 162, Wilson, NY, 14172. If possible, would you please return your quilt tickets to Betty even though you don't care to make a donation at this time. You may also send them to Chris Kelman with your renewal dues.

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APRIL BOARD MEETING will be held at the museum, Wednesday evening, April 10th at 7:30PM.

* * * * *

SOUNDINGS: Did you ever notice how tired you can get by just standing still?

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SPECIAL FAIR ATTRACTION:

Roger Mawhiney will have an interesting display of fly-wheel engines at the Memorial Day Fair, and a special attraction will be his one cylinder, 15 ton diesel engine. The motor, came from the old Wilson Cold Storage Plant, has two-2 and three quarter ton fly wheels.

The engine requires a compressor and 225 pounds of air pressure to start it, and was originally used to run the ammonia compressor at the storage plant from 1933 to 1965. The old relic is all painted up and mounted on a truck frame and, according to Roger, will be a sight to see whether it is running or not.

A meeting of the Fair Comm. was held at the depot on March 7th, and Darrell and Sally Smith asked for reports from the chairmen in attendance. Maxine Jones discussed ways in which the serving of food might be improved, and Nettie Stimson said she would contact members for food contributions and assistance. Clark Stimson reported that a car rally would be held, and said that the Bison City Stompers and Wilson School Band would be with us again this year. It is planned to work out a special military theme for the fair in honor of our Gulf War heroes, and Dorothy Maxfield, Eleanor Myers, and Martha MacAskill will be in charge of museum exhibits.

Most of last year's chairmen are helping out again including Wally Goodman and Clark Stimson, antique cars; Lois Ward, candy; Mary Clark, chili; Ed Hastings, clean-up; Judy Zauner, coffee/donuts; Jack and Melinda Hutchins, cotton candy/ice cream; Ron Zauner, dealer parking; Nettie Stimson, dealer registration; Pam Groff, depot kitchen; Sara Berry, drinks; Clark Stimson, Entertainment; Bobbie Hull, fishpond; Maxine Jones, food Building; Lois Barnum and Emma Lou Reppentine, food supplies; Susan Sobiegay, funnel cakes; Dale Schlyer, hot dogs; Dick and Sue Schultz, lemonade/popcorn; Chris Kelman, membership; Dorothy Maxfield, curator; Laura Murawski, childrens games; Dan King, parking; Don Croop, publications; Bill Fritton, Publicity; Betty Stimson, quilt; Don Burrows, shuttlebus; Helen Stevens, thank-you notes; Carole Schnoor,treas.; Lucille Upton, Ways & Means; and Johnny Myers, trouble shooter.

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LOOKING AHEAD:

The Newfane Historical Society will hold its 1991 Apple Blossom Festival at their museum on West Creek Road, May 19th, 1991.

The Niagara County Historical Society will hold their 8th annual Chicken Bar-B-Q and Strawberry Social at their grounds in Lockport, June 1st, from 12:00 to 5:00 PM.

* * * * *

VETERAN'S MEMORIAL:

A couple years ago, one of our members proposed that the society put up some type of Memorial Plaque to honor the brave men and women who have served in the armed forces from Wilson in past wars. He also made the generous offer to sponsor the project.

A meeting of the Memorial Comm. was held at the museum on March 11th to determine how the project should be carried out. Two proposals have been made, and when a decision is made, the plan will be submitted to the Board for approval.

Others who attended the meeting were Harold Benedict, Ass't. Chrm., Ollie Clark, Don Croop, and John Myers. John Demmin was unable to attend.

* * * * *

APRIL MEETING:

Our guest speaker at the meeting on April 15th will be Mr. Allan A. Spear of Lockport, who will talk about "Lockport Glass". Mr. Spear has also invited anyone with a glass item to bring it to the meeting to share with the group.

Following the program, light refreshments will be served by Maryanne Sharpe and Emma Schrader.

* * * * *

NEW MEMBERS:

It is a pleasure to welcome the following new members: Frances C. Gnage of Winter Haven, Florida; also junior members, Kevin Sippel of Wilson, and Kelli Jordan of Lockport. Kelli is the granddaughter of Jack and Winnifred Terry of Wilson.

* * * * *

MEMBER IN THE SUN:

Congratulations to Brett Sippel of Wilson who was recently named to the Union Sun & Journal's All Area Boy's Basketball Team. Brett's ability in the position of point guard was credited with having helped Wilson capture the N-O crown with an undefeated record of 14-0. Brett has been a member of the Wilson Historical Society since he was nine years old.

John Emborsky, a forward-guard on Wilson's championship team, was also named to the US&J team.

.....Detach and Return.....

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION PLEASE CHECK ONE NEW..... RENEWAL.....

NAME..... PHONE ().....

ADDRESS.....P.O.BOX.....

CITY,STATE,ZIP.....

COUPLE (please check)	\$8.00.....	JUNIOR MEMBERS
SINGLE	\$5.00.....	Name.....Age.....
JUNIORS (under 18)	each \$1.00.....	Name.....Age.....
LIFE MEMBER	each \$150.00.....	Name.....Age.....
HONORARY (85 yrs. or over)	<u>FREE</u>	ENDOWMENT FUND CONTRIBUTION \$.....
TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED	\$.....	

Please make all checks payable to the WILSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY and return to:
CHRISTINE KELMAN, Harbor Mobile Park, Box784, Wilson, NY 14172

NEW LIFE MEMBER:

Sally Murawski Smith, daughter of Joseph and Albina Wrobel Murawski, has joined the Life Membership Class of the Wilson Historical Society. She was born in Niagara Falls, March 25, 1959, and is a graduate of Niagara-Wheatfield Central School. She also attended Buffalo University, and received her B.S. in Nursing at Niagara University in 1982.

She married Darrell Smith of Pekin in 1984 and they have one son, Joshua Grant Smith. The family attends St. Leo's R.C. Church on Military Road.

Sally is a registered nurse and is currently working for Coordinated Care Management setting up home care in conjunction with the Erie County Social Services Department.

She and Darrell have accepted co-chairmanship of the society's Memorial Day Fair.

* * * * *

WILSON HISTORY:

Emma Lou Reppentine reports that "Wilson Sketchbook" is on schedule, and we hope to have it published by Memorial Day. In response to several requests, we are making up a list of persons who wish to reserve a copy of this first printing.

* * * * *

BOARD ACTION AND REPORTS:

The Planning Comm. recommended that the society's present financial condition does not warrant acquiring house adjacent to the museum's northeast property line. Motion was made and approved to accept committee's recommendation.

Motion was made and approved to accept committee's recommendation that Life Membership fund be re-identified as an Endowment Fund so that other sources of income could be added to it, and 60% of fund's interest may be withdrawn for society's expenses and 40% retained so fund's principal will appreciate and generate growth in income.

Motion also approved to accept comm. recommendation to form Deactivation Comm. who will decide which items should be disposed of; are not suitable for display; or not worth restoring or in the society's best interests.

The armed forces Memorial Comm. with Neva Benedict, Chrm., will decide the best way to make up memorial for Wilson's war heroes, and present it to the Board for approval. The Memorial is being privately funded, and the Board will decide where it is to be displayed.

A letter was read from Sup. Harold Mosher on work done at Greenwood Cemetery. Early graves have been identified, computerized, and cross-referenced with a copy on file for our use at the town clerk's office. Helen Stevens, Cor. Sec., was asked to write thank-you notes to Shirley Stephenson and Betty Kline for all their dedicated work on the project.

Motion made and approved to award \$50 prizes to the Senior boy and girl for outstanding achievement in history at Wilson High School.

It was also reported that, because of the expansion project at the library, permission has been given to store books in the Barnum Building until Fair Day; Elton Kropp, Grounds Chrm., is hard at work cleaning up land leased for the Fair; and Don Burrows has made up a frame for the Reuben Wilson headstone that has been stored in the Fittro Shop ever since a new marker was erected in Greenwood Cemetery to replace the original.

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SPECIAL NOTICE:

All members holding keys for the depot-museum are advised that the security system is on and no members should use keys without first receiving proper instruction.

* * * * *

A MATTER OF DOLLARS AND SENSE:

Dan King has submitted an average yearly budget which reveals that approximately \$9,000.00 is needed to meet the society's fixed expenses. These are Utilities; Insurance; Newsletter; Repairs; Grounds Upkeep; Programs and Miscellaneous. Dan has set up a business-like approach for the society to follow, and with him and Carole Schnoor keeping watch over the funds, we suggest that the society is in good hands.

They do need everyones help, however, so support the Memorial Day Fair and insure the society's success for another year and many more years to come.

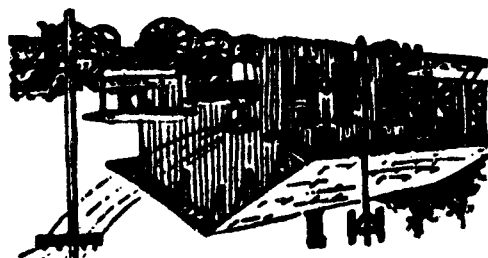
And don't overlook our new Endowment Fund Contribution space which has been added to this month's Membership Application form. Any amount will be gratefully accepted to help build up this great investment fund for the society.

* * * * *

CLOSING THOUGHT: Giving our best today is the recipe for a better tomorrow.

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LIBRARY
WILSON CENTRAL SCHOOL
WILSON, NY 12177

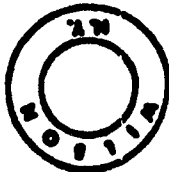
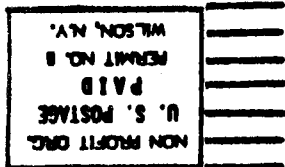


May 1991 Vol. 20 No. 5
(Coleman Printing)

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

NEWSLETTER

WILSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY
WILSON, NEW YORK 14172-9763



WILSON AND THE CIVIL WAR:

In 1917, Levi G. Pettit, who served with the 8th NY Vol. Heavy Artillery, prepared a list of the men who enlisted from Wilson during the Civil War, and, according to him approximately 385 men enlisted from the town. This number is believed to have been the most, per capita, of any small town in New York State.

Over 100 men enlisted alone in the 1st NY Light Artillery, Battery M, in which Chief Bugler Lorenzo Pratt served with his captured **confederate** war horse, "Billy Sherman". After the war, Pratt returned to Wilson with his horse, and when Billy died, he was buried on the Pratt farm with military honors by members of Wilson's G.A.R Post. Today the farm is the home of Ron and Judy Zauner, and Frank Massing keeps the site mowed and looking nice.

Several other units such as the 19th Independent Battery, the New York Heavy Artillery, and the 28th Infantry Regiment also had impressive enlistment records from Wilson, but there were also many other units in which small numbers of enlistees served from Wilson.

One, for instance, was the 105th NY Volunteer Regiment, which was organized at Rochester and LeRoy in 1862, and saw action at Cedar Mountain, Rappahannock, 2nd Bull Run, Antietam, and Fredericksburg. The original muster roll filed in the County Clerk's Office lists three men in the regiment from Wilson, Julius Turner, Robert Lutze, and Charles Ashford.

Another unit, the 12th NY Independent Battery, was organized in Albany and had a number of Niagara County men serving in it including two from Wilson--John Adriance and Arnold Harris. Some of the engagements in which the 12th fought were the Battle of Petersburg, Kelly's Ford, and Cold Harbor.

The story about "Billy Sherman" wasn't the only one to come out of the war about local Wilson veterans, but perhaps the most unusual was one about William Adriance, who grew up on his family's farm on Beebe Road, town of Wilson.

Young Adriance enlisted in the 28th infantry regiment of NY volunteers, and on May, 1862, he was captured near Winchester, Virginia. The 1851 .36 caliber Naval Colt revolver which he carried as a side arm, was taken from him, but on the handle of the pistol was engraved, "William Adriance, 3rd Sgt., Lockport, New York."

Adriance never got his pistol back but, strange as it may seem, the weapon was found 100 yrs. later by a Mr. Robert Stapleton on the bed of the Yaquina River in the State of Oregon.

The inscription on the revolver was still legible, so Mr. Stapleton contacted the office of the Niagara County Historical Society to see if a relative could be found. The society was able to refer him to a grand niece of William Adriance, and the revolver was given to her.

It's any one's guess how the pistol, which was taken from Adriance in Virginia, found its way to a river bed in Oregon.

Wilson may also be noted for having lost one of the last men killed in the war. On April 9, 1865, the last official day of the war, the 2nd NY Mounted Rifles were engaged in combat, and during the battle, volunteer Joshua Smith was killed in action.

It was during the war's final months that Lee's once great army of Northern Virginia was strung out in the trenches around Petersburg. At the same time, Gen. Grant was sending out cavalry raids to destroy the enemy's military installations.

The 2nd Mounted Rifles took part in this action, and destroyed several bridges and tore up railroad tracks to cut off supplies to Lee's army. Twenty nine Wilson men were there, so perhaps you can pick out one of your ancestors from the following list: Ozro Bachelder, Bill Clift, Charles Coryell, Clark Davis, John Davis, John Fisher, George Gaskill, William Gaskill, John Gilbert, Hiram Goodenough, John Gardineer, Albert Gould, Isaac Hayes, James Hill, Orrin Johnson, Cyrus King, Chester Kyte, Frederick Mahl, Cpt. Martin McChesney, Jason Pettit, John Relley, Norman Robinson, Charles Rollyre, Courtland Rouse, Theodore Schniling, Joshua Smith, Eldridge Tabor, Nelson Thurston, and Hugh Wilson, M.D.

* * * * *

MAY MEETING:

At the regular meeting on May 20th, Hoyt and Norie Desso will be the guest speakers, and will share some information about their interesting bottle collection.

Dorothy Linnabery and Doris Klees will be the refreshments hostesses for the evening.

* * * * *

SOUNDINGS:

April is when the green returns to the lawn, the lilacs.....and the IRS.

* * * * *

FAIR TIME AGAIN:

The annual Memorial Day Fair will be held at the museum grounds on May 27th, from 9:00 to 5:00 PM, however, the grounds will be open at 6:00 AM to permit dealers to get their tables set up. On Friday, Saturday, and Sunday before the fair, all chairmen or others involved with setting up and getting ready for the big day, should please try to be present to prepare their areas for the visitors who attend on Monday.

All those who plan to bake pies or furnish other foods would find it easier to bring these items on Sunday afternoon when it will be easier to gain access to the Barnum Building. Since we usually run out of food before we should, you can readily see why it is so important for all members to do everything they can--the success of the fair depends on it.

Nettie Stimson devotes a great deal of her time to the fair effort, and calling a couple hundred people for help is no easy task, let alone contacting a couple hundred dealers. Please don't feel slighted if your missed--we occasionally have people say they were't asked to help. We need everyone's help so don't be bashful--let us know if your'e available.

Clark Stimson, with the help of Hoyt Desso, is trying to make up some display cases for the Argue Building. He is looking for all kinds of automobile memorabilia, oil cans, tools, etc. Life or Time magazines from the 1940's to the 1970's are desired, also glass storm windows. If you have any of these items, he'll be glad to pick them up.

We understand we have enough dealers signed up for the space we have; quilt tickets continue to come in and extra books are available from Betty Stimson. There may be about 100 old cars on display; and there will be balloons, fishpond, and several children's games for youngsters.

Members as well as visitors are urged to leave their cars in the parking areas provided, and it would be to your advantage to park in the village and use the free shuttle busses provided to carry passengers to and from the museum grounds.

The food building under the supervision of Maxine Jones, will serve salads, chili, pies, cakes, and drinks. Booths outside the building will provide hot dogs, funnel cakes, candy, popcorn and drinks. The cotton candy and ice cream sundae stand will be by the Fittro Shop, and as far as we know, the Little League Chicken Bar-B-Q will be in business as usual from 12:30 to 5:00 PM. Coffee, donuts, and other drinks will be provided by the Zauners at depot.

So, it looks like all there is left to do is pray for good weather and support the Fair.

* * * * *

IN MEMORIAM:

The society extends its condolences to the family of Norman N. Luff, 85, one of the original board members of the Inter Community Hospital at Newfane. He died after a short illness on March 19, 1991, and is survived by his wife, Marie (Searles) Luff, and two sons, William and Howard (Shirley), both of Lockport. Burial was at North Ridge Cemetery.

Edward T. Marks, 88, owner of the Mark's Nursery in Wilson, who died March 21, 1991, at Inter-community Hospital at Newfane. He is survived by his wife, Gertrude; two children, Mrs. Earle (Eva Lou) Charles; and Thomas (June), both of Wilson.

Thomasine Monaghan Gath, 57, a book keeper with Noco Energy Corp. in Tonawanda, who died March 24, 1991, after a long illness. She is survived by her husband, Gary; a son, David Miller of Kenmore; and 4 daughters, Mrs. Robert (Debra) Panella of Tonawanda; Mrs. William (Robie) Draper of Kenmore; and Mrs. Ronald (Jean) Jenkins and Mrs. Lori Reynolds, both of Tonawanda. Burial was in Forest Lawn Cemetery with Rev. Robert Reickus officiating.

Also, Mrs. Helen Heckes of Oysterville, WA, a descendent of the town of Wilson's founder, Reuben Wilson, who passed away on June 17, 1990.

* * * * *

CULINARY HINTS:

Sue and Miles Linnabery of Laramie, WY, have made up a reproduction copy of "Culinary Hints for the Soldier" which was originally published in 1862 for distribution to the troops Headquarters, Army of the Potomac.

The Linnabery's operate "Frau Frau Historic Fashions" in Laramie, and the facsimilie copy which they sent to Dorothy Linnabery in Wilson, contains a number of recipies for camp fire cooking with use of various size iron kettles.

An interesting observation in the book's introduction notes that "Beans, badly boiled, kill more than bullets, and Fat is more fatal than gunpowder."

There are about a dozen recipies for camp cooking but one that caught our eye was called "Bubble and Squeak". Here is how to make it if you'd like to try a sample of the food that helped sustain our Civil War soldiers on the battlefield.

Take bits of cold corned beef or salt beef, and cut into slices and sprinkle with pepper; put it in a pan with a little grease and fry them slightly. Boil some cabbage and squeeze it dry, then cut it up real fine. Serve a piece of beef with a spoonful of cabbage and season with salt, peper, and vinegar.

This beef stew delicacyis strinkingly similar to some modern day recipies: Cut beef into inch squares, and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Fry with a little grease until half cooked. Place in kettle and cover meat with cold water, then add pared potatoes cut in squares. Stew slowly over moderate fire for 3½ hours, skimming every now and then. Stir in 2 table- spoons of vinegar and serve hot. All kinds of vegetables such as leeks, carrots, parsnips, or turnips may be added to great advantage.

* * * * *

A LOT OF EGGS:

Remember when you were a youngster and most of the eggs in America were produced on small rural farms? That all changed after World War II. Now there are probably as many hens laying eggs each day as there are people--and that's a lot of eggs.

It is estimated that over half of the people like their eggs scrambled, but regardless how you like them, it's a well-known fact that the common poultry egg is high on the American diet.

However, if your chlorestal count is high, doctors will suggest that you limit your egg input to two or three a week.

* * * * *

BON MOT: Don't count your years. Make your years count.

* * * * *

LIBRARY PROGRESS:

A construction contract for the new Wilson Library was signed in April with the Valery Contracting Corp. of Niagara Falls, and the Library Board is confident that the \$75,000 still needed to fill the "gap" will be raised by the time the building is completed.

Several thousand books have been removed to the Exley United Methodist Church where library hours are being conducted Mon. through Fri. from 1-5PM and Tues. and Thurs. from 7-9PM. The remaining books are in storage, courtesy of Clark Equipment Co.

Organizations who have held fund-raising activities include the Delphic Circle; the Wilson Lions Club; the Wilson Business Assoc., and the Lakeshore Mothers Club. The Gnostic Guild has scheduled an auction in the Junior-Senior High School Library for Tues. evening, May 7th.

Others who have donated as a group include the PTA's of the Thomas Marks and Stevenson schools; The Wilson Junior High School; Wilson Conservation Club; Youth Baseball League; Wilson Class of 1979; and 40 alumni members from the Class of 1970 and earlier. A very successful Read-A-Thon conducted at Thomas Marks School by Celeste Crawford, Librarian, received excellent cooperation from both students and parents.

The Library will have a booth at this year's Memorial Day Fair so don't miss this opportunity to boost the library fund if you haven't already done so.

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NEW MEMBERS:

Please welcome Pauline M. Kurtz of Wilson; Dorothy Knight of Tonawanda; and Mrs. William Welch of Santa Cruz, CA. Our two newest junior members are Christy & Kathleen Johnson, Wilson.

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BOARD ACTION AND REPORTS:

Motion was approved to clean up Marzetti property and save hayrake and telephone poles.

Members of the new de-acquisition comm. will consist of the curator, secretary, president, and building chairman where item in question is located.

Items donated to the museum are accepted and identified by the Acquisitions Chrm. for distribution to their proper location. Chairmen of the various buildings are responsible for taking these items from the library to their respective locations.

Motion was approved to permit the Historical Society of the North German Settlements to meet in and tour the Wilson museum on June 20, 1991.

Motion was approved to permit pay the Wilson Free Library \$750 for used shelving, furnaces, and light fixtures.

* * * * *

VETERAN'S MEMORIAL UPDATE:

Neva Benedict, Chrm., is compiling a list of all veterans who served in all wars from Wilson. The list will include men and women who lived in the town of Wilson or attended school from the Wilson Central School District. When finished, the list will be available to the public to check for omissions or corrections. For information or questions check with Neva and Harold Benedict, Ollie Clark, John Demmin, John Myers, Don Croop, or Harold Bottrell.

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RECENT ACQUISITIONS:

Ida Wilson has donated an Ansonia Wall Clock that used to hang in the Wilson Boathouse; a large oil painting of Walter Wilson; Large Bible of the Ida Southcombe Wilson family (of Canada) with family records in center of Bible.

Dorothy Linnabery: One Glass Insulator "Petticoat".

Rex E. Stacy, Texas: Ten early advertising cards.

Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Rider: Large framed colored portrait of young boy.

Janet Sporleder: Rubbing from Vietnam Veteran's Memorial in Washington; Name of Michael Witkop "American Heritage" Special Ed. (1989); Reagan Campaign Sticker; "Women's Day "Dictionary of Dolls"; Time Magazine-1962 Space Issue; "Making of AM-The Deep Sputh" "Guide to Heart Island"

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IT'S GONE TO THE PRINTER:

"Wilson Sketchbook" has gone to the printer--thanks to Emma Lou Schrader who spent many, many hours retyping the original copy. Wanda Burrows proofread the entire book,(no small task) and Don Burrows gave us all the necessary "push" to keep us at it. A special word of thanks to Becky Baker Hill of Tiffin, Ohio, who volunteered to cross index the book. When she returned the copy she wrote,"The book itself, the layout, typing and pictures are great, and such a joy to read. It was fun to read about people and places I haven't seen or thought about in years."

Thank you Becky, we hope everyone who gets a copy will like it as well.

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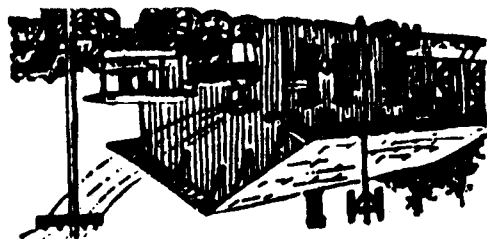
FINAL THOUGHT: As you get older, work becomes less fun, and fun becomes more work.

.....Detach and Return.....

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION	(PLEASE CHECK ONE)	NEW.....	Renewal.....
NAME.....		PHONE().....	
ADDRESS.....	P.O.BOX.....		
CITY, STATE, ZIP.....			
COUPLE (Please check)	\$8.00.....		JUNIOR MEMBERS
SINGLE	\$5.00.....	Name.....	Age.....
JUNIORS (Under 18) each	\$1.00.....	Name.....	Age.....
LIFE MEMBER each	\$150.00.....	Name.....	Age.....
HONORARY (85 yrs. or over)	FREE.....		
ENDOWMENT FUND DONATION	TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED.....	

Make checks payable to WILSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY and return to
CHRISTINE KELMAN, Harbor Mobile Park, Box 784, Wilson, NY 14172

LIBRARIAN
WILSON CENTRAL SCHOOL
WILSON, NY 14172

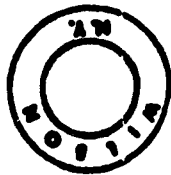
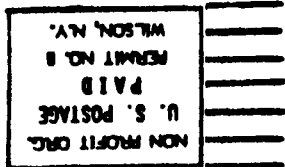


June 1991 Vol 20 No. 6
(Coleman Printing)

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

NEWSLETTER

Wilson Historical Society
Wilson, New York 14172-9763



THE VILLAGE LOCKUP:

There probably aren't too many people around Wilson today who remember when the village lockup was located on Young Street--let alone the reason for having one there.

The village ordinances of 1898, however, might give a clue as to why residents may have felt a jail was necessary.

When the new ordinances came out, the old "Lockport Journal" noted, "Wilson intends to be very nice and sedate, and woe be to the luckless person who violates any of the new ordinances." Here are several, and we quote:

"All persons found intoxicated on streets, using profane language, initiating fights, or making noise shall be punished; also any person who discharges a firearm, unless in self defense, shall be punished.

"No person shall throw; catch; knock; or play ball on the streets in a manner offending anyone; and no non-resident shall be allowed to hawk, peddle, or sell by auction, any goods or wares, except meat, fruit, or farm products.

"No horses, animals, or geese, shall be permitted to run at large; no person shall deposit garbage on the streets; no person shall make an indecent exposure in any public place; and no person shall injure, tear up or destroy any tree, post, or other fixture."

For what-ever reason, when the old Collegiate Institute was torn down, it was determined that a large outside toilet behind the school would be appropriate for use as a village lockup. The village fathers had it moved to Young Street between the old Navy Grocery and Harvey Sanford's Tile Yard, and with the help of Jesse Biggins, the local blacksmith, two barred cells were built into the structure.

Constable Ben Stone was the first "jailer", and the building was used for a number of years, however, in the early 1920's it was moved next to the old water tower on High Street near Flagler's Welding Shop.

The jail was still in use in 1932 when an inspection report was made out by Walter Nicholson, Chairman of the State Board of Corrections, who submitted it to Fred Bigalow, town supervisor, and A.M. McIlroy, village mayor. It read as follows:

"This lockup occupies a small one-story wood building on the outskirts of the village, and contains one latticed steel cell, and one wooden cell with latticed steel door. Cells are equipped with bunks, mattresses, blankets, and comfortables.

"There are no sanitary facilities what-ever, but there is an electric light and a stove for heating. Since the last inspection, the lockup has been painted throughout with white enamel paint, and is in good condition. Constable William Lort states that detentions are seldom made now, and the lockup is frequently used for lodgers."

The Commissioner recommended that "When this lockup is used for detention purposes it should be kept under constant and complete supervision as fire risk is extreme by reason of the type of construction, its location, and exposure."

The late Earl Armstrong, former Niagara County Deputy Sheriff, told a rather humorous story about how he once stopped at the jail after school one day, and when he walked into a cell to look it over, someone slammed the door shut behind him.

The Constable had driven into the country with his horse and buggy, so Earl went without any supper. To make matters worse, he had a date with a girl on the "Island", and when he didn't show up she got "mad as hops".

Earl didn't get out of jail until the Constable returned at 9PM, but his girl wouldn't speak to him until some of his friends at school explained to her what happened.

* * * * *

MEMBER IN THE SUN:

Harold Mosher has tossed his hat in the ring and decided to run for his sixth 2-year term as Supervisor of the town of Wilson. During his tenure he has been able to stabilize local taxes and keep the town free of indebtedness.

He has been a resident of Wilson for about 55 years, and prior to being elected supervisor was Mayor of the village of Wilson.

Harold is a navy veteran and Past Commander of Legion Post 836; a member of the Wilson Lions Club; Niagara County Water District Commissioner; 20 year Exempt member of Wilson Vol. Fire Co. #1; Honorary member of the Wilson Historical Society Board of Directors, and member of Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic Church in Wilson.

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BON MOT: Success comes in cans, not can'ts.

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PARISIAN GOWN TO BE FAIR ATTRACTION:

One would hardly expect to find copies of the Union Sun & Journal hidden behind a wall in the Wilson Free Library, but such was the case recently when workers tore a wall down while doing renovation work for the new library.

One newspaper, published on May 19, 1958, featured an item about the death of Mark J. Tovell a well-known barber, who was 99 years old when he died. His wife, Jesse Oliver, who passed away in 1930, was married in an 1898 Parisian wedding gown of black silk with matching parasol, and when she died, the gown was given to Charles Tovell, her husband's nephew.

Charles Tovell's wife, Beryl Tovell, a resident of Wilson, donated the gown to the Wilson Historical Society, and it will be exhibited in the museum during the Memorial Day Fair.

This year's Fair, which will be held on May 27th from 9:00 to 5:00 PM, will be the 19th fund-raiser since the organization was started in 1972. It is the society's main source of income which depends heavily on the success of the Food Building, chaired by Maxine Jones; the Quilt Raffle, chaired by Betty Stimson; and the "Flea Market" chaired by Nettie Stimson.

Other essential food concessions will be chaired by Leona Hunter, Candy; Mary Clark, Chili; Judy Zauner, Coffee & Donuts; Jack and Melinda Hutchins, Cotton Candy/ice cream; Dick and Sue Schultz, Lemonade & Popcorn; Sue Sobiegray, Funnel Cakes; and Dale Schlyer, Hot Dogs.

Darrell and Sally Smith, co-chairmen, have arranged several games for the youngsters including face-painting and free balloons, and the children's fish pond will be run by Bobbie Hull.

Dorothy Maxfield, curator, is planning a fair theme in honor of Wilson's veterans who served in all our Nation's wars, and she will be assisted by Eleanor Myers and Martha MacAskill.

Sally Smith has announced that demonstrations planned will include Robert Ketch, glassblower; Jim Hoffman, blacksmith; Roger Mawhiney, Diesel Engine; Bob Radnor, small engines; and Winnie Fischer, Loom.

There will be a first aid unit standing by, courtesy of Wilson Fire Co. #1; Carl Sabey, Town Constable will be on the grounds; Parking will be supervised by Dan King; and Don Burrows will be incharge of the shuttle bus service. Frank Massing, the society's night watchman, will look after things the night before the fair.

There will be something for everyone, so come and enjoy a sociable day at the Fair.

* * * * *

SPECIAL MEMBERSHIP NOTICE:

It was bad news when Chris Kelman fell and broke her ankle making it impossible for her to continue doing the important work required of the Membership Chairman. Chris has held the office since 1977, and it is hard for the society to lose her dedicated and devoted service.

The good news is that Anne (Argue) Faery has consented to take over for Chris, and all indications are that the membership job will continue to be in good hands. Your membership applications should now be either mailed or given to Anne whos address is 3285 West Lake Road, Wilson, New York 14172.

The membership application included with this newsletter is the last notice you will receive this year. Why not take a second to make sure your membership card shows you are paid through April 30, 1992.

On an average, it costs your society about \$3.00 per person per year to publish and mail the Newsletter to you, and approximately 500 copies are mailed out each month. The rest of your dues payment helps maintain vital services at the Wilson Museum.

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FUND CLARIFICATION:

In response to a couple inquiries about the status of the Life Membership Fund, we would like to say that nothing has really changed except the name.

The Board of Directors voted to change the name to Endowment Fund so that any monies received from supportive members or other sources might be deposited to it. They also agreed that only 40% of the interest earned would be withdrawn for general expenses, and 60% would remain in the fund to help build it up so it can be a greater source of operating income for the society.

You may have noted that a line on the membership application form is available for any contribution to the Endowment Fund, large or small. It was interesting to note that the first contribution made to the Endowment Fund was by one of our honorary members, Emma Schrader.

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CABOOSE MEMORIAL PLAQUE:

A new bronze plaque has been obtained for the caboose in memory of Burt Jennings, former trustee, and one of the leading forces in the construction program at the Wilson Museum. Burt was always available at any time for painting or "touching up" that had to be done, however, the caboose, which he carefully helped renovate to its present condition, was his first pride and joy. Ellsworth McKelvey took over as caboose chr. when Burt passed away.

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MUSEUM HOSTESSES:

Our apologies to the May hosts and hostesses who were inadvertently left out of the May Newsletter. This didn't stop them from doing their job, however, so "hats off" to Don and Wanda Burrows; Bill and Maxine Jones; Edna and Willard Rose; and George and Marge Lederhouse.

June greeters are scheduled as follows: June 2nd, Lloyd and Sandy Evans; June 9th, Ted and Millie Lonsbery; June 16th, Celeste Crawford and Evadna Crawford; June 23rd, Alice Davenport and Helen Stevens; and June 30th, Sara Berry and Don Croop.

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GOOD IDEA:

Dorothy Linnabery suggested recently that she might try to put together a collection of recipies for people who live alone and cook for one. Her idea is that most cookbooks cater to two or more persons--and who likes leftovers.

* * * * *

JUST A THOT:

Happiness is not a station at which you arrive, but a manner of traveling.

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POINTS OF LIGHT":

On July 1, 1972, the newly organized Wilson Historical Society had a total of 94 members-- a rather remarkable number in-as-much as the organization had only been in operation 3 months.

We did some checking and were surprised to learn that 52 of the original group are still members; 30 have passed away; and 12 dropped out for various reasons.

Today the numbers have increased, but our volunteers have not increased in the same proportion. We believe John Myers, Pres., had this in mind when he suggested we include the following letter in this month's Newsletter.

"To all members of the Wilson Historical Society: The Board of Directors wish to thank everyone for their past cooperation.

"We now have over 300 members within Niagara County. As you know, there has been a handful of members who have given many, many hours every month for the past 18 years.

"Being a member gives you the opportunity to provide this organization with your active participation, and help us continue this exemplary past by doing your part.

"This means volunteering for any jobs or anything that you would like to help out with. Please contact us. We need help in all areas such as dusters, writers, carpenters, refinishers, plumbers, cement workers, guides, hostesses or furnishers."

Your editor wishes to add to Johnny's letter by suggesting that volunteers are "Points of Light" in the community as they strive to make their town a better place in which to live. Everyone has special talents which could greatly benefit the Wilson Museum, but we need your participation before we can benefit from those talents.

Accept the challenge. Be a "Point of Light" in your community.

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THE TREES IN "HOJACK PARK":

An impressive number of trees have been placed on the museum grounds since 1972, and the first planting was in 1974 when Ron Schearer placed 6 "Little Leaf Lindens" along the brick walk east of the depot.

In 1976, the Wilson Conservation Club donated a large "Liberty Tree" Maple which was planted north of the colosse in recognition of our Nation's Bicentennial Celebration.

Ten ornamental and shade trees were later donated by the town of Wilson and, with help from Ron and the water district backhoe, were planted west of the new transportation building. In this group were Crimson Maples, Buttonwoods, Silver Maples, and Mountain Ash.

One of the largest plantings was in 1981 when Dr. and Mrs. George Badger of Lockport, who donated the 4 1/2 acres of land for "Hojack Park", had forty Blue Spruce Evergreens placed 12 feet apart and 10 feet inside the north boundary line of the museum property.

Also, in 1981, a Shademaster Locust was planted by Maryanne Sharpe and her son, Tom, in memory of Thomas L. Sharpe, and other memorial trees were later planted in memory of Ray Allgeier by his wife, Lorine; a Mountain Ash in memory of Dorothy Thilk by the Delphic Circle; and a Ginko Tree in memory of deceased members of the Wilson Golden Age Club. Four White Spruce Evergreens were also planted by the Wilson I.O.O.F. in memory of Garnette Upton, Millie Croop, Bernie Messersmith, and all deceased members of Lodge No. 881 of Wilson.

Two Bradford Pears were donated in 1985 in honor of Dr. John F. Argue and Jean K. Argue's Golden Wedding Anniversary by George and Dorothy Linnabery, and a Crimson Hawthorne was also donated in their honor by members of Jean's bridge club consisting of Lois Jennings, Eleanor Myers, Grace Singer, Dora Wakeman, Helen French, and Christine Kelman.

All trees are identified with small plaques and are put in place by Elwin Upton. New markers will have name of deceased loved-one and the year of death. Names of donors will be recorded in the museum's Memorial Book which was donated by Richard Adams of Tonawanda, N.Y.

Grounds Chairman, Elton Kropp, and Bill Fritton, trustee, have a record of all trees planted as well as their location on the grounds.

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NEW MEMBER:

Please welcome our latest new member, Leona E. Schumacher, of North Tonawanda, N.Y. also Melissa Brydges of Buffalo.

* * * * *

DID FATHER KNOW BEST?:

George Washington, the Father of our Country once said, "Religion and morality are indispensable supports of government, and national morality cannot prevail if religious principles are excluded."

* * * * *

SOUNDINGS: Children need models more than they need critics.

* * * * *

.....Detach and Return.....

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION	PLEASE CHECK ONE	NEW.....RENEWAL.....
NAME.....		PHONE(.....).....
ADDRESS.....	P.O.BOX.....	
CITY, STATE, ZIP.....		
COUPLE (Please check)	\$8.00.....	JUNIOR MEMBERS
SINGLE	\$5.00	Name.....Age.....
JUNIORS (under 18)	\$1.00.....	Name.....Age.....
LIFE MEMBER (each)	\$150.00	Name.....Age.....
HONORARY (85 yrs. or older)	FREE.....	
TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED	\$.....	ENDOWMENT FUND CONTRIBUTION \$.....

Please make all checks payable to the Wilson Historical Society and return to:
ANN A. FAERY 3285 West Lake Road Wilson, NY 14172

WILSON HISTORY:

The society's latest publication, "Wilson Sketchbook", has been completed and is ready for distribution.

The 8½ by 11 inch book will be illustrated with 38 pictures and approximately 175 pages of articles related to the history of Wilson.

It was written by the editor of your historical society Newsletter, and proof-read by Wanda Burrows of Burt, NY.

The copy was re-typed for publication by Emma Lou Reppentine of Wilson, and will contain a computerized cross index by Becky Baker Hill of Tiffin, Ohio.

The book is published by Coleman Printing of Niagara Falls, and the first edition will be available at the Memorial Day Fair, and will be sold for \$15.00 a copy.

Mail orders will be accepted but must include \$3.00, (the book rate) for mailing and handling. If you prefer to have a copy sent by first class mail, the postage will be \$5.00.

Mail order requests for books may be addressed to Don Croop, Publications Chrm., 4559 Chestnut Road, Wilson, NY 14172; Emma Lou Reppentine, 463 Lake Street, Wilson, NY 14172; or Wanda Burrows, 2094, North Beebe Road, Burt, NY 14028.

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ANNUAL MEETING:

The Wilson Historical Society will hold its annual meeting in the Barnum Building at approximately 6:00 PM on June 16th.

The meeting will start with a box lunch social, and after lunch committee chairmen will be given an opportunity to report on the past year's activities. The annual election of Officers and trustees will follow.

Cost of the box lunches has not been determined as this is being written, but all will cost the same. The lunches will be prepared by a committee consisting of Janet Sporkeder, Dorothy Linnabery, Barbara Mosher, Lucille Upton, Lucille Terry, and Shirley Evans.

Reservations should be made by contacting any of the committee members named above.

* * * * *

WE'VE COME A LONG WAY, BABY:

It was April 18, 1972, when a small number of Wilson residents met to discuss the possibility of forming a historical society in the town of Wilson.

They met at the home of Dorothy Thilk, town historian, and Dr. John F. Argue agreed to chair the group which included Whitney Barnum, town supervisor; Harold Mosher, village mayor; Justice Jane Moxham; Jean Argue; Joseph Higgins; Anna Mae Nevins; Mildred Middleton; and Norman Thilk.

A general discussion was held to outline the possible aims and purpose for having a society in Wilson, and a list of prospective members was made up and invited to attend a new meeting which was held at the town hall on April 24, 1972.

At this meeting, Whitney Barnum acted as temporary chairman, and stated that Dr. Argue had expressed a desire to donate the old railroad depot to society for a meeting place and museum should one be started. Richard Southard, town attorney, was also contacted and agreed to act as legal advisor to the group.

Anna Mae Nevins made a motion, seconded by Jane Moxham, that a historical society be started, and the motion was approved by the 40 persons in attendance. A nominating comm. was then elected consisting of Dorothy Thilk, Mildred Middleton, Winifred Stacy, Karl Wright, and Anna Mae Nevins. A Constitution and By-laws comm. was also elected made up of Marion Campbell, Eleanor Myers, Lois Jennings, Joseph Higgins, and Kay Ness.

At the next meeting in town hall on May 9th, 1972, the following members were elected as the first officers and trustees of the Wilson Historical Society: Dr. John Argue, Pres., Karl Wright, Vice-Pres., Laura Eick, Recording Secretary, Mildred Croop, treasurer, and Ella Mae Baker, Corresponding Secretary.

Five trustees were elected including Dora Wakeman and David Weiler, 1 year; Flossie Lortz and Helen Borngraeber, 2 years; and Anna Mae Nevins, Joseph Higgins, and Whitney Barnum, 3 yrs.

Legal transfer of the railroad property was made to the town of Wilson by Dr. Argue at the town hall on October 16, 1972. In attendance at this meeting were Henry DeLange, atty. for Dr. Argue; Richard Southard, atty. for the town of Wilson; and Whitney Barnum, town supervisor.

The first meeting in the old depot was held on June 18th, 1973--the rest is history.

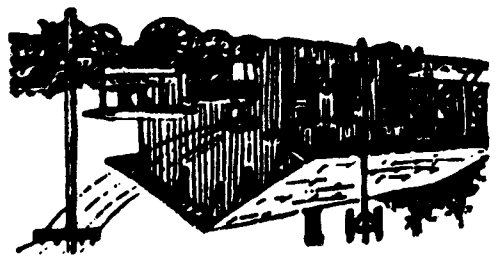
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FINAL THOUGHT: Even the woodpecker owes his success to the fact that he uses his head and keeps pecking away until he finishes the job he starts.

LAST NOTICE

Your dues must be paid through April, 1992, to receive the July Newsletter.

LIBRARIAN
WILSON CENTRAL SCHOOL
WILSON, NY 14172

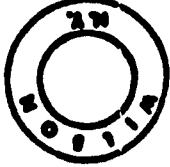
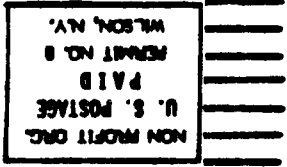


July 1991 Vol. 20 No. 7
(Coleman Printing)

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

NEWSLETTER

Wilson Historical Society
Wilson, New York 14172-9763



EARLY FIELD DAYS BUILT FIRE COMPANY:

Considering the number of bad fires that occurred in Wilson at the turn of the century, it is surprising that a fire company wasn't started up sooner than it was, yet after the Masonic Block fire of 1890 a proposition to organize a fire company was presented twice to the voters, and twice was voted down.

On July 10, 1894, the historic old Ontario Hotel burned down taking the frame Presbyterian Church with it, and on June 6, 1896, the pretentious Tower House was also consumed by flames. Other fires leveled the Baptist Church, the R.W. & O. depot, and Steven's Fruit Warehouse.

In 1899, Hackett's Grocery and the Honeywell residence burned down, and 2 years later the north side of Young Street was destroyed, with one or two exceptions. In 1913, when the Sutherland Hotel burned down, there was still no fire company in Wilson.

In 1923, public apathy turned to action, and the 1st volunteer fire company in Wilson was organized. The company was as poor as the proverbial "church mouse", however, and meetings were held each week with orange crates used for seats.

The first fire equipment consisted of two hose carts borrowed from the town of Newfane, and fire drill found firemen racing through the streets with two men on the tongue and two more on the ropes used to pull the carts.

In order to raise money for new equipment, the volunteers launched a number of fund-raising events, and the first was a balloon dance held at Middleton's Hall. Dozens of balloons were floated into the air--some with dollar bills attached, and those lucky enough to find one were given free admission to the dance.

The fire company held its first annual Field Day on August 30, 1924, and it started at ten in the morning with "free for all" horse and pony races. Twenty dollar cash prizes were given to the winners.

A parade was held at 1PM featuring 6 fire companies, 6 bands, and a large number of civic and church floats. The volunteers were proud of their new company so the line of march started at the north end of Lake Street, proceeded to the railroad depot, then counter marched back to Young Street where it headed west and disbanded at Youngstown Road.

All kinds of events were planned during the day including a tug-of-war contest between the long-haired ladies and those with bobbed hair. Trouble was, they couldn't find enough long-haired ladies to compete so a balloon race was held instead.

Boxes of candy were given to the ladies and gents who competed in the three-legged races, and boxes of cigars were awarded to the fire companies with men strong enough to win the inter company tug-of-war contests.

Honeymoon races were staged for young couples, and running races were held for women and boys under twelve. A pie-eating contest was timed for speed--not endurance, because the firemen were afraid they couldn't find enough pies for a long contest.

Other activities included a penny scramble for the children; peanut races for the women; sack races for mixed couples; and quoit pitching contests for both men and women, but the high light of the day was a greased pig scramble with the pig awarded as the prize.

It was truly an old fashioned field day picnic in which the entire community took part, and even the churches joined together to provide food at a single church stand. Afternoon and evening concerts were provided by the Ontario Band, and an outdoor dance from seven until midnight rounded out the many events of the day.

By March 14, 1925, the new fire company was able to acquire its first fire truck, a LaFrance Pumper, which is still kept in good running condition. Known as "Old Betsey", the \$12,000 truck was acquired after eight of the company's volunteers signed a note to make the purchase.

Today, the old fashioned field day is a thing of the past, and has been replaced by a more commercialized type of event featuring carnival rides, etc., but other attractions like home-made foods, chicken chowder, and bingo, have become popular crowd pleasers.

The volunteers of the 1920's got their new fire company off to a good start, and any former members still around may well be proud of the present fire company which grew out of their efforts nearly 70 years ago.

Today, Wilson's Volunteer Fire Co. #1 serves many areas of the community with their well trained fire police; water rescue/scuba diver team; certified "smoke divers" for fire rescue; and a medical service team that was 1st in the county to provide Advanced Life Support to all local residents.

* * * * *

BON MOT:

The greatest oak was once a little nut that held its ground.

* * * * *

RECENT ACQUISITIONS:

Kenneth E. Welker, Lockport: From the estate of Ida Erion; 2 pottery jugs; 1 gallon milk & chemung spring water glass jug; 2 early electric light bulbs; very small old electric fan; 3 straight razors; carved cherry cane that belonged to Ida's father, Mr. Rohring; also mason quart jar. Two insurance maps of village of Wilson by Sanborn Map Co (1911) 71931. Given in memory of Samuel D. Brown.

Doris Swick Fraser: 1919 Year Book of Wilson High School.

Marion Campbell: Musical car horns which play, "The Campbells are Coming". Originally used on Bill and Lucille Campbell Kirchoff's car.

Mary LeClair: Great grandmother Baker's hand fan.

Gary Pettit: Oars from Merle Wilson's Boat Livery.

Mary Clark: Bonnet made for Wilson Centennial Celebration in 1958.

Barbara J. Wilson Estate: 41 piece Walter Wilson Woodcarvings.

Phyllis (Gifford) Stewart, Lockport: Three pictures taken of Choir, Band, and Chorus (1936-37-38) (Some names recorded on back)

Ronald and Catherine Cumpsey, Florida: Two doctor's bags that were given to them by Dr. John Burns of Wilson. Ronald was a painter at Newfane and had a summer business at Camp Allen in Olcott.

Blanche Wilson, Newfane: 1981 issues of Time Magazine.

Judy Zauner: Two colored pictures taken of Billy Sherman grave and marker. Frank Massing planted flowers and painted marker--he does a fine job of keeping up the historic site.

Judy and Dan King: Blue chrystal plate from St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Wilson.

Don Croop: 9 aluminum glass storm windows anddozen wood window frames for making display cases in Argue Memorial Building.

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ICE CREAM SOCIAL:

The Town of Wilson and the Wilson Historical Society will sponsor a band concert and ice cream social at the museum grounds, Sunday afternoon, August 4th. This year's event will have a military theme to honor our servicemen involved in operation "Desert Storm".

* * * * *

NEW MEMBERS:

It is a pleasure to welcome the following new members: Robert B. Parkhill of Sanborn, NY; Neal and Donna Wixon of Buffalo, NY; Harvey Beute of Kalamazoo, Mich.; Julia G. McCoy, Norwich, CT; Bruce and Lee La Manlia, Wilson; and Frank Scott, Jr. of Desert Palm, California.

Members may be interested to know that Frank Scott is a direct descendent of Reuben and his son Luther Wilson. If some of you are fans of the Lawrence Welk show, you may have seen Frank on TV as he was the pianist for the orchestra up to 1970. He may still be seen on Saturday night re-runs on PBS.

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LIBRARY ON "HOME STRETCH":

A challenge grant for \$23,000 from the Western New York Foundation may make it possible for the Wilson Free Library to complete renovation of the old building and finish the new addition, however, to receive the money the library must raise \$46,000--double the amount of the challenge grant.

Welles V. Moot, president of the foundation said that trustees were delighted to be able to assist with the renovation and "were amazed at the number of dollars the library had been able to put together."

Jean Siddall, director, said the library has also received funds from the Niagara Foundation to purchase furniture for the reading room, and applications have been made to other foundations to cover cost of book shelving and other furniture.

A "friends of the library" is being formed, and Sylvia McQuaig will be publicity chairman.

* * * * *

MUSEUM VISIT:

It was a pleasant day on May 14th when Georgeann Busch and her class from Thomas Marks School walked to the museum where they were greeted by Sara Berry and Don Croop. After a tour of the buildings, the youngsters were treated to some cookies and juice before returning to school.

A packet of letters was later received from the children thanking the hostesses for showing them around the museum. Each letter was hand-written and had a picture at the top showing what they liked best--drawings included guns, swords, cannon balls, caboose, and cars. All letters were original, but one that caught our eye came from Jamie who wrote: "Dear Mr. Coop and Mrs. Parry: Thank you for letting us cum to the historical society. I like the caboose." Our compliments to Ms. Busch for her well-behaved, attentive group of youngsters.

Any time you would really like to "make your day", just host a group of children through the Wilson Museum--it's an invigorating experience.

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MORE OUTLETS FOR "WILSON SKETCHBOOK":

In order to make the society's new publication, "Wilson Sketchbook" more accessible to area residents, copies may now be purchased at the Wilson Town Hall. Please ask for either Wanda Burrows or Emma Lou Reppentine.

The book may also be purchased from Sara Berry, (751-6757); Stimson's Antique Country Barn Shoppe, 578 Lake Street; or the Wilson Museum during visiting hours. All proceeds from the sale of the book will benefit the Wilson Historical Society. Price of the book is \$15.00 a copy.

Books ordered by mail should be addressed to Don Croop, 4559 Chestnut Road, Wilson, NY 14172. Please enclose \$18.00, (mailing and handling) and make all checks payable to Wilson Historical Soc.

The book is selling well, so if you would like a copy of the 1st edition, we suggest you place your order soon.

* * * * *

SOUNDINGS:

Life can only be understood by looking backward, but it must be lived by looking forward.

* * * * *

SUCCESSFUL FAIR:

Early figures indicate that the recent Memorial Day Fair was a great success, and Darrell and Sally Smith, co-chrm., wish to thank everyone who participated for doing such a good job. A shortage of volunteers this year was compensated for by a number of non-members who graciously offered to help out where needed, and the society is deeply grateful to:

Micky and Shirley Hunter; Carol Townsend; Hank Jones; Rachel Amadeo; Jim and Faye Pisello; Tony Delgross; Ed Janicke; Joyce Licatta; Elizabeth Senese; Loretta Paulus; George and Althea Montgomery;; Vicki Waple; Landon Darnell; Laura Murawski; John Fowler; Barry Yousett; Kyle Yousett; Dan Hare; and Tom Mitalski. We also wish to thank Judy Streams and Becky Albright for helping with the museum display.

More fair information may be available after the committee meeting scheduled for June 27th.

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QUILT WINNER:

Ruth Moore of Clarence, NY, was the lucky winner of the "Bird Quilt" raffled at this year's Memorial Day Fair. The beautiful quilt was made by Betty Stimson of Wilson.

Six additional prizes of hand-made items were awarded as follows: Afghan, Carol Townsend of Lockport; Pennsylvania Dutch Wall Hanging, Joan Gap of Ontario, Canada; Scare Crow Doll, Blanche Wilson of Newfane; Doll Quilt, Judith Harold of Philadelphia, PA; Tablecloth, Don Kirwin of Wilson; and Child's Quilt, Nila Weaver of Lockport.

Quilt Chrm, Betty Stimson, wishes to thank everyone who purchased quilt tickets or helped out in any way.

* * * * *

IN MEMORIAM:

Clarence G. Nablo, 74, a native of Wilson, died June 13, 1991, at Inter-Community Hospital at Newfane. He was a custom cabinet maker and owner of Nablo's Woodcraft and Gift Shop at Bristol Center. He returned to Wilson in 1983.

He was a member of Exley United Methodist Church, the Townline Retirees Bowling League, and he joined the Wilson Historical Society in 1986.

He is survived by his wife, Jeanne; a daughter, Carol N. Townsend of Lockport; and two grandchildren. Burial was in Greenwood Cemetery, Wilson, with Rev. Don Foley and Rev. Timothy Huber officiating.

* * * * *

ANNUAL MEETING:

The annual meeting on June 17th started at 6:30 PM with a box social supper consisting of turkey, cheese, and ham with roll; potato salad; carrots, celery sticks and radishes; fresh fruit cup; brownies; iced tea and coffee. The nourishing warm weather meal was prepared, boxed, and served by Barbara Mosher, Chrm., Janet Naslund, Winnie Terry, Emily McAvoy, Janet Sporleder, Dorothy Linnabery, Shirley Evans, and Mary T. Leninhan.

The meeting was opened by John Myers, President, who asked Pam Groff to read the minutes from the last Board of Director meeting. Committee reports were then given by Don Croop for the by-laws and publications committee; also for the acquisitions comm. in the absence of Lois Jennings, Chrm. Other reports and remarks were made by Dan King, Finanace Chrm; Celeste Crawford, Library and Genealogical Chrm.; Jan Sporleder, historical sites; and Don Burrows, 1st Vice-President. Election of officers and committee chairmen for next year were approved as follows:

John Myers, President; Don Burrows, 1st Vice-Pres; Norm MacAskill, 2nd Vice-President; Kathy Kraatz and Bobbie Hull, Recording Secretaries; Helen Stevens, Corresponding Secretary; and Carole Schnoor, Treasurer. Three Trustees to June, 1994, will be Dan King, Nettie Stimson, and Lois Barnum.

Nominees for Committee Chairmen were elected as follows: Lois Jennings, Acquisitions; Don Croop, By-Laws; Celeste Crawford, Genealogical; Helen Clark, Hostesses; Maryanne Sharpe, Housekeeper; Jan Sporleder, Historical Sites; Celeste Crawford, Library; Anne Faery, Membership; Lois Jennings, Memorial; Don Croop, Publications/Newsletter; Barbara Mosher, Programs; "Chuck" Branch, Photography; Emma Schrader, Refreshments; and Lucille Upton, Ways & Means. There were no nominations for Fair Chairman or Publicity Chairman.

A round of applause was given to Pam Groff in recognition of the fine job she did a Recording Secretary over the past two years.

* * * * *

PROMINENT SON:

Ashley Gale, Jr., of Charlotte, North Carolina, grew up in Wilson and graduated from Wilson Central School in 1943. He later graduated from Hobart College, New York, in 1950. He has kept in touch with his old home town and in 1987 became a Life Member of the Wilson Historical Society. He recently received the South Carolina Hospital Association's Distinguished Service Award which is made to persons who have contributed significantly to health care in that state.

Mr. Gale joined the Duke Endowment, a private foundation, in 1961, and was named director of its hospital division in 1980. Ashley is the son of the late Ashley Gale and Ruth Peuchen of North Tonawanda, and he has three sisters, Barbara, Catherine, and Judith.

* * * * *

"HOJACK" TELEGRAPHER:

Mrs. Florence McElwaine Clark of Tonawanda was 89 years old when she visited the Wilson Museum during the 1979 Memorial Day Fair. She said that she once worked at the depot as a telegrapher and ticket salesman for Mr. Patterson, and lived a few doors from the station in the house now owned by Don and Judy Streams. She attended school in Rochester and came to Wilson in 1916. When she left Wilson, she worked at Burt; and also Adams on the Adirondack section of the Rome, Watertown, and Ogdensburg Railroad, better known as the "Hojack".

* * * * *

TAXATION is a system of plucking the goose to get the most feathers with the least hissing, while those who talk about stretching a dollar haven't kept up with how the buck is shrinking.

* * * * *

BOARD ACTION & REPORTS:

Motion made and approved to place crushed stone by caboose so tracks may be laid for work car. Motion was also approved to run water lines to east and west side of Earnum Building at estimated cost of \$250--to be charged to Barnum Building budget.

A request from Harold Mosher to use grounds for a band concert on August 4th was approved, and a motion was made by Ed Allgeier, seconded by Dan King, to hold ice cream social during the concert. Motion approved.

A request to the Board to set up a beer tent for a country-western type jamboree was voted down in deference to a long standing policy of the historical society not to allow sale of alcoholic beverages on the grounds.

A letter was read from Walter Moxham, atty., stating that the society would be the beneficiary of a collection of carved wood ducks from the estate of the late Barbara J. Wilson. Two of her paintings were also given to the society.

A letter was read from Kay Ness, trustee of the Wilson Free Library, thanking the society for storing the library's books in the Barnum Building.

Ted Grocki, high school principal, notified the society that Barbara Lynn Fare and Elton Lloyd Parker will receive the historical society's awards on Class night to the best history students.

Norm MacAskill reported on a meeting of the Local Historical Societies to be held at the Buffalo and Erie Co. historical society on July 13th. He later reported on the meeting at the society's annual meeting on July 17th, and said that Judson Heck of Newfane was one of the principle speakers.

* * * * *

TOURISM CAN HELP COMMUNITY:

A recent tour-managers visit to points of interest in Niagara County, promoted by the Niagara County Tourism comm., included Wilson, and indications that the promotion may be bearing fruit is seen in "Freedom First", the May/June 1991 Newsletter of the First National Bank of Pennsylvania. Under a scheduled Day Tour on July 11th it states, "We will be traveling to Lockport to board a canal boat and go through the locks. After lunch, our day continues with a visit to the Wilson Caboose and Historical Museum which houses antique cars and trucks. Or you may choose to browse among the small shops in the town of Wilson."

We may have more visitors as the word gets around, and we would suggest that our museum committee be aware of the potential for hosts and hostesses.

* * * * *

NEW PLANTINGS:

Elton Kropp, grounds chrm., has announced that the Marks family have planted a sycamore tree on the grounds in memory of the late Edward Marks.

A Thundercloud Flowering Plumb and Forsythia Bush have also been planted in the northeast corner of the parking lot, courtesy of Miss Flossie Lortz.

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TABLE NEEDED:

Dorothy Maxfield, curator, is looking for a small wood table for use in the waiting room. If you have one about the size of a card table that you'd like to sell or donate, please contact Dorothy.

* * * * *

CHARTER MEMBERS:

At an organizational meeting of the society on May 9, 1972, Winifred Stacy made a motion, seconded by John Cowles, that to be a charter member, persons must attend two of the first five meetings. Motion was approved.

According to attendance records on May 9th; May 24th; June 28th; July 17th; and Aug. 21st; the following members qualified as Charter Members of the Wilson Historical Society: (*) after name denotes deceased.

- Diane Albright; Esther Albright; Harold Albright (*); Jean Argue; Dr. John Argue (*); Ella Mae Baker; Lois Barnum; Whitney Barnum (*); Sara Berry; Helen Borngraeber; Cheryl Brown; Merritt Cake (*); Marion Campbell; Verna Caufield (*); Elizabeth Cole; James Cowles; Loretta Cowles; Shelby Cowles; Donald Croop; Mildred Croop (*); Susan Cruickshank; Eloise Culverwell; Laura Eick; Mildred Faraday; Winifred Fischer; Mary Gamble; Marguerite Geiser; Ellen Golde; Marietta Goodman; Susan Goodnight; Joseph Higgins (*); Raker; Phylis Hurst (*); Burt Jennings (*); Lois Jennings; Myra Karsten (*); Nancy Kent; Elton Kropp; June Kropp; Frances Landy; Dorothy Lort; Edward Lort (*); Flossie Lortz; Edna Martin; Mildred Middleton (*); Eleanor Myers; John Myers; Anna Mae Nevins; Zilpha Petty; Marie Reynolds (*); Patricia Rice; Helen Sayer; Arthur Schnoor; Gertrude Schnoor; Carole Schnoor; C. Richard Schultz; Susan Schultz; Thomas Sharpe (*); Grace Singer; Shirley Smith; Rex Stacy; Winifred Stacy; Mitchell Stevenson; Helen Stevens; Betty Stimson; Nettie Stimson; Gerry Swann; Doris Tarr (*); Albert Taylor (*); Catherine Taylor; Dorothy Thilk (*); Susan Thilk; Dorothy Tracey; Terrence Upton; Dora Wakeman; David Weiler; Mabel Wilson (*); Gwen Wright (*); and Karl Wright (*).

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WORTH REPEATING:

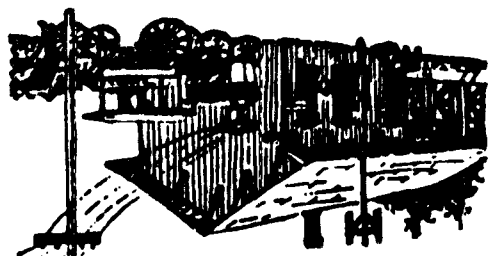
A rare book published in Buffalo in 1843, tells of the trials and tribulations of Benjamin Wait, a resident of Wilson, who participated in the Upper Canada Rebellion of 1837. According to the book, "Wait's Narrative", he was captured and sentenced to the gallows, but through personal appeals to the Earl of Dunham by his wife, his sentence was reduced to exile and imprisonment in Van Dieman's Land, Australia.

Mrs. Wait lived in Lockport with friends while her husband was imprisoned, but 4 years later he escaped and returned to the Niagara Frontier where he was believed to have again made his home in Wilson.

The source for this unusual bit of history came from the late Dr. John Argue who obtained a copy of Wait's Narrative from Dr. John Donovan of Lockport.

* * * * *

FINAL THOUGHT: Blessed are they who clean up!



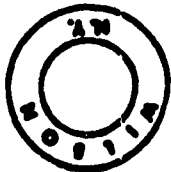
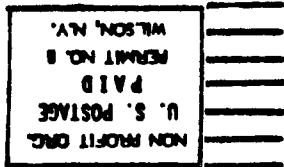
LIBRARIAN
WILSON CENTRAL SCHOOL
WILSON, NY 14172

September 1991 Vol. 20 No. 8
(Coleman Printing)

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

NEWSLETTER

WILSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY
WILSON, NEW YORK 14172-9763



LIBRARY HELPED FUTURE LIBRARIANS:

Judith Jennejahn, the daughter of Sara Berry and the late Fred Berry of Wilson, became interested in library work when she was a junior at Wilson Central School. It was her love of books and people and part time work at the Wilson Free Library, that gave her the incentive to continue working in libraries until she graduated from SUNY Brockport in 1958.

In 1969, she earned a master's degree in library studies from SUNY Geneseo, and returned to Brockport in 1984 after having served as a teacher and librarian in Spencerport and Ogden. During this time she acquired the skills that enabled her to return to Brockport as head of Library Acquisitions.

Some people might think that librarians just say "quiet please" or just "stamp books", but there is a little more to it. At Brockport, Judith is responsible for the acquisition of serials and monographs for the library which might be compared to a budget coordinator in a business.

She recently started a monthly list of acquisitions and created an approval slip program to help departmental coordinators generate orders, and she also is responsible for the purchase of U.S. Government publications and co-editor of the New York Periodical Index.

Since 1972, the State University of New York has honored its most outstanding employees with the Chancellor's Award--the most coveted recognition in the SUNY system. This year, Judith was one of the four Brockport employees selected to receive the commendation.

While attending school in Wilson, Judith worked in the Wilson Library under the late Grace Smith, as did her sister, Pricilla B. Smiley, who is currently Librarian of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Illinois.

The late Marie Reynolds, who assisted Grace Smith, became Librarian when Grace died, and one of her student helpers was Prudy Davis Burrows, who became Marie's assistant librarian. Prudy is now working in the Wilson Central School Library.

Another of Marie's helpers was "Becky" Baker (Hill), who is now Librarian at the President Rutherford B. Hayes Library in Fremont, Ohio.

Phyllis Hageman, Jr., also got her start in the Wilson Library and is presently the Assistant Librarian under Mrs. Jean Siddall.

As the Wilson Free Library continues to expand and improve its services in the community, it is reasonable to assume that more young people will be encouraged to work there and make a career of library work.

Also, if you stop to think about it, what better reason could one have to make a special contribution to the library's current renovation and building fund project.

* * * * *

MEMBERS IN THE SUN:

The Wilson Gnostic Guild recently celebrated their 50th year at a dinner party held at the Basin Marina Restaurant, when charter members, Ruth Phillips, Beatrice Rockwood, and Virginia Nichols were honored. It has been the goal of Gnostic to support the Wilson Free Library, and each year part of the membership dues is contributed for that purpose. Members are also active in the current drive to raise funds for the library building fund.

* * * * *

Anne Rohring, Wilson artist, recently presented a portrait of how the New Wilson Free Library will look to "Peg" Fritton, President of the library's board of directors. The large water-color painting was put on exhibit at the Hamilton & Clark Building on Young Street, Wilson.

* * * * *

HISTORIC DATA COPIED:

When Les Clark of Hayward, California, visited Wilson to attend the Memorial Day Fair, he managed to find time to make copies of the first village survey and incorporation papers as well as the election notice. The survey, dated March 24, 1858, was signed by E.V.W. Dox, S. Parsons, and George B. Wilson. The election notice was signed by R.C. Holmes, Dudley Frish, and James G. O. Brown. Several pages are devoted to the listing of the names of all residents living within the corporation limits in 1858, as well as the number of residents in each household with a total of 715 recorded.

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SEPTEMBER BOARD MEETING:

The Board of Directors will meet at the museum, Wed., Sept. 11th, at 7:30 PM.

* * * * *

BON MOT: Golf is like taxes--you drive hard to get to the green, and wind up in the hole.

* * * * *

GOLDEN WEDDING BELLS:

Lt. Col. Floyd and Beatrice Hicks were honored with a reception for relatives and friends at the Elk's Lodge in S. San Francisco, Ca. Out-of-town guests included Marion Winger and Agnes Shanahan of Wilson. Floyd retired from the army in 1955, and the 12th Dist. Federal Reserve Bank in 1973. "Bea" is Regent of LaPuerta De Ora Chapter of the DAR; State Recording Sec. of Daughters of American Colonists; State Pres. of Daughters of Flanders and Patriots of America; and member of the Golden Gate Colony of New England Women.

George and Marge Lederhouse of Ransomville were honored with a surprise reception for 200 guests in the Free Methodist Church, Ransomville, and on July 4th, an anniversary dinner for family and friends was held at the Wilson House Inn. George retired from Carborundum after 38 years, and Marge taught school for 23 years--3 in a rural school, and 20 at the Stevenson Elementary School in Ransomville. Both are avid bowlers and Marge was selected Senior of the year a couple years ago at the Newfane Golden Age Club.

"Ted" and Melva Carrigan Bull, Chestnut Rd., Newfane, repeated their marriage vows at Exley U.M. Church, and celebrated their anniversary on the 30th at the South Wilson Fire Hall. Ted is a veteran of World War II and retiree of Harrison Radiator Div. of GMC. Melva, a native of Wilson, worked about 12 years at the Feit Mill in Newfane.

Archie and Zilpha Petty observed their anniversary in April while in Florida, but on June 30 a reception for family and friends was held at the home of their daughter, Dr. Arthur (Judy) Kane. Archie became a Math teacher at Wilson Central in 1957, and later was a guidance Counselor. Zilpha was on the school faculty and consultant for remedial reading, also member of DAR.

Sam and Mary McCoy, Lake Rd., Burt, observed their 50th anniversary at home with family and close friends. They were married June 28th, 1941, and Sam is a retiree of Harrisons Div., GMC.

Harold and Neva Latta Benedict of Wilson celebrated their anniversary at the Wilson Conservation Club with family and friends. Harold is a retired independant trucker and member of the American Legion. Neva is a member of the Niagara Falls Chapter, DAR.

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AROUND THE MUSEUM:

You may have noticed how nice the museum grounds have been kept up this summer--trees trimmed; trash disposed of; dirt leveled off where needed, etc. We believe that Elton Kropp, grounds chrm., deserves a pat on the back as well as others who've given him a hand.

We also noted that Elwood and Bess McKelvey have been busy touching up the wheels on the caboose, and the've also been working on the old fire hose cart. He would like to find a nozzle and hose to "dress up" the old relic--it would make a nice exhibit for the breezeway.

Wally Goodman said that improvements are coming along slowly in the car building, and we've noted that new things are appearing in the Fittro Shop--even though Ed Allgeier has been pretty busy chasing the big ones out on the lake.

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CHALLENGER:

Maxine Jones has been endorsed by the Democratic Comm. of Wilson to run for the position of Town Supervisor. Maxine, an active member of Exley United Methodist Church and the Wilson Historical Society, has been a resident of Wilson for 26 years. During this time she has been Comm. Chrm. of Boy Scout Troop No. 66 as well as treasurer and chairman of the Wilson Democratic Committee. From 1972 to 1977 she was town of Wilson Water Clerk, also executive assistant to the town supervisor from 1972 to 1981.

In addition to doing volunteer work with the Thomas Marks PTA, she has also capably managed the Food Building for the last three historical society Memorial Day Fairs.

Maxine feels that her volunteer work and years of experience as a town employee have given her the experience and qualifications necessary to run for the position of Town Supervisor.

* * * * *

ICE CREAM SOCIAL:

Lois Barnum, Judy King, and Emma Lou Reppentine co-chaired the recent successful Ice Cream Social which was held in conjunction with the town-sponsored Band Concert and Recognition Day for all Wilson's veterans of past wars. Welcome address was given by Mayor K. Charles Branch.

Harold Mosher, supervisor, introduced the guest speaker, Col. Paul R. Cooper, Group Commander of the 914th TAG, Niagara Falls Airforce Base, who pointed out that their job was made much easier during the Gulf War because of the tremendous support given the troops by the folks back home. Mr. Mosher then read off a list of the Wilson men and women who served in the conflict.

Following performances by the "23 Skidoos" and "Queen City Strutters", a certificate of recognition "For his contributions to the preservation of our town's history" was presented to this writer, along with a painting of the Wilson Depot by local artist, Anne Rohring.

Society members were kept busy dishing out ice cream sundaes and root beer floats. Don and Wanda Burrows estimated over 400 people went through 10 halves of freshly cut Niagara County Peaches--donated by the Burrows.

Other members who helped out with the social included Commander John Demmin, American Legion, Rev. Paul Burkard, Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic Church, Darrell and Sally Smith, Bea Rockwood, John Myers, Pat Stephenson, Sue Cruickshank, Jeffrey and Dayna Wiepert, Chris and Lisa Murawski, Jeff and Mark Wiepert, Joshua Smith, and Jean Figura, "Won't you come home Bill Bailey".

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FROM THE MAILBAG:

When Esther Davis Stockwell placed an order for "Wilson Sketchbook", she wrote that she was 2 years old when her mother, Lella Mason Davis, moved from Ohio to "Sunset Island" ca. 1917. She explained that her older sister attended Wilson High School and was a good friend of Frances Marks Landy. Esther's father, Frederick Davis, was born in Wilson and was the son of Henry M. Davis, a schoolteacher who later became a lawyer and Niagara County Judge. Esther now resides in LaPorte, Indiana.

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FISHING DERBIES:

Wilson's many fishing derbies leads us to the following conclusion: There are two kinds of fishermen--those who insist they fish for sport, and those who catch something.

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CENTENARIAN PASSES AWAY:

Bessie DeNeau Crawford, 102, died August 19, 1991 at St. Petersburg, Florida. She is survived by her daughter, Cleo Anne Salerno, also of St. Petersburg; and two nieces, Marilyn Conti and Carilyn Warblow, both of North Tonawanda.

Bessie was 9 months old when Lake Island Park was opened in 1888, and her earliest recognition was when she received a silver cup for being the prettiest baby in the Park's baby contest.

A native of Wilson, she grew up on Pettit Street and attended the old cobblestone school-house that stood near her home. When the cobblestone school was torn down, all the younger grades met in the former Free Methodist Church on Washington Street, while the 7th and 8th grades met in the old Wilson Creamery. High School classes were held in the old Town Hall.

When Bessie graduated, there were only 10 students in her class. She later attended the Teachers Training Class and taught in area schools for a few year. She gave up teaching when she met and married Luther Crawford in 1915, and they moved to "Sunset Island" where they lived out their lives together. When Lou died in 1966, Bessie remained on the Island, but spent her winters with her daughter, Cleo.

Bessie joined the Wilson Historical Society in 1972, and became a Life Member in 1984. Cleo also joined the society as a Life Member in 1987.

We had the pleasure of visiting with Bessie several times before she moved away from the Island much of the information in the society's 9th publication, "The Story of Sunset Island" was contributed by her.

As we write this final tribute to the "Grand Old Lady of the Island", we extend, on behalf of the members of the Wilson Historical Society, our condolences to Bessie's family and friends.

* * * * *

Willard R. Rose, 77, a native of Wilson and retired foreman for the State Department of Transportation, died at home on July 7, 1991. Better known as "Bob", he served in the U.S. Army Corps during World War II.

He joined the Wilson Historical Society in 1975 and became a Life Member in 1983. From 1977 until 1982 he was chairman of the Caboose Committee, and from 1982 until 1986, was chairman of the Antique Car Committee.

He is survived by his wife, Edna Rose of Wilson; a son, William R. (Judith) Rose of Waynesboro, Pa; two sisters, Winifred Baker and Jane (Rex) Caufield of Youngstown, NY; also two granddaughters; and a dear friend, Mary Okoniewski.

Services were held at the Hamilton & Clark Funeral Chapel, and burial was in Greenwood Cemetery in Wilson. Bob left his mark on the Wilson Museum--he will be sorely missed.

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NEW LIFE MEMBER:

Eva Lou Marks Charles, daughter of Edward and Gertrude Marks of Wilson, has been given a Life Membership in the Wilson Historical Society, courtesy of her mother, Gertrude.

Eva Lou was born in the Niagara Falls Hospital, and attended Wilson Central School. She continued her education at Mansfield State University in Pennsylvania, also at Buffalo State.

She is married to Earle Charles, Jr., and they have to children, Earle III, and Sandra. They make their home in Tonawanda, NY, and attend the Episcopal Church. Eva Lou is a retired elementary school teacher.

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Please welcome these additional new members in the society: Elwood and Dorothy Schultz of Ransomville; Clifford H. McCoy of Burt; Tom and Sue Dunch of North Tonawanda; Mr. and Mrs. William A. Evans of Ransomville; Richard and Margaret Seiner of Wilson; Bob Dolan of Wilson; Norma Stockwell English of Florida; and Mr. and Mrs. William Miller of Wilson and Florida.

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BERGHOLZ VISITORS:

About 25 members of the Historical Society of North German Settlements of Western New York visited the Wilson Museum on Thursday evening, June 20th, where they were greeted by Elton and June Kropp and Don Croop.

The group assembled in the Barnum Building for an interesting business meeting, then adjourned for a guided tour of the premises. A sociable evening was topped-off with fruit punch and cake served by Mrs. Kropp.

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Two busloads carrying approximately 80 visitors from Erie, Pa, arrived at the Wilson Museum on July 11, 1991. They were greeted at the depot by Lucille Upton, Helen Stevens, Eleanor Myers, Bess McKelvey, and Dorothy Maxfield. Ellsworth McKelvey greeted the visitors at the 1903 caboose, and Don Croop showed the guests through the antique car building.

The tour of Wilson by the group from Erie, Pa., was in conjunction with a trip through the Canal Locks at Lockport.

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LAKESIDE DERBY:

We personally believe that fishing derbies and museums don't mix, but when the Chamber of Commerce decided to sponsor a fishing derby in Wilson on August 15th, our members were willing to give it a try and the museum was open from 2:00 to 5:00 PM.

A special thank you to all who gave of their time to serve as "greeters": Lucille Upton, June Kropp, Zilpha Petty, Barbara Mosher, Bess McKelvey, Ellsworth McKelvey, and Clark Stimson.

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SEPTEMBER MEETING:

Guest speaker for the September 16th meeting at the museum will be Kathy Neville, a native of Wilson and graduate of Wilson Central School. She published a book recently, and her talk will be about some of her interesting experiences.

Refreshment hostesses for the evening will be Sara Berry and Zilpha Petty.

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SOUNDINGS:

It is better to give than to lend, and it costs about the same.

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IMPORTANT MEMBERSHIP NOTICE:

The Board of Directors, upon the recommendation of Anne Faery, have voted to put all memberships in the society on a calendar year.

Therefore, starting immediately, Anyone who has paid their dues through April 30, 1991, will be continued on the roll as a member until December 31, 1991.

By the same token, anyone who has paid their dues through April 30, 1992, will be kept on the roll as a member until December 31, 1992.

Starting in 1993, all renewals will become effective as of January 1st, and each year after.

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In other board action, it was decided to restrict use of the old tables and chairs to the Wilson Fire Company only. The past policy of loaning them out indiscriminately resulted in considerable damage making the board's action necessary.

Bill Fritton announced that Margaret Seiner agreed to be publicity chairman in his place, and a motion was made by Lois Barnum, seconded by Carole Schnoor, to accept the offer.

Darrell and Sally Smith announced that they do not wish to accept the chairmanship of the 1992 Memorial Day Fair. Everyone was sorry to hear this as they did so well with this years Fair.

Carole Schnoor read a "thank you" note from Elton Parker, recipient of one of the society's awards for achievement in history given on Class Night at the Wilson School.

Ollie Clark, trustee, said that the eaves and rafters around the depot needed attention. John Myers, Pres. said that he received a letter from Assemblyman Joseph T. Pillittere that he might be able to get \$5,000 for the society to make necessary repairs. It was through the good offices of Assemblyman Pillittere, that a \$15,000 grant was obtained to make erection of the Dr. John F. Argue Memorial Building possible.

Don Burrows volunteered to be chairman of the "Breezeway" which, up to now, has been a "no man's land" between the Barnum Building and the Argue Building.

Lois Barnum reported that about \$250 was cleared by the ice cream social on August 4th.

Ellsworth McKelvey has replaced the missing letter on the caboose "Hojack Line" sign.

Lucille Upton announced that she will hold another training session for hostesses at the museum on Thursday, September 19th, at 7:00PM.

The board, in harmony with the Finance Committee, approved a motion to complete the barber-shop exhibit room in the Barnum Building. The cost is projected at about \$500. A motion was also approved to cover the west end of the Fittro Shop with siding to match the original.

Motion was made and approved to have the depot cleaned a couple times a year by outside help. Maryanne Sharpe, housekeeper, will continue her weekly chores as in the past.

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SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT:

Over the past 20 years, the Wilson Museum was built because of many volunteers who were willing to give of their time and skills to make it what it is today. In order to give area residents an opportunity to see the facilities, approximately 60 members are needed to serve as hostesses on Sunday afternoons from 2:00 to 4:00 PM. The museum could not be open without their help. Even though we have about 400 members in the immediate vicinity, it is difficult to supply the total persons needed without asking a few to repeat their services over and over.

This is difficult to understand since no member would be required to give up more than two hours of their time, once in 5 years, if all our members would cooperate. No member is asked to do more than they want to do, but is this really too much to ask?

September hostesses have volunteered to serve as follows: Sept. 1st, Bill and Maxine Jones; Sept. 8th, Lucille Upton and Frank Massing; Sept. 15th, Lois Barnum and Shelley Andrews; Sept. 22nd, Sara Berry and Gerry Swann; and Sept. 29th, Elton and June Kropp.

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RECENT ACQUISITIONS:

Ida Wilson has donated a quantity of items including several books, Whitman's "Leaves of Grass", "Poems of Longfellow", "The Count of Monte Crisco", Goldsmith's "Vicar of Wakefield", and Shakespeare's "Caeser and MacBeth" "Ivanhoe"; also 2 paintings by the late Barbara Wilson, a valentine, letter, and eye glasses that belonged to Ida Wilson's grandfather, John Delatre.

Micky and Shirley Hunter: Mourning Veil, two Pontiac car mats; and old newspapers that belonged to Shirley's mother, Mildred Swick.

Arthur Bollman: One 5 gallon Gulf Oil Can--approximately 40 years old.

Ernestine Walpole: A Lockport Journal dated November 4, 1914.

Dan King: Chest Freezer in good condition.

John Myers: Old combination P.O. Box Door.

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"WILSON SKETCHBOOK":

"Wilson Sketchbook" is written by your Newsletter Editor, and is a human interest history of Wilson with personal interviews and information about early life in Wilson. It would make a fine souvenir of your next visit to Wilson--also a nice Christmas gift for the history buff in your family.

The book, which contains 137 pages and 40 pictures sells for \$15.00 a copy, \$18.00 by mail order. It is available at the museum during visiting hours, at the Wilson Town Hall (See Wanda Burrows or Emma Lou Reppentine), by calling Sara Berry (751-6757) or at Stimson's Country Barn Shoppe on Lake Street. Please address all mail orders to Don Croop, 4559 Chestnut Road, Wilson, NY 14172, and please makes checks payable to the Wilson Historical Society.

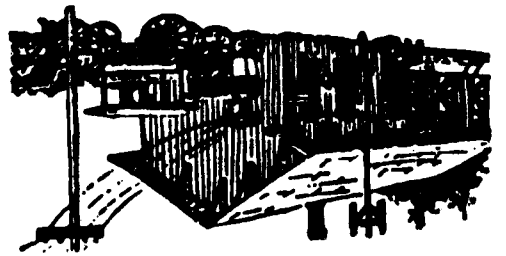
We have received a number of favorable comments about the new book, and typical is one we received from Harold Donner of Ithaca who wrote:

"I greatly enjoyed reading "Wilson Sketchbook". It helped me to recall many nostalgic items which I already knew, and in addition I learned many other things pertaining to Wilson's history and people.

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FINAL THOUGHT: Man is a strange animal who goes to sleep when he's not tired, and gets up when he is.

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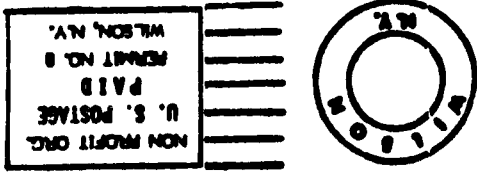
WILSON, NY 14172
WILSON CENTRAL SCHOOL
LIBRARIAN

October 1991 Vol. 20 No. 9
(Coleman Printing)

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

NEWSLETTER

WILSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY
WILSON, NEW YORK 14172-9763



THE "DIRTY THIRTIES":

We hear a lot lately about to-day's lingering recession, but let's take a look back to the early 1930's when things were really tough.

The Country didn't have quite as large a population as it has today, yet 25% of our Nation's work force was unemployed. This meant that about 15 million wage earners were without jobs, and, (if we can believe the statistics) double that number were spouses and children dependent on those workers. Yes, there was a time in our nation's history when only one wage earner was needed to support the family---and that wage earner was usually the father.

Jobs were hard to find, and unemployed men often stood on street corners selling apples for a penny apiece; thousands of hungry persons, in search of a little nourishment, could be seen standing in long soup lines; and people would accept any kind of job they could get.

Salaries were minimal, however, and farm hands were lucky to make \$200 a year. Waitresses were payed about \$500 a year, and school teachers, always underpaid until recent times, averaged about \$1200 annually. Today that amount is less than many teachers get in pay raises each year.

The familiar song, "Brother Can You Spare a Dime", was a by-product of the depression, and its lyrics were more truth than poetry. It was next to impossible to walk down any city street without being stopped several times by destitute people, all with the same plaintiff cry, "Can you spare a dime for a cup of coffee?"

A good home could be purchased for \$3,000, and a new car for \$500, (if you had the down payment) yet in spite of the hard times, people could still laugh and smile through their problems---they had to or the whole country might have collapsed.

Little things like jig saw puzzles, card games, or radio programs helped relieve the tension and worry, and some radio shows kept thousands of listeners "glued" to their radio sets all evening. One was the Amos 'n' Andy show, and when they were on the air telephone exchanges had little to do while they performed. Other popular favorites included the Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy show; Fibber McGee and Molly; or the venerable old favorites, George Burns and Gracie Allen.

One possible advantage the radio had over its TV counterpart of today was that a woman could do the housework, wash clothes, iron, or prepare dinner while listening to her favorite "soaps".

The 30's also had their exciting moments with gangsters such as "Bonnie & Clyde", "Machine Gun Kelly", or John Dillinger terrorizing the countryside---with many of their exploits still dramatized on TV.

The impact of the "Bank Holiday" was felt Nationwide, and many small depositors in rural towns like Wilson suffered severe losses. New laws were enacted to protect future depositors, but new laws weren't good enough to prevent billions of dollars in bank failures recently because bank regulators and politicians were too lax in monitoring the system.

When Prohibition was repealed, the days of the rum-runner and "speakeasies" came to an end, but it was also the time when the New Deal began to take shape. One of Wilson's own in the Roosevelt Cabinet was Rex Tugwell, Assistant Secretary of Agriculture, and a close friend and advisor to the President.

Soon everyone was trying to familiarize themselves with the new Administration's "alphabet soup", and one of the first programs was the N.R.A. (The National Recovery Act) which was put in place to regulate wages, hours, and prices. Then millions of young men and women were put to work by the Works Progress Administration, better known as the W.P.A. This agency pulled many young men from the bread lines to build roads, bridges, schools, and other worthwhile projects---many of which benefit the country to this day.

Another of Roosevelt's controversial programs was the C.C.C., or Civilian Conservation Corps, which put two million young men to work for \$30 a month planting trees, restoring battlesites, building campgrounds, and other projects beneficial to the Nation. Although not always popular with the vested interests, the New Deal programs took millions of persons off the jobless rolls and started the country back on the road to prosperity.

We recall that a couple great movies, "Gone With the Wind" and the "Wizard of Oz" helped close out the decade of the "dirty thirties", but it was probably Roosevelt's theme song, "Happy Days are Here Again" that gave many Americans a hope for the future.

We believe that anyone who lived through the dust-bowl days of the 30's, can be glad they survived the "Great Depression" but would hope and pray we never have another.

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BON MOT: Life is like an exciting book, and every year starts a new chapter.

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BIRTH OF THE UNION FREE SCHOOL:

We recently looked at a copy of the June issue of Wilson's "Wise Owl", and were intrigued by a speech that the late G. Herbert Swick gave at the dedication of the New High School in 1936. His talk described some of the little-known facts regarding the history of the schools in Wilson including a couple of incidents that have not appeared in this Newsletter.

When the old Collegiate Institute was started in 1845, it was decided that circulars would be sent out to advertise the new school--and they proved to be very successful. When the doors opened in the fall of 1846, 339 applicants had applied for admission.

Strangely enough, 199 young men and 140 young ladies between the ages of 17 and 25 years of age applied, and of this group, 140 men and 73 women were non-residents. Applications were received from Mississippi, Kentucky, Ohio, Illinois, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Michigan, and Canada. The out-of-towners readily found places to board in the village, and in addition, a long red Dormitory was fitted out for students who wished to board themselves.

As has been noted before, moral standards were very high at the school, and all pupils were required to attend church at least once on Sunday. Students were also expected to be in their own rooms at 7:30 PM except on Friday evenings which were reserved for social activities.

As other schools were built, attendance dropped off in Wilson and by 1869, tuition money was inadequate to maintain the school and it became necessary to apply to the State Education Dept. for aid.

A proposal was made to unite four districts to form a Wilson Union Free School, but it was met with great objections--especially from the outlying districts. In fact, feelings ran so high many people would not trade with Merchants that advocated "such an asinine project that would allow persons to be taxed to support a free school."

When it was time to vote, it resulted in a tie, so one enterprising gentleman, Reuben F. Wilson, asked Elder Garfield, (who loved to talk) to get up and make a speech in favor of the free school.

While Garfield rambled on and on, Mr. Wilson hitched up his horse and buggy and raced to the harbor and asked Captain Bunn to get off his boat and accompany him back to the school.

Captain Bunn voted "yes", and the Wilson Union Free School was born.

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OCTOBER PROGRAM:

Cathleen M. Allen, Director of Public Relations and Development at Inter-Community Hospital at Newfane, will be the guest speaker at the general meeting of the society on Monday, Oct. 21st. The subject of her talk will be "The Inter-Community Hospital, Past, Present, and Future."

Lois Jennings and Emily McAvoy, co-chrm. of the Wilson Branch, will talk about the Wilson Auxiliary and its contributions to the Hospital and Community.

Refreshment Hostesses will be Gerry Swann and Mary Clark.

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IN MEMORIAM:

Gladys Weber, a native of Wilson and Honorary member of the Wilson His. Soc., died on August 19, 1991, at Lockport Memorial Hospital. She was a retired Senior Case Supervisor with the Niagara Co. Social Services Dept.

She is survived by two sons, the Rev. Frederick (Patricia) Weber of Lockport; and Dr. David (Sandra) Weber of Shoreham, Long Island.

Gladys joined the Wilson His. Soc. in 1981, and became an Honorary member in April. Services were held at the United Methodist Church in Lockport.

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FRACTIONAL CURRENCY:

If someone were to ask you, "What is a shin plaster?", the logical answer would be, "A plaster for a sore shin."--and you would be right. The shin plaster was also a type of currency used during the Civil War, and the dictionary describes it as fractional currency in money or coins with less value than the U.S. dollar.

Bea Mensch of Lockport thought this would be a good question for "Jeopardy", and sent the information in. Today, Bea is the happy recipient of a "thank you" letter from Alec Trebek---but best of all, an autographed photo.

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GOOD NEWS:

About three months ago "Wilson Sketchbook" was published, so it is a pleasure to be able to report that our treasury has been re-imbursed for the publishing cost of \$4,308.00 dollars.

We wish to thank everyone who has responded so generously, and remind you that copies are still available from Wanda Burrows or Emma Lou Reppentine at Wilson Town Hall; Sara Berry, Dox Avenue; Stimson's Barn Shop, Lake Street, or Lucille Upton, Ways & Means Chairman. Mail orders should be addressed to Don Croop with check made out to Wilson His. Soc. for \$18.00 dollars.

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POSSIBILITY?:

In answer to some inquiries from board members as to the possibility of having the Wilson Depot designated as a Historic Landmark, we dug up the following--for what it's worth:

Some local communities such as Lewiston have reportedly passed "Landmark Ordinances" which is a local law passed in a community that wishes to protect historic structures from being demolished or inappropriately altered.

After a building is designated as a historic structure by a duly appointed Town Review Board, any demolition or exterior alteration must be reviewed by the Board before a permit is issued.

The Ordinance could be an advantage to owners of such structures in the form of possible funding for restoration.

* * * * *

THE MARCH 1958 issue of the Wilson "Star" states that surveying instruments used by V.W. Dox and Jessica Haner to "lay out Wilson", are in the Niag. Co. Historical Museum in Lockport. The two Wilson men also surveyed sections of the Erie Canal, and two Wilson streets bear their names.

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SOOUNDINGS: Just because things go wrong is no reason you must go with them.

WILL WE GET TO THE DEPOT ON TIME?:

Ollie Clark and Dan King have made a survey of the gutters and eaves around the Depot, and their report is really one to be concerned about.

As you probably know, the old Depot was remodeled and expanded by the New York Central in 1912, and the building is one of the few landmarks left in the town of Wilson. The architecture of the old station is typical of the depots that used to service the old "Hojack" line in the 1900's, and except for the Barker Library is believed to be the only one left of its kind.

Replacement of the overhanging roof supports where they have been broken or rotted out presents a real problem, and if we are to preserve the beautiful old structure something has got to be done soon---and this could run into thousands of dollars.

If nothing is done, the old landmark will be lost beyond repair. If help with the project could be obtained with some type of grant the problem could be solved, but considering the overall monetary problems in the Country today this may be a difficult way to go.

We believe that publicizing the situation is the first step in finding a solution, however, as the saying goes, "Simple solutions seldom are."

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ASSEMBLYMAN HELPS LIBRARY:

Assemblyman Joseph Pillittere has notified Jean Siddall, director of the Wilson Free Library, that a previously promised grant for \$25,000 has been restored to the library through action of the State Legislature. Mr. Pillittere strongly supported the idea that the legislature honor all agreements that were made prior to the "budget crunch" last fall.

The Library is now in the enviable position of being within \$8,200 of its final goal of \$295,000. When the \$8,200 is raised, the library will receive a grant of \$23,000 from the Western New York Foundation.

The Board is excited over the enthusiastic support given to the library, and it appears that Wilson may soon realize its dream of a beautiful new library. We are sure that the many Historical Society members who supported the building fund will be happy to hear this.

* * * * *

QUILT PURCHASED:

A brand new Amish Quilt has been acquired from "Chuck" Manhardt of Newfane, and will be raffled off at the society's 1992 Memorial Day Fair. The Amish are noted for their special quilt-making ability, so we're sure our beautiful Dahlia Quilt will be a popular item at next year's Fair.

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OCTOBER MEETINGS:

The Board of Directors will meet at the Depot, October 16th at 7:30 PM. Wed. evening.

The Regular meeting will be held at the Depot Monday, October 21st at 7:30 PM

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MUST BE DOING SOMETHING RIGHT:

Members of our society should be pleased to learn that we got high marks when Rev. Francis Miller of Lackawanna visited the Wilson Museum on September 15th.

Rev. Miller is a member of the Buffalo and Batavia Historical Societies and, according to hostess, Lois Barnum, was delighted with the exhibit/displays in the depot, Barnum Bldg., and Dr. Argue Building. We believe our building chairmen deserve a pat on the back, namely, Wally Goodman and Clark Stimson, Cars; Don Burrows, Breezeway; Eleanor Myers, Barnum Bldg.; and Martha MacAskill, Depot.

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CORPORATE ATTRACTIONS:

An interesting talk by Kathleen Neville, a 1971 graduate of Wilson Central School, was the subject of the society's September meeting.

Kathy related some of her experiences to a friendly home-town audience that included two of her former teachers, Barbara Mosher and Celeste Crawford.

As a result of her experiences at a Buffalo TV station and her subsequent dismissal, Kathy has authored the revealing book, "Corporate Attractions", which gives an inside account of the sexual harrassment in today's business world.

Refreshment hostesses for the evening were Sara Berry, Zilpha Petty, and Emma Schrader.

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RECENT ACQUISITIONS:

Received from Rex Stacy, former resident and businessman, Spring, Texas: 149 Advertising Cards; Greeting Cards; Old Religious Cards; Advertising Booklet, "Flint Buggies"; "Story of Squire Brown and the Mule"; also "Hood's", "Ridge's Foods", and "Bickford and Huffman!"; also Glass enclosed Thermometer advertising J.E. Pettit Feed Mill(1931); and Ulster Co. Gazette(1800) with account of George Washington's Funeral.

Janet Sporleder: Colonial Homes; "Americana"(1900); American Heritage(Vol. 41); Time, (1962) and "Space"(1991).

Don Croop: Framed Ceramic Picture of 1903 Olds Runabout.

Lois Popenhagen: Stamp "Wetter" for Post Office display in Barnum Building.

Phyllis Lute, Lockport: Copy of Wilson "Star" dated April 6, 1950.

Mary McCoy: Union Sun & Journals March 20, 1913; March 10, 1921; and October 20, 1937.

Marjorie Robinson, Lockport: Antique Apple Peeler; Antique Cherry Pitter; Wilson Lumber Co. Apron and Bustle.

Florence Donner Mudge, Cleveland, Ohio: 1920 Class Day and Graduation Dress (Wilson High). (Given via Janet Schultz.)

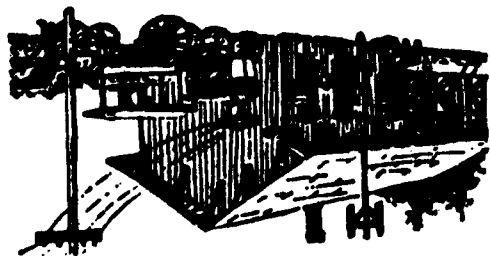
Edward Beccue: Slide Projector Metal Table.

Rosemary Thilk: G.S. Membership Cards, Troop 1(1936)(1937)(1939) Troop 28, Wilson. Troop 28, (1941) and (1942).

Cordia M. Thiel, Lockport; Centennial Skirts with Petticoat and Bonnets; Centennial Dress; High Laced Lady's Shoes.

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FINAL THOUGHT: Cherish yesterday...Dream tomorrow...Live today.



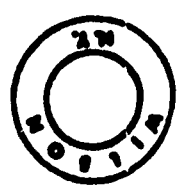
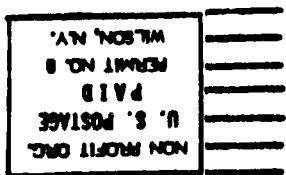
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November 1991 Vol. 20 No. 10
Coleman Printing

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

NEWSLETTER

Wilson Historical Society
Wilson, New York 14172-9763



OLD CARS AND OLD TALES:

The Wilson Museum has a pretty fair collection of old cars and, when looking at some of them, our thoughts drift back to the early 20's when the "horseless carriage" was still having a hard time competing with the horse and buggy.

In the 1900's, many new cars were built to satisfy the hopes and dreams of budding young entrepreneurs, and even in Wilson they had their Wilson Auto Manufacturing Company. It was here that the first "Niagara Runabout" was engineered and built by Stanley Dwight, George Brooks, and George Whiteside.

They organized the company on October 22, 1900, and the first car was built in Brook's Machine Shop which stood beside the old grist mill on West Young Street. Later, the company moved into the old Creamery Building that used to stand near the Methodist Church.

The dream of an auto empire in Wilson fizzled out in 1905 when the company was forced to close due to the lack of financial backing. A few cars were produced before then, however, and their general appearance was similar to the 1904 "Covert" on display in the Wilson Museum.

The "Covert" was made by Byron Covert at his former plant on Richmond Avenue in Lockport, and was the first chainless car ever built in this country with water-cooled engine.

After the Wilson Auto Co. went out of business, the E.R. Thomas Co. of Buffalo acquired the patent rights on a special Power Transmission Gearing Box that George Whiteside had designed, and he was given the position of head mechanic with the Thomas Company. He not only helped develop the champion "Around the World Car", but also helped equip other historic models such as the "Grand Prix Racer", "Thomas Flyer", and "Thomas Forty".

We recall that the dirt roads of the early twenties weren't all that great, and seemed to be built more for horse and wagons rather than autos, also, in those days, roads were not graded as they are today and usually followed the contour of the land. Sometimes cars had problems on hills, and we remember that much discussion was held on the ability of different make cars to climb hills easily or not.

We recall going on a Sunday drive in the family's Buick Touring car one afternoon, and when we started up a small hill we became "stuck"---a slight dusting of snow was just enough to prevent the car's narrow tires to get traction.

In a nearby field, an old farmer with a team of horses watched as we tried in vain to reach the top, and suddenly he unhitched his team and drove over to our car. Without saying a word he hooked a chain to our front axle and towed us up the hill, while all the time sucking on an old corn cob pipe. He wouldn't take anything for his trouble and went back to his wagon, but he did give us a friendly wave as we drove off--good Samaritans were abundant in those days.

Many times when cars were sold in the early 1900's, they were road-tested and driven to the buyer's home. An old letter in the effects of the late George Whiteside seems to bear this out as he describes how he drove a Limousine Tonneau from Kansas City to St. Louis:

"I guess I was crazy to start out alone, but I covered 61 miles the first day. I kept the car in a livery stable that night, but in the morning I found the roads very muddy from an overnight rain. There were deep ruts everywhere filled with water and slush, and I nearly got stuck and had to use four mud hooks all afternoon. The car was often in mud to its axles, and I didn't take it out of low gear for four hours.

"I ran out of gas and had to walk three miles to the Missouri River where I caught a Ferry across to the other side where I found a gas station. When I got back to the car, I started out again--even though the pan under the floor boards was a solid mass of wet sand. One nice thing about it though, I reached St. Louis and didn't even have to change one spark plug."

After Whiteside delivered the Limousine to his customer, he stayed in St. Louis for two weeks to show the gentleman how to operate and maintain his car. We wonder how many people today would take delivery of a car that had gone through the conditions described by Whiteside.

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WOLVES IN THE WILDERNESS:

The Marsh Settlement Road (now Chestnut Road) was opened up in 1824. One year later, Stephen J. Stockwell settled at the present corner of Beebe and Chestnut roads, and it soon became known as Stockwell's Corners.

It was a wilderness at the time, and wolves roamed around East Wilson freely. It was reported that Stephen's daughter, Lucinda, was very frightened when the wolves howled at night, and it seems she had good reason--her family only had a blanket covering their cabin door the 1st. yr.

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BON MOT: A penny saved is a penny taxed.

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"WAKE UP" THE ERIE CANAL:

On Oct. 26, 1825, Gov. DeWitt Clinton opened up New York's famous Erie Canal and joined the waters of Lake Erie with the Atlantic Ocean. From the very beginning, it was the best way to transport people and goods to and from the Great Lakes.

Without the canal, western expansion and economic development of the midwest would have had to have been accomplished via other routes--and if that had happened, New York probably would never have become known as the Empire State.

As the railroads took over as a reliable method of moving freight, the canal system slowly went out of business, yet today the modern barge canal still has great potential as a recreational and major tourist attraction.

Not only is the canal a critical part of the state's flood control system, it also provides a dependable supply of water for manufacturing, agriculture, and municipalities. It also ties in with many of our state parks and could provide additional outlets for fishermen, bicyclers, hikers, wildlife enthusiasts, and access to museums and other historic sites. Its potential as a tourist attraction is unlimited, but it also could provide jobs for area residents as canalside property is developed by businessmen.

Except for limited use by small pleasure boats, the canal has laid dormant for many years, but this could all change now that the State Legislature has taken action to revitalize the 524 mile canal system linking the Atlantic with the Great Lakes.

Now for the second time, a Constitutional Amendment has been approved that could once again make the Erie Canal an economical asset to the State. In November, New York voters will also be given an opportunity to approve the amendment which, according to Sen. John B. Sheffer II, and Assemblyman Joseph Pillittere, had no formal opposition in the legislature.

So now it's up to you, the voters, to "Wake Up" the Erie Barge Canal on Election Day.

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NEW LIFE MEMBERS:

Beatrice Stockwell Hicks has been given a Life Membership in the Wilson Historical Society compliments of her sister, Marian Winger of Wilson.

Beatrice, the daughter of Clayton and Ella Stockwell, attended grade school in Wilson, and graduated with honors from the Newfane High School.

She married Lt. Col. Floyd Hicks and they had two children, Claudia Noller, a Registered Nurse in Phoenix, Arizona; and Scott St. James, a radio and TV personality in Los Angeles. They also have two grandchildren, Laura Noller, a sophomore at Grand Canyon University at Phoenix; and James Noller, a senior at the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis, Maryland.

"Bea" is very active and holds State and National offices in many patriotic organizations. She is Regent of the La Puerta De Ora Chapter of the DAR; State Recording Secretary of the Daughters of American Colonists; State President of the Daughters of Flanders and Patriots of America, and member of the Golden Gate Colony of New England Women.

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Thomas E. Marks has been given a Life Membership in the Wilson Historical Society, courtesy of his mother, Mrs. Gertrude Marks. Tom was born at the Niagara Falls Memorial Hospital on Sept. 11, 1927, and graduated from Wilson Central School in 1945.

He is a member of the New York State Nurserymen's Association, and Manager of the Marks Nursery on Lake Road which his grandfather, Thomas Marks, established in 1910..

He and his wife, June, have a daughter, Susan Marks Lunn, and the family attend the Episcopal Church of the Redeemor.

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MUSEUM VISITORS:

About 40 members of the Cheektowaga Historical Society visited the Wilson Museum on Sept. 19th where they were greeted by Lois Jennings, Sara Berry, Ellsworth and Bess McKelvey, Don Croop, and Norm and Martha MacAskill. The group spent about two hours touring the premises before moving on to the Olcott area.

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Approximately 50 tourists from the Canandaigua and Rochester area visited the Wilson Museum on September 26th, and were made welcome by Lucille Upton, Dorothea Mark, John Myers, Eleanor Myers, Clark Stimson, Betty Hauseman, and Dick Schmidle.

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TAX BREAK FOR WILSONITES:

According to town Supervisor, Harold Mosher, Wilson residents will not have to face a tax hike next year in spite of an estimated \$65,000 loss in state revenue-sharing; a 50% cut in the youth recreation program; and a 50% cut in state funding for the town's ditching program.

Helping the town to hold the line on its budget for 1992, was a large increase in assessments on new homes built in 1991 combined with a careful "pruning" of the budget to counteract the loss of revenues from the state.

The budget, if approved by the board on November 4th, will not reduce services to residents.

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WELCOME DR. HOHENSEE:

A reception for Dr. James Hohensee was held at the Wilson Town Hall recently where he was welcomed by many well-wishers from the area including doctors, board members, hospital officials, and residents of the village and town of Wilson.

The reception was chaired by Diane Zabel, member of the ICMH board of directors, and Supervisor Harold Mosher and Mayor Charles Branch presented Dr. Hohensee with a framed map of the town of Wilson signed by everyone who attended the event.

Town and village officials and members of the executive staff of ICMH have worked a long time to bring a new medical facility to Wilson, and it is expected that the new building at the corner of High and Warren Strs. will be open in November.

Dr. Hohensee, a resident of the Buffalo area, received his medical degree from the University of Buffalo.

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SOUNDINGS: Health is wealth--and it's tax free.

FROM THE MAILBAG:

John and Marion Goodrich write that they enjoy reading the Newsletter, and are still holding their own at Lakeland, Florida. As you know, John was a former Niagara County fruit agent, and one of the Niagara Region's top fruit growers. He was active in the Exley Methodist Church in Wilson; the Niagara County Farm Bureau; Wilson Zoning Board of Appeals; and the New York State Horticultural Society.

He and Marion joined the Wilson Historical Society in 1973, and the barn wood that covers the walls in the museum's Patterson Room came from the Goodrich barn on Lake Road.

John married Marion Downes, daughter of Dr. Chester Downes of Lockport, and Olive Pickering, a native of Toronto. The ceremony was held at Emmanuel Methodist Church in Lockport, and they had three children, Jean (Patchin); Dr. Philip Goodrich; and Dr. Barbara (Phillipps.) Marion received her B.S. degree at SUNY Albany, and was a teacher at Lockport High School.

John writes, "marion and I are not very active anymore, but we try to stay healthy and attend Methodist Church functions. He said they were pleasantly surprised recently when Marion Campbell and Mildred (Brothers) Cayce paid them a visit.

In answer to a couple questions: Art Schnoor is still in pretty fair shape, and so is "Chuck" Messersmith. Mabel Burrows, in spite of her years, appears to look younger every day.

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NOVEMBER PROGRAM:

Looks like Barb Mosher has put together another interesting program for the meeting on November 18th. The guest speaker will be Rollin Grant of Lockport who will talk about Cambria's once famous "Sutherland Sisters" who once lived near Warrens Corners on route 104.

Refreshment hostesses for the evening will be Emma Schrader, Chrm., Debra Cruickshank, and Judy Zauner.

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NOVEMBER HOSTESSES:

Helen Clark, Chrm., has announced that Sunday afternoon hostesses at the museum from 2-4PM will be: Nov. 3rd, Nory and Hoyt Desso; Nov. 10th, Leona and Howard Hunter; Nov. 17th, George and Sue Cruickshank; and Nov. 24th, Norma Ward and Lois Ward.

* * * * *

NOVEMBER CALENDAR:

- Tuesday, Nov. 5th: Election Day (6am to 9pm) BAKE SALE AT TOWN HALL 9AM on
- Wednesday, Nov. 13th: Board of Directors, Wilson Museum, 7:30 PM.
- Monday, Nov. 18th: Monthly Meeting, Wilson Museum, 7:30 PM.
- Thursday, Nov. 28th: Happy Thanksgiving, everyone.

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WILSON DESCENDENT VISITS WILSON:

Fayette Wilson and Mary Ayers of Northville, NY, visited Wilson last month and were given a tour of the Wilson Museum. Fayette is descended from Joel Wilson, brother of Rueben Wilson, and when their parents, Ezra and Lucy Wilson, moved to the Adirondacks from Spencer, Mass., they had 9 children; Elizabeth, Reuben, Joel, Sally, Sybil, Isaac, Polly, and Anna. Most of their descendents remained in the Adirondack region, but Reuben moved to Canada before settling and founding the town of Wilson, NY.

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INDOMITABLE SPIRIT:

Sometimes life throws you an unexpected curve--and that happened to Winnie Fischer several years ago when a severe stroke left her confined to a wheelchair. Undaunted, she has tried to overcome her handicap and is using some of her talents she perfected while a 4-H leader.

We received a small card from her recently which reads, "Weaving by Winnie Fischer, tel: 751-6582. A small lamb touches it off with the words, "Thank Ewe".

* * * * *

IN MEMORIAM:

Walter J. Hutchison, 85, former athletic coach at Wilson Central School, died Oct. 14, 1991, after a brief illness at Inter Community Hospital, Newfane.

"Hutch" graduated from Ithaca College in 1931, and came to Wilson in 1945 as a history and Physical education teacher. He retired in 1945 after 22 years coaching Wilson's football and baseball teams. His six man football squads won 5 Niagara-Orleans titles, and in his overall record he won 5 Section VI, Class A Titles in football, and 4 Class A Titles in baseball.

Shortly after retirement, he was feted at an appreciation dinner in Cambria at which time the football field at Wilson High was named the "Walter J. Hutchison Athletic Field" in his honor. In October, 1975, he was again honored at a banquet in Ithaca, NY, when he was named to the Hall of Fame at Ithaca College.

The Hutchisons were also members of Exley United Methodist Church in Wilson, and members of the Wilson Historical Society since 1974.

He is survived by his wife, Christine Glover; and 2 sons, Gordon (Georgine) of Parker, Col., and Roger of Wilson. Burial was at Greenwood Cemetery with Rev. Donald Foley officiating.

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Lynford J. Griffin, 75, a native of Wilson, died Oct. 13, 1991, at Inter Community Hospital at Newfane. He graduated from Wilson High School in 1933, and retired from Carborundum in 1980 after 41 years service. He was a member of the Wilson Community Choir, and 1st Baptist Church of Wilson where he sang in the choir and was a member of the board of trustees.

He is survived by his wife, Amalia Cutini; 2 sons, George of Wayland, and Dexter of Youngstown; also 2 daughters, Linda (Patrick) Reilly of Nashville, TN; and Amelia (Thomas) Bach of Wilson. Burial was in Greenwood with Rev. Jeffrey Derham and Rev. Richard Gilbert officiating.

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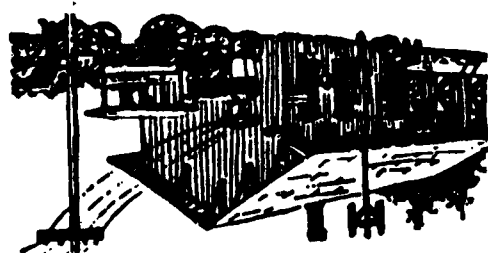
BAKE SALE:

Lois Barnum & Winnie Terry will run society's Bake Sale at Town Hall on Election Day. You know what is needed. Try to have your "specialties" there by 9AM--they are Sooooo Good!

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FINAL THOUGHT: A diet is a plan for putting off tomorrow what you put on today. (Attend Bake Sale

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WILSON, N.Y.

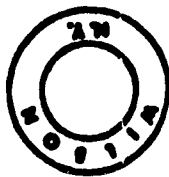
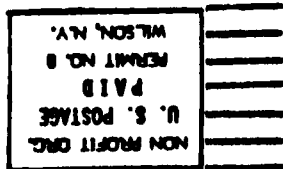


December 1991 Vol. 20 No. 11
(Coleman Printing)

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

NEWSLETTER

Wilson Historical Society
Wilson, New York 14172-9763



OPENING THE "PURCHASE":

It's pretty common knowledge to most history students that in 1800, nearly all the area in Western New York was owned by the Holland Land Company. The only exceptions were, of course, the "Mile Strip" along the Niagara River, and the 200,000 acres set aside for the five Indian Reservations.

The name, Ellicott, pops up in many locations around western New York, but there probably aren't too many people aware that Joseph Ellicott was the chief surveyor for the Holland Land Company, and during the early 1800's was one of the most influential men in the area.

In the spring of 1798 he and a party of 130 men set out to survey the wilderness, and one of their first jobs was to arrange with the Indians where the exact boundaries for each reservation should be. The next important task was to mark the east boundary of the "Purchase", and, when that was done the Company lands were surveyed into ranges and townships about 6 miles square.

It is said that Ellicott set high standards for the survey, and insisted that permanent stone markers be used. One of these markers may be seen at Olcott and we believe was dedicated as a historic landmark a few years ago by the Newfane Historical Society.

Survey of the "purchase" took longer than planned so with few exceptions, the first sale of lands to individuals didn't take place until 1800.

Ellicott was named Resident Agent for the Holland Company, and the land was practically unoccupied when he took over. Travelers had to use Indian trails to come into the area, and the 1800 census for the town of Northampton, Ontario, lists only 152 residents.

While waiting for suitable quarters, Ellicott moved into the tavern home of Asa Ransom in Clarence Hollow where he conducted his business for two years before moving to Batavia.

Migration into the area was very slow at first--mainly because of lack of roads and the long distance one had to travel to record deeds and mortgages at the County Seat at Canandaigua, NY.

One of several old letters describes the old Buffalo Road as being "an obscure path through the woods with occasional blaze marks on trees to show the way." In fact, Ellicott himself wrote that "The main road from Buffalo to Batavia is so bad and so deep in mud and mire that it is almost impassable." Another letter by a pioneer woman, Mrs. David Mather, wrote that the road was so bad, "We were three days moving from Batavia to Williamsville with a yoke of oxen and a wagon."

Most of the settlers had little money, but a 10% down payment was required. Title to lands were not given, however, until the property was fully payed for.

Ellicott still had road problems to contend with in 1804, but got permission to rebuild two roads into western New York. One was the "Middle Road" which connected Big Tree (Geneseo) to a point just south of Buffalo Creek. The other extended from Batavia to New Amsterdam, (or Buffalo Creek) and was named the Buffalo Road. Neither road was actually completed until 1810.

In his annual report to the Willink Town meeting at Clarence in 1806, Ellicott stated that most applications for land were made in the months of May, June, September and October. Those who purchased land that year at Ransom's Grove, (now Clarence) were Edward Carney, Edmund Thompson, Henry Doney, Jonathon Barrett, Jake Taylor, Justice Webber, and George Croop.

It is interesting to note that the population began to expand as Ellicott encouraged the new towns to build roads and bridges, and when the War of 1812 broke out, there were 26,000 persons living in the 5,000 square miles comprising Western New York.

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ELECTION WINNERS:

Congratulations are in order to the following Wilson Historical Society members who were victorious in the November elections: Harold Mosher, town supervisor; Marilyn Allgeier, town clerk; Walter Evans, town councilman; Bill Ganshaw, justice of the peace; and Paul Karsten, town highway superintendent.

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MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS:

Members who have paid their dues to April 30, 1991 had their memberships extended to December 31, 1991. If you have a card that expires April 30, 1991, please note that your 1992 dues will be payable as of January 1st. An application will be attached to this Newsletter for your convenience. (Please disregard this notice if you have paid your dues to April 30, 1992.)

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SOUNDINGS:

The toughest part of dieting isn't watching what you eat; It's watching what your friends are eating.

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REMEMBER THE CENTENNIAL?:

A recent notice of the death of Bill Armitage, 71, who worked for the John B. Rodgers Co. as director/producer of Centennial Productions, reminds us that 33 years have passed by since the village of Wilson held its centennial celebration in 1958.

There was widespread participation by all members of the community when the week long program of events took place from August 24th through the 29th.

Mayor Bob Horton served on the executive committee that staged the celebration and other members were Beach Hicks, Chrm., Stanley Borngraeber, Kenneth Welker, Maxine Gnage, James Cornell, and Mark Huntington.

All week long there were special events including Kiddie Parades; ball games; teen age dances; flower shows; fashion shows; teas; caravans to other towns; band concerts, fireworks, brothers of the brush, centennial belles; historical tours, and a spectacular firemens' field day and parade. The highlight of the event, however, was a four-day Pageant that depicted historic events in Wilson's 100 year history.

The pageant was headed by Ernest Tarr, and his committee consisted of Ruth Gale and Eleanor Moot, (Scenario & Title); Cynthia Wilson, (Properties); Marjorie Hurlburt & Jack Maxfield, (Music); Eleanor and John Myers, (Cast); Art Schnoor and "Chuck" Messersmith, (Construction); Evelyn Draper & Kathleen Ness, (Costumes & Make-up); and Walter Moxham, (Sound System.)

The Participation Division was headed up by Anna Mae Nevins and Stuart Walpole. Their committee included Jack Perry, (Brothers of the Brush); Helen Kepner, (Men's Hats & Ties); Don Kerwin, (Promenade & Caravans); Bea Rockwood and Melva Ryan, (Celebration Belles); Mary Cornell, (Ladies Sunbonnets & Dresses); and Ralph Hessinger, (Antique Show).

Each day had a special chairman and theme, and starting Sunday was (Americanism Day), Howard Kayner; (Youth Day), Linda McGrath and Walter Hutchison; (Ladies Day), Doris Tarr; (Merchants' Day), Geraldine Scheffler; (Pioneers' Day), Lydia Southard; and (Neighbors' Day), Dr. John F. Argue and Don Sinclair.

Other Divisions involved in putting on the 100 year spectacle and celebration were: Publicity, John Nicholson, Chrm., Richard Schmidle, Berne Kent, Marion Nicholson, Lydia Sporleder, and Joseph Rice. Hospitality, Ronald Swick, Chrm., Alonzo Swick, Fred Forder, Carlton Funk, Eleanor Brydges, Helen Horton, Grace Singer, and Lillian McPherson. Special Events, Ethel Rohring, Chrm., Ora Pettit, Louis Diez, and Felice Dean; Revenue, Lewis Schrader, Chrm., Howard and Verna Caulfield; Norbert Sherrie; E. Richard Clark and Ruth Clark; and Stanley and Helen Borngraeber. Spectacle Tickets, Gordon McPherson, Chrm., Bill Ganshaw; Ashley Gale; Charlton Bulmer; Betty Hausmann; Eleanor Harrington; Thomas Palisano; Leslie Dickinson; and Milton Clark.

Divisional Chairmen were: Kenneth Welker, Insurance; Don Lort, Fireworks; Eugene Pembroke, Operating Capital; and Louis Diez, Decorations.

Although the colorful celebration is now history, the village's 150th Birthday is only 17 years in the future, so don't let the year 2008 slip by--the years pass by quickly.

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LIBRARY TO RE-OPEN:

The Wilson Free Library, thanks to the concerted efforts of its many volunteers, is expected to be in its new quarters on Young Street by November 18, 1991. This will fulfil a hope that was expressed when the new library project was first started--to complete the renovation plan before the end of 1991, the 80th birthday of the library.

Substantial donations from the offices of Senator John Daly and Assemblyman Joseph Pillittere and a matching grant from the Western New York Foundation, the Gregg Lewis Trust, and donations from Norman Thik, Ashley Gale, and the Wilson Conservation Club helped finalize the drive, but thousands of smaller contributors from all over the country were equally important.

The library has been operating temporarily from the rooms of the Exley United Methodist Church of Wilson,,but closed during the week of November 11-16th, then re-opened on the 18th in its new facilities.

In response to many requests from its patrons, a new schedule of library hours has been set up as follows: Mondays--9:30 to 11:30 AM with a story hour from 10 to 11 AM.

Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays the hours are 1 to 4 PM; Fridays, 2 to 5 PM; and on Saturday, 10 AM to 1 PM.

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MEMBER IN THE "SUN":

Colleen Slate, the new Christian educator of the 2nd Presbyterian Church in Lockport, will coordinate Sunday School, Youth groups, and plan special events.

Colleen, the daughter of Archie and Zilpha Petty of Wilson, graduated from the Wilson Central School in 1966, and completed undergraduate work at Alma College, Michigan. She received her master's degree in education at Niagara University.

She is the wife of L. Robin Slate and mother of 2 children, Jennifer and Matthew.

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MUSEUM VISITORS:

An enthusiastic group of ladies from the Buffalo area YWCA visited the Wilson Museum on Oct. 23rd, and were greeted by John and Eleanor Myers, Dorothy Maxfield, and Bess McKelvey. Ellsworth McKelvey took the visitors through the 1903 caboose, and Don Croop showed the group through the Barnum and Argue Car Building.

The tour, arranged through the Grand Island Transit Co. of Lockport, was one of 6 tours scheduled this past summer with stops at the Wilson Museum.

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WHERE WERE YOU, CHARLIE BROWN?:

The Wilson Business Association held its annual "Great Pumpkin Contest" at the Wilson Museum on October 27. No cut-outs were allowed this year, and all judgeable entries were decorated with buttons, bows, ribbons, and sequins. The contest was open to 1st graders to 9th, also adults.

Free cider and popcorn was furnished by the businessmen, and George and Marge Lederhouse were hostesses for the museum which was open from 2-4 PM.

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BON MOT: Being a grandson makes every boy smarter.

BOARD REPORTS:

Is our annual Memorial Day Fair all you would like it to be? This is the question the Board would like our members to answer. If you have any ideas or suggestions the Board would like to hear from you before January 1, 1992. Here's your chance to come up with a great idea to make the fair better. Drop a note or card to Box No. 830, or if you prefer to phone, you may call either 751-6053; 751-6311; or 751-9827. Let your voice be heard.

All future meetings of the board will be held on the 2nd Wednesday of each month, and meetings will start promptly at 7:30 PM.

Dorothy Maxfield thanked Nettie and Clark Stimson for the new display case that has been set up to display brochures and booklets.

After considerable discussion, the board decided to eliminate the Housekeeping Committee, and have their duties assumed by the Museum Committee and their members. Helen Stevens, Cor. Sec., was directed to send Maryanne Sharpe a letter of appreciation for her past efforts.

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WILSON GIRL SCOUTS HELP COMMUNITY:

Girl Scouts of Wilson Troop No.1, who are working for their Community Service badges, helped beautify the museum grounds last month when they planted 666 daffodil bulbs along the brick walk-way by the depot.

The project was completed under the supervision of Joan Demmin, Scout Leader, and Elton Kropp, who prepared the ground for planting with a roto-tiller.

The society wishes to acknowledge the fine work done by the following girl scouts: Pauline Wells; Osici Strother; and Kristine Kooalski, all from Wilson; and Pauline Luanne Staselavage of Ransomville.

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MORE MUSEUM IMPROVEMENTS:

Elton Kropp, Grounds Chrm., has announced that the Marzetti property, which is leased by the society, has been leveled off and graded by Paul Karsten and his town crew. The society also wishes to thank Bob Zastrow and Jess Woodward for use of the village rake. A small amount of work is yet to be done to make the land ready for seeding in the spring.

A load of stone has been piled west of the caboose in preparation for laying tracks and ties for the Chisolm-Ryder Railroad Work Car that was donated by Don Burrows in 1987.

Work on the Pittro Shop is continuing with the siding on the west end being replaced recently by Ed Allgeier, Chrm., "Ollie" Clark, Elton Kropp, and Al Waite. The barn is eventually going to house a blacksmith shop along with various agricultural tools and equipment.

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IN MEMORIAM:

Duane Richards, husband of Jean (Carrigan) Richards, died suddenly at Lockport Memorial Hospital on Oct. 28, 1991. Besides his wife, he is survived by two children, Judith (Ronald) Branch of Ransomville; and Ronald (Catherine) Richards of Lockport.

Services were held at the Warrens Corners U.M. Church with burial at North Ridge Cemetery.

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DECEMBER HOSTESSES:

Dec. 1st, Don and Wanda Burrows; Dec. 8th, Sara Berry and Don Croop; Dec. 15th, Ollie and Helen Clark. Helen Clark, Chrm., announced that the museum will be closed Dec. 22nd & Dec. 29th, and visiting hours at the museum will be suspended January through March.

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CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS:

On Sunday, Dec. 8th, from 1:00 to 4:00PM, Celeste Crawford and Anne Faery will be in charge of decorating the museum for the holidays. Snacks are acceptable, so why not join in for your first sociable party of the season.

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HOUSING SHORTAGE:

The following notice appeared in an 1897 issue of the Wilson "Star": "Wilson is badly in need of a dozen nice houses that could be rented for \$4.00 or \$8.00 dollars a month. As it is, there is hardly a vacant house in the village."

(Note: Something like that might go over pretty good today, too.)

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DECEMBER MEETING:

Come to the Christmas party at the museum, December 16th, at 7:30 PM. There will be entertainment, games, and prizes. The Depot will be decorated prettily thanks to Celeste Crawford, Anne Faery, and Don Burrows.

Carole Schnoor has tickets available for 3 special Christmas gifts that she acquired. First prize will be a Train Set; 2nd prize, Father Christmas, (by Audrey Orr); and 3rd prize, A Precious Moment "Snow Dome". The lucky ticket holders will receive their gifts at the Christmas party.

Refreshment hostesses for the evening will be Lucille Upton and Shirley Evans.

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.....1992.....MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION.....1992.....

RENEWAL.....NEW..... NAME.....

ADDRESS.....P.O.BOX.....CITY.....ZIP.....

COUPLE \$8.00..... SINGLE \$5.00..... LIFE \$150.00..... JUNIOR (Under 18) \$1.00.....

HONORARY (85+).....Free ENDOWMENT FUND (Donation Optional).....

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED.....

Please make all checks payable to THE WILSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY. Return to:

ANNE FAERY, 3285 WEST LAKE ROAD, WILSON, N.Y. 14172