January 1992 through December 1992

HISTORY OF WILSON

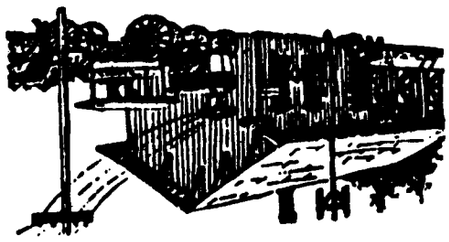
Decade of the Forties 1/92
One Hundred Years Ago 1/92
Twenty Years of Progress (Museum) 2/92
He rode the Rails 3/92 (Mike Radigan)
The North Ridge Church-Methodist 4/92
Billy Sherman, War Hero (Confederate Horse) 5/92
Whistle Stop (Elberta Station) 5/92
Prominent Wilsonian (Rex Tugwell) 6/92
How it All Started (Reuben Wilson) 6/92
Early Wilson 6/92
Gold Fever (George Swick) 11/92
Car Museum 11/92
The Old Lewiston Trail 12/92

MISCELLANEOUS

The Pioneer Eastman Family 12/92
Shades of Prohibition 1/92
Prominent Son, Corlis Armstrong 1/92
Unusual Accident (Neil Patterson) 3/92
Wilson is "Cool Man" 3/92
Tops in Her Profession (Marilyn Allgeier) 6/92
Veteran's Monument Dedicated 6/92
A Tribute to Chris 7/92
175th Anniversary-Ransomville 1/92
You've Come a Long Way, Baby 9/92
They Even made soap 10/92
"White Feather" (Sara Berry 10/92
Prominent Son, Walter Hurlburt 9/92
Thumbnail Sketch, Doris Fittro Clark 10/92
"Vic" Berlin 6/92

IN MEMORIAM

Jamie Leland Covey 4/92
Leonard Tabor 5/92
Gladys Lum Ho Ridley 5/92
Samuel McCoy 9/92
Hazel Thilk 9/92
Henry Perry 9/92
Alice Nelson 11/92
Anne Croop Wiepert 12/92



January 1992
Vol. 21, No. 1

(Coleman Printing)
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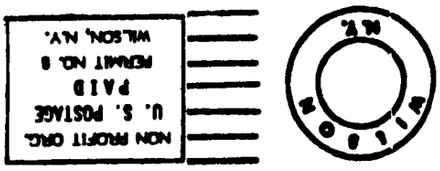
DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

NEWSLETTER

Wilson Historical Society
WILSON, NEW YORK 14172-9763



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 conceeded 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."

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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.)

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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, occured 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.

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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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SHADES OF PROHIBITION:

During the days of prohibition, they were called "rum-runners"; today they could be called "tobacco-runners". Fact is, hundreds of Canadians are crossing the border into the town of Niagara to buy cigarettes which are more than three times less expensive here than they are in Canada.

For example, a pack of cigarettes that sells for $5.75 in Niagara Falls, Ontario, can be bought in Niagara Falls, NY, for $2,50. Also, non taxed varieties are much cheaper on the Indian Reservations. The price difference has caused a lot of otherwise law-abiding citizens to try their hand at smuggling.

In New York it is a crime for a person to have more than two cartons of untaxed cigarettes in his or her possession, and having more than 100 cartons in one's possession is a felony. A smuggler's vehicle in both the U.S. and Canada may be seized, and it is reported that fines in Canada have ranged from $175 to $22,000 dollars, with some 6,000 cartons already seized from perons trying to smuggle 100 or more cartons across the border.

It appears that the attempt to wipe out smoking with high taxes has also created an epidemic of cross border smuggling reminiscent of the days of prohibition. (A/P-Press & Sun Bulletin.)

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JANUARY MEETING:

Barbara Mosher, Program Chrm., has announced that the January 20th meeting of the society will convene at the Wilson Town Hall on Lake Street starting at 7:30 PM. Following a business meeting in the auditorium, members will be taken on a tour of the newly remodeled and expanded facilities, and town personnel will briefly explain their functions in town government, and answer any questions.

Following the tour, refreshments will be served in the new Conference Room, and Emma Schrader, Chrm., has announced that Eleanor Myers and Maryanne Sharpe will be refreshment hostesses.

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MEMBERS IN THE SUN:

Gertrude Marks and her daughter, Eva Lou Charles, recently accepted,(on behalf of Gertrude's late husband, Edward Marks) the prestigious Edward H. Stoll Award given by the U.S. Dept. of Commerce's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Mr. Marks spent the last 50 years taking weather observations for the U.S. Weather Service.

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PROMINENT SON:

The late Corliss Armstrong was one native son of Wilson who didn't allow the grass to grow under his feet. He grew up on West Lake Road, and graduated from Wilson High School in 1923. After graduation, he continued his education at the University of Michigan and graduated 3rd in his class with a B.S. in Economics and a Master's Degree in Business Administration.

He started his career in 1931 as a budget clerk with the Buick Div. of G.M.C., and during World War II rose to the position of statistician to the Ass't. General Manager. In 1947 he was promoted to Budget Manager, and later became an executive with the Pontiac Div. of G.M.C. Prior to his retirement, he was listed in "Who's Who" of American Automotive Executives.

Wilson residents may recall when his brother, Elton Armstrong, operated the gas station on the northeast corner of Young and Lake streets. Doc Argue liked to have his automobile serviced there because Elton's wife, Doris, often gave him coffee and cookies when he brought his car in for a tune-up.

Corliss Armstrong's daughter, Kathleen Voelkle, pretty well summed up her father's career in a recent letter when she wrote:

"My father always loved Wilson and it contributed to many of his positive characteristics. Even though he was a General Motors Executive, he still had that gentle nature that can only be acquired from growing up as a child in a small, caring community."

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BOARD ACTION AND REPORTS:

Celeste Crawford and Anne Faery were in charge of the Christmas decorating party on December 8th. Ron Schearer did a beautiful job placing lights on the Patterson Room tree, and childs' toys were also placed tastefully around the tree,

A second tree was decorated in the Millie Croop Room which featured many of the hand-made ornaments donated by members during celebration of our nation's bicentennial Christmas. Relish tray, cookies, cake, and coffee were available to the couple dozen persons who participated.

Lucille Upton, Chrm. of the Ways & Means Comm., will be quilt chairman for the 1992 Memorial Day Fair. A hand-made Amish Quilt, hand-made tablecloth, special wood-carving, Copy of "Wilson Sketchbook", and a Historical Society Cookbook will be awarded on "Fair Day".

The next Board meeting will be held Wed. evening, January 8th, at 7:30. The monthly meeting will be at Town Hall on January 20th, also 7:30 PM.

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VISITORS: Mary Watt's 2nd graders from Thomas Marks visited the museum on Dec. 13th where they were greeted by Celeste Crawford and Lucille Upton. After their tour of the museum, they were treated to hot chocolate and cookies before their walk back to the school.

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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 (Optional).....

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED.....

Make checks payable to Wilson Historical Society. Return to

ANNE FAERY, 3285 WEST LAKE ROAD, WILSON, NY 14172

Wilson Historical Society
WILSON, NEW YORK 14172-9763

NEWSLETTER

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

February 1992 Vol. 21 No. 2
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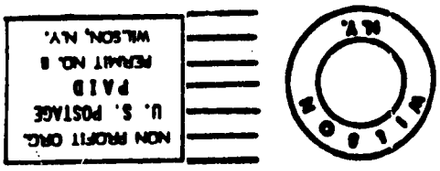

FEBRUARY 1992

TWENTY YEARS OF PROGRESS:

As the New Year gets under way, it seems only a short time ago that a small group of Wilson residents attended a meeting at Town Hall on October 16, 1972, and watched as the late Dr. John Argue signed over the 1912 depot to the town of Wilson for a museum and meeting place for the newly organized Wilson Historical Society. Supervisor Whitney Barnum accepted the property for the town, and, under Dr. Argue's leadership, the society embarked on an ambitious program to build a museum facility that has since exceeded all expectations.

In 1973, meetings were held in the depot waiting room, but half of the building was still used to store antique trucks and auto parts. The new organization grew rapidly, however, and President Argue turned the entire building over for the society's use.

The first renovation work was done by Ollie Clark and Joe Higgins who removed a long wall connecting the waiting room with the express room. The additional space made it possible to build in a Library and two Rest Rooms--and we recall how carefully Ollie and Joe matched and refinished the wainscoting that had been removed. That was the beginning of an extensive remodeling program that involved most of our early members.

First the ladies invaded the museum with scrub brushes and mops, and soon had the place spotless. Members of that "scrub brush" brigade" were Jean Argue, Helen Borngraeber, Ella Mae Baker, Becky Baker, Dorothy Thilk, Mildred Middleton, Betty Stimson, Millie Croop, and Verna Caufield. Burt Jennings, Peggy Ward, and Millie Croop painted the inside ceilings of the ticket office and express rooms while standing on ten foot scafolding, and some 20 or 30 families later pitched in to scrape and brush the outside of the depot to get it ready for painting.

How many remember that first cold winter when, without any heat, dozens of men and women turned out every Saturday to remodel the freight room into what is now known as the Patterson Room. Named after Wilson's long time station agent, the room was completely covered with flooring, siding, insulation, barn wood walls, and other improvements including heating equipment, electrical wiring, and fixtures. And was it Nettie Stimson who fell off a ten foot stepladder while helping Diane Albright, Peggy Ward, and Lois Barnum stipple the entire new ceiling?

Improvements were made because the society had many willing volunteers, while some like Art Schnoor, Elwin Upton, Ed Culverwell, Ralph Dinse, Whit Barnum, Burt Jennings, Don Croop, Elton Kropp, Howard Hunter, Doug and Darrell Smith, Bob Thomas, Wally Beutel, Fred Berry, Ed Allgeier, Fenton Cole, Archie Petty, Dick Schultz, Tom Sharpe, Rex Stacy, Mitchell Stevenson, Earl Swann, Ken Tracy, Karl Wright, Harold Albright, Merritt Cake, Joe Higgins, Ed Lort, and David Weiler, put in many extra hours to get the museum off to a good start.

Art Schnoor and other willing hands built in the kitchenette, storage dock, tool shed, and "Schnoor Room", which was named for Art in appreciation for all he did. After Dr. Argue donated several antique cars, it was decided that a building should be erected to put them in., and the project was given a boost when Dr. George and Rosemary Badger of Lockport, donated 4½ acres of land. The new structure was erected on the east side of the property they gave, but it was through the generosity of Ed Hastings that the building was completed.

Other special projects included the placement of the 1903 Caboose, courtesy of "Red Clark", and its renovation by the late Burt Jennings and Bob Rose, also erection of the operating windmill under the guidance of "Chuck" Messersmith.

A few years ago it was decided to build a larger transportation building, and upon completion it was dedicated as the Dr. John Argue Memorial Building. The original car building was named the "Barnum Building" after Wilson's late supervisor, Whitney Barnum, and it now contains a kitchen, banquet area, and built in exhibits like the old Wilson Postoffice, and "Country Store", (in progress). A number of volunteers helped on this project including Ollie Clark, construction; John Myers, electrical wiring; and Jack Maxfield, painting.

Future attention will be directed to repairing the gutters and eves, but progress has also been made on the Fittro Shop. Under the chairmanship of Ed Allgeier, cement floors have been poured, the west end of the barn resided, and items are being collected for a blacksmith shop. It is quite likely that agricultural equipment will also be kept in the Barn.

A lot has been accomplished, and a lot more will be as younger members with new ideas become active and help continue the dream that was envisioned 20 years ago by a small group of founding members. They established a museum to preserve the town's heritage--we hope the succeeding generation has the "clout" to preserve it.

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BON MOT:

It is never too soon to be kind, for we never know how soon it will be too late.

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SCHOOL SPONSORS SENIOR BREAKFAST:

In spite of inclement weather, a large group of Senior Citizens from the Wilson School District turned out for the 10th annual Senior Citizens Breakfast held at the Wilson Central School recently.

Seniors were welcomed in the school auditorium by Ray Groff, WTA President, and Richard Zipp, Superintendent of schools, and were then entertained by the WCS Band under the direction of Keith Schessl.

Breakfast was prepared and served by the eighth grade Home and Career students under the supervision of Mrs. Strang-Cooke, and while seniors enjoyed the delicious meal of fruit cups, scrambled eggs, bacon, breads and rolls, musical performances and demonstrations were put on by the school's talented students.

Student demonstrations were also set-up in the library for visitors to see after breakfast, and senior citizens appeared to thoroughly enjoy their annual visit to school to see some of the skils acquired by the young men and women of Wilson.

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RECENT ACUISITIONS:

Mildred Duxbury has presented several old books to the museum including, "Waverlry" by Sir Walter Scott (1871); "Complete System of Arithmetick" (1807); "Hymns of the Methodist Church (1849); and 1868 Bible presented to Rev. Stephen Chartier at his ordination(Rev. Chartier was Mildred Duxbury's grandfather.)

Jean Argue: Eight stuffed toys for Christmas displays.
Clark and Nettie Stimson: Display rack for holding booklets, brochures, etc.
Ed and Marilyn Allgeier: 1955 Sears Roebuck Catalogue.
Bernice Smith: Framed picture of of one of Dr. Argue's antique cars used in 1982 wedding.
Janeta Fredericks: 1941-1991, 50 years Wilson Central School, also newspaper clippings (1920)
James Mensen: One small show case.
Anne Faery: Small Drinking Fountain.
Linda Harrod: a Child Book that belonged to John Hamilton.
Don Croop: Late model Kodak Disc-4100, with film cartridge. For display only.
Walter V. Harris: Genealogy of family of Willard Harmon Harris.
Beryl Tovell: Books, old newspapers, misc. paper items and pair of old eye glasses.
Wilson Lodge 881 I.O.O.F: Framed Presentation Collar for Hoyt.

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IN MEMORIAM:

Yvonne Smithson reports that her aunt, Donna Giles Burke, 83, died on Dec. 9, 1991, at Lake Forest, Illinois. She and her husband, Edmund, who preceeded her in August, resided in the Albany area for over 40 years.

Mrs. Burke was the daughter of Ida and Henry Giles, and sister of the late Stanley and Ralph Giles and Elizabeth Giles Duxbury. She is survived by her son, John, of New York City, and a daughter, Elizabeth Morse of Lake Forest, also 3 grandchildren.

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DECEMBER PROGRAM:

About two dozen members of the Senior High School Ensemble sang at the December meeting and performed beautifully under the direction of Lynda Williams. After a sh ort business meeting, a drawing was held with items awarded as follows: Train Set, Janet Naslund; Father Christmas, Millie Lonsbery; and Snow Dome, Celso Cruz.

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CORRECTION:

We did a poor job of deciphering the names in the guest register of the girl scouts who planted the daffodils at the museum last month. Their leader, Jane Demmin, informed us that the four Wilson Scouts are: Asia Strother, Kristine Kovalski, Pauline Wells, and Luanne Staselavage. We try to be accurate, so we appreciate note of correction.

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DOES THE MAJORITY REALLY RULE?

Madalyn Murray O'Hare, who successfully led the fight to eliminate Bible reading and prayer from our public schools, is now renewing her fight to stop religious broadcasting of both radio and TV programs. In addition, she is attempting to remove all Christmas programs, Christmas songs, and Christmas Carols from our public schools.

It is a little scary that only 45% of the men and women in this Country took the time to vote in the 1990 election. We were brought up to believe that the basis of our democratic process is the will and consent of the majority in the formulation of all laws. If the vast majority of Americans are unwilling to fight for that belief, the Madalyn O'Hares will prevail.

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NEW MEMBERS:

It is a pleasure to welcome the following new members into the Wilson Historical Society: David C. Moody of Remsen, New York, courtesy of his sister, Wilberta Hardy; Shirley Urtel of Lockport, courtesy of Nettie Stimson; and Millicent Russell of Burt, New York.

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BIRTHDAY PARTY PLANNED:

John Myers, Pres., has announced that the Wilson Historical Society will observe its 20th birthday this year with a party tentatively scheduled for Sunday, May 31st--one week after the Memorial Day Fair.

Lois Jennings has been appointed chairman of the event, and when arrangements are planned, details will be revealed in either the March or April Newsletter.

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SOUNDINGS:

The virtue of being punctual is largely offset by waiting for people who aren't.

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TIME TO THINK "FAIR":

February is the month when all historical society members should start to think about the upcoming "Memorial Day Fair" on May 25th. Some already are-like Lois Barnum, Maxine Jones, Nettie Stimson, Lucille Upton, Darrell and Sally Smith, Dick and Sue Schultz, and Dan and Kevin King. They provide some of the most important functions of the fair such as acquiring supplies; home-made foods; dealer contracts; quilt raffle; set-up and funnel cakes; drinks and popcorn; and parking. With these operations in good hands, it's a pretty safe bet that other important activities of the fair will fall into place. Try to attend scheduled fair meetings--the more in-put and ideas we have now, the more output we'll have later.

As was previously announced last fall, the society has purchased a beautiful "Dahlia" Amish Quilt which will be raffled off on fair day. Lucille Upton has replaced Betty Stimson as quilt chairman, and we urge you to give her the same fine support you gave Betty during the past six years. Additional prizes to be awarded will include a hand-made tablecloth; special wood carving; "Wilson Sketchbook", and a copy of the society's Cook Book.

The society anticipates that a great deal of money will have to be raised if we are to be able to fix the gutters and overhanging supports. There is a good chance the depot will be destroyed if it isn't done soon. Anything you can do to boost the society's income this year will therefore be gratefully appreciated.

Ticket donations on the quilt are included with this Newsletter. If you can see your way clear to help, please return your ticket stubs and donations to Lucille Upton, 2579 Townline Road, Wilson, New York 14172.

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FEBRUARY PROGRAM:

Dennis Horvath of Wilson will be the guest speaker at the February 17th meeting of the Wilson Historical Society which start s at 7:30 PM. Mr. Horvath will discuss the "Life and Times of Sherlock Holmes." He is an avid collector of all Sherlock Holmes memorabilia, and recently presented an extensive collection to the Ransomville Free Library.

Norrie Desso, the society's new Refreshment Chairman, has announced that she and Janeta Fredericks will serve light refreshments after the program.

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LIBRARY DEDICATION SET:

The newly renovated and expanded Wilson Free Library has re-opened its doors to the public, and when entering the premises one cannot help but be impressed by the attractive, bright, and cheerful new rooms.

No longer are books closely packed on shelves like they were in the old library, and volumes that were once stored in various locations are now attractively arranged for everyone to use.

There are also several special areas in the new building including a reading room which was furnished by the Niagara Educational Foundation. Here one may quietly relax in comfortable surroundings, and peruse current copies of books, magazines, and newspapers.

The Community Room is a separate area set aside for group meetings, and this room, provided by Norman Thilk, will be available for meetings held even outside regular library hours. Picture moldings donated by Sylvia and Malcolm McQuaig, will be installed in this room as well as throughout the building so that paintings by local artists may be hung for the enjoyment of everyone visiting the library.

Books and furnishings were put in place by members of the Wilson Lions Club and the recently re-organized "Friends of the Library". They, as well as many others, have worked with director Jean Siddall to complete the enormous task of moving back in from the temporary quarters at Exley United Methodist Church. Mrs. Siddall can also use more volunteers to help in the day-to-day operation of the library.

In spite of the success of meeting the $23,000 one-dollar for two grant from the Western New York Foundation, there is still a shortfall in funding because ofthe $25,000 legislature grant promised by Assemblyman Joseph Pillittere which is still in jeopardy because of New York State budget difficulties.

Several other projects are also in need of funding, and the Library Board hopes that money can be raised to fund three individual study carrels; drap eries for windows; furniture for the private literacy instruction room; and to pay for shelving that is already installed.

The Board is hopeful that all these requirements can be met before the formal dedication of the library which has been scheduled for Sunday, April 5, 1992.

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VETERAN"S MEMORIAL:

After months of planning, Neva Benedict, Chrm. of the Veteran's Memorial Committee, has announced that a new blue-grey granite obelisk has been ordered to honor Wilson Veterans from all wars.

The four sided granite pillar will be approximately 6-7 foot high, three foot six inches at the bottom, and 10 inches at the top. Lettering on the stone has not yet been determined, but Mr. Lester Clark of Haywood, California, will have his name on the base as the sponsoring donor.

Harold Bottrell, Neva's grandson, has placed all names of known veterans on a computer tape, and the committee hopes to eventually have these names placed on plaques and mounted on one of the inside walls of the museum buildings. It is hoped to have the obelisk in place Memorial Day.

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BOARD REPORTS:

Dan King, Finance Chrm., would like all chairpersons to be thinking about their operating budgets for next year.

Eleanor Myers has donated all items on loan to the museum such as cabinets and display cases.

Motion approved to have security system tied in with Central Control.

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FINAL THOUGHT:

If your outgo exceeds your income, then your upkeep will be your downfall.

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Wilson Historical Society
WILSON, NEW YORK 14172-9763

NEWSLETTER

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

March 1992 Vol. 21 No.4
Coleman Printing

March 1992

HE RODE THE RAILS:

Many persons who visit the Wilson Museum appear to be intrigued by an old bicycle with attached frame that is displayed with the antique cars in the John Argue Memorial Building. The story how it found its way to the museum is rather an unusual one.

Today, people think nothing of hopping into their cars and driving twenty-five or thirty miles to shop, buy groceries, or eat out at their favorite restaurant. A generation ago it wasn't that way, which makes one realize how much the world has changed in one lifetime.

When the old Rome, Watertown, and Ogdensburg Railroad came through Wilson in 1876, it started an era when the "iron horse" would become the principal means of transportation for people traveling from one city to another. However, trains ran on schedules, and one might not be available when you needed it. That was the situation faced by Mike Radigan of Lockport.

In 1906, Mike decided to buy an interest in the Wilson Lumber Company which, at the time, was owned by five Wilson residents, Dwight, Bigalow, Singer, Mudge, and Tugwell. Naturally he wanted to look the yard over before making a purchase, so he and his 12 year old son, Frank, took the trolley to Burt, then walked the rest of the way to Wilson along the railroad tracks.

Alanson Bigalow was the first person to sell his interest to Mike and, when he did, the lumber yard consisted of a carpenter shop and one small shed containing a few bundles of shingles and some cedar posts. He proceeded to buy out the other partners, then set about trying to figure out an easier way to get to Wilson each day.

He hit upon the idea of attaching a frame to his bicycle which he built so it could be operated on the rails between Burt and Wilson. Three iron rods were clamped to the bike so the handle bars and front wheel were held rigid. The bike's tires rode on one rail, and a small guide wheel attached to the opposite end of the frame, rode along the other rail. All Mike had to do was to get on and peddle--although he had to keep his eyes open for trains. The trip was smooth and fast, and he reached his destination much sooner than if he had followed the highways between the two communities.

He made arrangements with Martin Sheehan, Supt. of the Lockport Division of the International Railway to store his "railbike" in a shed by the Burt station each night, so when he arrived in Burt in the morning, his "transportation" was waiting for him.

Mr. Sheehan did caution him, however, to get his contraption off the rails quickly if he saw a train approaching, so he wouldn't be reported to Divisional Headquarters in Rochester.

In 1914, Mike bought a Buick touring sedan for $1200, and began driving back and forth from Lockport to Wilson each day accompanied by his old police dog, "Fritz".

Since he no longer had use for his "rail-bike", he hung it up in his garage on Grant street where it remained for about seventy years.

The late Frank Radigan showed the frame to Norm Thilkone day,and, because of its historical connection to Wilson, Norm got Frank to donate it to the Wilson Museum.

Mike made good use of his rail-bike for 12 years, and operated the Wilson Lumber Company until 1934 when his son, Frank, took over the business.

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DEPOT REPAIRS DISCUSSED:

A special meeting of the historical society trustees was held in the new conference room at town hall on January 22nd to formulate a plan of action for repairing the depot gutters and roof supports.

A motion was approved to accept a suggestion by Ed Hastings to do some preliminary work on the depot in order to determine what's involved and how much the project will cost.

Everyone agreed that the depot must be saved, and it is hoped that the necessary repairs can be made without taking anything away from the general appearance of the depot.

A building committee consisting of John Myers, Ollie Clark, Art Schnoor, Bill Fritton, Dan King, and Don Burrows, are working with Ed Hastings to determine the best way to go.

Other improvements recommended by the Planning Board have been put on "hold" until the roof problem is solved.

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MARCH MEETING:

A video tape of the Recognition Day proceedings held Aug. 4, 1991, will be shown at the March 16th Regular meeting at the museum. There will be no meeting in April.

Refreshment hostesses will be Helen Dinse and Helen Horton.

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SOUNDINGS:

Many of life's failures are persons who didn't realize how close they were to success when they gave up.

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THE QUILTING PROJECT:

Ever since the Wilson Historical Society started its quilt raffle in 1974, a small group of industrious members have provided a beautiful hand-made quilt each year for the benefit of our annual Memorial Day Fair.

Grateful members can thank Anna Mae Nevins, Florence Schultz, and the late Joe Higgins for getting the project off the ground, also the following quilters who kept the project going: Betty Stimson, Beryl Tovell, Dorothy Lort, Faye Pisello, Janet Sporleder, Eva Zortman, Maxine Jones, Marge Moyer, Louise Ross, Ruth McKernan, Mae Scheffler, and the late Millie Croop, Verna Caufield, and Dorothy Thilk.

The first quilt was made by the society in 1974 for the 2nd annual "Country Fair" which was held on May 27, 1974. The beautiful red and white coverlet was pieced together by Harriet Ames, Dorothy Thilk's great-grandmother, and quilting bees were held each week at the museum until the quilt was completed. Marian Robinson of North Ridge won the proceless heirloom.

The society's quilters proceeded to turn out a new quilt each year after that until this year when an opportunity to acquire an Amish "Dahlia" quilt was too good to refuse. Everyone who has seen the quilt is well pleased with it, so we would suggest that if you want to make it yours, you return your ticket stubs and donations to Lucille Upton, 2579 Townline Road, Wilson, NY 14172. Thanks for helping out your society, and "Good Luck".

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NEW PUBLICITY CHAIRMAN:

Margaret Siener has been appointed publicity chairman for the Wilson Historical Society. If you have any announcements or notices that you want publicized in the paper, please contact Margaret at 751-9406.

Up to 1978, all publicity was handled by the Publications Committee, but that year a separate committee was established with Dorothy Linnabery as chairman. Dorothy was succeeded by John Myers and Bill Fritton.

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IN MEMORY OF:

Vira Munch, 92, a former resident of Chestnut Rd., East Wilson, died at her home in Branford, Florida, January 21, 1992. She was a member of the North Ridge Methodist Church; a long time member of the former East Wilson Methodist Church, where she taught Sunday School and was in charge of the church's music program. She was also a charter member of the former W.C.T.U.: the Lockport Chapter of the Eastern Star; and an Honorary Member of the Wilson Historical Soc.

She is survived by two sons, Oscar H. Munch of Branford, Florida; and James D. Munch of Wilmington, Delaware; also 4 grandchildren and 4 great-grandchildren.

Burial was in Glenwood Cemetery, Lockport, New York.

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MEMBER IN THE "SUN":

Chad Yerdon was one of the finalists in the Union Sun & Journal "Page 1 Valentine Contest". He has been a member of the society since 1980, and now attends Niagara University. Chad is the son of Kathy Yerdon of Harbor Trailor Park, Wilson.

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"SERVED TIME":

The late Jennie Bigalow, wife of former Niagara County Sheriff, Fred Bigalow, spent nine years as a Matron at the Niagara County Jail. After her retirement, she enjoyed telling people she had "served time in jail"---just to see the looks of disbelief that would come over their faces. Jennie worked at the county facility during and after the death of her husband who was killed on duty while trying to apprehend a cornered fugitive.

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NEW MEMBERS:

It is a pleasure to welcome the following new members into the Wilson Historical Society: Iola Sherrie of Pembroke Pines, Florida; James Feyrer of Mars, Pennsylvania; Robert Van Housen of Burnt Hills, New York; A. Vernon Croop of Rochester, New York; James and Carilyn (DeNeau) Warblow of North Tonawanda, New York; also Don Luff and Maureen Bryer of Wilson, NY.

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"WILSON SKETCHBOOK":

Copies of "Wilson Sketchbook" are still available and may be purchased from Wanda Burrows at Town Hall; Nettie Stimson's Barn Shop on Lake Street; or Lucille Upton, 751-6883. Money received from sale of books may be used to boost the new Building Fund.

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UNUSUAL ACCIDENT:

In December, 1934, eleven months old Neil Patterson was riding in a car on his grandmother's lap when they were struck by a "Hojack" train at the Elberta crossing. The car flipped over, and Neil was thrown between the rails. The train passed over him safely, but his grandmother was killed. Neil was later found playing in the snow beside the tracks, and grew up to marry and have four children of his own; Diana, Cynthia, Wayne, and Laura.

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MARCH CALENDAR: COMING EVENTS:

March 11th: Board of Directors will meet at the museum, 7:30 PM.
March 16th: Regular Meeting of the society, 7:30 PM, at the museum.
March 20th: FIRST DAY OF SPRING.
April 8th: Board of Directors at museum, 7:30 PM.
April 20th: NO APRIL MEETING (Too close to Easter)
April 5th: Museum reopens for visitors--hostesses needed.
May 25th: MEMORIAL DAY FAIR:
May 31st: Historical Society 20th year birthday party.
June 15th: Annual Meeting.
August 2nd: Town sponsored Band Concert, Society Ice Cream Social, 2PM, Museum Grounds.

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BON MOT: The best way to have your family tree checked is to run for public office.

FAIR CHAIRMEN APPOINTED:

Eleanor Myers, town historian, has accepted the chairmanship of the Wilson Historical Society's 1992 Memorial Day Fair. This may be considered an "A" plus for this year's event since Eleanor has a wealth ofexperience behind her.

She was first elected Fair Chairman in 1976, our Bicentennial Year, and she continued in that capacity for the next three years. During this time the fair became the society's main source of funding for general operating expenses.

Eleanor is a charter member of the society, and has always had the organization's best interest at heart. Her educational exhibits and other museum displays have always been crowd-pleasers, and, as Chairman of the Barnum Building, she and her committee planned the installation of the new kitchen, old Wilson Postoffice, and Country Store.

Her plan for this year's fair is to have different area chairmen responsible for various activities related to the fair's operation:

Lois Barnum will be Food Chairman, and she will be responsible for all food concessions. Working with her will be Emma Lou Reppentine, supplies; Maxine Jones, Food Building; Judy Zauner, Coffee and Donuts; Sally Smith, Funnel Cakes; Dale Schlyer, Hot Dogs; Leona Hunter, Home-made Candies; Melinda Hutchison, Cotton Candy; Sara Berry, Coffee and Soda; Dick and Sue Schultz, Popcorn and Soda; Pam Groff, Depot Kitchenette; and Jerry Dean, Tables.

Arthur Schnoor, Darrell Smith, and Ed Hastings, will be in charge of set-up and clean-up. Other chairmen as of this date, will be Nettie Stimson, Dealer Chairman in charge of Contracts, Dealer Sites; and Dealer Assignments. Don Burrows, Traffic Control, Shuttle Busses, etc., Dan King, Parking; Lucille Upton, Quilt Tickets; Wally Goodman, Antique Cars; Games, Darrell Smith; and Publicity, Margaret Siener.

Any additions or corrections will be in the April Newsletter.

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MEMBERSHIP NOTICE:

We have mailed out a new membership roll for 1992 which was prepared by Anne Faery, and we hope everyone will have received a copy before you get this newsletter.

A count of the members listed has been taken, and we find that we now have 491 adult members; 98 Life Members; 31 Honorary Members; and 38 Junior Members for a total of 658 .

There has been a small drop in our total membership--probably because of the recession or the recent increase in dues. We might add, however, that the rate increase was the first in our 20 years of operation, and in view of conditions, we had no alternative.

Anne (Argue) Faery is to be commended for the fine, business like manner in which she has tackled the membership job. She has updated her files and placed everyone on a computer disc which will make it easier to make address changes, corrections, or additions.

(If we can get a few more younger members active, we may "Get Back to the Future" yet).

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WILSON IS "COOL" MAN:

Speaking in the modern lingo, Wilson is a "cool" place to live. If you have any doubts, look at the population growth. From 1930 through 1991, the town's population has nearly tripled. According to U.S. Census records there were 2, 801 persons living in Wilson is 1930, and by 1992, the figure had increased to ca. 7,000--which merely bears out what we already knew, Wilson is a great town to live in.

Since there has to be a reason, perhaps some of the following might apply: A great school system; responsible local officials; modern business establishments; a strong religious community; fine recreational facilities; but perhaps most important of all--friendly people.

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BOARD REPORTS:

Harold Bottrell was voted a 5 year adult membership in the society in recognition of his Great job of putting over 1,000 names of Wilson's servicemen on a computer disc. The list is made up of veterans of all wars who lived in Wilson or attended school in the Wilson Central School District.

Neva Benedict, Chrm., announced that the new veteran's obelisk has been ordered, and the society will install a base on the grounds on which the granite monument will be placed.

It was reported that the town of Wilson will sponsor another Band Concert at the museum grounds on August 2nd at 2:00 PM. The Society will again hold an ice cream social in the Barnum Building to coincide with the band concert.

A motion was approved to recognize the senior boy and girl receiving the highest grades in history at Wilson Central School on Class Night, June 11th.

Bill Fritton, project engineer for the proposed roof repair program on the 1912 depot, reported that he has sent in an application to the N.Y.S. Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, seeking help for the depot repair project.

It was also announced that Lee Bickford of Niagara Falls sent the treasurer a $1,000 check to be applied toward the depot-repair building fund. After a vote of thanks in appreciation of Lee's generous contribution, the Board decided there may be other members who might wish to match Mr. Bickford's gift.

A motion was thereupon approved to give a Life Membership to anyone who follows Lee's example. If a donor should aleady be a Life Member, he might designate another person to receive the recognition. It was further suggested that anyone donating $100 to the Building fund would qualify for a year's membership.

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RECENT ACQUISITIONS:

Several valuable display cases and other items have been donated by Eleanor Myers: 1 Wall Show Case; 1 4-door Breakfront Case; 1 Floor Show Case; and 1 Slant Front Show Case. Also 1 Cast Iron Stove; 1 Steamer Trunk, 1 Walnut Table, and 1 Victorian Music Stand.

A small showcase has also been donated by James Mensch of Lockport.

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FINAL THOUGHT: Cheer up! Birds have bills, and they are still singing.

Coleman Printing

April 1992 Vol. 21 No. 4

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

NEWSLETTER

Wilson Historical Society
WILSON, NEW YORK 14172-9763

April 1992

THE NORTH RIDGE CHURCH:

According to research done by Mrs. Dora Wakeman, former historian of the North Ridge United Methodist Church, the origin of the church began ca. 1815 when Aaron and Rachel Beach settled in Cambria, N.Y. Their daughter, Miss Olive, learned that a Rev. Mr. Ash lived at Four Mile Creek, and, since there was nothing of a religious nature in the sparse community, she decided to walk 10 miles through the wilderness to see Rev. Ash, who agreed to form a Class at her father's "South Ridge" home.

He proceeded to preach there every two weeks until a Rev. Shepherdson was sent to the Ridge by the Genesee Conference to form a circuit which included Dickersonville, East Wilson, and part of Ontario, Canada. This circuit, known as the Lewiston Circuit, was later divided into East Cambria and West Youngstown.

A small log schoolhouse across from where the North Ridge Church now stands, was where the Sabbath School was held with "Aunt Olive" as the first Sunday School Superintendent. Preaching services were held in an old store run by Calvin Wilson.

The plot of ground on which the North Ridge Church now stands was given to the congregation by Reuben Wilson and his wife in 1845, but the church edifice was not completed until 1848. At the time, it was a community church and any denomination could hold services there. The first minister to preach there, before the seats were installed, was Rev. Elijah Wood, who stood on a pile of lumber to deliver his first sermon.

The church, built by Irish immigrants who had helped dig the Erie Canal, is a beautiful cobblestone buiding erected from Water-washed stones from the shores of Lake Ontario.

In 1869, new seats were installed in the church, and the minutes of a board of trustee meeting that year stated, "We, the pew-owners of the North Ridge Methodist Church, surrender our claim on the pews to the trustees of said church for the purpose of renting the same."

In 1878, the trustees voted to rent the seats to help pay the minister's salary and other expenses, but in 1881 it was decided that the pews should be free. The following year there was only a balance of four cents in the church treasury, so in 1883 it was decided to again rent the pews. All pews were condidered free, however, if anyone arrived at church after the second hymn was sung.

In 1902, a notice was served on the board as well as the teacher in school #9, that children were not to climb the church steeple or throw stones through the church windows, suggesting that perhaps children were no different then than they are today.

Many years later, when the school next door was closed for centralization, the property was purchased by the church to make additional space for parking.

In the 1930's, plays were held to raise money to paint the church and pay the minister's salary, and one play was "Little Women", directed by Dora Wakeman. Enough money was realized from this production to send the young people to Silver Lake.

In 1907, when the furnace was installed, it had been discovered that the windows were in bad shape. A Memorial window was donated by the Womens' Association, and other members followed suit with windows donated by Olive Beach, Rev. Staples, Sarah Staples, Almira Beach, Cyrus Beach, Helen Lafler, Ray Martin, Sarah Culver, Marcus and Melinda Miles, Alonzo and Avis Swick, Jesse and Mary Beach, and the Alpha Class taught by Lucia Petty.

For many years the Cambria Charge consisted of two churches, North Ridge and Dickersonville, and the pastor resided in the North Ridge parsonage. In 1941, North Ridge left Dickersonville and joined charges with Warrens Corners.

In 1964, the East Wilson Church closed and it membership was transferred to North Ridge. The East Wilson church had been built in 1871 on lot #56, which originally was part of the Stephen C. Wakeman property. After the East Wilson congregation was transferred, the North Ridge Church became an independent charge.

Many of the improvements made to the North Ridge Church may be attributed to the supportive auxiliary groups including the present United Methodist Women. Their range of support has been expressed in many ways including public teas, ice cream socials, bazaars, rummage sales, and excellent dinners.

Rev. Ronald H. Sellers is the current pastor, and worship services are held at 10:15 AM on Sundays

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SOUNDINGS:

Why does a slight tax increase always cost you about $200, while a substantial tax cut only saves you about thirty cents?

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A DREAM FULFILLED:

The trustees of the Wilson Library are extending an open invitation to everyone to attend the Open House and Dedication of the 'new' Wilson Free Library to be held Sunday, April 5th, from 2:00 to 4:00PM. The formal dedication will take place at 2:30 PM.

The trustees gratefully acknowledge the splendid co-operation that has been received since the project was announced, and sincerely thanks all contributors for their gifts of money, talent, services, and goods.

Donors of $1,000 or more will be listed on a plaque to be displayed prominently in the library, and all names will be recorded in a book which will be available for all to see.

Out of town members of the Wilson Historical Society who contributed generously to the renovation fund, are encouraged to see what they helped accomplish the next time they pay a visit to their old home town.

Furniture for a private study room will be purchased with a grant that was received from the Gannett Communities Fund recently.

It is hoped that the $25,000 legislative grant promised by Assemblyman Joseph Pellittere will be forthcoming as soon as New York State budget problems are solved, since the money has been earmarked for study carrels, shelving, and window blinds or draperies.

Malcolm and Sylvia McCuaig, art coordinator, working through the reorganized Friends of the Library, wish to extend an invitation to all local artists to exhibit some of their works in the library.

Bill Fritton, Project Manager, worked closely with both the architecture and contractor to insure that everything was done properly and conformed to standards.

Trustees responsible for the renovation of Wilson's beautiful new cultural facility are: Margaret (Peg) Fritton, President; Tom Fare, Vice-President; Judy Okoniewski, Secretary; Christine Kelahan, treasurer; Margaret Siener; Tina Elia; Michael Moley; Kay Ness; Harold Partridge; and Mrs. Jean Siddall, Director. Two board members who resigned recently were members of the board when the project was started in 1988; Dr. Warren Button and Mary Clark.

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FROM THE MAILBAG:

We received an interesting letter from Mildred Robison,85, of Lockport, who is recovering from a broken hip. Although not a member of the society, she enjoys reading the Newsletter when it is published in the Union Sun & Journal. Having a broken hip may possibly be why she recalled the following story:

She noted that she lived on Grand Street across the road from Mike Radigan when she was a little girl. She remembered Mike's dog, "Fritz", and wrote, "As I look back, I think he ended up crippled with arthritis.

'Mrs. Radigan was doing dishes, and the dog went over and laid down right in back of her. As she turned around, she fell over the dog and broke her hip. I don't know what happened to the dog as he was never seen again--or her either. I was very young at the time."

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IN MEMORY OF:

Jamie Leland Covey,90, died at his home in Deming, CO, on April 20, 1991. He was with the hotel industry for over 53 years in the Denver area, and was a life member of the"Hotel-Motel Greeters of America.

He was a member of the United Methodist Church, and also held dual Masonic memberships in Highland Lodge No. 86 of Denver, and Deming Lodge No. 12; also Ruth Chapter No. 6 OES, and High Desert Shrine No. 6 OWSJ of Deming.

Following the death of his first wife, Carrie Vernon, he married Helen Salisbury, daughter of Beatrice Salisbury of Wilson, and after his retirement they moved to Deming, CO.

He is survived by his wife, Helen; two sons, Richard and Phylis Covey of Pueblo, CO; and Gary and Judy Covey of Mesa, AZ; also two daughters, Joyce (Ralph) Leonard of Arvada,CO; and Susan (Robert) Moon of Grand Junction, CO.

Inurnment was at the Crown Hill Cemetery in Wheatridge, Colorado.

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THE COMMUNITY AT "FIVE CORNERS":

We recently acquired a pamphlet published in 1912 by the Mens' Social Club of the Warrens Corners Methodist-Episcopal Church featuring a Roast Beef Dinner with all the trimmings, also amateur performances by the "Jaw-Bone Band" and the "Rastus Bones Minstrels." Admission was 25¢ for adults and 10¢ for children.

We wonder if any of the persons who took part in that program some 80 years ago are still around today, namely, R.A. Smith; Benton Nerber; Ernest Blackstone; Harry Haines; Myron Tracy; Ewald Glowitz; Herman Eldridge; George Tracy; George Haines; Edgar Wakeman; F.C. Washburn; and Bradley and Steadman.

The Pamphlet described Warrens Corners as a "prosperous town, five miles from Lockport at the junction of Ridge, Stone, Beebe, Taylor, and Turnpike Roads--one of the 'five corners' of N. Y. State." It further describes the community as having a population of 571 persons; a modern church with seating capacity of 300, surrounded by a beautiful grove; a new driving barn that accomodates 30 riggs; a Chapel of large demensions; a beautiful parsonage; also one store, a blacksmith shop; an Academy; and beautiful residences surrounded by a rich productive fruit country.

Lockport businessmen who placed ads in the 1912 pamphlet were: Shaeffer's Seeds; Dr. Burt Ide, dentist; Kenney Boots & Shoes; Parson's Drug Co., Darrison Co.,Seeds; Lerch & Daly, Clothiers; Stainthorpe & Co., Contractors; Dickson Movers; Taylor & Reynolds, Furniture and Funeral Directors; Perry's Shoes; Moore's Cigars; Standish & Son, Druggist & Groceries; and Higgs and Staples, Hardware.

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BON MOT:

Nostalgia: Life in the past lane.

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MAKING SCHOOL HISTORY:

A new "school store", the latest wrinkle in the educational learning experience, is being tried out at Wilson Central School by students in Mary Stang-Cooke's 3rd period career skills and planning class.

An old store room has been cleaned out by the eager youngsters, and is being stocked with supplies suggested by fellow classmates such as Wilson T-shirts, etc.

Representing the class at a recent "grand opening" were Curtis Neadow, Patrice Littlefeather, and Mary Stang Cook, store advisor; also Berne Kent, acting high school principal, and Wallace Goodman, junior high principal.

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Michele Savigny, a junior member of the Wilson Historical Society, was named "top student" of the month at Wilson Junior High School. Michele, an 8th grader, is a member of Immanuel Lutheran Church at Newfane, and also sings in the junior high chorus. She also loves to play volleyball.

She is the daughter of Robert and Mary Savigny of Maple Road, Wilson, and plans a career in Marine Biology. She is currently providing shelter for unwanted dogs as a member of Save-a-pet.

Other top students named with Michele are Kristen Hillman and Jim Schultz of Ransomville.

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APRIL CALENDAR:

April 5th: Museum reopens for visitors, Sunday afternoons from 2 to 4 PM. New Wilson Free Library dedication at 2:30 PM.
April 8th: Board of Director Meeting at museum, 7:30 PM.
April 15th: Meeting of Fair Committee at museum, 7:30 PM.
April 19th: EASTER Sunday.
April 20th: Monthly meeting in April has been cancelled.

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NEW MEMBERS:

A sincere welcome to the following new members: Beth and "Chip" Humphreys III of Midlothian, Virginia; Rev. Daniel H. Berry of Portville, NY; and Kathy Hope and Doris Grenville, both of Wilson, NY. Beth is the granddaughter of Chris Kelman of Wilson, and Rev. Berry is the son of Sara Berry,Wilson/Florida.

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VETERAN'S MEMORIAL:

April showers bring May flowers, and when the flowers arrive this year, it will be time to remember those who gave their lives to make our Nation free.

A new obelisk monument will soon be placed on the museum grounds to commemorate all Wilson's veterans of past wars, and the granite stone is being donated by the Clark family in memory of their parents, Murrel S. and Ethel I. Clark.

Arrangements are now underway to try and dedicate the stone on Memorial Day. The idea of honoring Wilson's servicemen with a granite marker originated with Lester Clark of Hayward, CA. It was an idea whos time had come.

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NEW MARKER TO BE PLACED:

At the request of the Ways & Means Comm., a new supply of "Diary of a Deadman" have been acquired from the U.S. Parks Service at Gettysburg, and are now available at the Museum.

Members may be interested to know that a historical marker for the former Ira Pettit home on Maple Road has been received, and Janet Sporleder, Chrm., has made arrangements with the town highway department to put it in place this Spring.

Jan has not only been instrumental in having Wilson's historical sites marked, but has also seen to it that they are kept in good shape and repainted when necessary. A map in the museum identifies the location of all historical sites marked by her committee.

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FAIR DAY IS MAY 25TH:

The fair is drawing near, and the fair comm. is making good progress with plans for this year's event. They hope to have all questions answered in time for the next meeting which will be held at the museum on April 15th. Everyone involved should plan to attend.

It is hoped that all our members will donate generously since we will need many pies, baked goods and salads with emphasis on macaroni, potato, and beans.

Although this is our 19th annual fair, it is also our 20th birthday, and Eleanor Myers, Chrm. plans an exhibit of past events. Any special photos you could loan us would be appreciated.

This year's fair will feature most of the things we've had in the past including antique cars, flea market, demonstrations, quilt raffle, and games for the youngsters. A fish pond and free balloons for the kids will also be available.

It is hoped to have a good supply of food on hand at the Barnum Building, and Hot Dogs and Funnel Cakes will be supplimented with home-made candies, pop corn,drinks,ice cream bars, sno cones, and cotton candy.

Another special feature will be the Chicken Bar-B-Q which has been put on by the youth baseball league for about ten years.

Everyone is welcome at the Wilson Historical Society Fair, so what better way to spend the the holiday than by browzing around our huge flea market, looking over the antique cars, or just munching on a hot dog while socializing with your neighbors and friends.

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DID YOU KNOW THAT.....

The Lockport-Wilson Stagecoach, driven by "Jocky" Faery, used to stop each day at the East Wilson Postoffice located in Stockwell's shop? It also stopped at the South Wilson Post-office located in the Baylis home--now the residence of Mrs. Hazel Thilk.

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FINAL THOUGHT: The only thing faster than the speed of light is word of mouth.

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Coleman Printing
MAY 1992 Vol. 21 No. 5

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

NEWSLETTER

Wilson Historical Society
WILSON, NEW YORK 14172-9763

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May 1992

BILLY SHERMAN, WAR HERO:

The battles around Chattanooga, TN, in November, 1863, ended with a Union victory that not only left the South's main rail center in northern hands, but also most of the fertile food producing lands of eastern Tennessee.

Battery M, 1st Regiment, N.Y. Light Artillery, took an active part in the battles, and today one may see the name of Niagara's proud artillery company displayed on the New York Monument on top of "Lookout Mountain".

The battery was made up mostly of men from Niagara County, and according to records compiled by former Wilson Town Clerk, Arthur Dobbs, over 100 of the 262 men who volunteered to serve in Battery M during the war, came from the town of Wilson. Among these was Chief Bugler, Pvt. Lorenzo Pratt, who was reported to have captured a Confederate military horse during the Chattanooga battle.

The horse, a Tennessee Walker, was a dark bay, 15 hands high, and his record as a military "hero" was described in an 1889 edition of the Lockport Daily Journal under the heading, "Journal War Sketches," and we quote:

"He was chosen as a saddle horse by Comrade Lorenzo Pratt at Chattannooga, just as we were entering on the "Atlantic Campaign." He bore well his part in all harships and battles that culminated in the capture of Atlanta, and also was in the battles of Resica, Dallas, New Hope Church, Kulp's Farm, Peach Tree Creek, and the Siege of Atlanta."

Pvt. Pratt named his horse "Billy Sherman" after General William T. Sherman who led the Union army in the "March to the Sea." After the "Campaign of the Carolinas", Billy, bearing his master and his bugle, followed his illustrious namesake, General Sherman, to Washington where Battery M marched in the Grand Review.

The unit then returned to Rochester, NY, where it was mustered out on June 23, 1865, and Pvt. Pratt returned with Billy to his Wilson-Burt Road farm.

The horse lived for another 25 years during which time he did light farm chores, but in his later years he was treated as a family pet. He often appeared in Wilson's annual Memorial Day parades, 4th of July celebrations, and G.A.R. encampments. He was always a great attraction, and children especially liked to climb on his back to have their pictures taken. It was said that old Billy made a very smart appearance in his military trappings, and when a bugle was sounded, he would prance about as though anticipating a charge into battle.

Old Billy died in 1887 at the age of 32 years. Since he was held in high esteem by members of Battery M who belonged to Wilson's Peter A. Porter Post, G.A.R., a grave was dug on the west side of the Pratt farm where Billy was given a final military salute. He was lowered into his last resting place by surviving members of the G.A.R. with an army blanket over his body and an American Flag draped over his head.

For many years, when members of the G.A.R. placed flags on the graves of their departed comrades in Greenwood Cemetery, a flag was also placed on Billy's grave. But as the years went by, those who had fought beside the old Confederate war horse, also passed away. When Billy had been buried, however, someone had planted iris on his grave, and each year, although unattended, the flowers continued to bloom each spring. Because of this, the Wilson Historical Society was able to locate the gravesite, and made plans to place a marker at the site.

On September 1, 1973, just 86 years to the day when Billy died, a dedication service was held, and as Jackie Luff Bryer, great great grandaughter of Lorenzo Pratt unveiled the marker, Randy Schultz sounded taps while members of the North-South Skirmish Association fired a salute with their cannon.

Taking part in the impressive ceremony were Congressman Henry P. Smith,III; Dr. John F. Argue, Pres. of the historical society; Paul Hewitt. Chrm. Niagara County Legislators; Whitney Barnum, town supervisor; Harold Mosher, village mayor; and James Buncy, State Regional Commander of the North-South Skirmish Association.

Wilson is probably the only town in "Yankee Land" to have a memorial to a Confederate military horse, and the intriguing story has not only been written up in many area papers, but was also given wide publicity in the Chattanooga Free Press.

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IN MEMORY OF....our deceased members this past year: Norman R. Luff; Edward L. Marks; Thomasine Gath; Clarence G. Nablo; Gladys Weber; Walter J. Hutchison; Lynford J. Griffin; and Duane Richards.

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BON MOT: A happy memory never wears out.

"WHISTLE STOP":

In 1908, when the old "Hojack" railroad was a vital part of the Wilson scene, the south line of the village was about a half mile from the depot which, at that time, was known as "Wilson Station".

The next "whistle stop" south west of Wilson was called "Randall", which later was known as Elberta, the name given to it because of the large number of Elberta peaches grown and shipped from the area.

"Vic" Berlin of Wilson, one of Niagara County's largest produce buyers, built the railroad way station at Elberta which was located just east of where the tracks crossed Randall and Brayley Roads.

Those days were busy times on the railroad that saw two "flyers" a day "roaring" by the corners in addition to the daily milk train, mail trains, and numerous freight trains.

Just southwest of the crossing was a storage house, elavator, and evaporator along the tracks and, according to Bill Wilson, Cooper's store was on one side of the road and the Bass store was across from it. He recalled that Coopers sold candy for a penny, while Bass charged two cents--so the kids all went to Coopers.

The Bass store was just south of the intersection, and the fruit dryer was behind it along the tracks. Bill Wilson was manager of the dryer which had seven peeling machines and one for coring apples--all operated by young women. The dried fruit was packed in boxes and shipped by rail all over the country.

A skating rink was also reported to have been located at the corners at one time, and a cooperage, owned by "Vic" Berlin also operated there. Fred and Lewis Schrader, among others, used to work for him, and Ray Eddy was the head cooper. Four coopers were usually employed making barrels at one time in which peaches and apples were packed and shipped out by rail.

The late Lou Schrader started working there in 1916 before he was married, and later became "Vic's" right h and man.

Lou's first job was working for his father on their Randall Road farm, and he also worked a year for Ray Fitch. Following his marriage to Emma Duxbury, they took up housekeeping on McChesney Street in Wilson in the house that was formerly used for Andrew Bett's Bakery.

Lou became the village clerk, and worked in that capacity for 37 years. Now, following in her father's footsteps, Emma Lou (Schrader) Reppentine is the village clerk.

The Elberta Chemical Company operated at the corners for many years in more recent times, but with the demise of the "Hojack" several businesses closed including the chemical plant.

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MEMBERS IN THE "SUN":

Betty Stimson, retired village trustee, was honored at a reception held in the Wilson town hall recently in recognition of her dedicated service to the Wilson village.

Jerry Dean, her successor, was sworn in at the village meeting on April 2nd.

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WILSON HOMESTEAD:

One of the more interesting stone houses in the town of Wilson is the William Wilson house which was built on the Maple Road in 1861. It was originally occupied by two families totaling 13 persons, and the stones used to buiid it were hauled from the shores of Lake Ontario by horse and wagon. It is said that one time the team ran away and a load overturned when the wagon struck a tree.

The house is built from "English Cut" stones--the name used to describe the stones that were split in two by masons with the flat inner sides used for facing.

Remodeled by Lois and the late Whitney Barnum, the house stands out today as one of the prettiest examples of a pre-Civil War constructed home in the town of Wilson.

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FORT NIAGARA EVENTS:

May 2-3: Civil War Artillery School. "Union" soldiers will garrison fort; perfect skills.

May 30: Youngstown Garden Club Show. Historically themed exhibits in the Old French Castle.

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WE'RE GETTING UP TO DATE:

The equipment we are using to address the Newsletter is very old, and it is getting very difficult to get parts or make necessary repairs.

In an effort to forestall a future "breakdown" in our ability to mail the Newsletter to you, we are attempting to set up a more modern system for addressing them.

Anne Faery, our membership Chrm., is supplying the names of persons receiving the Newsletter to Wanda Burrows, who has graciously consented to make up a master mailing list on her personal computer. These can then be transferred easily to mailing labels, We suggest that if you have a box number, you make sure you use it on your address.

We are deeply grateful to Anne for assuming the responsibility of mailing out the newsletter.

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MAY CALENDAR:

May 13th: Board of Director Meeting, 7:30 PM, Wilson Museum.

May 18th: Regular Monthly Meeting, 7:30 PM, Wilson Museum.

May 25th: MEMORIAL DAY FAIR, Wilson Museum grounds, 10:00 AM to 5:00PM.

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BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION POSTPONED:

Please mark your calendars! The society's 20th birthday party is being postponed to Sunday, September 13th instead of May 31st as previously announced.

The committee has got to get an idea of how many may plan to attend. It will be helpful if you will notify one of the following persons: Lois Jennings, Chrm., 751-9783; Charlotte Pease, 751-9612; Lois Barnum, 751-6665; or Don Croop, 751-9827.

After arrangements are made, permanent reservations will be taken.

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A SMALL TOWN is a place where mass transportation means giving some one a ride to Church.

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SOME "BEAR FACTS":

Mrs. Jeanette Smith of Buffalo wrote that she used to live on Lake St. in Wilson when she was a little girl. She sent a photo dated 1915 which shows her playing with a small bear cub named "Buster". She described him as being "devilish", and said he used to "Nip on her, and she still has the marks to prove it." She also stated that they used to roll around on the ground together, and sometimes "he'd swing in a tree or eat ice cream cones while sitting on his haunches in his penn."

Jeanettes mother's name was Caroline Whitney, and sometimes the three of them would walk down Lake St. together to Slocum's barbershop on Main Street. She has no other information about "Buster" except that he was a Brown Bear, and died of old age in the Buffalo Zoo.

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LIFE MEMBER:

Lee W. Bickford, a native of Wilson, was recently added to the Life Membership Roll of the Wilson Historical Society. He is the son of Frank W. Bickford (1888-1922) and Evelyn Carrigan Bickford (1887-1982).

Lee graduated from Wilson High School in 1937, and married Lucille Jane (Buck) of Niagara Falls (now deceased). They had 5 children, Lee, Jr., Nancy, Patricia, Gary, and Kathy.

Lee is an Air Force Veteran of World War II.

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THE MEMORIAL DAY FAIR IS IMPORTANT:

On May 25th, the society will sponsor its 19th Memorial Day Fair. Its success will depend on how our members respond. The most important need is that you volunteer a couple hours of your time.

A few of our members devote hours of their time preparing for the fair as well as putting in long hours on the day of the fair. All they ask is for you to help out.

A successful fair will make it possible to keep the Wilson Museum open, and provide the funds necessary to continue sending you the Newsletter.

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RECENT ACQUISITIONS:

Charlie Manhardt of Newfane has given the museum a "Moline" Advertising Yardstick that was distributed by Ray Thilk, Sales & Service, in South Wilson.

John Tracey, Lynn, MA: 35mm Moving Picture Projector (ca. 1915) that was used in local theaters before "talking pictures" made their appearance.

Jan Sporleder: 8 Vols. "American Heritage" (1991), and 12 Vols. "Smithsonian" (1991).

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IN MEMORIAM:

The society extends its condolences to the families of Leonard Tabor, 86, fruit grower and native of Wilson who died April 3, 1992, at Intercommunity Hospital, Newfane. He was a member of the 1st Baptist Church of Wilson; Ontario Lodge No. 376, F.&.A.M.; and Wilson Lodge No. 881, I.O.O.F., and an Honorary Member of the Wilson His. Soc. He is survived by his wife, Marion.

Rev. Jeffrey Durham officiated at a Memorial Service with burial in North Ridge Cemetery.

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Gladys Lum Ho Ridley, 66, of Paia, Maui, Hawaii, died at Maui Memorial Hospital on March 26, 1992, and is survived by her husband, Lawrence C. Ridley, who married her during World War II. She also leaves 4 sons and 2 daughters; Lawrence (Gloria), Niagara Falls; Robert (Carol), Lockport; Fredrick (Jackie) Ransomville; William (Roberta) Florida; Marion (Donnie), Savella, CA; and Babette Ridley, at home.

She belonged the Paia Protestant Church and was buried in Makawo Veteran's Cemetery.

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LETTER FROM A SENIOR CITIZEN:

Just a line to tell you that I'm not among the dead,
But I'm getting more forgetful and mixed up in my head.
I'm used to my arthritis--to my dentures I'm resigned,
I can manage my bi-focals, but God I miss my mind.
Sometimes I can't remember when I stand beside the stairs,
If I'm going up for something, or just came down from there.
And before the "fridge" so often, my mind is filled with doubt--
Did I just put food away, or did I come to take some out.
And sometimes when it's dark--with nitecap on my head,
I don't know if I'm retiring, or just got out of bed.
It's my turn now to write you--no need for getting sore,
I think I may have written, but don't wish to be a bore.
Just remember that I miss you, and wish that you were here,
But now it's nearly mail time, so I must say "Goodbye, Dear."

Now, I'm standing by the mailbox--my face so very red
Instead of mailing you this letter, I opened it instead.

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MUSEUM HOSTESSES:

A recent proposal to the Board is being activated immediately which will make it easier for Sunday afternoon hostesses. A member of the Board of Directors will be present each Sunday to open and close the museum. Members will no longer be required to get a key before serving.

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MAY MEETING:

Norrie Desso, Chrm., has announced that Judy Zauner and Gerry Swann will be refreshment hostesses for the meeting on May 18th.

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FINAL THOUGHT:

Don't tell your troubles to everyone. Half don't care, and the other half figure you got what you deserved.

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(Coleman Printing)

JUNE 1992 Vol. 21 No. 6

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

NEWSLETTER

Wilson Historical Society

WILSON, NEW YORK 14172-9763

June 1992

PROMINENT WILSONIAN:

When Mr. and Mrs. Charles Tugwell moved from Sinclairville to Wilson ca. 1904, they couldn't have possibly known that their son, Rex, would someday be Assistant Secretary of Agriculture and a close advisor to the President of the Uni ted States, Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

People who knew Rex when he was a boy remembered him as being friendly, democratic, and very kind-hearted. He was an avid reader and quite fond of Dickens and the writings of Thomas Hardy. He also liked to write poetry and, after he left Wilson to attend Masten Park High School in Buffalo, he became the class poet.

He was a normal boy in all respects and though quite studious, enjoyed the ordinary pursuits and desires of other boys his age. Although never outstanding in sports, he was active and enjoyed playing games. It was said that he enjoyed boxing, but was known to generally be on the losing end. Rex did like to swim and go boating--he never had much interest in hunting or fishing.

Since his parents were well to do, he was able to enjoy the many advantages they were able to provide for him and, after he left home he still spent the summers at his folk's house on an island in Tuscarora Bay. Once known as Tugwell's Island, it is now the site of the Clark Marina.

During his college years, he spent a lot of time building a small log cabin near his parent's home which provided a quiet place for him to study and write. Prior to receiving his degree from the University of Pennsylvania, he married Florence Arnold, and they had two children.

Dr. Tugwell became a Professor at Columbia University where he taught economics, and while in that position was named Assistant Secretary of Agriculture. The President appointed him to try and help solve the many agricultural problems facing the nation in the 1930's.

Before 1938, the American consumer was at the mercy of the unrestricted use of chemicals by farmers who grew fruit and vegetables. Apples were being sprayed with arsenic-laced pesticides; raw milk was being processed from tubercular cows; eye-liners containing corrosives were causing blindness to women; and it was reported that one brand of toothpaste was so strong, "a german army officer committed suicide by eating a tubeful."

In 1937 a drug was put on the market that hadn't been safety-tested, and proved to be poisoness. One hundred seven persons died, mostly children, before the source of the poison was found, but it was in this climate of "public outrage", that Dr. Tugwell authored the Pure Foods Bill which provided regulations and restrictions on the sale and advertising of drugs and cosmetics--an act which generated many protests from the drug and cosmetic companies.

Tugwell may have been way ahead of his time on conservation and environmental matters, and in 1935 he urged support for the Federal Forest Service and other land conservation projects. He felt that our trees, grass, and water supplies must be conserved or the time would come when the midwestern section of the country would become a vast desert.

It is interesting to note that nearly sixty years ago, Dr. Tugwell predicted that "Cutthroat international trade would be eliminated." In his view he believed that "Somewhere between international arnachy, which we call free trade, and protectionist nationalism.....we shall find a way to build a more substantial structure of exchange."

Dr. Tugwell, in spite of his many works for the public good, seemed to have a nack for rousing the ire of some organizations. For instance, in a speech before the Democratic women in Washington, DC., he once said, "American women should follow the example of Mrs. Roosevelt and serve wine in their homes." The response was instantaneous--especially among church groups, with one congregation demanding that if his remarks were true, he should be asked to resign immediately.

Tugwell explained that his plea was for temperance, and that he was only urging women to use their influence to bring the country away from hard liquors, and use light wines and beers instead.

Dr. Rexford Guy Tugwell was 88 years old when he passed away in 1979 at Santa Barbara, California. Interment was in Evergreen Cemetery at Sinclairsville,N.Y., home of his parents before they moved to Wilson, NY in 1904.

(Note: Reference material for above item received from Don Loker, History Specialist at the Niagara Falls Public Library.)

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SOUNDINGS: Our Congressmen might be more inclined to keep taxes lower, if they didn't have the power to vote themselves a raise everytime they fall behind.

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TOPS IN HER PROFESSION:

Marilyn Allgeier, who has served 27 years in the position of Wilson Town Clerk, was recently named "New York State Town Clerk of the Year", and we join with her many friends and associates to congratulate her for this well deserved honor and recognition.

Pres. Alice Hunt of the State Town Clerks Assoc. presented Mrs. Allgeier with a beautifully engraved plaque at the Association's 10th annual banquet in Albany, where she also received a citation from State Senator John Daly of Lewiston and State Assemblyman Joseph Pillittere of Niagara Falls.

At a reception in her honor at the Wilson Town Hall, Sup. Harold Mosher stated: "The vast amount of knowledge gathered during her many years in office can be relied upon as a major source of information when important decisions are to be made. The citizens of our community respect her, and electing her to office for 27 consecutive years as town clerk says more than any words I can write."

Marilyn moved to Wilson from Buffalo in 1937, and graduated from Wilson Central School in 1947. She married Edward Allgeier, and they had two children, Kathleen A. Fuller, a school-teacher, and Michael E. Allgeier, an optical engineer.

During the years that her children were in school, Marilyn was a 4-H leader and Youth Counselor for the MYF at Exley United Methodist Church. She is also a Life Member of the Wilson Historical Society; Secretary of the South Wilson Fire Company; member of the New York Assoc. of Town Clerks. International Institute of Municipal Clerks; and member of the Inter-Community Hospital Auxiliary.

Marilyn considers the years she spent working for and with the residents of Wilson the most rewarding of her life. Her political interest in town government may possibly have been influenced by the fact that her father, Howard Kayner, was a Wilson Councilman during the 1950's, and was later elected to the position of Niagara County Treasurer.

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NEW MEMORIAL TREE:

Elton Kropp,Grounds Chrm., and Bill Fritton, trustee, have planted a new "Rubrum Maple" Memorial tree donated by Thomas E. Marks in memory of his father, Edward T. Marks.

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LIBRARY PROPOSITION CLARIFIED:

In order to help libraries raise funds to meet the rising cost of books, magazines, videos, audiocassettes, and other expenses, the N.Y. State Education law permits school boards to place a library aid proposition on the school budget ballot this year.

If school district voters approve the proposition on June 10th, , the sum of $12,000 will be collected by the school district and turned over to the library to help pay for the library's operation and maintenance.

It is estimated that on the average, no property owner would be required to pay over $5.00 a year to support the library--or the equivelant of about ten cents a week. This appears to be a reasonable solution for the upkeep of Wilson's beautiful new library, and a proposition with which most reasonable persons might agree.

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Wilson's new Free Library received special recognition from the White House recently when Barbara Bush, wife of the President,sent a letter to the Library Board and noted that the dedication of the "new" library on Sunday, April 5th, "representing the dreams, hard work, and resources of many, was a very special time, filled with pride and a sense of achievement."

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ANNUAL MEETING:

The Program Committee and the Ways & Means Committee will join hands this year to sponsor a "Dinner from the Forties" at the Wilson Historical Society's 20th Annual Meeting on June 15th.

A flat rate of $3.50 per person will be charged, and reservations must be made for the dinner.

To make reservations, you may call either Barbara Mosher, Jan Sporleder, Jan Naslund, Lucille Upton, or Shirley Evans.

The dinner will be held in the Barnum Building at 6:30 PM, and will be followed by committee reports and election of officers.

Please make your reservations immediately--payment will be accepted at the door. Any money over expenses will be alotted to the Ways and Means Committee.

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VETERAN"S MONUMENT DEDICATED:

The Veterans' Monument which was placed on the museum grounds east of the depot, was erected in honor of Wilson Veterans of all wars, and was dedicated at a special ceremony held during the recent Memorial Day Fair.

John Demmin, Commander of Wilson's American Legion Post, conducted a flag-raising ceremony at Noon, and Neva Benedict, Veteran's Comm. Chrm., introduced Walter Moxham, a veteran of the Vietnam War, who gave a short address.

Several selections were played by the Wilson Central School Band, and visitors had an opportunity to view a special exhibit in the museum of photos taken during the Vietnam War. The display was prepared by Mr. Moxham, a Lockport attorney, and Life Member of the Wilson Society.

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MUSEUM IMPROVEMENTS:

The Chisolm-Ryder railcar has been placed on tracks east of the caboose. The job was completed April 30th when Dale Schlyer welded its wheels to the tracks. Other members of the society who pitched in to help out were Ollie Clark, Elton Kropp, Don Smithson, Harold Benedict, Howard Hunter, and John Myers. Doyle Philps and Grover Cowder were asked to prepare roadbed.

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Preliminary work on the gutters and eves has been authorized by the Board of Directors, and replacement of the roof shingles will follow.

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BON MOT: It took about 50 years for movies to go from silent to unspeakable.

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NOMINATIONS FOR OFFICERS:

Edward C. Allgeier, Chrm. of the nominating committee, presented the following list of nominees to be voted on at the annual meeting on June 15th:

President, John Myers; Vice-President, Donald Burrows; 2nd Vice-President, Norman MacAskill; Recording Secretary, Kathy Kraatz/Bobbie Hull; Coresponding Secretary, Emily McAvoy; and Treasurer, Carole Schnoor.

Trustees for three years: Milton "Ollie" Clark; Bill Fritton; and Wally Goodman.

Committee Chairmen: Aquisitions, Lois Jennings; By-Laws, Judy King; Genealogy, Celeste Crawford; Sunday Hostesses, Marjorie Lederhouse; Historical Sites, Jan Sporleder; Membership, Anne Faery; Librarian, Bobbie Hull; Memorial, Lois Jennings; Publications/Newsletter, Don Croop; Program, Barbara Mosher; Photography, "Chuck" Branch; Publicity, Margaret Siener; Refreshments, Norie Desso; Ways & Means, Dick Schmidle; and Docents, Lucille Upton.

All committee chairmen elected may pick their own committees. Motions may also be made from the floor at the June Meeting. (Oversite) Antique Car Chrm, Wally Goodman.

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THUMBNAIL SKETCH:

The late Victor "Vic" Berlin of Wilson was a native of Sweden who spent his boyhood years in Jamestown, New York, and seventy years as a resident of Wilson.

After he moved to the village, he married Edith Hamblin, and they had four children, Charles, Robert, Mary (Lewis), and Lydia (Southard).

"Vic" served on the Niagara County Board of Supervisors for sixteen years--five of them as chairman. He also was one of the area's largest produce buyers.

He was a member of Exley Methodist Church; a charter member of the Wilsonian Club; and also helped organize the Tuscarora Park Club. He was also a former President of the Ransomville Bank; former director of the Wilson State Bank; and very influential in the fight to improve the Wilson Harbor in 1937.

Mr. Berlin was 78 years of age when he passed away, and he is interred in the Greenwood Cemetery in Wilson.

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HOW IT ALL STARTED:

Much of the early history of Wilson was personally recorded by historian, Orsemus Turner, Lockport journalist and author of "Turner's History of the Holland Land Company.", who interviewed Reuben Wilson when Wilson's founder was 71 years old and quoted him as follows:

"When I came in,(to Wilson) there was scarely an acre of ground cleared in what is now Wilson. There was no road along the lake until 1811 when a road opened from Fort Niagara to Somerset.

"In 1811, I was honored with the office of Constable of the town of Cambria. It was a very easy station, no precept being put in my hands during the year.....

"The first year after I came in, I had my provisions to procure in Canada; the second year I raised my own; at the end of two years, I had 15 acres of improvements. When I first raised grain I had to go across to Port Hope and Hamilton for my grinding.....

Previous to the war, myself and neighbors did our trading at Niagara, and Dr. Alvord and Dr. Smith of Lewiston were our early physicians.

"We had no schools previous to the war; after it, and up to 1820, we had occasional preaching in the neighborhood by missionaries. We organized a school and built a log school house. Dr. Warner was our first teacher. He was both school teacher and physician.....

"A saw mill was built in 1815 at the mouth of the "Twelve", by Daniel Sheldon and Joshua Williams, and I purchased the property in 1816 and built a grist mill in 1825.

"The first saw mill north of the Ridge in Niagara, was built by Judge Van Horn in 1811, and he built the first grist mill the same year.

"The war created a demand for any produce we had to sell. In 1816 and '17, the seasons were unpropituous. In 1818 we had good crops and the courage of the new settlers was revived after a long period of gloom and depression.....

"When we began to have surplus produce, it was mostly needed for new settlers that came in. For anything we had to send off, Montreal was our market until the Erie Canal was finished."

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A REMINDER:

Lois Jennings, Chrm. of the proposed Society's 20th Birthday celebration, wishes to remind everyone that it will be very difficult to make arrangements unless she has some idea of the number who plan to attend. Either she, Lois Barnum, or Jeanette Pease will be glad to put your name on a tentative list.

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GOOD PROGRAM:

Dick Schmidle talked about some interesting experiences he had during World War II while serving as a Medic with the Infantry. As every one knows, war is no picnic, and conditions that our servicemen had to endure were intolerable to say the least, but Dick's ability to bring out some of the humerous aspects of military life helped to show how America's military were able to cope with adversity.

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CALENDAR FOR JUNE:

June 4th: Lewiston Garden Club will visit museum--10:30 AM.
June 10th: Board of directors meeting at museum, 7:30 PM.
June 15th: Annual Meeting, Barnum Building; Dinner at 6:30 PM-Reservations.

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SOCIETY "SPARKPLUG":

Wanda Burrows is not only turning out to be one of our best salesmen for "Wilson Sketchbook", but is also doing a great job "computerizing" our membership mailing list.

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FINAL THOUGHT: If you can remain calm in the midst of chaos, you've obviously had some experience raising a family.

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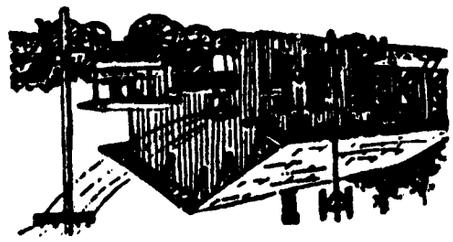


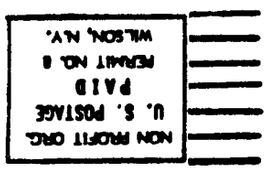
(Coleman Printing)

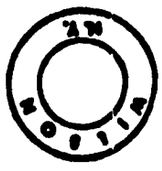
JULY/AUGUST 1992 Vol. 21 No. 7

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

NEWSLETTER

Wilson Historical Society
WILSON, NEW YORK 14172-9763





July/August 1992

A TRIBUTE TO CHRIS:

On May 31, 1992, a group of friends met in the Village Inn at Child's, NY, and held a farewell party for Christine Kelman, a highly respected resident of the Wilson village. A couple weeks later, Chris moved from her lakeside home to take up residence in Central New Jersey where she will be near her daughter, Mary Weiler.

Chris was never one to hide her light under a barrel, and her radiant smile and cheerful manner permeated the lives of everyone with whom she became acquainted. Service to others was one of her most redeeming characteristics, and the love and consideration she had for her family and friends endeared her in the hearts of everyone.

Christine Allison Leggett was born in Buffalo on December 19, 1905, and she grew up on the West side. Her father, William Adams Leggett, was from Scotland, and he became a Building Inspector for the city of Buffalo. Her mother, Mary Nichol Leggett, came to America from Northern Ontario where her Scottish parents farmed the land and raised 13 children.

Chris had a younger sister, a fair-haired, blue-eyed prankster who was in deep contrast to Chris with her auburn hair, hazel eyes, and more serious disposition. The Leggett sisters attended Lafayette High School and had to walk a long distance from their West Avenue home to reach it. It was well worth it though as the school was considered to be one of the best.

Both sisters attended the Buffalo State Normal School, known today as SUNY State College at Buffalo, but it was no small sacrifice for their working class parents to send them. The Kelmans prized education, however, and instilled those values in their daughters.

Following the untimely death of her sister, Chris earned her degree for teaching and, after graduation, tried to ease her parent's grief by making their lives more comfortable. She was very thankful that she was able to have a job during the Great Depression.

On August 12, 1939, she married Leslie Thomas Kelman, and later gave birth to her daughter, Mary Christine. She had met her husband while attending the 1st Scotch Presbyterian Church where she was a member until 1959. That was the year her church merged with the 1st United Presbyterian located near the Kleinhan's Music Hall.

After Mary was born, Chris returned to teach in the primary grades, and also earned her Master's Degree in Education. She then settled down to teach first grade for 25 years and, overall, accumulated over 40 years in the Buffalo and Kenmore Schools.

In 1971, she retired and moved to Wilson where she became a "Country Gal" and full time grandmother to three lovely grandaughters, Jennifer, Anne, and Beth Leggett Weiler.

Chris, however, was too full of energy to resign her life to a rocking chair, and soon became active in a number of community projects. She joined the Exley United Methodist Church where she quickly became involved in the United Methodist Women; the Fellowship Class; the Annual Bazaar; and the Vacation Bible School. Other activities included the Library Story Hour; the Newfane Hospital Auxiliary; and the "Wilson Puppeteers."

She was one of the organizers of the Womens' Society Bowling League at Townline Bowl which later expanded to include the husbands. The group eventually became known as the Newfane Golden Age Retirees Bowling League, and Chris was secretary for many years. She also served as Chaplain during the bi-monthly meetings of the Newfane Golden Ages. She was also a member of the Delphic Circle and weekly Bridge Club in Wilson, but it was said that she'd never turn down an opportunity to play a game of "Uno" with her friends.

Chris was also a charter member of the Wilson Historical Society, and held the office of Membership Chairman from 1977 through 1991. During her tenure in office, the society grew from forty persons to over 750 members.

She was a resident of the Harbor Trailer Park for the past several years, but decided to move to a retirement village in central New Jersey to be near her family. Her departure has left a void in the lives of those who knew her, and she will be remembered for her friendly smile, her graciousness, her warm laughter, and her caring concern to reach out to others.

Perhaps no better words could conclude this tribute to Chris than those penned by her own daughter, Mary, who wrote: "Wilson will always be close to my heart--it was a good place for our girls to grow up, but it was a <u>wonderful</u> place for my mother to grow older with dear, loving friends around her."

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SOUNDINGS:

Doctors tell you that if you eat slowly you will eat less. Anyone who was raised in a large family will tell you the same thing.

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BON MOT: Each birthday is a gift of time, and growing old is a gift of life.

LOCAL TEACHER WINS QUILT:

Edith Goodnight, a teacher at Wilson Central School, was the lucky winner of the beautiful Amish Quilt awarded at this year's Memorial Day Fair.

Other winners in the order their names were drawn were: Barbara Manhardt, Lockport, Hand-Made Tablecloth; Rebecca Sattelberg, N. Tonawanda, Special Woodcarving; Helen Shaw, "Wilson Sketchbook"; Verna O. Barnum, Lockport, "Cookbook"; and Holly Nolinski, Grand Island, "Cookbook".

The Wilson Historical Society is grateful to all who participated.

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"CREAM OF THE CROP":

The young men and women who graduate from our nation's military academies have often been called the "Cream of the Crop", and this has been born out in history by the number of great leaders that those academies have produced.

In view of this, it is interesting to note that Ensign James C. Noller, a descendent of one of Wilson's oldest families, graduated recently from the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis, Md.,

Ensign Noller is the grandson of Lt. Col. Beach and Beatrice (Stockwell) Hicks of South San Francisco, Cal., who attended their grandson's graduation accompanied by Mrs. Hick's sisters, Marion (Stockwell) Winger and Agnes (Stockwell) Shanahan of Wilson.

James Noller is the great-great grandson of Edwin E. Stockwell of Wilson who was known in his day as "The Colonel"; also the g. g. g. grandson of Edwin Stockwell, who served during the Civil War with the 151st N.Y. Volunteer Infantry Regiment.

The Stocwell family came to the Niagara Frontier in 1824 when Stephen Stockwell settled in Somerset and later moved to Wilson ca. 1833.

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175TH ANNIVERSARY:

Ransomville, which joins the southwest corner of the town of Wilson, hasn't left many bases untouched in planning this year's celebration of its 175th Anniversary. Special events have been taking place since March and will continue through October.

An Old Fashioned Parade will be featured on July 18th starting at 4:00PM, and will be followed by an Ox Roast and Street Dance. On August 8th, an Old Fashioned Picnic will be held featuring old time games, beard judging, and baseball games.

The events are all part of a program to commemorate the early days since 1817 when Gideon Curtiss purchased land from the Holland Land Company and built a log cabin and tavern on it. During the 1820's, Charles Quade also purchased 60 acres of land at the "Corners" where he built a store and tavern. The settlement was called "Quade's Corners" until around 1826 when the property was acquired by Jehial Clark Ransom.

Mr. Ransom was appointed Postmaster, and the first Postoffice was located in his store. At a meeting held to pick a name for the Hamlet, it was decided to call the community Ransomville after him.

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BOARD REPORTS:

John Myers, Pres., announced that work on the museum gutters will be performed by Ed Hastings and, when completed, the roof shingles will be removed and replaced by Mike White Roofing and Siding. Work on the gutters was started on June 15, 1992 and is expected to be completed soon.

Bill Fritton, trustee, said that a $5,000 grant has been approved by N.Y.S. Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historical Preservation and will be available as needed.

Motion was made and approved to have all elected terms of office expire on a calendar year basis, Terms of office for those elected at the June annual meeting, under this new arrangement, will expire on December 31st 1993.

Based on our present method of operation, we would assume that the Nominating Committee, after selecting nominees for office, will present them at the regular meeting in November, 1993. They would then be voted on at the annual meeting which would be held in December, 1993.

Policy changes approved by the Board of Directors, should be presented to the By-Laws Comm. so that appropriate changes can be made to the by-laws for approval by the membership.

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BOARD OF DIRECTOR ASSIGNMENTS:

Members of the Board of Directors who will be responsible for opening the museu Sunday afternoons at 2:00PM and closing it at 4:00PM have been selected for July/Aug. as follows:

July 5th, Norman MacAskill; July 12th, Don Burrows; July 19th, Wally Goodman; July 26th, Anne Faery.

Aug. 2nd, Gary Fitch; Aug. 9th, John Myers; Aug. 16th, Don Burrows; Aug. 23rd, Norm MacAskill; and Aug. 30th, Bobbie Hull.

Any Director who finds himself or herself unable to attend on their scheduled date, will be responsible for having a substitute attend in their place.

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MUSEUM HOSTS & HOSTESSES:

We wish to thank the members who served as museum attendants during the month of June: June 7th, Melva and Ted Bull; June 14th, Helen Stevens and Dorthea Marcks; June 21st, Cheryl Brown and Lillian Evans; and June 28th, Dick and Jean Schmidle.

July 5th, Marian Campbell and Alice Davenport; July 12th, Robert and Ruth Thomas; July 19th, Agnes Shanahan and Marian Winger, and July 22nd, Claude and Ruth Lampman.

Aug. 2nd, Marge and George Lederhouse; Aug. 9th, Judy and Dan King; Aug. 16th, Wanda and Don Burrows; Aug. 23rd, Zilpha and Archie Pettie; and Aug. 30th, Winnie and Jack Terry.

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SUMMERTIME:

There will be no regular monthly meetings during July and August, however, the Board of Directors will meet at the museum at 7:30 PM on July 8th and August 12th.

The museum will be open to visitors Sundays from 2-4PM, and special tour reservations may be made by calling John Myers (751-6053) or Dorothy Maxfield (751-6311).

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MEMBERS IN THE NEWS:

Mrs. Hazel Salisbury of Wilson was recently recognized as the co-winner of the Union Sun & Journal "My Favorite Teacher" contest, and to those who know her, the selection was well deserved. Hazel, a former teacher in Wilson and Burt, resides at East Lake Road, and has been a "favorite teacher" to many admiring friends during her extended years in Wilson.

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Another teacher, Dora Wakeman, who helped inspire a former student, Verna Bergamann, to write the book, "In The Classroom", was also in the news recently.

Ms. Bergamann, a retired professor at the University of North Carolina, described Mrs. Wakeman as being "way ahead of her time when it came to teaching---one who did individualized instruction and was good at determining our special skills and our weaknesses."

Dora, 89, still lives in the same house from where she walked to the District #14 schoolhouse to teach her neighbors' children.

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RECENT ACQUISITIONS:

Patricia Plain of Phoenix,AZ, daughter of the late Dr. John Plain of Ransomville, has donated a Stethescope that was used by her father. Dr. Plain opened an office there in 1904, and servedhis community for many years as Health Officer. He was also a member of the schoolboard and chairman of it for ten years.

His long years of community service were first recognized in 1954 when a reception was held to observe his 50th year of practise in the medical profession. Also, in 1963, the Fireman's field at the Ransomville Fire Hall was named the "Dr. John Plain Memorial Park" in his honor. The doctor died in 1961 at 85 years of age.

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Florence Hillman: Carriage Blanket; Old Steering Wheel; B&S Dry Cleaner Picture; Karsten Implement Thermometer; Pens from Edith Hazen; Blacksmith Anvil; Davis Dairy Bottle Caps; Lace and Camisale--all in good condition. (Given via her daughter, Carol Dillabough.)

Joyce Liddell, Newfane: Two World War II Army Caps; 3 Funeral Books of Mary Stahl Miles;

Mildred Lonsbery: Calendars, Wilson Lumber Co. (1934-1940); H.S. Stockwell, (1931); Hamilton and Clark (1926); and Butch and Chet (1940).

Robert McKenna: Framed Stand with Bogus Bills that were dropped over Algeria during World War II to discredit the Allies.

Richard Culverwell: Comic Section of 1912, Nov. 17th Edition of the Buffalo Courier Express.

David Barclay: Early Wringer for old Washtub (ca. 1900).

Donald Wiltse: Washtub Stand and Brakeman's Stick.

Dot Zimmerman, Newfane: Plastic Grater and hand-operated Can Opener.

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MUSEUM SIGN PLANTINGS:

The attractive plantings around the museum sign were arranged by the Beutel Greenhouses of Chestnut Road, East Wilson. Don and his family have been keeping things looking nice around the sign ever since it was erected a few years ago.

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UP-DATE YOUR MEMBERSHIP ROLL:

It is a real pleasure to welcome the following new members into the Wilson Historical Society: Tom and Gail (Pettit) Jeacock, Canada; Frank and Marilyn (DeNeau) Conti, No. Tonawanda; Mike Niethe, Lockport; and Yvonne Varney, Ransomville.

The following are all from Wilson: William and Mary Lou Brodie; Edith Goodnight; Louis McLaughlin; Frances D. Flatt; Kara Holden; Aorian and Kathy Frerichs; Dr. James Hohensee; David Branch; Dennis and Traccy Sweatman; Maxwell(Micky) and Shirley Hunter; Joseph and Linda Moran; Peter and Betty Moot; Ray and Ruth Tordoff, Buzz & Diane Lane; & Beverly Woolson.

Two new junior members are: James Ryan Eastman of Hilton, NY; and Brian Adam Tiffany of Rushville, NY.

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"LOVE THOSE FUNNEL CAKES":

Hundreds of people have been enjoying the society's funnel cakes ever since they were introduced by Carol Smith, yet in spite of all efforts, it has been difficult to produce them fast enough to prevent long lines .

The mouth-watering delicacy gets its name from the way it is made. A special batter is poured through a funnel into hot grease, and after it is cooked, powdered sugar is sprinkled over it. Perhaps the special appeal for Wilson's funnel cakes stems from the fact that the recipe used is said to have been handed down through several generations by a family that once resided in the Pennsylvania Dutch Country.

Sally Smith, our funnel cake lady from Sanborn, took over the operation a couple years ago, and has been doing a great job. Sally had many of her family and friends helping her so we wish to thank them individually for helping our society out: Susan Sobiegray, Joan Hoover, Linda Hoover, Jonathon Hoover, Lisa Bellina, Sue Willow, Laura Murawski, Chris Murawski, Lisa Murawski, Elizabeth Sense; also Anne Wiepert, Lois Barnum, and Sharyl Delaney.

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AROUND THE MUSEUM:

If you stop by the museum you'll be pleasantly surprised how well the Ways and Means Comm. has reorganized its souvenirs and booklets. They have also provided a colorful new supply of T-shirts, caps, and a reasonably priced coffe mug with a sketch of the depot on it. Richard Schmidle recently took over the chairmanship position from Lucille Upton.

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20TH BIRTHDAY PARTY:

The society will celebrate its 20th year with a buffet dinner in the Barnum Building on September 9, 1992. The catered event will be $8.50 each and reservations are required. Please call Lois Jenning (751-9783); Lois Barnum (751-6665); or Charlotte Pease (751-9612). You may pay at the door, but please make reservations as soon as possible.

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MEMORIAL DAY FAIR A SUCCESS:

All indications point to another successful Memorial Day Fair. Some bills are still outstanding so our treasurer, Carole Schnoor is unable to give out a final figure at this time, however, she has provided final figures on some of the fair's activities.

The homemade candy booth chaired by Edna Rose and Jane Demmin made $439.78; The Dealers, chaired by Nettie Stimson, realized $3,970.50; Childrens' Games, Darrell Smith, Chrm., $150.00; Auction run by Jim Stapf, $120.00; Coffee & Donuts, Judy Zauner, Chrm., $358.57; Food Bldg., Maxine Jones, Chrm., $1103.18; Hot Dogs, Dale Schlyer, Chrm., and Funnel Cakes, Sally Smith, Chrm., (combined) $3,038.44; Ice Cream, Melinda Hutchison, Chrm., $425.00; Sno Cones, Darrell Smith, Chrm., $159.25; Quilt, Lucille Upton, Chrm., $2,774.60; Lemonade & Popcorn, Dick and Sue Schultz, Chrm., $77.70; Ways and Means, Dick Schmidle, Chrm., $242.69; Cotton Candy, Melinda Hutchison, Chrm., $358.57, also Fish Pond, Gail Walder, Chrm., $53.65.

It was the concerted effort by everyone that made the fair a success, but there were some to whom we'd like to make special mention: Ed Hastings, Darrell Smith, and Elton Kropp for a great job on set-up and clean-up; Art Schnoor and "Chuck" Messersmith for putting up the awning pipes by the Barnum Building.

Don Burrows did his usual fine job of arranging for and monitoring the shuttle busses, and one of the best parking lay-outs we've had was engineered by Dan and Keven King.

Eleanor Myers, General Chairman, arranged for some good musical entertainment this year that reminded us of the "Old Fshioned Country Fairs" of earlier years. Berne Kent, in derby hat and vest, provided some of the best titilating honky tonk piano we've heard recently, and he, along with the Wilson Central School Band showed that you don't have to look beyond Wilson's own borders to find good, refreshing entertainment.

Margaret Siener did a good job on Publicity even though it was new to her, and we also hope that everyone had an opportunity to see the exhibits in the Depot, Fittro Shop, Barnum Building, and Dr. Argue Antique car building. One attraction put together in the depot by Winnie Fischer, showed pictures taken of past fairs. The ever popular alumni registration and display of the Wilson Central School "Crests" also attracted much attention.

Darrell Smith provided a good selection of children's games this year, and we thank Tony Del Gross who dispensed free balloons to the youngsters all day long. And we can't overlook our congenial night watchman, Frank Massing, who kept watch over the premises on the night before the fair, then spent all next day dispensing coffee and donuts.

If you liked our "canned musical background" and announcements you can blame John Myers and this writer, but since we aren't professional announcers, we hope you'll overlook some of our "bloopers". We also wish to acknowledge the excellent fair coverage from "Good Neighbor Dave" and the WLVL Radio Station at Lockport who covered fair proceedings until after the American Legion Monument Dedication and remarks by Walter Moxham, Vietnam veteran.

Nettie Stimson is to be commended for the business-like manner that she handled our fair's biggest attraction, the Flea Market. Not only did Nettie send out hundreds of contracts to area dealers, she also collec ted fees and had spaces marked out to accomodate them. Nettie along with Ron Zauner and Judy arrive early and stay late, and while many of us are still sleeping, Nettie is on the job directing dealers to their locations.

Other members who help keep things running smoothly include Lois Barnum, Eleanor Myers, Maxine Jones, Emma Lou Schrader, Sara Berry, Pam Groff, Judy Zauner, and Carole Schnoor. In fact, they all do their jobs so well you hardly realize how important they are to the fair.

If you walked through the Dr. Argue Memorial Building you probably noticed how nicely Wally Goodman and Clark Stimson arranged the cars. Clark also made several changes in displays, and from what we saw, we believe the antique car committee is on the road to making the car building one of the best exhibits in the museum complex.

We wish we could list the names of everyone who furnished or offered their services to help make this year's fair a success--we just hope we didn't leave someone out.

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ANNUAL MEETING:

The annual meeting was held in the Barnum Bldg. on June 15th and approximately 50 members attended the 40's dinner put on by the Program Comm. and Ways & Means Comm. The menu consisted of meat loaf,scalloped potatoes, boiled cabbage, rolls and condiments. Coffee tea, and lemonade were furnished with apple cobbler for desert.

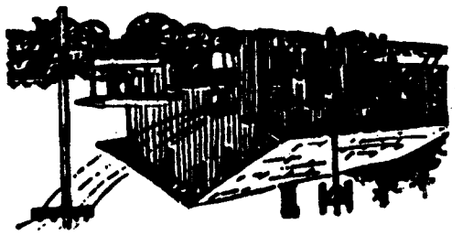
Entertainment was provided by the "snappy" A Band from Thomas Marks School under the direction of Thomas Leach Three of the society's junior members played in the band including Kyle Andrews, Robert Hull, and Kyle Mittlefehldt. Other members were Jason Brasure, Seth Muck, Daniel Licht, Peter Kozelak, Benjamin Albright, Mindy Lane, Anthony Francescutti, & Gregory Platt

Following the program, John Myers, Pres., called for committee reports. Don Croop reported over 500 families received 11 editions of the Newsletter; 650 books of quilt tickets were made up; posters, contracts, and hand-outs were printed up for the fair. He thanked Wanda Burrows, Sara Berry, Nettie Stimson, and the Ways & Means Comm. for selling over 400 "Sketchbooks".

Lois Jennings reported that during the past year 71 donors contributed 585 items. Mrs. Janet Sporleder announced that a historic marker is ready to place on the old Ira Pettit home on Maple Rd., and another has been ordered for the anchor farm, site of the 1st adult evening classes which were held before a schoolhouse was built in Wilson.

Officers elected will serve to December 31, 1993: John Myers, Pres., Don Burrows, Vice-Pres., Norm MacAskill, 2nd Vice-Pres., Rec. Sec., Bobbie Hull/Kathy Kraatz; Cor. Sec., Emily McAvoy; and Treas., Carole Schnoor. Trustees to December 31, 1995, are Ollie Clark, "Red" Clark, and Wally Goodman. Committee Chairmen were elected as follows:

Lois Jennings, Acquisitions; Judy King, By-Laws; Celeste Crawford, Genealogy; Marjorie Lederhouse, Sunday Hostesses; Jan Sporleder, Historical Sites; Anne Faery, Membership; Bobbie Hull, Librarian; Lois Jennings, Memorial; Don Croop, Publications/Newsletter; Barbara Mosher, Program; "Chuck" Branch, Photography; Margaret Siener, Publicity; Norie Desso, Refreshments; Dick Schmidle, Ways & Means; and Lucille Upton, Docents.



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September, 1992 Vol. 21 No. 8

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

NEWSLETTER

Wilson Historical Society
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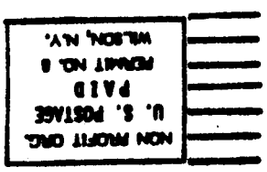

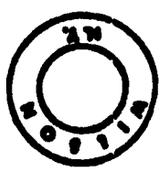

September 1992

YOU'VE COME A LONG WAY, BABY:

It is said that "War is Hell", but it took World War II to shake the long standing tradition that "Women's place is in the home" and, with thousands of them entering the work force in 1942, to back their men in arms, a trend developed that would never again see women restricted in the labor market.

Winnie Fischer of Wilson recently recalled the 1940's when married women didn't work in banks, and remembered one young lady who was secretly married, and, when she became pregnant, "lost her job in a hurry."

These conditions began to change by 1942 as thousands of men entered the armed forces and business establishments soon became hard pressed to find help. That was when they made the remarkable discovery that many women could do as well or better on jobs that, up to then, had been considered mens' work.

On February 28, 1942, one of the headlines in a Tonawanda newspaper read, "State Trust names woman as a teller; Wiss Winifred Helwig will take over a male teller's place on Monday."

The article then goes on to explain, "Women tellers are being tried out by many banks at present due to the large number of male tellers that are being called into the army."

Since many persons today spend from $75 to $150 dollars a week for groceries, they might find it hard to believe that back in the early 40's, people actually worked for $10 or $15 dollars a week. In fact, Winnie recalled that her first job on the paper payed only $9 per week. She later made $12 a week working for a lumber company, and when the opportunity came to work in the bank for $15 dollars a week, she thought she was "sitting on top of the world."

The comparatively low wages of yester year, however, went further because of the relatively low cost of living. For instance, a $3 outlay for groceries could feed a small family for a week; also, medical expenses were unbelievably low compared to today.

Winnie provided us with several copies of old medical bills from DeGraff Memorial Hospital which bears this out. One shows a operating room charge for $7.50, plus 4 daysin a ward @ $2.50 perday for a total of $17.50.

Another bill dated April 22, 1942, lists nine and two thirds days of private room service at $6 a day for a total of $62 dollars.

Everyone is aware, of course, that conditions have greatly changed in the past 30 years with everything from food, to cars, to homes, skyrocketing out of sight.

Perhaps the greatest change to come about since the days of World War II has been the progress made by women in their on going search for "womens' lib" and, with a new found freedom in the work place, they have advanced steadily in rolls of leadership in both the business and the political world. With our country three trillion dollars in debt, perhaps it's about time.

Perhaps there's more truth than humor in a recent advertising slogan, "You've Come a long way, Baby.".

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FROM THE MAILBAG:

Mark Huntington, Vice-Pres. of S.C. Parker & Co. Investment Service of Lockport, in response to a recent item in the newsletter about Rex Tugwell, noted that his father and Rex Tugwell's father, Charles, were very good friends.

Mark's predecessor at the Wilson Branch Marine Trust, Paul Davenport, lived in the former Tugwell home on the Bay, so Mark had the opportunity to spend some time there and recalls that Rex's private cabin was both rustic and very charming.

Many of Wilson's old timers may recall those early days when Wilson's harbor was a lot more peaceful than it is today, and we think Mark summed it up pretty well when he wrote, "Progress sure raises the devil with nostalgia and beautiful scenery."

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Warren and Frances Cook of Escondido, California, write that they are living this summer at Lake Almanor, CA., and he hopes that the 4,500 foot elevation and clean air will "improve my health." They have purchased two copies of "Wilson Sketchbook" to give to their sons, Warren and Tom.

The Cooks are descended from Russell Robinson who lived on the "Slash" (Maple) Road, and in 1834 was instrumental in starting up the 1st Baptist Church in Wilson. Mr. Robinson served for forty years as a Deacon in the church.

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BON MOT:

The only thing that kids wear out faster than shoes are parents and teachers.

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LAND WHERE THE BUFFALO ROAMED:

When Columbus discovered America, 60 million bison roamed freely around the country--many right here in Western New York. By the mid 1800's, there were still some 20 million on the North American continent.

Since the Indians depended on the Buffalo for food and clothing, great hunting expeditions and railroad excursions were organized to slaughter the Buffalo as a means of forcing the Indians onto reservations.

By 1900, it was estimated that only 200 of the animals still survived. Only by the concerted action of a few concerned ranchers was the trend reversed, and today the threat of their extinction is no longer of great concern.

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CORRECTION:

Lt. Col Floyd and Beatrice (Stockwell) Hicks recently attended the graduation of their grandson, Ensign Noller, at the Annapolis Naval Academy. Also attending were Marion (Stockwell) Winger and her friend, Agnas Shanahan, both from Wilson. We apologize for the errors in the July/August Newsletter.

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MUSEUM HOSTS AND HOSTESSES:

Marge Lederhouse reports that the following members will greet visitors at the museum on Sundays from 2 to 4 PM:

Sept. 6th, Howard Lederhouse and Norm Thilk; Sept. 13th, Dorothy Lort and Ruth Phillips; Sept. 20th, Helen Horton and Edna Rose; and Sept. 27th, Neva and Harold Benedict.

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AROUND THE MUSEUM:

When you visit the museum you may notice all the Memorial trees have been marked with small name plates. Thanks to Elwin Upton, they are all mounted uniformly on treated wood, and should hold up well for many years.

The most recent plaque to be put in place identifies the tree that was donated by Thomas E. Marks in memory of his father, Edward T. Marks.

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When the old depot was acquired by the society for a museum ca. 20 years ago, many of our members dreamed of the day when the rotted-out eves and over-hanging roof supports could be repaired, and the cement-asbestos roof replaced.

Those dreams have finally been realized, and in less than 3 weeks, Ed Hastings and Mike White's Roofing and Siding, transformed the old depot into a real "showplace."

The newly-painted west side of the Fittro Shop looks great thanks to Ed Allgeier, Ollie Clark and Elton Kropp. The Veteran's Memorial is greatly enhanced by the new improvements around it.

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NEW MEMBERS:

It is always a pleasure to accept new members into our society, and this month we are happy to welcome: Steven and Ethel Licht of Wilson; James and Beth Waldron of Wilson; Howard Baker of Albion, New York; and junior member Ashley Cramer of Ransomville.

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BOARD ASSIGNMENTS:

As reported in the last newsletter, the Board of Directors recently decided to have one of its members responsible each week for opening and closing the museum on Sundays from 2-4Pm.

The Director will also be responsible for taking charge of any monies received for booklets souvenirs or donations, and giving it to Carole Schnoor, our treasurer. Any director who is unable to serve when assigned will be expected to find a suitable substitute.

Directors assigned to open and close the museum in September are: Sept. 6th, Donald Croop; Sept. 13th, Dorothy Maxfield; Sept 20th, John Myers, and Sept. 27th, Lois Barnum.

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FINAL NOTICE:

The 20th Birthday Party Celebration of the Wilson Historical Society will be held in the Barnum Building on Sunday, September 13th, at 5:00PM. Reservations should be called in to either Lois Jennings, Lois Barnum, or Charlotte Pease. The cost will be $8.50 per person, and you may pay at the door.

It has been decided that the Birthday Party on the 13th will ... replace the regular monthly meeting in September, and Barbara Mosher, program chairman, said that the first program meeting this fall will be held on Monday evening, October 19th.

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BOARD APPOINTMENTS:

Committee chairmen elected at the annual meeting in June appeared in the July/Aug. Newsletter. Chairmen appointed by the Board of Directors are as follows: Curator, Dorothy Maxfield; Barnum Building, Eleanor Myers; Fittro Shop, Ed Allgeier; Grounds Chrm, Elton Kropp; Depot Chairmen, Norrie and Hoyt Desso;; Argue Building, Wally Goodman/Clark Stimson; Caboose, Ellsworth McKelvey; Federation Representative, Norman MacAskill; and 1993 Memorial Day Fair, fair committee consisting of Donald Burrows, Dan King, Darrell Smith, Lois Barnum and Nettie Stimson. Appointments: Trustee to December, 1995, Floyd Clark. Trustee to December 31, 1993, Dr. George Cruickshank.

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SUMMER SOCIAL:

A combination of beautiful weather, great music, and jumbo ice cream sundaes, helped to make this year's Ice Cream Social one of the town's successful summer events. Not only could area residents enjoy the snappy music of Sanborn's Award Winning Band, they could also browse through the museum which was hosted by Claude and Ruth Lampman and Hoyt and Norrie Desso.

Dick and Sue Schultz chaired the Ice Cream Social assisted by Wanda Burrows, Mary and Red Clark, Bill and Maxine Jones, and Christopher and Mary Schultz. Judy King, assisted by Ruth Staples were cashiers, and Ollie Clark and Ed Allgeier handled the "set-up".

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A SMALL TOWN is a place where no one panics when the police department takes his vacation.

THUMBNAIL SKETCH:

Pioneer Walter Hurlburt came to the Wilson area from Vermont prior to the Civil War, and the family homestead was originally located on the Hurlburt Road west of Wilson. When the war broke out, he enlisted with the 23rd N.Y. Independent Battery.

He was a gunsmith, farmer, and miller, and when he died he was buried in Greenwood Cemetery in Wilson. His wife, Esther Sweet, is also interred there.

He and his wife had four children, William Levi Hurlburt; Mary (H. Johnson); Hattie (Burt) Wilson; and Flora (Timothy) Wilson. His son, William, left school after the 8th grade to work for his father in his grist mill, but left in 1884 to work in grist mills at Phelps, NY, and Malone, NY. In 1890 he went to Oneida, NY, where he became Supt. of the Oneida flour mill.

In 1898 he married Wilhemina Carroll of Oneida, and they had two sons, Walter and Russell. In 1904, William brought his family to Buffalo, NY, and was Supt. of the Buffalo Cerial Co. They lived on West Ferry St. until 1908 when he decided to move his family back to Wilson where they resided on Harbor Street.

He commuted to Buffalo on the old "Hojack" railroad until 1912 when, for health reasons, he resigned from the cerial company.

In 1913, William accepted the position of Supt. at Charlie Tugwell's "Fredonia Canning Co." in Wilson, and he worked there until the mid 1930's when he left to help his sons, Walter and Russ,, establish the "Hurlburt Brothers Company." He worked there as Vice-President until his death in 1957. His wife, Mina Carroll, died in 1948.

Walter and Russell started the Hurlburt Co. in a barn behind the family home on Harbor Street and the same year moved into a building on Napoleon Street. In 1946 they built a large new processing plant at the location.

Russell married Marjorie Crossman, and their children, all graduates of Wilson Central School are Mary Lou, Hannah Jane, and Carroll (Teague.)

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FAIR EFFORTS APPRECIATED:

Eleanor Myers, General Chrm. of the 1992 Memorial Day Fair, reported that "this year's fair was a success even with the poor weather conditions endured, and that over 250 two-hour posi-sions were filled by many willing volunteers."

She thanks the various sub-chairmen responsible for the fair's success: Lois Barnum, Don Burrows, Darrell Smith, Wally Goodman, Maxine Jones, Dan King, Emma Lou Reppentine, Margaret Seiner, Nettie Stimson, Clark Stimson, Dick Schmidle, Ed Hastings, Carole Schnoor, Pam Graff, Judy Zauner. Dick and Sue Schultz, Dale Schlyer, Sally Smith, Elton Kropp, Art Schnoor, Sara Berry, Frank Massing, and Ron Zauner.

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At the July meeting of the Board of Directors, a motion was approved to permit a five-person committee take full responsibility for the 1993 Fair.

The committee, consisting of Darrell Smith, Don Burrows, Nettie Stimson, Lois Barnum, and Dan King presented a letter to the Board with the following proposal:

"We propose that the Board of Directors give us the authority to operate the Memorial Day Fair. The members of the committee agree to take on the responsibility as they feel it is no longer a job for one or even two chairmen. We are proposing this in order to make the fair run efficiently with enough profit to run the museum financially sound throughout the year."

The proposal was unanimously approved by the board, and commenting later on the Board's action, John Myers, President said,"We are very, very happy to have this group take on the responsibility."

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IN MEMORIAM:

Samuel McCoy, retired machinist at Harrison Div. GMC, Lockport, died Tuesday, June 16, 1992, at Inter-Community Hospital at Newfane.

Sam, a veteran of World War II, was a member of Exley U. M. C., past master of Ontario Lodge, F&AM of Wilson; the U.A.W. 686 of Lockport; Elks Lodge No. 41, Lockport; Wilson Lions Club; and Wilson Historical Society since 1985.

He is survived by his wife, Mary Zimmerman McCoy, and 3 children, David R. of Lockport; Deborah Tallman; and Julia (David) Godfrey of Norwich,CT; also a brother, Clifford McCoy of Wilson, and 6 grandchildren.

Memorial services were held at Exley U.M.C. with Rev. Don Foley officiating. Burial was in Greenwood Cemetery, Wilson.

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Hazel Thilk, 94, died at her home on Chestnut Rd., June 19, 1992. She was a lifelong member of the East Wilson Community; was the local correspondent for the Union Sun & Journal; charter member of the South Wilson Fire Co. Auxiliary; Inter-Community Hospital volunteer; member of the American Legion Auxiliary, 836 of Wilson; and Honorary Member of the Wilson Historical Society.

She is survived by 2 sons, Raymond (Rosemary) Thilk and Merritt (Marion) Thilk, both of Wilson; also 4 grandchildren and 6 great grandchildren.

Memorial services were held at the Hamilton & Clark Funeral Chapel, and burial was in the North Ridge Cemetery at North Ridge.

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Henry J. Perry, 84, died July 3, 1992, at Inter-Community Hospital, Newfane. A World War II army veteran, he belonged to American Legion Post 850 and Lodge 135, F&AM of Lowville; also the AARP and Tappi, a professional engineering association. He once served on the Wilson Planning Board, and joined the historical society in 1986.

Burial arrangements were made by the Hamilton & Clark Funeral Chapel, and internment was in the Albany Rural Cemetery at Albany, New York.

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FINAL THOUGHT:

An automobile is an expensive thing to operate--right up there behind the grocery cart.

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Coleman Printing

October 1992 Vol. 21 No. 10

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

NEWSLETTER

Wilson Historical Society

WILSON, NEW YORK 14172-9763

October, 1992

THEY EVEN MADE SOAP:

Anyone in the 80 or 90 year bracket probably remembers when most families, especially those in rural communities, were very self-sufficient. Many raised their own food in large gardens, and some vegetables and fruits were preserved by drying before the art of canning was perfected.

Meats were often salted and smoked and hung in unheated rooms for future use, and pork was salted in brine and preserved in large stone crocks or barrels.

Most houses were built with large cellars or attics which not only served as a place to store meats and vegetables, but also provided a place to hang the wash in bad weather.

Before farmers shipped milk, they generally kept just enough cows to provide milk and butter for their own families, while those who had more cows made cottage cheese and butter which was packed in stone crocks. A piece of cloth from an old sheet or pillowcase was often placed over the crocks to draw out the moisture and help preserve the butter.

Many farmers had regular customers who would drive out from the city to purchase butter, eggs, dressed chickens, garden produce, or fresh fruits--a custom that continues somewhat to the present day, however, numerous vegetable and fruit stands throughout the area attract most of the city trade today.

Although rural residents were self-sufficient, they still had to make weekly trips to town where they would visit the local grocer to obtain items such as coffee, tea, sugar, flour,spices and molasses. Many persons pickled fruits such as pears, peaches, and cherries, while bushels of pears and apples w ere made into butter.

Every farmhouse had its own barrel of vinegar and hard cider in the cellar or other suitable place like a garage, and it wasn't too unusual to see friends or neighbors stopping in now or then to check the contents.

It also wasn't unusual for farm wives to make their own soap, and, in the days before concentrated lye came into use, farmers would make their own.

This was done by making a leech barrel which was filled about half full with wheat straw over which wood ashes were dumped. The barrel was then filled to the top with straw and placed on a foundation above the ground.

A hole for a spigit was drilled in the barrel about ten inches from the bottom, and the contents of the barrel was then filled with water. As the water seeped through the straw and ashes, a lye solution was produced and drained off through the spigit into wooden pails. The dark colored liquid could only be stored in wood or porcelain containers, and, if one got it on their hands, it would burn quite badly.

Both hard and soft soap was made from the lye solution, and the soft soap, which was dark brown in color, was often kept in barrels. The hard soap was cream colored, and was poured into pans where it hardened and could be cut up later into bars.

The bar soap was often scented by the housewife to take away the strong odor of the lye. The soap generally had exceptional cleaning power, and was also highly recommended for use following one's exposure to poison ivy.

Our grandparents of the late 1800's learned to get along with what they had, and didn't enjoy the comforts that many of us have today, but their rugged individualism, no doubt, provided their descendents with the aptitude necessary to develop the amazing computerized society that we live in today.

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MEMBERSHIP NOTES:

Several new members have joined the society this month and we welcome, Charles A. Gerstung of Port St. Lucie, Florida; Ronald Swick of Boynton Beach, Florida; Howard and Dorothy Parker of Chestnut Road, Newfane, and Charlie and Debi Cleveland of Appleton, New York.

Stuart and Ernestine Walpole have moved from Wilson to Richmond, Virginia. They joined the society in 1972, and always took an active part in society affairs. Ernie was a member of the Memorial Committee and did a nice job keeping up the Memorial Book in the Patterson Room.

Ernie was a first grade teacher in the Wilson Elementary School system, and hundreds of her former pupils are probably living in the area today.

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OCTOBER MEETING:

Art Reynolds will be the guest speaker at the October 19th meeting of the Wilson Historical Society. The subject of Mr. Reynold's talk will be "The Erie Canal".

Refreshment hostesses will be Jane Sinclair and Joanna Demmin.

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BON MOT: A friendship is like pure gold--it won't wear out because its old.

THUMBNAIL SKETCH:

Doris Fittro Clark, 96, was born in 1896 at Clarksburg, West Virginia, and moved to Wilson when she was a youngster. She recalls that those were the days when peach orchards flourished around the town, and apples sold for $6.00 a barrel.

She graduated from Wilson High School in 1914, and her classmates were Martha Mallory, Elizabeth Tschabold, Irene Young, Seva Sweet, and Pauline McQuillan.

She later graduated from Normal School and taught in a rural school for $10.00 a week. In 1917, she married Ray E. Clark but they were separated when he joined the Infantry and was sent to France. She taught in Pendleton during the war until one day when Ray returned home.

They decided to open a furniture/undertaker business in 1922, and established the Hamilton & Clark business on Delaware Avenue in Buffalo.

The business prospered and they had two children, Virginia and Don, but the untimely death of Ray in 1926 brought everything to a standstill. Clark's share in the business was bought out by Mr. Hamilton, and Doris later sold her home on Lincoln when Kenmore merchants wanted the space for a parking lot.

Now, a young widow with two children, Doris had to work hard to support her family, and although she never remarried, always found time to enjoy life and became an excellent bridge player.

She was quite artistic and painted many beautiful water color scenes, also, an accomplished musician, she played the organ for her church and the Eastern Star Order in Kenmore.

Her daughter, Virginia Klaiber, resides in Williamsville with husband, Howard, and her son, Don, who lives in Kenmore, is an Emergency Medical Technician and headed the First Aid Department and Workmans Compensation Division at Nabisco.

Doris, a Life Member of the Wilson Historical Society, remembers the Fittro Blacksmith Shop clearly. She recalled that her father, Bruce Fittro, used to keep their buggy horse, "Dandy", in the back of the shop until 1914 when the horse was retired and put out to pasture on the Pettit farm.

Also that year, her father bought the first Buick sold in Wilson, and Doris said that she was the first person to drive it.

She worked for Mr. Patterson at the freight depot during World War I, and also kept busy managing the house, family, and tending store when Hamilton & Clark were "out on business."

Doris would be very happy to hear from other society members in her age bracket.

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"WHITE FEATHER":

Many moons ago, Chief Strong Fox and other members of the Corn Planter American Indians, entertained the student body at the Bradford, PA., High School with dances and songs--then adopted some of the students and faculty into their tribe.

One of the girls honored,Sara Holmes, was given the Indian name "White Feather". Today her friends in Wilson know her as Sara Berry.

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OCTOBER HOSTS AND HOSTESSES:

According to Marge Lederhouse, Chrm., the following members have agreed to be hosts and hostesses at the museum on Sunday afternoons from 2:00 to 4:00 PM.

Oct. 4th, Helen and Ralph Dinse; Oct. 11th, June and Elton Kropp; Oct. 18th, Donna and Sidney Pettit; and Oct. 25th, Maxine and Bill Jones.

Members of the Board of Directors assigned to open and close the museum follow: Oct. 4th, Milton Clark; Oct. 11th, Bobbie Hull; Oct. 18th, Norman MacAskill; and Oct. 25th, Donald Burrows.

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CLASS CELEBRATES 50th REUNION:

The Wilson Central School Class of 1942 held its 50th reunion at the Wilson House with classmates, spouses, and former teachers in attendance.

Officers of the class present were Robert Manning, President; Jean Kinsella Stapf, Treasurer; Martha Stockwell Harvey, Secretary, and, (absent) Donald Ossman, Vice-President.

Class Advisors, Dorothy Dehn of Buffalo, and Wesley Churchill and his wife of West Valley, were guests of honor; and some former teachers attending were Mr. and Mrs. Al Waite of Wilson; Mr. and Mrs. Raymond Hill of Sodus Point; and Mr. and Mrs. Robert Venneman of Buffalo.

Blanche Handy Jenson, Class Valedictorian, who resides in Sun City Center, Florida, came the greatest distance to attend the event.

James McCormick was Master of Ceremonies, and the invocation was given by Etta Davis, with a moment of silence in memory of deceased classmates, Nina Barney, Ellen Faery, James Ingrahm, Reginald Mann, Donald Truesdell, Bruce Wilson, and Richard Ingraham.

Jean Stapf, Salutatorian, of Wilson, was the speaker, and gave an address on "Teaching, Then and Now."

The class has tentative plans for holding a 55th reunion.

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RECENT ACQUISITIONS:

Charles Howard Baker, Albion: Wagon Wheel that stood behind depot on Loomis Farm; also white painted wheel from railroad handcart--in memory of his father, Charles H. Baker.

Charles Buchner, Ransomville: Two pictures, Wilson Main St. in 1987; also photo of Jack Perry when running for position of Town Clerk in 1959.

Gerald Kadryna, Lakeside Market: 13 pieces of red, white, and blue Bunting.

Lucy Wilson, Youngstown: Newspaper clippings on Lake Erosion, and Jane Moxham, Chrm. of the Shoreline Protection Association.

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DIRECTOR MEETING:

Directors will meet at Museum Wed. evening, Oct. 14th, at 7:30 PM. All committee chrm. are welcome, and encouraged to attend to make reports and keep themselves informed on activities.

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IT IS NICE to remember the past, but you can't live in it.

EARLY WILSON:

The Niagara County Directory of 1869 reveals that Wilson had a population of 680 persons in 1820--10 years after Reuben Wilson and John Eastman pulled their boats ashore and built cabins along the lake. By 1865, the town's population had increased to 3,264, and, by comparison, Lockport had a population of 13,937 persons.

In 1821, Wilson was divided into five school districts, but by 1869 the number had increased to seventeen.

When the village was incorporated on May 4, 1858, it had a population of one thousand, and had three dry goods stores, three groceries, and several mechanic shops. There was also the J.C. & McCarty Lumber Yard, the F.E. Moore & Co. Sash and Door Manufactory, and H. Sanford's Coal Yard.

There were four postoffices in the town at the time, and Daniel H. Crosby was the postmaster in the village; Aaron Beebe was postmaster at the East Wilson office which was located at the Marsh Settlement, (Chestnut & Beebe Roads); Guy W. Loomis was postmaster of the Maple Street office located at the old Ide Settlement about three miles from the village; and Mathias Covert was postmaster of the South Wilson Postoffice.

The area was thickly forested, and most of the trees that were cut were sawed into lumber at the Barber Steam Saw Mill located at the Marsh Settlement, or the Freeman Saw Mill which was four miles south of the Wilson Village on Townline Road, (Rt. 425).

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FITTRO DESCENDANT SHINES:

Leslie Diane Stotlar, daughter of James and Suzanne C. Stotlar of Yorba Linda, CA., and granddaughter of Harvey and June Wince of Valencia, CA., has recently received an appointment to the United States Air Force Academy, Class of '66, at Colorado Springs, South Dakota.

Leslie's appointment has special significanse to Wilson because she is the great-great granddaughter of Bruce Fittro, former Wilson Blacksmith, whos shop was in the barn which is now a part of the Wilson Museum Complex.

It is no small accomplishment to receive an appointment to any of our Nation's Military Academies, so Leslie deserves a lot of credit. She was nominated to the Academy by Congressman Dannemeyer of California, and was one of 1100 appointees accepted from 12,000 applicants.

Leslie graduated in 1991 from the Esperanzo High School in Anneheim, CA.,and, in addition to being a National Merit Semi Finalist, received a Falcon Foundation Scholarship.

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FAMILY VALUES:

Ask an Old Timer if you want to know the meaning of the term, "family values". Don Clark, for instance, refers to the period around 1900 when 85% of the U.S. population lived on farms. In his view we were a nation of small, independent businessmen whos success mainly depended on the weather, hard work, and steadfast faith in God.

In the large victorian houses of early Wilsonand other towns, there was always room for grandad or grandma, and extended families were the rule. It was a time of independent living with large families joining together to split up and share the workload.

Independent farmers didn't have to rely on factory jobs for their livelihood, and most of them were prosperous and happy on their own farms. Children were able to learn family values at home where they had their their parents and grandparents to instill moral values and respect for their elders in them.

Today, the greatest communicator of all time, TV, exerts great influence on the minds of our nation's young people, and, we might add, "What they see is what we get."

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20th BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION:

Seventy-five members of the Wilson Historical Society attended the 20th Birthday Party celebration which was held in the Barnum Building Sunday, Sept. 13th, at 5:00PM. Mrs. Lois Jennings chaired the event assisted by Lois Barnum and Charlotte Pease.

Arthur Schnoor gave the blessing and a delicious buffet dinner, prepared and catered by Mary Moley Palacios of Wilson, was topped off with cake and ice cream.

Harold Mosher, town supervisor, spoke briefly on what the society had achieved during the past 20 years, and complimented the officers and volunteer workers for their fine contribution.

John Myers, President, also said a few words and thanked everyone, both past and present, for their labor of love which allowed the museum to become what it is today.

In 1972, anyone who attended two of the 1st five meetings, were designated charter members. Mrs. Jennings read the names of those who qualified, and asked for a show of hands to see how many were present at the dinner, and 18 persons responded including Jean Argue, Lois Barnum, Sara Berry, Marion Campbell, Donald Croop, Eloise Culverwell, Winifred Fischer, Lois Jennings, Eleanor Myers, John Myers, Anna Mae Nevins, Patricia Rice, Arthur Schnoor, Carole Schnoor, Grace Singer, Helen Stevens, Nettie Stimson, and Dorothy Tracey (Maxfield). It may also be noted that approximately 20 charter members are deceased.

The program concluded with a video tape put together by Charlie Cleveland and Don Croop which showed scenes from the 1973 and 1974 Memorial Day Fairs as well as other society related activities. There were also scenes from this year's Fair which showed how the museum and grounds have changed over the past 20 years.

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DID YOU KNOW...that Krull Park in Olcott was originally called Tenbrook Grove after one of its pioneer settlers? It is the first recreational facility developed in Niagara County's Park system, and covers 81 acres, eleven of which lie along the lake shore. Home of the Pioneer's Picnics for over 25 years, hundreds of old timers gathered each year from all over Niagara County, and one year Pres. Theodore Roosevelt addressed the gathering.

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FINAL THOUGHT: A politician is a person who reserves any positive things about his opponent for his concession speech.

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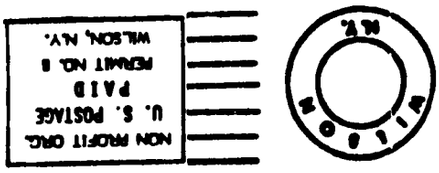
DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

NEWSLETTER

Wilson Historical Society
WILSON, NEW YORK 14172-9763



November

GOLD FEVER:

Old letters sometimes reveal interesting stories about former residents and how their lives were changed by historic events. One that we were privileged to read described the adventures of George Swick, a young Wilson man, who decided to "Go West" during the Oregon gold rush of the 1860's.

George grew up on the family farm located at the corner of Chestnut and Townline Roads--known for many years as the William Rohring farm.

When the Civil War broke out he was 22 years old, and he volunteered to serve in Co. B of the 28th N.Y. Infantry Regiment. The 28th was the pride and joy of Niagara County, but was also one of the most embattled regiments in the war. It was reported that when the regiment left New York in 1861 it had a complement of 798 men, but when it was mustered out 2 years later, only 418 remained.

George was one of the lucky ones who made it back home to Wilson, and about a year later he met and married Martha Rodgers.

It was around this time that gold was discovered in Oregon, and one of George's neighbors got the "gold fever" and sold young Swick on the idea of going west to make a fortune. Martha didn't like the idea, however, and decided to stay home.

George and his friend stocked up on provisions and purchased a covered wagon and three saddle horses. When they loaded up their wagon it was noted that, even though Swick was a temporate man, their supplies included 10 gallons of whiskey, 5 gallons of gin, and 5 gallons of wine.

They left Lockport on their western trek the same year that President Lincoln was assassinated, and the journey took them three months to cross fourteen states to their destination. The trip wasn't easy, and very often it was difficult to find suitable places at night where they could easily find fuel and water.

One time, when they were crossing the Mississippi on a horse boat, they got tangled up with a large floating tree which carried their boat, horses and wagon downstream. It nearly proved to be a disaster, but they finally managed to get back to shore and on the trail again.

The route that they followed was known as the "Overland Stage Route", and in some places they could still see where Rebels had torn up the railroad tracks. Although they saw several Indian tribes, all appeared to be friendly and they had no trouble with them.

When they finally reached Oregon, they decided to settle on the Snake River where they were able to buy a cabin for $30 and immediately set about panning for gold.

At that time, gold was used as the medium of exchange, and since most westerners considered paper money worthless, you needed gold if you wished to purchase anything. The best way to get it was by "panning" or using a pick and shovel. The finished product looked like yellow sand, and was worth about $20 an ounce.

George spent two years in Oregon, and would probably have stayed longer, but since his wife had not gone with him, he decided to return to Wilson.

The journey home was nearly as rough as when he had gone west. The first leg of his trip was a 160 mile drive by stagecoach to the Columbia River. There he boarded a boat for Portland, Oregon, where he caught a steamer to San Francisco. There he was able to board another boat headed for Panama.

The Panama Canal had not yet been built, so George and his party had to cross the Isthmus by mule train. On the Gulf side he boarded a small boat for the Atlantic Coast, but his boat was nearly sunk off the Carolina Coast when they ran into a bad storm. Everyone made it safely to shore, however, and George was able to catch a train back to Wilson.

He was later known to be fairly well off, but he never revealed how much gold he had brought home with him-- When asked, he'd always say he had seen to many people get robbed when they "flashed" their gold around.

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MUSEUM ATTENDANTS FOR NOVEMBER:

Marge Lederhouse has announced that the following persons have agreed to serve as attendants at the museum on Sunday afternoons from 2-4PM.

Nov. 1st, Lucille Upton and Frances Diez. Director, Wallace Goodman; Nov. 8th, John and Jane Demmin, Director, Anne Faery; Nov. 15th, Fenton and Bessie Cole, Director, Gary Fitch; Nov. 22nd, Hoyt and Norie Desso, Director, Carole Schnoor; Nov. 29th, Dick and Sue Schultz, Director, Dorothy Maxfield.

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BON MOT: Many women are not as young as they are painted.

ACQUISITIONS & MEMORIALS:

Members and friends of the Wilson Historical Society who wish to give items to the museum are asked to please follow this request from Lois Jennings, Chrm. of the Acquisitions Committee:

Identify all items with donor's name and address and leave in Library so that Mrs. Jennings will be able to enter all acquisitions in the accession book. If attendant fills out transmission slip, leave copys with gift.

Lois is also Chairman of the Memorial Comm., and all memorial gifts should be directed to her. She sees to it that a proper acknowledgement is sent to both the family and donor.

Ernie Walpole, who recently moved to Virginia, was a member of the committee and saw to it that all memorials were entered into the Memorial Book which is kept in the Patterson Room. It is quite likely that Mrs. Jennings would like someone to take over Mrs. Walpole's job, so if you can print or write neatly, here's an opportunity to do a worthwhile job for the society.

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The following acquisitions were received from Mrs. Stuart Walpole: George Middleton Pharmacy Bottle; 1958 Centennial Wooden Nickle; Adv. Screwdriver from Bill Caufield;Covered Wooden Box from Taggart & Stevens Store; Wilson Wise Owl-1932; 100th Anniversary Wilson High School-1946; Teachers Association Comm. Program-1933; & Teachers' Assoc. Spring Banquet Program-1963;1964. also, Collection Newspaper Articles (listed in accessions) 18 early postcards of Wilson; Play Programs for "Gem" Theater, Wilson, 1931 and 1933.

Lois Barnum: Two large bicycle Wheels.

Paul J. Harold, Chatham, VA: Schoolhouse Bell from District *12 School.

Mrs. Henry Donner, Euclid, OH; Cup & Saucer given to her by 5th grade teacher, Lenore Kruske, in 1912; Globe of World with routes in color taken by Henry & Florence around world; also one large Ostrich Egg.

Wilson Conservation Club: Back Pack Sprayer used for brush fires.

Melvin Beutel, Newfane: Two framed pictures of District School Children.

Mrs. Robert (Mary) Clare, Charlotte, NC: Two World War I Serviceman's Bags that belonged to William Kruske; Framed picture of Wilson High Class of 1912; also Newspaper, 8/4/1992. Clipping of Class 50th Reunion, picture of Lenore Kruske at her school desk.

Sarah Berry: Brownie Camera; Sweet Grass square basket Purse (picture of Phillipines on front) 48 star Flag; Middy Blouse, two books, and two Xmas tree bulbs, ca. 1930.

Marion Campbell: Box of Bunting; Iron Seal from Sam Brown's Catalog of Union Free School, '47,'48 and '40; Wilson Central "Inklings" from January '54 to June,'65; One "Wise Owl"; One "wizars" and 3-"Commentar",Oct. & Nov.,'52 and Feb., '53.

Helene Cornell Gough, Lockport: Wilson "Crests", 1939;1943; & 1966. Wilson "Wise Owl, '29; '32; and '36. The "Clairvoyant,1938. Newspaper Clippings of Wilson Centennial Programs and Bonnet, 1958. "Wilson Stars", '39 Nov.; 3/12/41;3/13/42; 3/12/43; 8/5/43; 8/12/43; 3/12/43;/45.

Evelyn Goodman (Irma) Sonnelitter, Lockport: Button Necklace; 51 Calling Cards; 10 Advertising Cards; 15 Greeting Cards; Good Conduct Card, 1876, 1875; also, Adv. Box; Foxy Grandpa Button; Harding Political Button; Plush Jacket; Taffeta Coat(All belonged to Emma Goodman, born 1865.)

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COMING EVENTS:

According to Dick Schmidle, Ways & Means Chrm., the annual Bake Sale will be held at the Town Hall on Election Day, November 3rd. Winnie Terry is Chairman of the event, and urges everyone to please help out and bring your baked goods to the hall from 8 to 9 AM. Assisting Terry will be Emily McAvoy and Lucille Upton.

Celeste Crawford has announced that the tree-trimmin' party will be held at the museum starting Sunday afternoon, December 6th, at 1PM. Plan to come, bring some "goodies"-have fun.

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BOARD REPORTS:

"Red" Clark gave a summary of the proposed master plan for development of Wilson's Tuscarora State Park.

Eleanor Myers reported that work is being done on the Country Store, and she could use a few volunteers to help remove rust spots from the chrome-trimmed chairs in the Barnum Building.

Ellsworth and Bess McKelvey have painted the new shelving in the library that was installed by Ollie Clark. The McKelveys have also done considerable touch-up work on the old caboose, and have also brushed and painted both the baggage truck and the 2-wheel fire hose cart.

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NEW MEMBERS:

It is a pleasure to welcome the following new members: Mr. and Mrs. Myron Webster of Lockport, and Mike and Lorretta White of Wilson.

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NOVEMBER MEETING:

The Nov. 16th meeting will be in the form of a "Book Review", and the subject will be two 1916 Cookbooks that were loaned to the society by Ernestine Walpole. The cookbooks belonged to her mother, Ida Deitrick, and the review will cover "Household Hints", "Home Doctoring", and "Things Worth Knowing." Refreshment hostesses provided by Norie Desso, Chrm., will be Sue Schearer and Gail Walder.

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WREATHES AVAILABLE:

The Wilson Cemetery Association will accept orders immediately from all persons who might be interested in having a wreath placed on a loved-one's grave in Greenwood Cemetery. There will be a charge for wreath and stand, and town employee will put wreaths in place. You may obtain more information by calling the Town Hall.

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THE NEXT Board of Director meeting will be held November 11th at the museum starting at 7:30PM.

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SOUNDINGS: An organization is as good as the officers entrusted with its operation.

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CAR MUSEUM:

Wally goodman and Clark Stimson had a nice exhibit of old cars at the Memorial Day Fair, and we've found that many visitors to the museum like to ask questions about the cars on display. With this in mind, we thought some of the following information might be useful to our museum attendants.

The oldest car in the collection is a replica of a 1901 Oldsmobile which was donated by Jean Argue in 1988. It was built on an original Olds frame by Lewis Smith and Don Flagler, and was presented to Dr. Argue in honor of his 25th year as a practising physician in Wilson.

Perhaps the rarest car on exhibit is the 1904 Covert Chainless which was built by Byron Covert at his former Richmond Avenue Plant in Lockport. It was the first car acquired for the museum by Dr. Argue, and was obtained from the Ford Museum at Dearborn, Michigan. It is the only car of its make known to exist in the United States, and was once the property of James Melton, former opera star. The car's one cylinder gas engine develops 6½ horsepower and has a combination air and water cooling system.

The 1907 Metz, which was originally purchased new at the Metz Dealership in Gasport, NY, was used by Dr. Murray Mudge of Hartland to make calls on his patients. In 1920, he sold it to Herbert Smart, who later sold it to Dr. Argue in 1950. A unique feature of the car is a single seat located at the back of the car which was called the "mother-in-law seat."

The 1928 Reo Wolverine Sport Coupe Cabriolet features a rumble seat which was built in place of the customary rear trunk. This car was quite popular with young lovers during the 1920's, and sported a 6 cylinder, 50 h.p. rated engine; four-wheel hydraulic brakes; and strap shock absorbers on the front springs. When Dr. Argue acquired this model, the owner had given up trying to restore it, and most of the parts were in baskets.

The society also owns two trucks. One is a 1919 ton and a half Ford that was restored by Les Myers of Wilson. He later added a low-high gear which made the truck a good vehicle for farmers to use in the fields.

The other truck, a 1923 one and a half ton Chevrolet, is the last model produced by chevy with a four cylinder engine.

A World War II Jeep donated by Leo Klees of Wilson, is in need of considerable body work to restore it to good condition, but it runs good, and represents one of the last Willys Jeeps produced without the use of over head valves.

One of the museum's showpieces is a 1959 Cadillac Convertible that was once owned by former Lockport druggist, James Oldham. Also, in this same class, is a 1934 Pierce Arrow, and a 1957 Lincoln Mark II.

Some of the other cars include a 1967 Pontiac Convertible that was donated by Norman Thilk of Wilson; a 1968 Chevrolet Corvair Monza; and a sporty Studebaker Avanti with super charged engine.

The last car donated to the museum by the late Dr. Argue is an electric car which he used to commute back and forth to the Newfane Hospital during the gas shortage days.

We should note that it takes a considerable amount of money to restore antique cars to mint condition and, since available funds have had to be used for more urgent needs such as roof repairs, the car committee, by necessity, has been unable to complete all the projects that have been planned for the Dr. John Argue Memorial Building.

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HAPPY BIRTHDAY:

On behalf of all the members of the Wilson Historical Society, we wish to extend a special "Happy Birthday" greeting to Rena Coe of Middleport, NY., whocelebrated her 100th birthday on October 20, 1992. Rena, a former resident of Wilson, has been a member of the society for 13 years, and was given Honorary Membership status in 1987.

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IN MEMORIAM:

We have learned that Alice Nelson, 88, of Oriskany, NY, passed away recently following a short illness. She was a descendant of one of Wilson's pioneers, Benjamin Nelson, who settled at the present corner of Rt. 425 and Nelson Road shortly after the War of 1812.

Capt. Benjamin Nelson and his company, marched through Wilson during the war and later fought in the Battle of Lundy's Lane in Canada. He apparently liked the Wilson area so well, he returned after the war an bought 50 acres of land about 3½ miles south of the village. He was later given an additional 100 acres from the government in lieu of payment for his services in the armed forces.

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CHECK YOUR MEMBERSHIP CARDS:

All memberships in the society that expire on December 31, 1992 are renewable January 1, 1993. From this date on, all dues will be for the calendar year (Jan. 1st to Dec. 31st) An application below is attached for your convenience: Thank you, Anne Faery, Membership Chairman.

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FINAL THOUGHT:

When the candles cost more than the cake, you know you are getting old.

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1993.....MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION.....1993

NEW.....RENEWAL..... NAME.....Phone No:.....

ADDRESS.....P.O.Box.....CITY.....ZIP.....

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

HONORARY (85+).....no charge ENDOWMENT FUND..... TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED.....

Please make all checks payable to the Wilson Historical Society

Return to: ANNE A. FAERY, 3285 WEST LAKE ROAD, WILSON, NY 14172

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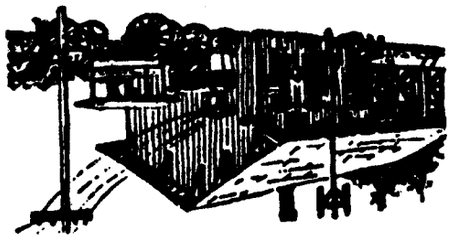
Wilson Historical Society
WILSON, NEW YORK 14172-9763

NEWSLETTER

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

December 1992 Vol. 21 No. 12

(Coleman Printing)



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December 1992

THE OLD LEWISTON TRAIL:

An old newspaper clipping notes that in 1812 a company of soldiers from Batavia followed the old Lewiston Trail to Cold Springs on the northern outskirts of Lockport where, being hot and thirsty, they drank freely from the spring's cool waters. Twelve of the soldiers died, and it was never fully determined whether they had been victims of a poisoned spring or a batch of bad whiskey. Regardless, they were buried on the knoll above the spring.

History tells us that there was a good deal of action on the Niagara Frontier during the War of 1812, but the sparsely settled area mostly escaped military action during the Revolution. However, in the latter years of 1779-80, General Sullivan raided the Indian villages in Central New York, and sent thousands of angry Iroquois fleeing along the Lewiston Trail to the British outpost at Fort Niagara.

Soon, 5,000 Indians were camped near the fort, and the unexpected gathering of so many Indians and their families caused a severe drain on the fort's supplies. In order to ease the situation, the fort's commander sent numerous war parties to raid settlers' cabins as far east as the Schoharie Valley.

The raiding parties mostly used the Lewiston Trail, and as they spread out through the area, burned and looted settler's cabins as they went. Those who resisted were killed and scalped, but it was estimated that over 1,000 captives were forced to follow the trail back to old Fort Niagara. Some who survived the ordeal were later able to write about the atrocities they had been subjected to.

During the Revolution, about one of every three settlers were loyal to the English King, and they sometimes engaged in actions that sabotaged plans made by the American Patriots. As the war dragged on, resentment of the Tories turned to hate, and many of them were forced to flee west along the Lewiston Trail to escape the wrath of the Americans.

At the Niagara River, the Loyalists were ferried across to Canada where they were given every opportunity to resume a normal life. The tories were named United Empire Loyalists by the English and, because of their loyalty to the King, each family was given 200 acres of land.

It has been said that up to the end of the Revolution, the old Lewiston Trail probably saw more action and more human misery than any other trail or road in New York State.

In 1800, the American commander at Fort Niagara got permission from the Indians to widen the Lewiston Trail so that ox carts and sleds could be used to bring supplies to the fort. Also, at this time, the Frontier became relatively quiet as new settlers began to take up lands surveyed by the Holland Land Company.

The calm was suddenly broken in 1812, however, when America again took up arms against the British, and in the Campaign of 1813, the Americans captured Fort George and the adjoining positions at Newark. Troops were later withdrawn with only 60 men left to guard the fort, and when it was learned that a large British force was marching to retake it, the American commander, Col. McClure, abandoned Fort George. Before retreating, however, he made the fatal mistake of torching the British village of Newark, which we know today as Niagara-on-the-Lake.

On Dec. 18th, a strong force of British and Indians crossed the river at 5 Mile Meadows, and marched on Fort Niagara where they captured the pickets. They found the gates to the fort open, and the garrison of 450 soldiers were easily captured.

The British had been furious over the senseless burning of Newark, and with the fort again under the British Flag, retaliation was swift and cruel. Raiding parties proceeded to burn the few houses at Youngstown; plundered Lewiston; and sent hundreds of inhabitants fleeing east along the Lewiston Trail, Raiding parties were also sent into other unprotected areas including Wilson. All the settlers who had located along the lake shore from Fort Niagara to 18 Mile Creek were exposed to great danger, but most families were able to flee. The raid was especially severe on the settlers as it was made in Dec., 1813, with winter closing in.

Today, modern highways follow the old Indian trail which is now lined with beautiful homes and farmlands. One may drive over the historic old trail by picking up route 77 as it crosses the eastern border of Niagara County, then continuing west over Chestnut Ridge, the Old Niagara Road, and the Stone Road to Warrens Corners. There the trail winds it way west along route 104 until it reaches the historic old settlement of Lewiston.

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BOARD MEETING:

The next meeting of the Board will be Wed. evening, December 9th, at the museum, 7:30 PM.

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BON MOT; To stay youthful, stay useful.

MERRY CHRISTMAS & A HAPPY NEW YEAR

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THE PIONEER EASTMAN FAMILY:

John Eastman was born on May 11, 1739, at Kingston, NH, and in 1775 he volunteered in the Revolution and saw action at Bunker Hill. Later he was with Stark's Hampshire Militia when it was sent to New York to stop Burgoyn's march south after the fall of Fort Ticonderoga.

He was later killed in a skirmish at Fort Anne, but his name did not die with him. Although only 38 years old, he and his wife, Judith, had brought five children into the world.

His namesake, John, was born March 22, 1772 at Hopkinton, NH--a small village nine miles east of Concord. When the war ended, young John went to Canada and resided in Coburg.

In 1809 he obtained an article for 100 acres of land on lot #82 in the present town of Wilson and in 1810, he and his family joined up with the Wilson family, and, with Gilbert Purdy as their boatman, poled their way in two open batteaux to a point ca. 1½ miles east of 12 Mile Creek. There they pulled their boats ashore and turned them over on stakes for temporary shelter.

Purdy helped Reuben and John erect two cabins, then returned to 12 Mile Creek where he put up a cabin for his family whom he later brought to Wilson.

In 1815, Henry Eastman, son of John was born in Wilson--one of 6 sons, and in 1818, John decided to trade his farm with James Cole of Hartland and moved there. In 1826 he moved again near Dunkirk in Chautauqua County.

Henry Eastman was the only one to remain in Chautauqua where he also had 6 sons. One of them, Newton, was the grandfather of John and Robert Eastman, both of whom are members of the Wilson Historical Society.

John Eastman, who came to Wilson with Reuben in 1810, was last recorded in the 1850 census of Warren, PA, listed as a male, 77 years old, born in New Hampshire, and now living with his eldest son, John, who was born in Canada. The Eastmans would still like to find the burial site for their great-great grandfather.

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MUSEUM "SPARKPLUGS":

The following chairmen have been appointed by the Board of Directors and will serve until December 31, 1993: Dorothy Maxfield, Curator; Daniel King, Finance Chairman; Eleanor Myers, Barnum Building; Ed Allgeier, Fittro Shop; Elton Kropp, Grounds; Gary Fitch, Plant Supt.; Hoyt and Norie Desso, Wilson Depot; John Myers, Planning Board; Wally Goodman/Clark Stimson, Dr. John Argue Memorial Building; Ellsworth McKelvey, 1903 Caboose; Arthur Schnoor, Nominating Committee; Donald Burrows, Breezeway; and Norm MacAskill, Federation Representative.

The following chairmen were nominated and elected at the annual meeting to serve to December 31, 1993: Lois Jennings, Acquisitions; Judy King, By-Laws; Celeste Crawford, Genealogy; Marjorie Lederhouse, Hostesses; Janet Sporleder, Historical Sites; Anne Faery, Membership; Bobbie Hull, Librarian; Lois Jennings, Memorial; Don Croop, Newsletter/Publications; Barbara Mosher, Programs; Margaret Siener, Publicity; Chuck Branch, Photography; Norie Desso, Refreshments, and Richard Schmidle, Ways & Means.

The committee approved by the Board of Directors to take charge of the Memorial Day Fair will consist of Lois Barnum; Donald Burrows; Dan King; Darrell Smith; and Nettie Stimson.

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FROM THE MAILBAG:

John Cable of Ocala, FL, wrote to change his zip code and mentioned that he still likes the Newsletter because it helps him keep up on his friends and relatives in Wilson. His mother, Edith Wilson, is 88 years old now, and also looks forword to each issue.

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Marilyn Rogenmoser of Middleport wrote that her mother, Rena Coe, was pleased to receive so nice birthday cards from her Wilson friends in recognition of her 100th birthday.

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John Eastman wrote that his brother.Bob, spent some time in Wilson last summer. Bob is married to Althea Ayer, daughter of Erastus William Ayer, who was born in Shawnee, town of Wheatfield. Erastus lived in Lockport before going to Rochester to run a grocery store for many years. John Eastman plans to sell his home in Middlesex and will move to Florida. Bob lives in Northridge, California.

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Vince and Phyllis Loomis of Ocala, FL, paid a visit to Wilson--first in 12 years. They were deeply impressed with Wilson's new Free Public Library. They are starting their 55th year together, and Phyllis recently celebrated her 78th birthday, while Vince is eighty. They gave their 3 daughters copies of Wilson Sketchbook--a thoughtful Holiday gift.

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EXCELLENT JOB:

Dick Schmidle, Chrm. of the Ways & Means Comm., reported that the society's Election Day Bake Sale was a great success. He and Winnie Terry, Bake Sale Chrm., wish to thank all members who responded so generously making this year's sale the most successful to date. They also wish to thank Margaret Siener for advertising the event so well.

Terry and a team consisting of Edna Rose, Emily McAvoy, Janice Naslund, and Jeanne Schmidle, did a great job dispensing baked goods from 8:00AM until 4:00PM.

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HISTORICAL MARKERS:

Jan Sporleder, Chrm. of the Historical Sites Comm., reports that the sign for Ira Pettit, (Diary of a Deadman) should be up at the Clinton Pettit home on Maple Road. A sign that she ordered for the "Anchor Farm" has also been received.

The town of Wilson highway department has been very cooperative in placing the historical markers, and we wish to thank Paul Karsten, Supt., and his crew for helping the society mark historic sites in the town.

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SOUNDINGS:

A successful man is one who can think up ways of making money faster than the government can take it away from him.

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WELL ORGANIZED:

Marge Lederhouse, Hostess Chrm., has done a good job providing "greeters" at the museum for Sunday afternoons from 2-4pm., and she wishes to thank everyone who helped her out from May 24th through December 20th. The museum will be closed during Jan., Feb., and March, but she will resume calling in the spring for hostesses to serve from April through December, 1993.

Hostesses for December are as follows: Lorine Allgeier and Lil Evans, director, John Myers; Dec. 13th, Celeste Crawford and Bobbie Hull; Dec. 20th, Sara Berry and Don Croop.

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DECEMBER MEETING:

The Monday, Dec. 21st meeting of the Wilson Historical Society will be a Christmas Program of Music, Games, and Refreshments. Meeting time, 7:30 PM.

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NEW MEMBERS:

Please welcome our newest members, Bob and Althea Eastman of Northridge, California.

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IN MEMORIAM:

Anne C. Wiepert, 55, died Tuesday, Nov. 17, 1992, at Mt. St. Mary's Hospital, Lewiston, following a long illness. She was the daughter of Don and the late Millie Croop of Wilson, and moved to Ransomville following her marriage to Carl Wiepert in 1956.

She graduated from Wilson Central School in 1955, and earned her B.S. at Niagara University. She was a member of St. Peter's Lutheran Church at North Ridge, the Niagara Falls Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution; and at the time of her death was associated with Stovroff and Herman Realtors in Wilson.

In addition to her father, she is survived by two sons, Carl A. (Cathy) Wiepert; and Jeffrey Wiepert, Ransomville; a sister, Carol (William) C. Smith of Sanborn; a brother, Howard D. Croop of Rapid City, SD; a close cousin, Renee' (Keith) Weeks of Afton, NY; her former husband, Carl A. Wiepert; also three grandchildren.

Services conducted by Rev. David Musall with burial at North Ridge Cemetery.

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BOARD REPORTS:

All Comm. Budget requests should be in to Finance Comm. for calendar year, Jan 1 to Dec. 31.

Letter read from Assemblyman Joe Pillittere thanking society for input regarding master plan for Tuscarora State Park. Proposal to include golf course and fishing ammenities supported.

New shelving in storage area above kitchenette built in through efforts of Ollie and John.

Planning Comm. suggests future renovation work be concentrated on Depot. Possibly $22,000 will have to be raised to repair windows, curbing, brick walkways, skirting around building, and re-painting of entire building. It is quite obvious if the society is going to be able to mainyain the town's museum facilities, additional sources of revenue must be found.

It has been suggested that irreplaceable books and records acquired by the society be placed in the fire-proof facilities at Town Hall. Perhaps our Town Historian, Eleanor Myers, should supervise such a project so that these items would be accessible if needed for research.

Water lines in the unheated facilities have been drained for winter.

The "Friends of the Library" Banjo Concert will be at the museum, Dec. 3rd, 7:30 to 8:30.

Christmas Tree decorating party at museum, Dece. 6th, 2-4PM.

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MEMBER IN THE NEWS:

Congratulations to Jr. member Tim Goodman, son of Wally and Chris Goodman. Tim has been selected to perform in the New York State Music Asocc. All State Band.

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RECENT ACQUISITIONS:

Robert J. Mugele of Casselberry, FL, visited Wilson this past summer, and donated a 1910 Poster advertising "Sunset Beach", Wilson; also a postcard of Miller's Landing on the Bay.

Audry Adams, Lockport: an 1876 Record Book.

Lois Barnum: Two original Mugs.

Sara Berry: Kodak Brownie Camera.

Darrell Smith: Nozzle for fire hose.

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HISTORICAL MARKERS:

Jan Sporleder, Historical Sites Chrm., has reported that the sign for Ira Pettit,(Diary of a Deadman) is ready for placing at the old Clinton Pettit home on Maple Road. She also informed us that a new sign which she ordered for the "Anchor Farm" on Townline Road has also been received.

Highway Supt. Paul Karsten and his crew have been very helpful in placing many of the town's historical markers, and we not only wish to acknowledge but to thank them for their help.

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FINAL THOUGHT:

It's time to diet when "one size fits all" doesn't fit you.

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