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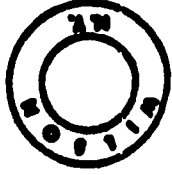
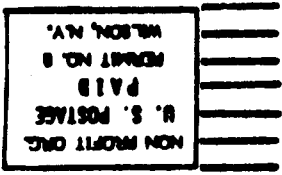
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January 1994 Vol. 23 No. 1

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

# NEWSLETTER

Wilson Historical Society  
Wilson, New York 14172-9763



January 1994

## WILSON'S ICE AGE:

Ever since we can remember, people have been figuring out ways to keep cool in summer, and even the old pioneers who settled on the prairies soon learned that a sod hut could protect them from the summer heat and help keep them warm in winter.

Les Clark of Hayward, California, who was raised in Wilson, recalled how his folks would keep their windows open 1/4 distance from the top and bottom to get better air circulation in a room; and some of us can remember how our grandparents used to hang wet sheets over open doors or windows to help cool the house in summer.

Ten foot high ceilings were built into homes to allow heat and fumes from wood-burning stoves to rise above the head-level, and even though people didn't hear much about wind chill factors, they knew that open windows and cross ventilation made a room more comfortable.

Ice boxes were widely used to preserve perishable foods and in the winter, window boxes would keep food safely outside, but still be easily accessible from the inside.

Les noted that old friends used to butcher cows and pigs and hang the meat in unheated rooms where it would freeze solid until needed--then all one had to do was cut through the meat and bone with a meat saw. Some meat that wasn't frozen was also smoked or "sugar cured", then hung from rafters until ready to use.

When he was a boy, he used to watch while men sawed blocks of ice from the frozen-over Twelve Mile Creek, then drawn by horse and sled to Ackerman's Dairy where the blocks were placed in an ice house and covered with sawdust.

"Ice was also manufactured at the Wilson Cold Storage, and Bill Schnoor and "Curly" Loomis were the ice-makers. Three hundred pound ice cakes were made in a pool consisting of a salt brine solution which was cooled by an ammonia heat exchange process. Ammonia gas was compressed by use of a large diesel engine. (This engine is now owned by Gordon Mawhiney of Wilson, and has been exhibited and operated at recent Historical Society Memorial Day Fairs.)

"The ammonia cooled saltwater solution was brought down to 27 degrees fahrenheit which easily froze the water into 300 pound blocks of ice. The blocks were then stored in the Cold Storage building to cool the apples brought there in the fall. In the Spring, the ice was sold.

"Prior to selling it, the blocks were scored with gang-saws so that anyone with an ice pick could separate the block into 25, 50, or 100 lb. cakes of ice.

"The ice was then sold to private homes, bars, and stores, or used for "icing" railroad cars filled with fruit for shipment around the Country.

"Another revelation showing the ingenuity of people before the advent of modern refrigeration, was the use of underground springs directed through a cellar to cool milk and other milk products. The method was quite effective as spring waters usually were about 45 degrees.

"After World War II, the ice business fell off as new refrigeration units replaced the ice boxes and drip-pans previously used in most homes."

There have been many changes in our life styles since 1940, and should anyone have any doubt, consider this:

If you were born before 1940 you were born before television, penicillin, polio shots, frozen foods, Xerox, plastics, contact lenses, frisbies, and the Pill.

You were born before Radar, credit cards, laser beams, ball point pens, pantyhose, electric blankets, dishwashers, clothes dryers, and air conditioners.

You were born before Day Care Centers, group therapy, and Nursing Homes; and you hadn't yet heard about FM radio, tape decks, electric typewriters, artificial hearts, or word processors.

Fast food was what you ate during Lent, while pizzas, McDonalds, and instant coffee were still in the future. (How did we ever survive?)

We thank Les Clark for his interesting observations about a period in Wilson's past that few in today's younger generation probably have any conception of.

\* \* \* \* \*

## BOARD MEETING:

The 1st meeting of the Board of Directors in the New Year will be held on Wednesday, Jan. 12, 1994, at 7:30 PM in the Wilson Museum. Start the New Year right and please attend. Committee Chairmen are encouraged to attend meetings, but only board members may vote.

\* \* \* \* \*

Brian Dunnigan, director, or a representative of Fort Niagara, will be the guest speaker at the Jan. 17, 1994 meeting at the museum at 7:30 PM. Refreshment hostesses will be Lois Barnum and Emma Lou Reppentine.

\* \* \* \* \*

Don Mot: Don't use time or words carelessly. Neither can be retrieved.

SCHOOLHOUSE PROJECT PROCEEDING:

Supervisor Harold Mosher has been notified by Richard Zipp, Sup't. of Schools, that the Wilson Central School Board of Education, working through a School/Community Committee, is endeavoring to move the Randall Road Schoolhouse to the property of the Wilson Historical Society, and that Mrs. H. Jean Figura, trustee of the Board, would coordinate the committee effort for the Board of Education.

The Historical Society had previously advised the School Board by letter that the Society would accept the schoolhouse and responsibility for it once the building is placed on the Society's Site. The Society has also set aside an amount of money to prepare a site and foundation for the school.

Since the Historical Society facilities are located on Town property, the project depends on whether the Town Board accepts the building and lends its support to the Committee.

Mr. Zipp stated that "It would be wonderful to preserve the old Randall Road Schoolhouse for its historical and educational value for future generations, and this community project represents yet another bright spot of broad-based participation of citizens and officials for the benefit of Wilson."

\* \* \* \* \*

RECENT ACQUISITIONS:

Connie Reynolds Moss has donated 2 Baby Blankets; Homespun Baby Blanket; Satin Crib Blanket; 6 Crocheted Baby Caps; Two Bib; 3 Bootie and Sacque Sets; Snowsuit and Cap; Tied Quilt (1890); 3 Dresses, (early 1900's); Wilson Centennial Skirt and 2 Bonnets; Tied Patch Quilt; Pieced Quilt Top; and Hand-quilted Appliqued Quilt.

Bernard Israel: Early Christmas Tree Decorations; Antique German Candle Clips for Christmas Trees; Papier Mache Sleigh and Reindeer; Rural New Yorker (100th Anniversary Copy); Flour Ad (1889); Tom Breneman's Life Story (1948); M.E. Sunday School Work Book (1917); Copies of Buffalo Evening News (1927) and (Nov. 1915).

Don Croop: Kodak Instamatic Projector (M-85); Willoughby Museum Plate, "Poems", by John Greenleaf Whittier; Centennial Tie (1958); Former East Wilson Boy Scout Troop #41 Flag; Navy Leotards, Navy Bathing Suit; also, 2-two piece White Navy Uniforms; 2 Dress Blue Navy Uniforms; Two Navy Tops and Tie Uniforms. (Navy uniforms belonged to Howard D. Croop while serving on the U.S.S. Intrepid in the Mediterranean after graduating from Wilson High School in 1957.)

John Gurski, Sr: Advertising Thermometer from old B.N. Lafler Store; Two Fashion Catalogs; 5 Hair Wavers; "Curvit" Woman's Razor (1900); (Items belonged to Mother, Anna Gurski); also, Gold Medal Flour Cookbook (1910); that belonged to Verna Gurski's mother, Emma Schrock.

Dorothy Lort: Centennial Issue of Wilson "Crest"; Wilson "Stars", (10/28/42), (11/11/43); Newspaper Clippings of Wilson Centennial (1958); Post Card of Wilson Main Street by F.A. Mudge. Clipping on Golden Agers First Birthday; 1959 picture of Wilson #1 New Firetruck.

Hazel Salisbury: Apple Brusher made by Floyd Salisbury, ca. 1955, and used to remove spray residue from apples so that they could be sold locally.

Kenneth Gaskill of Broadview Heights, Ohio: Energizer Kit; Massage and Vibrating Kit.

Eleanor Harrington: B.L. Gale Co. Veneers-Plywood, Wilson, NY (1928-29) with calendar on back. Notebook advertisement.

Esther Myers: Curtain Stretchers; Wilson "Star"; and Farmer's Almanac.

Ivy Thomas Family, Newfane: Hand-made Welcome Signs.

David Russ of Lockport: Frames Anti Freeze Chart; Plastic Electric Kendall Oil Sign.

Ransomville Celebration Committee: History Book of Ransomville's 175th Celebration.

\* \* \* \* \*

POINTS OF LIGHT:

The success of the Wilson Historical Society depends on how well the officers and committee chairmen do their jobs. From time to time we like to mention some who really "shine".

Our target for this Newsletter is Lois Jennings who has performed admirably as Chairman of the Acquisitions Committee. The detailed listings in the monthly newsletters gives one a little idea of what her job entails.

For each item donated to the museum, an accession record slip is made out with one copy for the donor, one to the newsletter editor, and the other kept in the museum file. All acquisitions are then acknowledged by Lois, and written in the museum Accession Book.

After acquisitions are recorded, they are kept in the library until the chairman of the various work areas such as the Barnum Building, Argue Building, Fittro Shop, and Depot, pick up the items relevant to their area and put them on display.

Thank you, Lois, your dedicated efforts have been a big factor in the society's success.

\* \* \* \* \*

NEW LIFE MEMBER:

Santa, with a little help from Peg Fritton, put a nice surprise in Bill Fritton's stocking this Christmas---a Life Membership in the Wilson Historical Society.

Bill joined the society in 1978 and has been an active member ever since. In 1981, both he and his wife served as co-chairmen of the Ways & Means Committee, and in 1988 he was elected to the Board of Trustees. In 1990 he was appointed Chairman of the Planning Board, and also served that year as Publicity Chairman.

Bill graduated from Wilson High School in 1933, and attended the College of Engineering at the University of Alabama. He was Vice-President of the Dexter Cap Corp., Hysol Division, at Olean, New York, and his unique expertise has also helped the society to obtain grants.

\* \* \* \* \*

The society is also happy to welcome the following new members: David and Peggy Ganshaw of Yarmouth, MA., and Robert and Ann Botzer of Newfane, New York. Also, two new junior members, Amanda Zurenda of Virginia Beach, VA., and Sterling Phillips of Rochester, New York.

\* \* \* \* \*

SOUNDINGS:

Every idea has its doubters; Every accomplishment its critics.

\* \* \* \* \*

TOURISM COMMITTEE PROMOTES TOWN:

The town of Wilson's annual 5K foot race, "The Salmon Run", and One Mile Fun Run has continued to grow since it was first initiated in 1985 by Town Supervisor, Harold Mosher, in cooperation with the Town of Wilson Tourism Committee. Participants are drawn from the local area as well as from out-of-state and Canada.

The two races are held each year in conjunction with the Great Lakes Pro-Am Salmon Team Tournament, and race fees are earmarked to benefit civic projects.

Milk for Health, Marine Midland Bank and Hayden/Wegman Consulting Engineers co-sponsor both races.

The Wilson Tourism Committee recently recommended and received approval to make the following donations from race revenues:

\$2,000 to the Wilson Volunteer Fire Company #1 ambulance fund for the purchase of ALS equipment for pediatric care and treatment.

A TV and VCR unit valued at \$500 to the Wilson Historical Society for program and other video presentations.

\$1,500 to the Wilson Historical Society for the specific use of rehabilitating the old Randall Road Schoolhouse.

The races have also generated funding for a variety of projects over the years including lighted Christmas decorations on Young Street; libraries; Boy Scouts; Girl Scouts; pen and pencil sets for local servicemen and women who served in Desert Storm; and the annual Soccer Tournament held in July. Contributions were also made to the Inter-Community Hospital Expansion Fund; and the Wilson Community Jamboree to benefit Mercy Flight.

Barbara Mosher and Janice Zipp, co-chairmen of the Tourism Committee are assisted by Edward Allgeier, Tom Bateman, Floyd Clark, and representatives from the Wilson Business Association, the Wilson Historical Society, and the Village Trustees. Jean Figura and Wanda Burrows serve as staff members.

\* \* \* \* \*

IN MEMORIAM:

Stuart Walpole, 81, former Wilson resident, died Dec. 4, 1993 at Beth Salom Nursing Home, Richmond, Va., after a long illness.

He was a member of Exley United Methodist Church. World War II Veteran; Rocket Technician at Bell Aerospace for 26 years; 50 year member of Wilson Lion's Club; Exempt member of Wilson Vol. Fire Co. #1; Wilson Masonic Lodge; and Wilson Historical Society.

He is survived by his wife, Ernestine Dietrick Walpole of Richmond, Va., and 2 grandchildren. Services were held at the Hamilton & Clark Funeral Chapel with Rev. Sue Kaiser officiating. Burial was in North Ridge Cemetery in Cambria.

\* \* \* \* \*

Ida E. Wilson, 91, an Honorary member of the Wilson Historical Society, died Nov. 12, 1993, at Inter-Community Hospital, Newfane, following a short illness.

She was the wife of the late Walter T. Wilson, part owner of the Wilson Bros. Boathouse. She was also pre-deceased by a daughter, Barbara J. Wilson, who died February 11, 1993. Walter and Ida Fortcomb were married at Pekin, NY, in 1924.

She is survived by one sister, Florence Gill, of Monroe, Michigan. She joined the Wilson Historical Society in 1975 and became an Honorary member in 1984.

Services were held in St. John's Episcopal Church, and burial was in Greenwood Cemetery,

\* \* \* \* \*

Esther Johnson Pope, 92, an Honorary Member of the Wilson Historical Society, died Decemeber 11, 1993, at the LeRoy Village Green Nursing Facility where she resided since February, 1992.

She was the daughter of Clarence and Nettie H. Johnson, natives of Wilson, and she graduated from Wilson High in 1919. She later taught English in the Wilson School District.

She was pre-deceased by her husband, John Pope, in Feb., 1992, and after moving to Oakfield did volunteer work at Genessee Memorial Hospital, Rochester, and the local library in Oakfield.

She is survived by a son, Daniel (Jean) Pope of Oakfield, also 3 grandchildren. Burial will be by cremation and a Memorial service will be held at Oakfield in the Spring.

\* \* \* \* \*

MEMBERS IN THE NEWS: Tim Goodman, Eric Mittelfehldt, and Nathan Groff have been inducted into the National Honor Soc. by Wilson High School. To qualify, students had to excel in Service, Scholarship, Leadership, and Character.

\* \* \* \* \*

FINAL NOTICE:

The 3rd and final application for membership is attached to this Newsletter, and we would suggest that if you wish to continue receiving the Newsletter that you please return it as soon as possible to Anne Faery with your payment.

\* \* \* \* \*

FOOD FOR THOUGHT:

The best way to appreciate having your job is to imagine how you'd be without it.

\* \* \* \* \*

1994.....MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION.....1994

NEW..... RENEWAL..... NAME..... Ph:( ).....  
ADDRESS.....P.O.BOX..... CITY..... Zip.....  
COUPLE \$8.00..... SINGLE \$5.00..... JR.(under 18) \$1.00..... LIFE \$150.00.....  
HONORARY (85+) ..... ENDOWMENT FUND \$..... TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED \$.....

Please make all checks payable to the WILSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY and return to:

ANNE ARGUE FAERY BOX NO. 731 WILSON, NEW YORK 14172

\* \* \* \* \*

MAJOR MEDIA CITES WILSON:

Jim Cornell of Boston, MA., sent us a news item that appeared in the New York Times on September 5, 1993, with the following notation:

"Perhaps you saw this. No matter, it's worth repeating! Wilson's bright and shining moment in the Major Media is well deserved--as us Wilson devotees know so well."

The article, written by Bruce Weber, describes his cross-country bicycle trip when the last leg of his journey takes him east from Niagara Falls along Route 18, and we quote:

"Upstate New York may not be exotic to a New Yorker, but it turns out to be worth a look from behind handlebars,

"Route 18, for example, is as splendid a stretch of riding as the nation has, at least it was on the sparkling day on which I sampled it, with small towns exuding a kind of American good health, separated by corn fields and horse barns lined up along the lake.

"In Wilson, there was an old-fashioned carnival going on in the center of town--an advertisement for wholesomeness, where a man sold me a hot dog he described sincerely as "Really, really, good", and not one of a half dozen residents I asked could remember if there was a public telephone in town."

\* \* \* \* \*

BUSINESSMAN DISLIKED SALES:

One of the proprietors of Wilson's oldest business, LaMont Hamilton of Hamilton & Clarks, did not believe in sales. He felt that sales were unfair to customers who had previously purchased items at the regular price.

During the Great Depression, when manufacturers pressured him to run sales, he reluctantly agreed, but, sticking to his principles, whenever he sold an item at the sale price, he would voluntarily refund the price-difference to customers who had earlier purchased the same item at the regular price.

Can you picture a businessman today adopting such a merchandizing policy as that?

\* \* \* \* \*

SOCIETY ELECTS NEW PRESIDENT:

Don Burrows received a majority of votes in the recent "mail-ballot" election for President of the Wilson Historical Society. Gary Fitch, runner-up, will be the new Vice-President. A total of nearly 250 votes were cast by our members.

The secretary cast one vote for the remaining slate of officers which were presented by the Nominating Committee at the last meeting. The new officers are:

Norman MacAskill, 2nd Vice-President; Bobbie Hull, Recording Secretary; Ann Botzer, Corresponding Secretary; and Carole Schnoor, Treasurer.

Trustees elected to December 31, 1996 are: Anne Argue Faery; Arthur Schnoor, and Darrell Smith.

Committee Chairmen: Lois Jennings, Acquisitions; Judy King, By-Laws; Celeste Crawford, Genealogy; Marge Lederhouse, Hostesses; Janet Sporleder, Historical Sites; Bess McKelvey, Librarian; Anne Argue Faery, Membership; Lois Jennings, Memorial; Don Croop, Newsletter and Publications; Janet Naslund, Programs; Wanda Burrows, Publicity; Norie Desso, Refreshments; and Richard Schmidle, Ways & Means.

\* \* \* \* \*

FROM THE MAILBAG:

When Robert L. Eastman of Northridge, California, renewed his membership recently, he mentioned that he is the great, great grandson of John Eastman who came to these Lake Ontario shores in 1810 with Reuben Wilson, from whom the town derives its name.

John and Reuben built cabins along the lakeshore near the present intersection of Maple Road and Route 18, and the landing site was marked a few years ago by the society's Historical Sites Committee chaired by Janet Sporleder. Robert's great grandfather, Henry Eastman, was born in the cabin in 1815.

Robert has done considerable research on the Eastman family, and on a trip to England this past summer was able to trace his family's roots back to the 1500's during the reign of King Henry the 8th.

\* \* \* \* \*

BY-LAWS APPROVED:

Judy King, Chrm. of the By-Laws Comm., presented the revised copy of the society's by-laws at the Dec. 20th meeting, and all changes were unanimously approved. She said that copies can be made for officers who would like one.

Judy is to be complemented for the fine job sh's done since since accepting the appointment from the Board of Directors in 1992.

\* \* \* \* \*

DID YOU KNOW that members of the Burrows and Fitch family s have lived in Wilson since the 1830s?

\* \* \* \* \*

FINAL THOUGHT:

The one absolutely unselfish friend a person has in this selfish world is his dog.

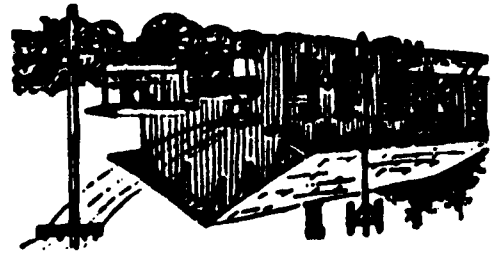
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A HAPPY AND PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR TO EVERYONE

Don Croop, Newsletter Editor  
and

Anne Argue Faery, Memberships



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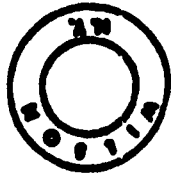
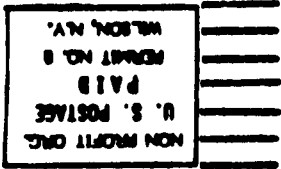
February 1994 Vol. 23 No. 2

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

# NEWSLETTER

WILSON, NEW YORK 14172-9763

Wilson Historical Society



February 1994

## LIONS PROMOTE WILSON COMMUNITY:

The year 1941 was the era for two memorable events--America's entry into World War II, and the formation of the Wilson Lions Club. Although the war was brought to a happy conclusion in 1945, the Lions Club is still going strong after 53 years.

The Lockport Lions sponsored the Wilson Club, and in November, 1941, two hundred and fifty Lions from surrounding areas gathered in the Wilson High School auditorium for a charter presentation ceremony.

Following a good supper, chairman James C. Cornell called the meeting to order and introduced Mr. Earl W. Brydges, president, who accepted the club's charter from Dr. Neff of Niagara Falls, New York.

The names inscribed on the new charter were: Dr. John F. Argue, Dr. George W. Badger, A. W. Blemaster, Virgil B. Bowersox, Stanley W. Borngraeber, Willard H. Broderick, Earl W. Brydges, Wesley A. Churchill, James C. Cornell, Harold F. Davis, Bernard E. Connors, Howard S. Kayner, Ronald P. Swick, Kermit Liddel, Rev. Edward Franklin, John A. Myers, Frank E. Radigan, Maitland P. Smith, Rex E. Stacy, Francis A. Tate, Norman J. Thilk, and John H. Wilson.

Since it was organized, the Lions Club has been foremost in the promotion of many worthwhile projects in Wilson, and perhaps most noteworthy has been their support of the Buffalo Eye Bank Research Society. The society was founded by the Lions Clubs of Western New York, and not only provides corneal service for the blind, but also helps underwrite the cost of eye glasses for the needy.

The Wilson Lions have also supported many other community activities such as the "Little League", the All Sports Booster Club, the Wilson Free Library, the Wilson Golden Agers, the Wilson Historical Society, and the Wilson Boy and Girl Scouts.

Other activities in which they have been involved have included cleaning up and repairing headstones in Greenwood Cemetery, entertaining youngsters in the Niagara County "Big Brothers and Big Sisters" program, and promoting Hollow'en parties for youngsters at the Wilson Fire Hall. In addition to monies received from personal donations, the Lions have participated in a number of activities to raise money for a variety of programs.

Outstanding among these have been "sell-out" performances by local talent in such musical shows as the "King and I", "Music Man", "Bye Bye Birdie", and "Fiddler on the Roof."

At the January meeting of the Board of Directors, Kevin Cornell and other representatives of the Lions Club, attended and donated several valuable artifacts for display in the Wilson Museum. Included was the first framed Charter of the Club presented in 1941; the first original Wilson Lions Club Banner; and two Brass Bells on which the names of past presidents are engraved.

According to Mr. Cornell, the items were believed to have been lost in the disastrous Hub Hotel fire in 1980, but were instead saved by several of their members. The decision was then made to turn the items over to the museum where they would be safe and put on display.

Kevin said that the Wilson Lions Club would be happy to accept new members, and should anyone be interested, please contact Mr. Peter Zabel, Membership Chairman, at 751-6062.

\* \* \* \* \*

## ANOTHER REAL BEAUTY:

We can think of no better way to describe the Wilson Historical Society's 1994 quilt than to say, "It's a Real Beauty."

The old hand-embroidered quilt top was donated by Mrs. Dorothy Lort of Wilson who obtained it from the late Violet Giddings. Of considerable interest is the fact that one of the blocks was initialed by the late Gertrude Plum of Wilson.

Donation tickets are now available and a book is enclosed with this Newsletter for your convenience. It would be greatly appreciated if you would return your ticket stubs and donations to our talented "quilt lady", Betty Stimson, Box 162, Wilson, NY., 14172.

Ticket holders will also be able to win several other valuable prizes including a hand-crafted tablecloth by Mrs. Alma McGrath of Lockport; a distinctive Wood Carving by Bob Schearer of Wilson; a "Wilson Sketchbook" History of Wilson; and two Wilson Historical Society Recipe Books. The drawing will be held on Memorial Day, Wilson Museum grounds, May 30, 1994.

\* \* \* \* \*

## SOUNDINGS:

When there is room in the heart, there is always room in the house.

\* \* \* \* \*

1813 FORT FLAG MAY RETURN:

The old Fort Niagara Flag taken by the British after the capture of Fort Niagara on December 19, 1813, may be returned to the fort sometime in the near future.

During the War of 1812, Fort Niagara served as a base for a raid against Canada in May, 1813, which resulted in the capture of Fort George. About 60 Americans held the fort until they learned that a large British force was preparing to launch an attack to recapture it. They decided to withdraw to the American side of the river, but before abandoning Fort George, they burned down the village of Newark, now known as Niagara-on-the-Lake.

The British decided to retaliate and on the night of December 19th, they crossed the river at Five Mile Meadows, and marched up the river to the American fort. There, in the early morning hours, they found the gates partially open as the guard was changed, and were able to quickly take over the fort capturing over 350 officers and men.

The flag which was taken from the fort after the battle had flown over it since 1809, and had 14 stars and 15 stripes. It was made of wool bunting and the white stars were applied over star-shaped holes in the blue field.

The flag currently hangs in Megginch Castle in Scotland, and is the property of Lady Strange, a member of the British House of Lords.

The Old Fort Niagara Association is presently conducting a fund-raising drive to collect money to permit development of a visitor centre and museum at the fort where the rare flag may once again be exhibited.

\* \* \* \* \*

IN MEMORIAM:

Rena B. Coe, 101, an Honorary member of the Wilson Historical Society, died Dec. 22, 1993, at the Orchard Manor Nursing Home in Medina. Her husband, Clare Coe, died in January, 1966.

Rena was a member of the Middleport United Methodist Church; the Middleport Senior Citizens; and a Past Matron of the Wilson Order of the Eastern Star.

She is survived by two daughters, Marilyn Rogenmoser of Middleport, and Virginia Pursell of Williamsville, New York; also, 5 grandchildren and 8 great-grandchildren.

Burial was in Lynhaven Cemetery, Lyndonville, New York.

\* \* \* \* \*

Ronald W. Swick, 79, a former deputy-secretary of the New York State Senate, died Dec. 27, 1993, at Fort Lauderdale, Florida, following a prolonged illness.

Ron was the son of the late Alonzo P. Swick and Florence Webster Swick, and graduated from Wilson High School with the Class of 1932. He was the 1st campaign manager for the late Sen. Earl W. Brydges of Wilson, and worked for the Senator for 25 years. He was also a charter member of the Wilson Lions Club, and lifelong member of the 1st Baptist Church of Wilson.

He is survived by 5 children, James (Karen) Swick of Woodland Hills, Cal., Jon (Connie) Swick of Lockport, NY, Jerry (Joan) Swick of Agoura Hills, Cal., Jill (Bill) Wall of Avon, NY, and Jon Knorr of LaCanada, Cal., 2 sisters; Frances Diez of Ransomville, NY., and Lucille Upton of Wilson, NY. Also 16 grandchildren and several great grandchildren.

A Memorial Service was held at the 1st Baptist Church, and burial was in North Ridge Cemetery with Dr. Harold Faba officiating.

\* \* \* \* \*

Dorothy Flagler Urtel, 70, a home maker, died at home on Dec. 1, 1993. She was the daughter of Elwyn and Rose Smith Flagler, and moved to Cambria from Wilson 45 years ago.

She married Russell E. Urtel in 1942 at the Exley United Methodist Church in Wilson. She was a member of St. Peter Lutheran Church and the Ladies Auxiliary; a life member of the Cambria Vol. Fire Co. Ladies Auxiliary; Meended Hearts Chapter 203, and Wilson Historical Soc.

She is survived by her husband, Russell Urtel; 2 sons and 3 daughters, William R. (Shirley) Urtel of Lockport; Rosemary (Robert) Pless of Wilson; Thomas (Donna) Urtel of Lockport; Barbara (Lance) Cronshaw of Newfane; and Sharon (Richard, Jr.) Hexemer of Lockport, also a sister, Helen Ward of Middleport; and a brother, Donald (Delores) Flagler of Irving, Texas.

Services were held at St. Peter Church, and burial was in St. Peter Lutheran Cemetery in Cambria with the Rev. David Musall officiating.

\* \* \* \* \*

FROM THE MAILBAG:

Mrs. Jean P. Ray of Waverly, Iowa, writes that she has had a portrait enlargement made up of the Clinton Pettit homestead on Maple Road in the town of Wilson. It is mounted in an antique frame that belonged to Lucina Pettit Shaw.

Lucina married Newton Laurence Shaw who also lived on the Maple Road, and the couple moved to Iowa shortly after the Civil War.

Mrs. Ray is author of the popular "Diary of a Deadman" and lives in the home that the Shaws built when they moved out west to the prairies. The Shaws were the grandparents of Jean Ray's husband, William Ray, and Ira Pettit, (subject of Diary of a Deadman) was William Ray's g-Uncle.

After Mrs. Ray compiled and published "Diary of a Deadman", she attended a meeting of the Wilson Historical Society on March 19, 1973, and autographed several dozen hard-cover copies of her interesting book for society members.

Under "acknowledgements" she expressed her gratitude to Mr. Larry Pease and the late Mrs. Dorothy Think of Wilson for their help in providing local information for the book.

\* \* \* \* \*

BOARD OF DIRECTOR MEETING:

The Board of Directors will meet at the Wilson Museum on Wednesday evening, February 9th, at 7:30 PM.

The regular monthly meeting of the society will be held Monday evening, February 21st, at 7:30 PM.

\* \* \* \* \*

BON MOT:

The safest way to double your money is to fold it in two and put it in your pocket.

\* \* \* \* \*

BY-LAWS UPDATED:

Judy King, By-Laws Chairman, has presented a revised copy of the by-laws which has been approved by the membership. Some of the changes are as follows:

Article 3, Sec. 3: Annual dues shall be payable by January 1st, and any member in arrears on February 1st shall no longer be considered an active member.

Article 6, Sec. 1: The Board of Directors shall be responsible for all board appointments by March 1st.

Sec 1,j: A chairman for the shelter and breezeway shall be appointed.

Sec. 3: All chairmen are required to give a quarterly report either orally or in writing to the Board of Directors.

Article 7, Sec. 4: The 2nd Vice-President shall be the society's representative at Niagara County Federation meetings.

Sec. 8: The Curator shall meet twice a year with the museum committee and report to the Board of Directors. (Note: The museum committee is composed of the chairmen of the Depot, Barnum Building, Argue Building, Fittro Shop, Caboose, Grounds, Library, Acquisitions, and any other building or project chairman.)

Sec. 11,c: Nominating Committee shall be composed of a Chairman, Trustees whose terms do not expire, and the Honorary trustees.

Article 8, Sec. 1: The Chairman of the Acquisitions Committee shall be responsible for accepting or declining items offered to the society.

Article 12, Sec 1: The Fiscal Year of the society shall end December 31st each year.

\* \* \* \* \*

RANDALL SCHOOLHOUSE:

Jean Figura and Wanda Burrows are helping to coordinate the effort to move the Randall Road Schoolhouse to the museum grounds, while action taken by the Town Board and Wilson School Board supports the effort so hopefully the matter may be resolved successfully.

It has been suggested that an on-going record be kept of the schoolhouse project, and members of the community who can supply any history or pictures of the old school are asked to please give this material to either Jean Figura or Wanda Burrows.

\* \* \* \* \*

NEW MEMBERS:

Please welcome the following new members into the Wilson Historical Society: Mrs. Jean Ray of Waverly, Iowa; Ms. Kathy Horton of Kingston, Ontario, Canada; David and Lynette Draper and son Christopher of Wilson; Charles and Ann Horton of Wilson; Thomas and Cheryl Horton of Wilson; Mrs. Sandy Holden of Wilson, and Joe and Sandy Wilkas of Wilson.

\* \* \* \* \*

BOARD ACTION & REPORTS:

Newly elected trustee, Darrell Smith, was welcomed by Don Burrows, President, at the January meeting of the board of directors.

The president also announced that the Wilson Town Board had accepted the Randall Road Schoolhouse from the Wilson Central School District on January 10, 1994.

Clark Stimson, co-chairman of the Argue Building, reported that a \$2,500 offer has been made to purchase the Larkin Sound truck, and a Cadillac and Buick will also be advertised for sale.

A motion was made and passed to deaccession the three vehicles named. Money derived from the sale of these vehicles will be placed in the general fund and disbursed at the discretion of the Finance Committee.

Dave and Chris Draper requested permission to display model airplanes and have a demonstration at the Memorial Day Fair. They were advised by the Board to meet with the Fair Committee.

Carole Schnoor, Treas., gave a year-end report showing an income of \$18,805.86 and expenditures of \$16,776.75.

\* \* \* \* \*

LAST SURVIVING SOLDIER:

Lemuel Cook was believed to be the oldest surviving soldier of the American Revolution, and in 1860 at the age of 105 years, he lived in the town of Clarendon, NY, west of Rochester.

Lemuel was born in Northbury, Litchfield County, Conn., ca. 1759, and was said to be one of the last Revolutionary War heroes. He served in Capt. William Staunton's 2nd Light Dragoon Infantry Company, and he was discharged in 1783 at Danbury, Conn. On his discharge papers signed by General George Washington it stated, "The above named Lemuel Cook has been honored with a badge for three years of faithful service."

At the end of the war, Lemuel married Hannah Curtis of Cheshire, Conn., and later moved to Utica, NY. The families of historical society members Sara Berry of Wilson, and Ella Mae Baker of Florida, are direct descendents of Lemuel Cook.

\* \* \* \* \*

RECENT ACQUISITION:

Gerald and Merton Wiepert of Ransomville have loaned one 67" Round Gulf Gas Sign for use in the Argue Car Building.

\* \* \* \* \*

FEBRUARY MEETING:

Mrs. Dorothy Linnabery of Wilson will be the guest speaker at the regular meeting on Monday, February 21, 1994. Mrs. Linnabery will give a talk on the Wilson Free Library.

After the program, refreshment hostesses will be Helen Stevens and Jane Demmin.

\* \* \* \* \*

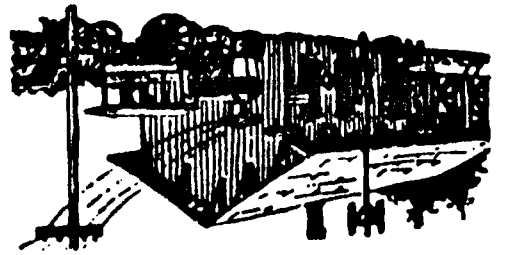
FOOLS GOLD:

It is said that the late Eldridge Tabor could usually be found around 12 Mile Creek digging with a short handle shovel. He was always looking for gold, but the only gold ever found in Wilson was "Fool's Gold".

\* \* \* \* \*

FINAL THOUGHT: One advantage in keeping silent is that no one can misquote you.

\* \* \* \* \*



(Coleman Printing)

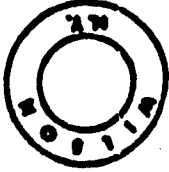
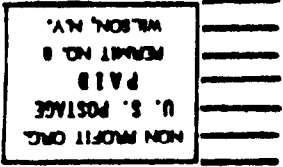
March 1994 Vol. 23 No. 3

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

# NEWSLETTER

WILSON, NEW YORK 14172-9763

Wilson Historical Society



*March 1994*

## DIFFICULT PROFESSION:

When the late Carrie Hutchins graduated from Wilson High School in 1882, she was one of a class of 6 students. A few years later she married Albert Martin and lived on a farm in Cambria Center for nine years. When her husband suddenly died, she entered the Buffalo State Normal School from where she graduated in January, 1900.

Carrie spent a short time teaching in New York and Long Island before returning to Wilson where she taught for 35 years. She was a faithful member of the teaching staff and was never known to be late.

She won obedience through respect, and in all her years at Wilson was only off one week because of illness. During that long career she taught under three principals, Charles Schenk, I.M. McIlroy, and A.W. Blemaster.

She was asked one time how students were rated for graduation when she attended school, and she replied, "When we passed everything they taught us. Commencement activities ended the afternoon they began, and there was no Class Day, Baccalaureate Sermon, School Dance, or Alumni Banquet."

Carrie Martin was loved by her students and, in addition to her regular teaching, enjoyed many other activities including church attendance.

The late Fay Campbell was proud of a picture he had which showed him and twenty other boys that made up a class Mrs. Martin taught at the Wilson Methodist Church for many years.

Fay once told us that Carrie had such a magnetic personality, "Nothing could keep us boys from attending Sunday School unless we were sick in bed or out of town."

It is interesting to note that when Carrie Martin died in April, 1951, members of her former Sunday School Class were pallbearers at her funeral, Earl Carrigan, Kenneth Moore, Harvy Duxbury, Lloyd Duxbury, and Delbert and Harold Singer.

Students who graduated from the Teachers Training Class in Wilson around the turn of the century, were entering a profession that was generally limited to low pay and many restrictive regulations. Rules outlined for teachers in old publications seem to bear this out.

In 1870, for instance, at Franklin, Mass., they had to adhere to some pretty stringent requirements if they wished to hold their jobs, and we quote:

"Men teachers may take off one night a week for courting--two evenings if they attend church regularly.

"After school, teachers must read the Bible or a good book until supper, and women teachers who engage in unseemly conduct, or marry, will be discharged.

"Every teacher will lay aside a goodly sum from each month's pay for old age so as not to become a burden on society.

"Any teacher who frequents pool halls, or gets shaved in a public barbershop will give good reason to suspect his worth, integrity, and honesty.

"Teachers performing duties regularly and faithfully for five years will be given an increase of twenty-five cents a week in their pay--providing the school board approves."

Another interesting item from a California publication suggested, (as the rural education system moved into the 20th Century) that teachers from coast to coast were obliged to perform many lowly tasks. In some school, for example, it was considered 'part of the job' to scrub out class rooms once a week, and not only were teachers expected to know how to use a pail of soap and water, they were also expected to clean out the 'out-houses' once each week.

Teachers were also expected to abide by very strict moral and dress codes, and women especially were not to be seen in public wearing a bathing suit, bloomers, or split skirts that might allow an ankle to be exposed.

Teachers might also be expelled for smoking, drinking, or being seen in public dances or a pool room, and since school boards and trustees made the rules, each community appeared to have their own set of rules to go by.

Which all seems to boil down to the obvious conclusion--teachers are a lot better off today than they were around the turn of the century.

\* \* \* \* \*

## BOARD MEETING:

There will be a meeting of the Board of Directors at the museum, March 9th at 7:30 P.M.

The regular monthly meeting of the society will be held at the museum, Monday evening,

March 21st, at 7:30 P.M.

\* \* \* \* \*

## BON MOT:

Show me a lifelong student and I'll show you an Academia Nut.

\* \* \* \* \*

LOCAL PHILANTHROPIST:

The recent demise of Norman J. Thilk on January 23, 1994, removed a well-known, familiar figure from the local scene. A native of Wilson, Norm was born October 8, 1907, the son of Fred and Jenny Woodcock Thilk of South Wilson.

In his earlier years, he helped his father operate a successful fruit farm at the corner of Irish and Chestnut roads, and he later opened the Thilk Insurance and Real Estate Agency in the village of Wilson.

Norm and his wife, Dorothy, held the first meeting to discuss formation of a historical society in the community, and after the society was officially organized in May, 1972, both became Life Members.

When Mrs. Thilk died in September, 1981, Norm gave a substantial amount of money to remodel a library in the museum. The following year he donated a 1967 Pontiac Convertible for display in the antique car building.

Norm Thilk was also the main force behind the recent drive to renovate the Wilson Free Library in the village, and in January, 1988, he sent a \$10,000 check to the trustees for the purpose of starting a fund to build a new library.

After several months he was persuaded to throw his support behind a renovation program for the existing library which many felt was in a better location.

Norm's interest did not stop with his initial contribution, and he quietly kept up with the building's progress and made several additional contributions when money was in short supply. His total contributions enabled the building committee to completely transform the old children's room and library office into a Community Center with a completely furnished meeting room and small service area.

This section, at Norm's request, was dedicated in memory of his wife, Dorothy Risely Thilk, and the facility may be reserved for use by local groups even when the main library is not open.

Although Mr. Thilk was pleased with the library's renovation, he wasn't one to refer in any way to his part in its success--in fact, he even declined to attend the dedication.

In his words, "Wilson should have a first class library where children will be able to develop a love for books."

Norm is survived by a son, Peter, and a daughter, Susan. A Memorial Service was held at Exley United Methodist Church and burial was in North Ridge Cemetery, Cambria, with the Rev. Sue Kaiser of Exley Church officiating.

\* \* \* \* \*

Edna Goodman Martin, 94, formerly of Wilson, died December 13, 1993, at the Newfane Health Facility in Newfane.

Mrs. Martin was a member of the 1st Baptist Church of Wilson; an Honorary/Charter Member of the Wilson Historical Society; the American Legion Auxiliary; and Inter Community Hospital Auxiliary.

She lived in Wilson for 68 years and retired with 20 years service from the Norton Laboratories in Lockport.

She was pre-deceased by her 1st husband, Stanley Goodman, on August 1, 1965, and by her 2nd husband, Robert Martin, on August 14, 1977.

She is survived by two daughters, Lucille (Robert) Schmitt of Rochester, and Anne (Allen) Rohring of Wilson; also 8 grandchildren and 8 great-grandchildren.

Services were held at the 1st Baptist Church and burial was in North Ridge Cemetery with Rev. Jeffrey Durham officiating.

\* \* \* \* \*

Lawrence D. Pease. 85, a former town of Wilson Councilman, died January 30, 1994. He was the son of Howard and Ethel Fitch Pease, and a descendent of one of Niagara County's early settlers, Enoch Pease, who fought in the War of 1812.

Larry was a 4th generation farmer and owner of Pinehurst Farm, and also served on the Wilson Town Board for 36 years. He graduated from Wilson High School in 1926, and from Bryant and Stratton of Buffalo. He also attended Cornell University.

He was a member of Exley United Methodist Church; a Past Master of Ontario Lodge #376, F&AM, of Wilson, and joined the Wilson Historical Society in 1981.

He is survived by his wife, Charlotte O'Connor Pease; three children, Dr. Rodney (Patricia) Pease of East Grand Rapids, Michigan; Jane Pease of Wilson; and James (Linda) Pease of Wilson; Also a sister, Helen Sayer of Newfane.

Services were held at Exley United Methodist Church and burial was in Greenwood Cemetery.

\* \* \* \* \*

Lucy E. Monroe, 82, former resident of Wilson, died at the Newfane Health Facility on February 5, 1994, following a long illness.

Lucy was a member of the Wilson Historical Society and well known for the delicious home-made candies dispensed by her at the annual Memorial Day Fairs. She was also active in the Womens Society of Exley United Methodist Church; the Newfane Golden Age Club; and the Womens Auxiliary of Inter Community Hospital at Newfane.

She is survived by her daughter, Marilyn (Edward) Rodgers of California; a son, James (Sharon) Monroe of North Tonawanda; a sister Margaret (Charles) Seaman of Florida; also 10 grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

Services were held at Exley United Methodist Church with Rev. Sue Kaiser officiating.

\* \* \* \* \*

RECENT ACQUISITIONS:

Estate of Eleanor Brydges: Two framed pictures of Sen. Earl Brydges; vacuum cleaner; Records; Various Kitchen articles; also Gavel and other memorabilia from Brydges family.

Donald Luff: Tin Box used to store seeds at Luff's Nursery--100 years old

\* \* \* \* \*

SOUNDINGS:

One good thing about snow-- it makes your lawn look as good as your neighbors.

\* \* \* \* \*

BOARD ACTION AND REPORTS:

Don Burrows, Pres., announced that arrangements have been made with the town of Wilson Tourism Comm., to hold the annual Band Concert and Ice Cream Social at the museum grounds on July 31, 1994. Special entertainment will be provided this year by the "Bar Room Buzzards."

Clark Stimson reported that the society's World War II Jeep is being repaired and worked on by Bob and Robert Hull.

Wanda Burrows has been appointed corresponding secretary, and one of her duties will be to send sympathy cards to the families of deceased members.

Motion was made by Ollie Clark to award \$50 to the Senior boy and girl with the highest 4 year average in Social Studies at Wilson High School. Motion passed.

Dan King made a motion to repair furnace installations and plumbing as soon as possible. Motion approved.

Gary Fitch has been appointed Supt. of buildings and grounds, and on Feb. 6th, he, Dan King, Don Burrows, and Ed Hastings surveyed the museum premises and made several recommendations for short term and long term projects.

\* \* \* \* \*

FAIR COMMITTEE MEETS:

The Fair Comm. met at the home of Lois Barnum in February to make plans for this year's Memorial Day Fair, May 30, 1994. Comm. members are Lois Barnum, Don Burrows, Dan King, Darrell Smith, and Nettie Stimson.

Dealer contracts are being distributed by Nettie, and quilt tickets have been mailed out to all members of the society. Extra tickets are available from Betty Stimson.

A Chicken-Bar-B-Q will be featured again this year supplemented by Beef on Weck, Hot Dogs, Funnel Cakes, Popcorn, Sno Cones, and a variety of soft drinks.

Activities will be outlined in future newsletters, and the next meeting of the fair comm. has been scheduled for March 17th at the Barnum home.

\* \* \* \* \*

MARCH MEETING:

Doris Orsitti of the Wilcox Mansion in Buffalo will be the guest speaker at the meeting on March 21st, and the subject for her talk will be "The Pan American Exposition." The public is always cordially invited to attend all program meetings of the Wilson Historical Society.

Refreshments hostesses for the evening will be Gus Bradley and Melva Bull.

\* \* \* \* \*

MEMORIAL TREE PLANTED:

Elton Kropp, Grounds Chrm., has announced that the evergreen tree donated by Kathy Neville in memory of her father, Richard Neville, has been planted. The tree will be marked with a plaque in keeping with other Memorial trees on the grounds.

\* \* \* \* \*

NEW LIFE MEMBER:

The society is honored to have Dr. James Edward Hohensee of Wilson join the Life Membership Class of the Wilson Historical Society.

Dr. Hohensee, the son of Edward and Elaine Hohensee of Buffalo, was born June 19, 1958, and he attended the Iroquois Central School at Elma, NY. He later received a B.S. in engineering at Michigan State University, and returned to Buffalo in 1984 where he acquired his Medical Degree at the S.U.N.Y. at Buffalo in 1991.

Dr. Hohensee is married to the former Andrea Rosati, and they have a 10 month old son and another baby expected in June. He also has a stepson, Ben Schultz.

The doctor is affiliated with Inter-Community Hospital at Newfane, and has established a family practise medical office in Wilson at the corner of High and Warren Streets.

\* \* \* \* \*

It is also a pleasure to welcome Ronald and Winona Hamblin of Niagara Falls; Raymond and Janyce Forsyth of Wilson; and Ann Marie Brogan of Buffalo as the latest new members in the Wilson Historical Society.

\* \* \* \* \*

GUIDES NEEDED:

BeHo Tours and Travel of Buffalo have contacted our society to try and arrange for cobblestone house tours in the town of Wilson.

Lucille Upton, tours chrm., is interested in finding several persons who would like to serve as "step-on" guides to provide bus passengers with information about the various houses on the "Cobblestone Trail". Please talk to Lucille if interested.

\* \* \* \* \*

UNDERGROUND RAILROAD:

The late Earl Armstrong once wrote that during the days of the "Underground Railroad", there were two stations in Wilson--the William H. Holmes farm on Wilson-Burt Road, and the D.L. Armstrong farm on West Lake Road.

According to him, "The Armstrong farm belonged to my grandfather, and one time when my uncle went up in the hay mow, he came down in a hurry--his face as white as a ghost.

"Grandmother asked him what was the matter, but he was so scared he could hardly talk. Finally he got it out, 'There's a black man in the hay mow.' Grandmother said, 'calm down' you're seeing things--there's no black men in our hay mow.

"That night grandfather went to the barn after dark, and us kids went to bed. Grandmother had packed a basket with sandwiches, coffe, and pie, which grandfather took with him. He said he had to drive to Youngstown to get some supplies and he hitched up his team to a surrey and left. When we peaked out of the upstairs window we could see someone was with him.

"Next day we were told not to ever go up in the hay mow again by ourselves and believe me, we never did."

\* \* \* \* \*

FINAL THOUGHT:

The older generation thought nothing of getting up at 5:00 AM. The younger generation doesn't think much of it eitner.

\* \* \* \* \*



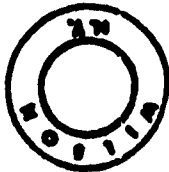
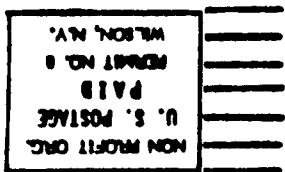
(Coleman Printing)

April 1994 VOL. 23 NO. 4

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

# NEWSLETTER

Wilson Historical Society  
Wilson, New York 14172-9763



April 1994

## CIVIL WAR ODDITIES:

During the Civil War, "war volunteers" made up most of the combat forces in both the Northern and Southern armies, and before the war started most communities like Wilson had their local militia units. Wilson's Militia drilled at Camp Cuyler on "Sunset Island", so many of the young men in the area had some military training when the war started.

Luther Wilson was Captain of Company L, one of five companies that made up the 66th Militia Regiment, however, when the war began the 66th did not enter the conflict as a Unit, but most of its young men volunteered for service in other Niagara County regiments. It is a matter of record that about 385 persons from the Wilson area served during the Civil War.

Daniel H. Davis, who enlisted in the 28th New York Infantry regiment was the first soldier from Wilson to die in combat, and he is buried in Greenwood Cemetery. Wilson is also noted for having lost one of the last soldiers killed in the war, namely, Joshua Smith, who lost his life while in action with the 2nd Mounted Rifles near Petersburg on April 9, 1865.

Another young Wilson soldier, William Adriance, grew up on his father's farm on the Beebe Road in East Wilson. He enlisted in the 28th New York Volunteer Infantry Regiment in May, 1862, and was later captured in a skirmish near Winchester, Virginia. An 1861 .36 Cal. Naval Colt Revolver which he carried as a side arm, had his name, William Adriance, 3rd Sgt. Lockport New York engraved on it, and it was taken from him and never returned.

One hundred years later the pistol was found on the bottom of the Yaquina River in the State of Oregon. Still in fair condition, the finder contacted the Niagara County Historical Society, and was able to return the pistol to a grand niece of Sgt. Adriance.

An interesting exhibit in the Wilson Museum is a preserved hoof removed from the Confederate War Horse, Billy Sherman. The horse was owned by Chief Bugler Lorenzo Pratt who served with Battery M, 1st New York Light Artillery. Pratt rode Billy on Sherman's march to the sea, and named him after General William Tecumseh Sherman, commander of the Union forces.

When the war ended, Pratt brought Billy back to Wilson where the horse lived out his life doing light chores on the Pratt farm. When he died, members of Peter Porter Post, GAR, who served with Battery M, assembled at the Pratt farm and buried Billy with military honors. The Wilson Historical Society was able to locate the grave because of the Iris that were planted on it and still blooming each year to the present time.

Wilson's GAR Post was named after Peter A. Porter, who commanded the 8th New York Heavy Artillery. The 8th was organized when President Lincoln issued a call for 300,000 men to help break the Union's stalled offensive at Richmond, Virginia. Over 50 Wilson men served in the regiment which was mustered in at the Niagara County Fairgrounds on August 22, 1862.

When the regiment first arrived in Washington, everyone was in high spirits, and the untested troops from the Niagara region were referred to as "Porter's Life Insurance Company." Later, because of their heavy casualties, the regiment became known as the "Hard Luck" outfit, or the "Bloody Eighth."

At Cold Harbor the 8th engaged in two days of furious fighting, and Colonel Porter along with 630 officers and men lost their lives.

Sometimes when men volunteered for service in the army, they found things a little changed when they came home. Enoch Pettit was a good example. When his wife died he was heartbroken and discouraged, so he enlisted and went to war with the 49'ers.

Prior to his enlistment, he bought and sold cattle and had considerable lands and buildings. While in the army he lost touch with Wilson and when his taxes were not paid, his lands were taken over by others. After the war he returned home and lived with a daughter until he died and was buried in Greenwood Cemetery.

Enoch served in a musician company, and the sword and dagger that he carried while on duty are on display in the Wilson Museum.

Although the Union army was made up mostly by volunteers, the government did draft some recruits, and the first man to be drafted from Wilson was Hugh Gleason who served in Co.A of the 140th New York Volunteer Regiment. Gleason was also the first substitute soldier from East Wilson.

Any man could be a substitute soldier after Congress passed a law making it possible for a drafted person to hire a substitute to serve in his place.

\* \* \* \* \*

## MEETINGS:

The Board of Directors will meet Wed., April 13th at the museum at 7:30 PM.

The regular meeting will be held at the museum Mon., April 18th, at 7:30 PM.

\* \* \* \* \*

BON MOT: Yesterday's nest egg will hardly buy today's birdhouse.

\* \* \* \* \*

FROM THE MAILBAG:

Virginia Klaiber of Williamsville, NY, has informed us that her mother, Doris Fittro Clark, passed away on January 3, 1994 following a massive coronary. Mrs. Clark was 97 but very alert up to the time of her attack.

As a young woman, Doris taught at the north Randall Road Schoolhouse which was located on the west side of the road. It was later converted to a residence.

She married Ray Clark in 1918 and they had two children, Virginia and Donald. After her husband went into business with LaMott Hamilton in Wilson, they opened a branch of the business in Kenmore. Ray died in 1926, but Doris and the children remained in Kenmore.

Doris Clark joined the Wilson Historical Society in 1975, and was made an Honorary Member in 1986. The Fittro Shop, now part of the Wilson Museum Complex, is where her father once operated a blacksmith shop.

The members of the society extend their deepest sympathy to all members of her family.

\* \* \* \* \*

NEW JUNIOR MEMBER:

Our newest junior member is 11 month old Kayley M. Humphreys, daughter of "Chip" and Beth Weiler Humphreys of Midlothian, Virginia. She is also the granddaughter of David and Mary Weiler of New Egypt, N.J., and the great-great granddaughter of Christine Kelman of Whiting, New Jersey, and John Weiler of Wilson, New York.

It is also a pleasure to welcome Fred and Anna Zehner Bruski of Lockport, and Robert and Nina M. Mowell of Wilson, NY, also David, Lynnette, and Christopher Draper of Wilson.

\* \* \* \* \*

1994 FEDERATION CONGRESS:

Several years ago a group of representatives from the various historical societies in Niagara County met to investigate the possibility of forming a member organization. Many of the societies were newly formed and needed help in getting started.

A Federation was formed, officers elected, and meetings held as needed. Each society had a representative who reported on activities and needs of their group, and mutual problems and successes were discussed: Two "Speakers Bureau" booklets were published to assist program chairmen; historical displays were set up by the 18 member Federation at the County 4-H Fair in Lockport; also an Annual Congress, geared to historical topics, which is open to all interested persons.

This year the Congress will be held on April 16th at the Niagara County Historical Society, 215 Niagara Street, Lockport, NY. At 9:45 a.m., guests will be introduced by Judson Heck, Pres. of the Federation, and at 10:45 a.m., Grace Kirck of the Newfane Historical Society, will speak on the "Restoration of the Van Horn Mansion."; At 1:00 a.m., Mr. William Lattin, Orleans Co. Historian, will talk about "Church Stained Glass Windows"; and at Noon there will be a Lunch break at the Shamus Restaurant.

At 1:30 p.m., Teresa Lasher-Winslow, former Niagara County Historian, will discuss ways to attract visitors to museums with the inspiring talk, "Over the Falls in a Barrel." At 2:45 p.m., Richard Cavagnaro of the Niagara County Society, will give a timely talk, "Along the Tow Path of the Erie Canal." At 3:30 p.m., there will be a guided tour of the Niagara County Museum.

Registration will be at 9:00-9:30 a.m. Sat., April 16th; Lunch at 12:00 Noon. Cost per person is \$12. For more information and registration forms, please contact Norman MacAskill at 297-6330, no later than April 9th.

\* \* \* \* \*

RECENT ACQUISITIONS:

Verna Farquharson of Sanborn has donated a Navy Jacket and Trousers worn by James Farquharson when he was Inspector General of N.Y. National Guard in late 1800's; also Khaki Jacket worn by James with Pocket Ribbon marked "74th Reception Comm.--Welcome Home 74th--February 1917. Other items include 4 Blacksmith's Tools; Pig Scraper; Hay Bale Lifter; Kraut Cutter; Lantern marked "Town of Wilson", and two geography books (1914) (1916).

Walpole, Ernestine of Richmond, Virginia: Complete Scrapbook of the Wilson Centennial (1958) compiled by Stuart Walpole.

Order of Eastern Star c/o Jane Sinclair: Original Charter and Bible of Wilson Chapter #268.

Gates, Ruth of Oviedo, FL: Business Envelopes to and Wilson Lumber Company (1930's)

\* \* \* \* \*

BOARD ACTION & REPORTS:

Pres. Don Burrows introduced guest, Jean Figura, who spoke about the Randall Rd. Schoolhouse project, and said that fund-raisers are underway. A motion was made by Gary Fitch and approved to allow Mrs. Figura to open a bank account using the society's tax number.

Brian Lonsbery and Charles Hartwig, representing the Wilson Business Association, requested use of the Barnum Bldg. and grounds for the annual Easter Egg Hunt on April 2, 1994. Motion was made by Ollie Clark and approved to grant permission.

They also asked permission to use photographs of the museum on Christmas ornaments which will be offered for sale this fall as a fund-raising project. Motion made by Don Croop to grant permission was approved. The Association also plans to have a booth at the Memorial Day Fair.

Don Burrows reported that Mary Ann Basil has renewed the lease on her land for another year, and also read a letter from Wally Moxham, Att'y., complimenting the society on the work that has been accomplished around the museum.

\* \* \* \* \*

MUSEUM WILL REOPEN:

The Wilson Museum, which has been closed for the winter, will reopen to visitors again on April 10th, from 2 to 4 PM. Museum Hosts and hostesses will be as follows:

April 10th, Don Burrows, Director, Ruth & Claude Lampman; April 17th, Gary Fitch, Director, Lorine Allgeier & Jeanne Nablo; April 24th, Ollie Clark, Carole Schnoor & Celeste Crawford.

\* \* \* \* \*

SOUNDINGS: For most kids, cleanliness isn't next to godliness--it's next to impossible.

\* \* \* \* \*

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE:

Many of the projects that were completed at the museum since 1972 were done with volunteer help and, needless to say, everyone can be proud of what has been accomplished. When a new organization starts up, a basic group of people are so interested in seeing it succeed, they will support it in every way possible.

The society has been fortunate to have so many dedicated volunteers because without them the society couldn't have afforded to do what it did. In February, Gary Fitch, Supt. in charge of Work Details and Construction, along with Ed Hastings, Dan King, and Don Burrows, surveyed the premises and made up a list of some recommendations to bring the museum facilities up to par.

It was found that repairs are needed on one furnace in the Depot, also kitchen and lavatory plumbing should be realigned to prevent future freeze-ups. Materials stored under depot should be removed and skirting replaced around foundation; Install motion light at entranceway; Move old refrigerator to Schnoor Room; replace lights in exit signs, install more shelves in library, and repaint depot.

Roof should be repaired on Barnum Building; holes in wall between buildings repaired; weather seals on doors; replace door lock, repair or remove cooler in back room; and paint block wall.

Concrete floor in Shelter; carpet in Breezeway, anchor or replace ramp, and seals on doors. Install climate control system in Argue Building, replace cupola; and lower ceiling.

Replace siding on north side of caboose; level parking lot with crushed stone; spray for weed control, and repair or replace defective sections in brick walk.

If you can help out on any of the above, Gary, 778-8854, or Don 751-9703 would appreciate a call--work can be done at your convenience., naturally.

\* \* \* \* \*

WILSON FAMILY REMEMBERED:

Walter E. Moxham, Jr., prominent Lockport attorney and Life Member of the Wilson His. Soc., recently made a Memorial contribution to the society in memory of Ida Wilson, long time resident.

Mr. Moxham's home on Ontario St. is a stone's throw from the former Wilson home, and he has many fond memories of the lakeshore couple who were "So much a part of our town's history."

He recalled the many times he spent fishing in front of the Wilson's home, and rowing around the harbor after "Coaxing 'Walt' into letting me borrow one of his rowboats." He also remembered the time he went on the lake at 4:00 AM in the "Docksetter", and watched while "Walt and Jonny Sax brought in the day's catch from nets they had set out the day before."

Mr. Moxham recalled that he didn't have the sea legs or the stomach that they did and spent the last hour hanging over the side of the boat--certain that he'd never reach his teenage years.

Walter Wilson was noted for his many woodcarvings of birds which he made from driftwood and pieces of wood from the old 1870 piers. Most of his collection has been donated to the Museum.

He was part owner of the old Wilson Boathouse and the son of Timothy and Flora Hurlburt Wilson, and he spent most of his life as a commercial fisherman. He and his wife, the former Ida Fortcomb, were married at Pekin in 1924. They had two children, Barbara and Stewart.

\* \* \* \* \*

HONOR STUDENT:

Ami M. Savigny, daughter of Robert and Mary Savigny of Maple Rd., Wilson, was named to the Dean's List for the fall semester at Geneseo State University. Ami graduated in 1993 as Valedictorian of Wilson Central School.

\* \* \* \* \*

IN MEMORIAM:

Rita C. Munch, wife of William Munch, died at Gibsonton, FL. March 5, 1994. Burial was in Brandon, FL. Our sympathy is extended to Bill and other members of the family. Bill is a former resident of Chestnut Rd., Wilson,

\* \* \* \* \*

FAIR ACTIVITIES:

The Fair Committee met at the home of Lois Barnum where Mrs. Nina Mowell, representing the Community Service Group, offered the services of its members to help out at the upcoming fair. Some of the activities projected for the Memorial Day event will include the Niagara County Living History Guild; Gasoline engine demonstrations; and Model Airplane Show.

Other attractions will feature Chiavetta's Bar-B-Q Chicken; over 200 dealer Flea Market; Quilt Raffle; and Antique Car Show. Society members are urged to get their donation tickets for the quilt drawing back to Betty Stimson as quickly as possible.

All Fair Chairmen are asked to please attend the next meeting which will be held at the home of Lois Barnum on April 7th at 7:00 p.m.

\* \* \* \* \*

ART EXHIBIT:

The Wilson Free Library is featuring an exhibit of the water color paintings of local artist, Norma Ward, in April during regular library hours.

Norma received her B.S. in Art Education at the S.U.N.Y. at Buffalo where she also did some post graduate studies. She is a member of the Niagara Frontier Watercolor Society; the Niagara Arts Guild; and holds office in the Niagara Society of Artists.

Norma is also Publicity Chrm. for this year's Memorial Day Fair.

\* \* \* \* \*

APRIL MEETING:

The regular monthly meeting will be held on April 18th at 7:30 p.m. in the Wilson Museum. Sandie Wilson and Maxine Jones will be refreshment hostesses for the evening.

\* \* \* \* \*

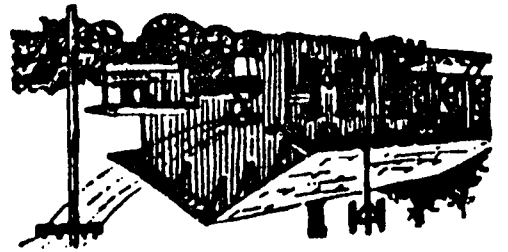
DID YOU KNOW...that the Hon. John A. Merritt of Lockport was a Postmaster at Washington, and a pioneer advocate of the Rural Free Delivery System?

\* \* \* \* \*

FINAL THOUGHT:

Man can't live by bread alone. He needs peanut butter too.

\* \* \* \* \*



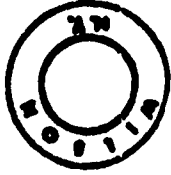
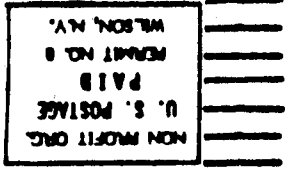
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May (1994) Vol. 23 No. 5

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

# NEWSLETTER

WILSON, NEW YORK 14172-9763  
Wilson Historical Society



May 1994

## MEMORIAL DAY FAIR-1994:

The Wilson Historical Society is about ready to sponsor its 23rd annual Memorial Day Fair on May 30, 1994, and it will be held from 9a.m. to 5p.m. at the museum grounds on route 425. If all expectations are met, it will be a gala affair featuring a wide variety of activities including entertainment, demonstrations, and displays.

The society's perennial event has always been held on Memorial Day, and thousands of persons have discovered that Wilson is a great place to be on that day--not only to pay tribute to the men and women who gave their lives for our Country, but also to have a day of fun, relaxation, and sociability. After all, where else on Memorial Day can one prowl around a big flea market; see a variety of exhibits and demonstrations; partake in delicious foods or snacks; and at the same time enjoy free parking and free access to the grounds via of free shuttle bus service from convenient parking places in the village. It's a package deal you'll find hard to beat.

In 1973, the idea of holding an annual fair was initiated by the society as a means of raising funds to open and maintain a museum in the community. It was an idea whose time had come, and during the next 20 years the facilities were improved and expanded while thousands of artifacts, including antique cars, were donated to the museum by area residents.

Although all buildings and lands acquired by the society are the property of the Town of Wilson, the historical society is entrusted with the care and upkeep of the property. This has been accomplished with the help and support of the local community as well as from donations of time and labor by the society's volunteers. Also contributing to its support have been funds raised by membership dues, annual fair receipts, bake sales, ice cream socials and occasional grants from the Town and local residents. All these plus services volunteered by hostesses and others have made it possible to keep the museum open to the public.

Since the fair is the primary fund-raiser for the historical society, organizations and vendors are asked to not sell items or conduct activities that would directly compete with fund-raisers provided by the historical society. This seems like a reasonable request because everyone can profit as long as the society is able to sponsor a successful fair.

The Fair's big attractions this year will feature a huge flea market from 9 to 5 p.m. and Chiavetta's Chicken Barbeque from 11 a.m. to 4p.m. We also understand that a few more dealer-spaces are still available. Please call Nettie Stimson (754-7815) for more information.

New events will include the Lake Ontario RC Flyers who will set up a display booth and demonstrate model airplanes. A special attraction for the children will be a Petting Zoo and Pony Rides provided by Ken and Dori Hill, Lower Mt. Rd., Sanborn, NY.

One of the fair's main attractions has been the antique cars displayed in the Dr. John Argue Memorial Building. There will also be a showing of area antique cars, and Clark Stimson, (754-7815) invites any individual or car club member to exhibit a classic, custom, or street-rod in a non-judged car display. A \$3.00 car-show parking fee will entitle the first 100 entrants to receive a commemorative dash plaque for their cars.

In past fairs, approximately 21 beautiful hand-embroidered quilts have been given to lucky winners throughout our area, and this year will be no exception. The 1944 quilt will feature a unique "turkey red" hand embroidered top with the date 1895 on it. It was donated by Mrs. Dorothy Lort and hand-quilted by Mrs. Betty Stimson--both residents of Wilson. Other prizes to be awarded will include a hand-embroidered table cloth by Mrs. Alma McGrath of Lockport; special Woodcarving by Bob Schearer of Wilson; "Wilson Sketchbook" History of Wilson; and two Wilson Historical Society Cookbooks.

The Niagara Living History Guild will also set-up on the grounds, and will be in authentic colonial dress and uniforms. Members of the King's Regiment of Foot and Royal Artillery will attend and display musketry and cannon. 18th century foods will be prepared on open fires, and Peddlers or "Suttlers" will display their wares. Other actors in this re-enactment group will be schoolchildren with schoolbooks made of horn, also lace-makers, weavers, and a blacksmith.

At noontime a special service to commemorate our fallen servicemen and women will be conducted by Wilson's American Legion Post followed by a concert by the Wilson High School Band. Fair-goers will also be able to catch the snappy background renditions by Berne Kent at the piano accompanied by Howard Fitzgerald.

In addition to the chicken bar-b-que, the society also expects to provide Beef on Weck, home made pies, hot dogs, funnel cakes, sno cones, cotton candy, popcorn, and beverages.

\* \* \* \* \*

BON MOT:

We can't all be shining examples, but we all can "twinkle" a little.

\* \* \* \* \*

WORKING FOR US:

When the Wilson Historical Society was in its "growing pain" years, Most of the fair activities were directed by a general chairman, and the society was fortunate to have several who did a super job, namely, Ella Mae Baker, the late Millie Croop, Eleanor Myers, Sue Toenniessen, Nettie Stimson, Rena Rohring, Darrell & Sally Smith, and Lois Barnum.

In 1993, the Board of Directors realized that the fair had grown too large for one person to handle, so appointed a fair committee consisting of five qualified members: Lois Barnum, Donald Burrows, Daniel King, Darrell Smith, and Nettie Stimson.

It was a good idea because all problems related to the fair were ironed out by the committee, who also arranged for other area chairmen to carry out all phases of the fair-operation.

This year's fair comm. is composed of the same group, and we'd like to acquaint you with some of their accomplishments to benefit the Wilson Historical Society.

Lois Barnum is a charter/life member, and has been heavily involved in the society's operation from the beginning. She has served in a variety of activities including Program Chrm., Tours Chrm., Ways & Means Chrm., General Chairman, Supplies Chrm., member of the 1993 fair comm., member of the Board of Trustees, and the Board of Directors.

Don Burrows joined the society in 1984 and quickly became involved. He has served on the Board of Trustees, was appointed Chrm. of the Planning Committee, was elected to the office of Vice-President, and in the 1994 election was elected Pres. of the Society. He is also a Life Member and serves on the Board of Directors.

Daniel King, although he joined the society in 1986, was active helping the society in many ways prior to that date. One job he did was to prefabricate the fins for the society's windmill. He is a member of the Board of trustees and Board of Directors, and was appointed Chrm. of the Finance Comm in 1993. He also served on the 1st fair committee in 1993.

Darrell Smith was 12 years old when he joined the society in 1973, and has attended every Memorial Day Fair. He has helped in a variety of ways such as cleaning up the grounds, parking cars, and in the summer of 1987 spray-painted the entire depot. He became a Life Member in 1990 and that same year he and his wife, Sally, were appointed co-chairmen of that year's fair. In 1993 he served on the first fair committee and in the 1994 elections was made a member of the Board of trustees and serves on the Board of Directors.

Nettie Stimson is a charter/life member of the society and has been active in numerous capacities including Chairman of the Ways & Means Comm., Corresponding Secretary, General Chairman of the Memorial Day Fair, trustee and member of the Board of Directors, and member of the first 1993 fair committee. Nettie has also served many years as Dealer Chrm. for the fair, one of the fair's most important attractions, and has seen the event grow from 30 to over 200 vendors. With the acquisition of new lands, it possibly could go much higher.

\* \* \* \* \*

A GENTLE REMINDER:

The Wilson Historical Society was organized May 1, 1972, and during the following 20 years, membership dues were renewable on that date.

In 1993, the society voted to make all dues payable on January 1st, and applications were attached to several newsletters last winter for your convenience..Because of the change in the date some of our valued members did not renew--possibly because many waited to renew on the date of the Fair.

It goes without saying that the continued support of all our members is essential to keep the museum open to the public. We budget nearly ten thousand a year to pay utilities, produce and mail out the Newsletter, and pay for the general maintenance of the buildings and grounds. In view of this, not only is the fair important, but also the dues collection.

We hope that you will continue to give the society your support and help make the Wilson Museum an attraction the village and town can be proud of.

\* \* \* \* \*

DON'T FORGET QUILT STUBS:

Apparently the quilt stubs are coming in great--must be the word's out that the 1895 spread is "One of a Kind"--at least all who've seen it think so.

Betty says she has a problem though--seems people are sending those checks and donation stubs everywhere in Wilson except to her. She would like to remind you once again it's best if you mail them directly to her: Betty Stimson, Box 162, Wilson, NY. 14172. Thanks a million.

\* \* \* \* \*

FROM THE PAST:

In 1892, the District #1 School in Wilson was taught by Arthur Dobbs. His class consisted of 19 youngsters. See how many of them were familiar to you:

Ida Brandt (Foster); Ada Carter; Edith Cook (Wilson); Minnie Pollow (Snelling); F.M. Campbell; Curtis Pettit; Jabez Ward; Charles Ward; Dennis Cook; Sarah Ward; Curtiss Gifford; Daniel Carter; Merle Holmes; Ray Holmes; Gusta Schultz; Clara Schultz; Ella Brandt; Edith Pease; Grace Smith; and Ray Seely.

\* \* \* \* \*

IN MEMORIAM:

Laura M. Clark, 74, a native of Wilson, died April 17, 1994. She was the daughter of Murrell and Ethel Ward Clark. She was a member of the Exley United Methodist Church in Wilson, and worked for the Harrison Radiator Div. of GMC for over thirty years. She joined the Wilson Historical Society in 1983.

She is survived by four brothers, Milton (Helen) Clark of Wilson; Lester (Betty) Clark of Hayward, Cal; Maurice Clark of Newfane, NY; and John Clark of Lockport.NY; three sisters, Pearl Spears of Lockport; Beverl Baily of Lockport; and Lois LaJoie of Appleton; also two sister-in-laws, Betty and Ruth Clark; and a brother-in-law Edward Roszmann.

Services were held at the Hamilton & Clark Funeral Chapel with Rev. Sue Kaiser officiating.

\* \* \* \* \*

SOUNDINGS:

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

\* \* \* \* \*

MAY MEETINGS?

Janet Naslund, Program Chrm., has announced that Don Wilke of North Tonawanda will be the guest speaker at the regular monthly meeting at the museum, May 16th, 7:30 PM. Mr. Wilke will bring his authentic Hofeauer German Grind Organ, and in addition to playing it will show slides and talk on the history of different types of hand organs. Janet said that Miles Linnabery helped make arrangements for the program.

Nina Mowell and Leona Hunter will serve light refreshments following the program, and we again wish to remind everyone that the public is cordially invited to attend all program meetings of the Wilson Historical Society. Norrie Desso is Chrm of the Refreshment committee.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Board of Director meeting will be held May 11, 1994, in the Wilson Museum at 7:30 PM.

\* \* \* \* \*

MUSEUM GREETERS FOR MAY:

Hosts and hostesses selected by Marge Lederhouse to serve at the museum on Sunday afternoons from 2 to 4 p.m. during the month of May are as follows:

May 1st, John and Jane Demmin--Wanda Burrows, director; May 8th, Helen Stevens and Dorothy Mark--Bobbie Hull, director; May 15th, Sidney and Donna Pettit--Eleanor Myers, director; May 22nd, Gerry Swann and Helen Horton--Norm MacAskill, director; May 29th, Fenton and Bessie Cole--Arthur Schnoor, director.

Directors are expected to open and close the museum on the dates they are assigned to. Any director named who, for any reason, is unable to attend is responsible for getting another director to serve in his or her place. Thank you for your co-operation.

\* \* \* \* \*

NEIGHBORS DID GOOD TURN:

The late Earl Armstrong liked to reminisce about some of the people and things he had heard about Wilson, and he once wrote some notes about a Civil War veteran, we'll call him "John", who appeared to be having a hard time taking care of his family and making payments on his home.

"A rather tight "money grabber" held the mortgage on John's place, and he decided to evict John and his family and acquire the property for himself.

"He had all the necessary eviction papers drawn up and when the Constable got them on a Saturday night, they could not be legally served until the following Monday morning.

"That same Saturday night, John's neighbors showed up with their teams, long timbers, flat boats, jack screws, and crow bars--everything needed to move a building.

"The men worked all Saturday night, Sunday, and Sunday night, and when the Constable came to serve the papers Monday morning, John's house was standing on a neighbor's property.

"Nobody appeared to know how the house had gotten moved, and when anyone was asked where they were on Sunday, it seems they were all visiting friends somewhere that day.

"John was later able to get back on his feet, and bought the little plot of ground on which his house had been moved to."

\* \* \* \* \*

AROUND THE MUSEUM:

Ollie Clark reported a great day on April 2nd when over 300 area youngsters competed for 1201 Easter eggs. The successful venture was sponsored by the Wilson Business Association.

The "Move-the-Randall Road-Schoolhouse committee" has been given permission by the society's Board of Directors to use the Barnum Building and grounds for a fund-raising Auction to be held on Saturday, September 10, 1994.

The society has been trying for months to get the old G.E. Refrigerator moved from the hall to the Schnoor Room. Proving that many hands make light work, Don Burrows, Dan King, Clark Stimson, and Darrell Smith, got the job done quickly during a recent fair meeting.

Dan King has arranged for some changes in museum wiring that should save us \$20 per month. Ellsworth McKelvey would like to find an old metal lunch pail or bucket--the more beat-up the better. He'd like it for an exhibit in the baboose.

Bess McKelvey has been doing some work in the library--looks great, keep it up. Gary Fitch is trying to get several small jobs done to spruce up the museum. Among these will be getting crushed stone on the parking lot and putting carpeting in the Breezeway.

\* \* \* \* \*

PLANNING BOARD TO MEET:

John Myers, Chrm. of the long-range Planning Committee plans to hold a meeting at the museum during the 1st week in May--date to be announced. He urges all committee members or any members of the society who have any ideas for improving the museum or grounds for the next 10 or 15 years, to bring those ideas to the meeting.

\* \* \* \* \*

ACTIVE NONAGENARIANS:

Congratulations to some of our Honorary members who have been celebrating their 90+ birth-days recently:

Mabel Burrows of Burt, NY, claims she is 90 years old, but she'd have to show proof for any of her friends to believe it. Mabel has been an active member since 1980, and became an Honorary member in 1989.

A. Vernon Croop of Rochester, NY, became a member in 1991 and an Honorary Member in 1992. Vern is an avid golfer and bowler and said that his age, 90, is a good number to shoot for on the golf course.

Frank Fenn of Ransomville, NY, has a head start on everyone. He celebrated his 98th birthday on April 5th. Frank has belonged to the society since 1983, and became an Honorary Member in 1987.

Elwood Schultz of Ransomville, NY, also an Honorary Member, joined the society in 1991 and celebrated his 90th birthday in April.

\* \* \* \* \*

FINAL THOUGHT:

You know you live in a small town when people read the local newspaper to see if the Publisher got it right.

\* \* \* \* \*



(Coleman Printing)

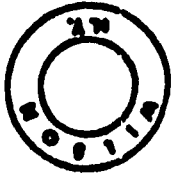
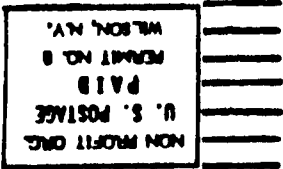
June (1994) Vol. 23 No. 6

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

# NEWSLETTER

Wilson Historical Society  
Wilson, New York 14172-9763

June 1994



### RANDALL ROAD HISTORY REVISED:

Wilbur R. Reese of Williamsburg, Virginia, had an illustrious career after he graduated from Wilson High School in 1934. He later graduated from Buffalo State College in 1938, and in 1941 became a Naval Aviator during World War II, and served aboard five different aircraft carriers as a fighter pilot.

He was promoted to the rank of Lieut. Commander and, after attending the graduate school at Ohio University, did research for a Psychological Corporation and internship in clinical psychology for the Akron, Ohio, Public Schools.

In 1949 he started the Mental Health Clinic for the City of Williamsburg, Virginia, and is listed in the 19th edition of "Who's Who in the South and Southwest." His hobby is genealogy and he has written 120 family genealogies since his retirement.

Mr. Reese started his schooling in the old Randall Road Schoolhouse, District #8, in 1924, and entered high school at Wilson in 1931.

The Randall Road Schoolhouse was about 150 yards north of his home and, according to him, "If I ran fast past Durphy's house and a row of cherry trees, I could get there in a couple of minutes."

It is interesting to note that the property on which the Randall Road Schoolhouse was built was donated by Henry Maham, an ancestor of Wilbur Reese, and the deed was recorded at the Niagara County Courthouse in January, 1861.

The Randall Road was named for the Randall family, and Asa Randall, with his wife and children, came to Wilson and settled on what is now the Randall Road between 1820 and 1830.

It was near the site of the Asa Randall cabin that Reese's ancestor, Henry Maham, built his house and barn.

In 1980, the Wilson Historical Society, under the direction of the late Dorothy Thilk, town of Wilson Historian, began the tedious task of trying to find and identify some of the markers at the site of the abandoned Randall Road Cemetery.

All of the stones had been covered up ca. 1910, and the plot was leveled off erasing all signs of a cemetery ever having been there.

Some of the stones found and recorded through the efforts of Mrs. Thilk and other society members included the one for Asa Randall which revealed that he had died on June 5, 1858 at the age of seventy. His wife, Mary, was 59 when she died, and the unfinished date on her stone was May 17, 18--. Also located was the marker for their 12 year old son, Asa, who died on December 13, 1834.

Several other markers were identified including one for Timothy Bachelder, 45, who was born on August 21, 1788 and died July 11, 1834.

The fact that some burials had been made in 1830 revealed that the old cemetery had been much older than previously thought.

In 1981, the Historical Sites Committee of the Wilson Historical Society, erected a historical marker at the site listing the names of all those interred whose names were identified.

\* \* \* \* \*

### SEMINAR PLANNED:

Miles Linnabery and Anne-Marie Brogan, Chief of Interpretations at the Theodore Roosevelt Historical Site on Delaware Avenue, Buffalo, are interested in conducting a Seminar on how to do research and prepare talks on local history.

A time and date for a Seminar will be set up when Miles is able to determine whether enough people would be interested in attending. For further information, please contact Miles, 751-6567.

\* \* \* \* \*

### FROM THE PAST:

It is said that one of Wilson's old timers, Byron Tabor, was an inventor and made one of the first machines used for paring apples.

He was also said to have invented the first railroad automatic coupler for freight and passenger cars. The late Earl Armstrong of Wilson once recalled that he used to play with the original model when he was a boy, and that Tabor kept it in a black walnut case.

Later, when the Gould Coupling came out, it was identical to the one Tabor had invented, and Armstrong believed that someone got rich while Tabor died a poor man.

\* \* \* \* \*

DID YOU KNOW....that in 1831, all the area we now know as the town of Wilson, was once called the "Great North Woods?"

\* \* \* \* \*

BON MOT: A hen is the only one who can lay around and still be a producer.

\* \* \* \* \*

"OLD HUB" NOTED FOR MEALS:

It was said that people came from miles around to get their dinners at the famous old Hub Hotel in Wilson, and recently an interesting menu from the 1930's was turned in to the museum by Mary E. Stone Allgeier who resides in Naples, Florida.

Anyone who thinks they are getting a bargain today when they spend \$15 or \$20 dollars per person to dine out, might like to compare those prices with ones charged in the 1930's when eating out was relatively much more reasonable.

The regular dinner at the Hub was \$1.00 and included a choice of tomato juice or grapefruit cup plus relish tray and soup. The main course consisted of either fried chicken, porterhouse steak, roast lamb, roast loin of pork, or fish complemented with salad, vegetables, hot breads, biscuits and butter. For dessert one might choose homemade pie, shortcake, sundaes, ice cream and cake, also coffee, tea, or milk--all for one dollar.

Aslightly cheaper full course meal might be had for seventy-five cents, but did not include soup and relishes.

The economy meal was sixty-cents, and also featured creamed chicken, roast lamb, loin of pork, and fish with a choice of tomato juice or soup. Salad, vegetables, bread and butter was also included with a choice of pie, ice cream or fruit for dessert. Coffee, tea, and milk were also served with the economy meal.

America was still trying to pull out of the Great Depression in the early thirties, so the prices charged then might seem like "chicken feed" today, however, all things considered, the amounts charged represented sizeable purchasing power in the 1930's.

The Hub's dining room was open daily from 3 to 8 p.m., and reservations might be made by calling the operator at 13-158.

The cover of the Hub's menu featured a colorful picture of the Three Musketeers raising their flasks in a toast.

The Hub continued to serve meals up to 1980 when it, along with the Wilson Postoffice, were consumed by flames.

\* \* \* \* \*

FROM THE MAILBAG:

It's nice to hear from old friends and former residents, and John Goodrich of Columbus Heights, MN, writes he is doin well in an apartment near son Phil and Daughter, Jean. Said he attended a service at Jean's Methodist Church in Fridley, and it was the first time he ever heard a 65 piece band accompanied by organ and piano play in a church.

A few days last winter the thermometer hit thirty below zero, but roads are well maintained. He said despite the snow and cold in western New York, it is still one of the safest places to live, and he's glad he was able to spend most of his life back here.

\* \* \* \* \*

COMMUNITY-MINDED CLUB:

On April 30, 1994, the Tri-town Clan 4-H Club planted a Pink Spire ornamental tree on the museum grounds in recognition of Arbor Day. An annual event, the club has planted several trees at various locations around the community.

Mrs. Shirley Harper, leader, along with with club members and their parents, attended the planting and also placed a marker by the tree to identify it.

\* \* \* \* \*

DOING A GREAT JOB:

Anne Argue Faery has been doing a good job as chairman of the membership committee, and in addition to keeping an up-to-date file on all members has compiled a computerized mailing list. As new persons join the society, move away, or pass away, she has to continually update the roll.

It is difficult to keep track of all our members--especially when some move away and do not leave forwarding addresses--the newsletter cannot be forwarded since it is mailed 3rd class.

When Anne put the mailing list on computer she accepted the responsibility of addressing and mailing out the monthly newsletter, and each month she places address labels on 450 newsletters and sorts them for mailing.

It is no secret that the success of the Wilson Historical Society depends directly on the way our officers and chairmen do their jobs...we thank Anne for doing a Great Job.

\* \* \* \* \*

BOARD MEETING:

The Board of Directors will meet at the museum on Wednesday, June 8th, at 7:30 p.m. There will also be Director meetings during July and August--but no monthly meeting.

\* \* \* \* \*

THUMBNAIL SKETCH:

The Anthony Clark family originated in Ireland, and Anthony was 7 years old when he came to American with his parents and settled on a farm along the Lake Road in Wilson.

Anthony grew up on his parent's farm and, following his marriage to Mary Bagley of Lewiston, continued in the farming vocation.

One of their five children, Chester J. Clark, grew up in Wilson and married Sarah E. Albright, also a native of Wilson.

Chetford and Sarah's son, Ray E. Clark, after attending school, remained on the Ide Road farm for several years, and in 1916 moved to Gasport where he worked for the Friends Mnufig. Co.

When Ray Clark and LaMott Hamilton bought out the Cuddeback & Cooper Funeral Parlor and Store, their business became known as Hamilton and Clark.

The Clark family were members of the M.E. Church in Wilson, and Ray was also active in the Masons, Oddfellows, and Mens' Club of Wilson.

\* \* \* \* \*

SOUNDINGS:

Market Tip: Bulls and Bears can make mon ey, Only Mogs get slaughtered.

\* \* \* \* \*

AROUND THE MUSEUM:

Nice to have the "sun-birds" back from the south, and we couldn't help but note how quickly "Chuck" Messersmith got back to tinkering with the old windmill again.

A cement floor has been poured in the shelter, and was done just in time for the Fair.

\* \* \* \* \*

NEW MEMBERS:

It is a pleasure to welcome Patricia Nunaley of Yuma, Arizona, and June Wince of Vienna, West Virginia, who were given memberships in the Wilson Historical Society by their cousin, Virginia Klaiber of Williamsville, New York. Patricia and June are graduates of Wilson High School, and the daughters of deceased Catherine and Leslie Mark. Their grandfather, N. Bruce Fittro, was a former Wilson Blacksmith.

Honorary memberships have also been given to Elsie Fitch of Burt, New York, who joined the society in 1972, and Howard Lederhouse of Wilson, who joined in 1984.

\* \* \* \* \*

JUNE MEETING:

The regular monthly meeting of the society will be held June 20th in the museum at 7:30 o'clock.

Janet Naslund, Chrm., has arranged for Ken McCaskill of Lewiston, NY, to present an unusual and interesting program on his saw. He is quite adept at what he does, and has entertained recently at both the Ransomville and Newfane Golden Age Clubs.

Refreshment Chairman, Norie Desso has selected Marge Ganshaw and Pam Groff to serve lite refreshments following the program.

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CHAIRMEN MAKE FAIR POSSIBLE:

The Memorial Day Fair has been a success because of the many area chairmen and other members who work quietly behind the scenes getting helpers, supplies, preparing exhibits, or dispensing foods or other services. That is why we think it's time to recognize some of these persons and organizations:

Sirley Linnenback and Shirley Hunter, Chicken Bar-B-Q; Melinda Hutchison, Cotton Candy; Frank Massing, Night Watchman; Don Burrows, Busses; Lois Barnum and Nettie Stimson, Supplies; Dick Schmidle, Ways & Means; Anne Faery, Memberships; Norma Ward, Publicity; Eleanor Myers, Displays; Nettie Stimson, Vendors; Clark Stimson & Wally Goodman, Antiqu Cars; Ron Zaunder, Vendor Parking; Gary Fitch, Tickets; Winnie Fischer, Loom; Howard Fitzgerald and HoytDesso, Announcing, and Betty Stimson, Quilt.

Also, Sara Berry, Coffee and Drinks; Pam Groff, Pies; Carlote Pease, Beef on Weck; Dale Schlyer, Hot Dogs; Dick and Sue Schultz, Popcorn; Jim and Linda Moran, Sno Cones; Bob and Mary Savigny, Pepsi Booth; Darrell and Sally Smith, Funnel Cakes.

We also wish to thank Jim Waldron and Clark Stimson, entertaining on piano and trumpet; The American Legion and Wilson School Band; Wilson Ambulance Volunteers; Niagara County Emergency Services for Traffic Control; Niagara Falls Civil Service Patrol Squadron #1 for Parking; and Dave Marmon from WLVL Lockport Radio.

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MUSEUM ATTENDANTS FOR JUNE:

Museum hostesses for June are unavailable for this Newsletter, but Directors scheduled to open the museum from 2 to 4 P.M. on Sundays will be as follows: Lois Barnum, June 5th; Darrell Smith, June 12th; Anne Faery, June 19th; and Floyd Clark, June 26th.

\* \* \* \* \*

OLD FORT:

Events are starting up again at Old Fort Niagara with a Civil War Artillery School on June 4th and 5th; The King's Birthday on June 11th and 12th; and the Highlanders on June 19th.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Niagara County Historical Society is having a Strawberry Social at their Niagara Street grounds in Lockport on June 4th. Chicken Bar-B-Q, drinks, and music by "Dempsey Station".

\* \* \* \* \*

SCHOOLHOUSE PROJECT UNDERWAY:

The "Randall Road Schoolhouse Project" is well-underway following a planning meeting in February at which an agenda for moving the old schoolhouse to the Wilson Museum grounds was established. Much interest has already been generated for the "Move", and contributions are being received from near and far.

Thirteen thousand, four hundred dollars is needed before the old schoolhouse may be seen Coming down the Randall Road, and a major fund-raiser is planned for September 10, 1994, when consignments will be accepted and, hopefully, a percent of each item sold will be donated to the schoolhouse project.

Shirley and Bill Urtel of "Action Auction" have offered their services. Mrs. Urtel is President of the Wilson School Board of Education.

Donations may also be mailed to the "Schoolhouse Project", P.O. Box 537, Wilson, NY, 14172. Donors may designate their contributions as Memorials if they so desire.

Watch for a progress report in the July/August Newsletter.

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PTA CONTEST:

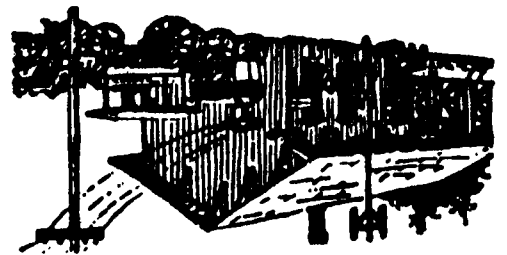
The Jr. High School PTA held a Logo contest for the "School-moving" Project; and 9th grader, Nicholas Hageman, was the winner. His logo depicts a child pulling a wagon to school, and it will be used on all posters, thank you notes, and other publicity items.

Hazel Salisbury, former teacher at the Randall Schoolhouse, spoke to all 4th graders at Thomas Marks, and told them what it was like to attend a one-room schoolhouse. The 4th graders were studying the history of the old Schoolhouse when Mrs. Joanna Andritz invited Hazel to speak

\* \* \* \* \*

FINAL THOUGHT: Take the world as it is, not as you'd like it to be.

\* \* \* \* \*

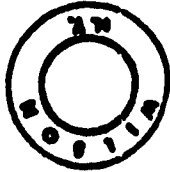
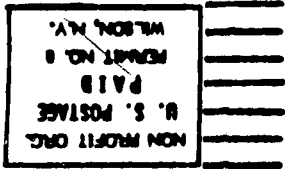


July/August 1994 VOL. 23 NO. 7  
(Coleman Printing)

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

# NEWSLETTER

Wilson Historical Society  
Wilson, New York 14172-9763



*July/Aug 1994*

## HARBOR ENLIGHTENMENT:

The natural harbor at Wilson has always been a magnet for small boats, fishermen, and other recreational pursuits, but in the mid 1800's it was the site for much ship-building and produce-shipping activity.

It is recorded that the first steamship to visit Wilson, the "Ontario", entered the harbor in 1817. It was built at Sackett's Harbor in 1816 and plied the lake waters until the 1900's.

In 1817, butt staves and other timber was shipped from Wilson to Cape Vincent and other harbors on the St. Lawrence River where they were floated to Montreal and Quebec. Much of the heavy timber was shipped to England where it was used to build frigates of war. The lumber industry flourished until all the great oak forests between Lake Ontario and the Ridge were depleted.

In 1846, Luther Wilson obtained permission from the U.S. Secretary of War to build two-200 foot piers into the lake--one on each side of the mouth of Twelve Mile Creek. The channel was dredged out by horsepower at Luther's own expense, and it was about that time that Abram Vosburg was appointed the first Customs Agent for the Port of Wilson.

Luther also built a large warehouse by the harbor and began to buy and ship out grain and fruit. He also established a shipyard where the 1st schooner, the "Reuben F. Wilson" was built to run produce between Wilson and Oswego. During the next twenty-five years over 20 ships were built at the harbor by itinerant builders including three assembled at the Putnum Yard at the west end of "Sunset Island".

During this period a number of ships were destroyed by storms off the Wilson shoreline--sometimes with loss of life. The schooner "Mary, for instance, was driven ashore by high winds and went to pieces just east of Wilson; in 1854 the schooner "Isobel" was driven ashore and lost her cargo during a snowstorm; two other schooners, the "Minerva" and the "I.C. Biggs" were also shipwrecked that same year.

The "Fleetwing", which was built in Wilson, capsized offshore and although Captain Quick and other crew members were saved, his wife, son, and ship's cook all drowned. The stone marking their graves may still be seen in Greenwood Cemetery.

When the Rome, Watertown, and Ogdensburg Railroad, (better known as the "Hojack") came through Wilson in 1876, commercial shipping at the harbor began a steady decline, however, another industry was getting ready to take its place.

It started when W.N. Harris acquired the beautiful pine groves around the inner harbor, and established what would later become known as "Lake Island Park". It developed into one of western New York's most outstanding summer resorts during the late 1800's, with hotels in the village and on the "Island" such as the "Sutherland", "Tower House", "Harris Cottage", and "Pittsburg Hotel" catering to the tourist trade.

A pavilion was erected for dining and dancing, and there was plenty of space for a ball diamond and other sports activities. There was also a toboggan slide for bathers and dozens of boats available for fishing and cruising.

A main attraction was the "Parade of Boats" which was held during the evening hours in summer when vessels of all sizes and shapes were trimmed with lanterns and floated up and down the river to the accompaniment of soft music played on mandolins and guitars.

One of the outstanding days of the year was the last Saturday in July when the annual picnic of the Niagara County Farmers Association was held there. It was a day when thousands of farmers and their families arrived in Wilson before dawn and remained well into the night.

Many visitors came to Wilson via the "Hojack" while hundreds more patronized the excursion boats that made regularly scheduled runs between Wilson and Toronto.

Lake Island Park slowly gave way to other interests when the automobile arrived on the scene making it possible for people to get to other places more easily. The harbor, however, never lost its appeal to boating enthusiasts or fishermen and, to the present day, is the center for many fishing derbies or other activities.

\* \* \* \* \*

## LUCKY WINNERS:

Christine Rafferty of Wilson won this year's beautiful hand-embroidered quilt, while 2nd place winner, Gail Kerwin of Newfane, took home the hand-embroidered table cloth.

The wood carving was won by Flo Phipps of Newfane, and Mike Waters of Wilson received a copy of "Wilson Sketchbook", a history of Wilson. Sylvia Mc Cuaig of Wilson and Florence Mac Kearnon of Buffalo each received copies and the Wilson Historical Society Cookbook.

The society deeply appreciates the fine support given by everyone.

\* \* \* \* \*

SOUNDINGS: Some people eat from the three basic food groups--canned, frozen, and take-out.

SUCCESSFUL FAIR:

The Memorial Day Fair was a winner this year because of beautiful weather and good planning by the fair committee. Attendance from the surrounding area was excellent, but the event could not have taken place without the volunteer help from our members. The society is also grateful to the many community-minded non-members who pitched in as though they were, and gave the society a much needed hand. Those reported to us were:

Joan Hoover, Chris Murawski, Susan Sobiegray, Lisa Bellina, Michael Murawski, Susan Stimson, Althea Montgomery, George Montgomery, Dorothy Knight, Jim Pisello, Faye Pisello, Jim Pisello, Jr., Jeff Duncan, Richard King, Kevin King, Roger Demmin, Jackie Rodgers, Dave Gross, Don Peck, Mike Clark, Walt Holmes, Robert Zauner, Steve Perillo, Shelly Andrews, Kyle Andrews, Nina Mowell, Janet Durham, and Carrie Dziomba.

Parking cars could have been a problem without the generous cooperation from the Wilson Central Schools, Exley United Methodist Church, Our Lady of the Rosary R.C. Church, Basil Div. of Amsco Scientific/American Sterilizer, the Wilson Town Hall, and Pfeiffer's Food Div. of Marzetti, Inc.

A special "thank you" to Merritt and John Thilk who removed the freon from an old refrigerator so it could be placed at the road for pick-up, also the Thilks came to our rescue a couple days before the fair and got the large cooler in the Barnum Building in good working order.

Martha Ferguson of Martha's Cupboard in Newfane, displayed the society's quilt for a week and we understand that two of the winning tickets in the drawing were sold there.

The popular "Pillow Jump" for the children was provided by Mr. and Mrs. Don Laurie at their own expense, and their son, Mark, provided help to get the Cotton Candy machine working right.

The society also appreciates cooperation received from Lakeside Market, and the fine landscaping job provided around the Museum Sign by Beutel Greenhouse, Chestnut Road, Newfane.

\* \* \* \* \*

JULY/AUGUST HOSTS & HOSTESSES:

The Director named after each date is responsible for opening and closing the museum on Sunday afternoons from 2-4 p.m: July 3rd, Wally Goodman, director, Jean and Dick Schmidle; July 10th, Dorothy Maxfield, director, Marjory and Joe Geiser; July 17th, John Myers, director, Mary and Edward Webster; July 24th, Wanda Burrows, director, Helen and Ollie Clark; July 31st, Carole Schnoor, director, Bill and Maxine Jones.

August 7th, Nettie Stimson, director, Gordon and Virginia Strablow; Aug. 14th, Don Burrows, director, Gus and David Bradley; Aug. 14th, Gary Fitch, director, Elton and June Kropp; Aug. 28th, Anne Faery, director, Micky and Shirley Hunter.

\* \* \* \* \*

ICE CREAM SOCIAL:

The annual Ice Cream Social will be held at the museum grounds, July 31st, and the "Barroom Buzzards", provided by the town of Wilson Tourism Comm., will play from 2-4PM. Light refreshments will be available from the historical society featuring ice cream sundaes and floats, Darrell and Sally Smith will serve as refreshments chairmen.

The museum will be open to the public from 2-4 pm. with Bill and Maxine Jones, attendants.

\* \* \* \* \*

IN MEMORIAM:

Mildred Gaskill Treacy, 80, of Cleveland, Ohio, died May 9, 1994. She was the daughter of Ada Fitch and Morris L. Gaskill, and was born on the Tillotson Farm, Wilson-Burt Road. She later lived on Lake Street in the home later occupied by Sen. Earl W. Brydges of Wilson.

She has two children by her marriage to Robert Treacy in 1939, Barbara, who died in infancy, and Robert (Judy) Treacy, and granddaughter Jennifer Treacy who survive her. She is also survived by a sister, Dorothea, whose husband, Kenneth Welker, was a former Mayor of Wilson.

Burial was in the Brooklyn Heights Mausoleum at Cleveland, Ohio.

\* \* \* \* \*

Kenneth W. Gaskill, 90, died May 27, 1994 at Broadview Heights, Ohio. He graduated from Wilson High School in 1926, and moved to Cleveland, Ohio, in 1927 where he worked 40 years for the Prudential Life Insurance Company. He joined the Wilson Historical Society in 1976.

He is survived by his wife, Alma, a sister, Dorothea (Kenneth) Welker, a nephew, Robert (Judy) Treacy, and Grand Niece, Jennifer Treacy.

Burial was in the Crown Hill Cemetery at Louisville, Ohio.

\* \* \* \* \*

A REMINDER:

The "Move the Randall Road Schoolhouse" Auction will be held at the museum grounds September 10, 1994, and will be conducted by Shirley and Bill Urtel of "Action Auction". Consignments will be accepted.

If you would like to contribute to the schoolhouse project, please send you donations to "Schoolhouse Project", P.O. Box 537, Wilson, NY 14172.

\* \* \* \* \*

JUNE GRADUATES:

Sara Smiley, daughter of Tom and Priscilla Smiley of Rantoul, IL., graduated as Valedictorian of her class, June 3, 1994. Sara, a junior member of the society for ten years, will attend the University of Illinois this fall.

Casey Croop, son of Howard Croop of Rapid City, SD, graduated from Rapid Central High School on June 5, 1994. He would like to attend the S.D. School of Forestry.

\* \* \* \* \*

MEETINGS:

The Board of Directors will meet at the museum, July 13, 1994 at 7:30 pm, and also on August 10, 1994.

There will be no program meetings at the museum during the months of July and August.

\* \* \* \* \*

BON MOT: Life is as unpredictable as a grapefruit squirt.

\* \* \* \* \*

SADD SPONSORS PROM:

Students against Driving Drunk, (SADD) are making an effort to bring their message home to fellow students as well as members of the community, and on May 24th the group held a Senior Citizen Prom at the high school where over two dozen Golden Agers enjoyed a variety of tasty refreshments provided by local merchants.

Big Band music from the 30's and 40's was enjoyed by everyone present, and some of the more lively Seniors showed they could still "cut a rug".

The event, the first of its kind, was organized by teacher Mary Moley Palacios, who was capably assisted by Liz Teal, Bridget Marshall, Melissa Confer, Robin Pollock, Chrishna Ashford, Amanda Kriesch, Amy Raynor, Christy Johnson, Anne Henry, and Matt Teal.

Mrs. Palacios thanked the Senior Citizens for attending, and said that SADD plans to have a bigger and better event next year.

The high school administration is to be commended for encouraging students to participate in worthwhile programs such as SADD, DARE, etc.

\* \* \* \* \*

NEW MEMBERS:

We welcome the following new members: Frances Danielewicz of Lockport; Anna Flatt of Middleport; Kenneth and Carol Tabler of Fort Myers, Florida; Ron and Sylvia Haefer of Newfane; and Dennis Meier of Wilson. Dennis, a deputy sherrif, has helped with security at past fairs.

\* \* \* \* \*

THIS CHANGING WORLD:

Reports indicate that in a typical family of four, both Mom and Pop work, and over 40% of what they earn is paid out in taxes. Remember the Good Old Days when Pop was able to support the family, and Mom stayed home and raised the kids?

\* \* \* \* \*

GOT A SPARE?

Marion Campbell is looking for several copies of the high school "Crest" to bring the museum collection up to date. She needs the following copies: 1944, 1976, 1983, 1984, and the 1990's.

\* \* \* \* \*

SUMMERTIME IN WILSON:

Got the summer blahs? Nothing to do? Come to Wilson: July 2-3rd, Youth Soccer Tournament, Thomas Marks Fields; July 4th, Niagara Experience Players, Martin Park, 2PM; July 9-10th, ESLO Tournament of Champions; July 10th, Walley Derby; Free Library Golf Tournament, Oak Run; Small Mouth Bass Derby; July 17th, Buffalo & Brandy, Martin Park, 2PM; July 23rd, ESLO Lake Erie International; July 24th, Community Jamboree & Flea Market, Little Leage Park, Noon to Six; July 31st, Chiavetti Chicken Bar-b-que, Exley United Methodist Church, 12-to 3PM; Ice Cream Social featuring Baroom Buzzards, Ontario Flyers; Swap Meet, Historical Society Grounds, 2-4PM.

August 13th, Festival of Arts; Wilson Vol. Fire Co. Garage Sale, 9am to 4pm; Aug. 20th, ESLO King Salmon Derby; ESLO Fall International begins; Aug. 22-26th, Community Vacation Bible School; Aug. 26-27th, Wilson Vol. Fire Co. Field Days--parade Saturday, 5PM. Aug. 22-28th, ESLO Niagara River Bass Challenge.

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FROM THE MAILBAG:

Kathy D'Amico of Albion, the daughter of Marge Carter Williams of Wilson, sent some interesting notes on the John Bull family of South Wilson who once owned a large farm at the corner of Chestnut and Irish roads, town of Wilson.

John Bull was born in 1779 in Connecticut, and in 1798 married Eliza Stiles of New Jersey. They had four children, Harriet, Joseph, Louise, and Benjamin.

Kathy, the granddaughter of the late Daniel Carter of Wilson, enjoyed attending the Memorial Day Fair and was pleased to be able to look up her ancestors in museum records and to discover she was related to so many prominent Wilson families.

The former John Bull home on Chestnut Road is now owned by Darrel and Sally Smith of Wilson, and was built by him in 1834.

\* \* \* \* \*

RECENT ACQUISITIONS:

The family of the late Elwin Upton have donated a plaque to be attached to the doll house received from Elwin's Estate. Family members are Mr. and Mrs. Melvin Upton; Mr. and Mrs. David Schendel; Cory, Kevin, and Kelly; Mr. and Mrs. George Smith; Mr James Upton; Mr. and Mrs. Randy Upton, Megham and Scott. Other items acquired from the Upton estate include a program from a Senior Class play, "The Man Higher Up"; Doll furniture made by Elwin for a 12 year old sister; 1920 Kewpie Doll; Pictorial Album, "Columbian Expo" (1893); "Atlas of the World with Camera" (1915); Doll House sign made by Elwin; and sign for "Princess Chysthemem, Japanese Operetta produced at Wilson High School in 1928.

Eleanor Canfield: Effanbee Baby Doll received by Eleanor on Christmas day, 1929. Composition and cloth in Good Condition.

Anne Argue Faery: New York car license plates, 1925, 2-1936, 1962, 1963, 1964, and a limousine phone by Globe Phone Co; Car registrations, 1991, 1992, 1993, and Memorabilia related to the New Year's Eve Celebrations in Wilson, "Home of the Little Apple."

Don Croop: Bicentennial Calendar, "The Bill of Rights and Beyond"; 100th Anniversary Edition of the Lockport Union Sun & Journal (7/17/1965); "Power for Progress" (2/5/61); "Jubilee of Progress" (10/8/67); "Memorial to J.F.K. (12/8/63) Also, War Ration Books including applications for Supplemental Gas Rationing Stamps; Sugar Purchase Certificates; Applications to ourchase new tires and tubes; All in good condition, saved by the late Millie Croop during World War II.

Mrs. Milford Robinson, Ransomville: Placque given to Milford (Pinky) Robinson by the Wilson Town Board in recognition of his contributions to Conservation and Fishing practises.

\* \* \* \* \*

FINAL THOUGHT: In the Good Old Days, people stopped spending when they ran out of money.

\* \* \* \* \*



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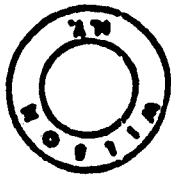
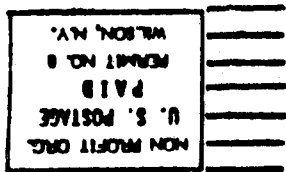
DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

# NEWSLETTER

WILSON, NEW YORK 14172-9763

Wilson Historical Society

September 1994



## THE "FLAPPER AGE"

Old Timers often reminisce about the "Good Old Days" when they were growing up and the world, according to them, was a better place to live in.

We recall, as a youngster, that people seemed to be a little more self-reliant, and most had to make do with what they had.

Now, in this modern day when things seem so plentiful and relatively easy to get, it's hard to believe how people used to cope.

We remember, for instance, if you ran out of tooth paste, you could make up a simple substitute by mixing salt with soda, and if you ran out of sandwich bags you could always use the wax paper inside cereal boxes.

Paste was always easily available by mixing flour and water, and the equivalent for a modern "Q" tip was a match stick with cotton wound tightly around it. And how many times did mothers mix raw onions with sugar syrup to relieve a nagging cough?

The "flapper" age brings back memories of short, tight skirts and the boyish bob--womens' big challenge to the Victorian Age. The "Charleston" dance was all the rage, and to the younger generation everything was the "Cat's Meeow". The girls attracted attention with their rolled down hose and yellow slickers, while the young men in college, (who could afford them) wore racoon coats.

And who could ever forget those wool-striped bathing suits with knee length pants, and the girls with their "balloon" skirts and umbrellas to ward off the hot rays from the sun.

It was an exciting time when the first sound or "talking movies" hit the scene, but we think one of the biggest thrills was when we heard radio broadcast the first time from station KDKA Pittsburg.

That was an occasion when fifty of us youngsters lined up in a drugstore to listen to a minute or two of radio broadcast through earphones strapped over our heads. It wasn't too many years after, that radio sets in people's homes were being tuned in to shows like "Amos 'N Andy", "The Shadow", "Inter Sanctum Mystery", "Ma Perkins", or "One Man's Family."

The old Silent Movie days were great for the kids, and for a dime you could sit all afternoon and watch comedies, drama, and westerns as the sometimes skillful piano player beat out an ever changing rythmn to accompany the action on the screen.

Movies with Tom Mix and his horse, "Tony", were favorites with us kids, but we also recall attending a Charlie Chaplin movie, "The Kid", when all admissions required the donation of a can of condensed milk. The milk collection was part of our country's program to help feed the starving children in Europe after World War I.

We believe the Model-T Ford was the real forerunner and phenonemon of the early 1900's, but by the 1920's other car manufacturers began to compete. This led to Ford introducing its fabulous Model-A with the gasoline tank under the hood a few inches before the front windshield. It was a snappy little car, and could run all day at a speed of 45 miles an hour.

At the time, we probably didn't appreciate being able to pull up at a service station, handing the attendant a one dollar bill, and telling him to "fill her up".

In a lot of ways they were "Good Old Days". At least you could walk down a street without being "mugged"--you didn't have to lock all the doors when you left your house--and crime wasn't the main topic covered in your newspaper or broadcast over the radio.

Perhaps each generation has its Good Old Days when oldsters look back on their childhood years, but our impression of our early years is that they were slower-paced and a more relaxed time when people didn't seem to be in such a rush, so easily agitated, or so deeply distressed.

\* \* \* \* \*

## FORT NIAGARA IN SEPTEMBER:

Sept. 17-18: Niagara's Soldiers through the ages. Demonstrations and displays by 18th, 19th, and 20th century soldiers.

Sept. 24-15: 1812 British Garrison Weekend: British forces of the War of 1812 live and work in the fort.

\* \* \* \* \*

## SEPTEMBER MEETINGS:

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

Sept. 19th: Regular monthly meeting, 7:30 PM, at museum.

\* \* \* \* \*

## BON MOT:

Nostalgia---life in the past lane.

\* \* \* \* \*

IN MEMORIAM:

Harold E. Mosher, 68, Town of Wilson Supervisor, died July 9, 1994, after a long fight against cancer. He graduated from Wilson Central School in 1944, and later became a certified automotive parts specialist under the G.I. Bill. He was also a licensed insurance broker; studied at Bryant & Stratton Institute; and attained the rank of 2nd Class Petty Officer in the U.S. Navy during World War II.

He was active in a number of organizations including the Boy Scouts; Wilson Little League; past commander of the American Legion, Wilson Post; Exempt member of Wilson Vol. Fire Co. #1; past president and secretary of the Wilson Lions Club; and Honorary Trustee of the Wilson Historical Society.

Harold ran for the office of supervisor under the slogan, "I Love Wilson", and to him these were no idle words. During his many years of service to the community as Mayor and supervisor, his foremost thoughts and actions were always directed to what would be in the best interests of all residents.

He supported the Wilson Historical Society and recognized the great voluntary effort made by its members to establish a fine museum in the township. But his high regard for all volunteers was well expressed when he stated:

"Take a moment to think what our town would be lacking without its volunteers. Consider the many volunteer firemen who answer fire alarms and ambulance calls in the early morning hours or cold wintry days; or the P.T.A. members who contribute so much to better educate our youth; also the many volunteers who give of their time and labor to church groups, Boy Scout and Girl Scout troops; Lions Club; Little League; Library Board; Sports Boosters; 4-H Clubs; and many more.

"Surely the dedication of the people of our community and their labor will be notched in the preservation of the history of Wilson."

Harold is survived by his wife, Barbara Estony Mosher; three children, Michael A. (Bonnie) Mosher of Ransomville; Marc H. Mosher of Cambria, NY; and Mrs. Maureen (Joseph) Hosey of Spencerport, NY; also a brother Donald (Veldren) Mosher of Newfane; and three sisters, Norma Smith of Akron, NY; Mrs. Shirley (Joseph) Harper of Lady Lake, FL; and Mrs. Marilyn (Laverne) Lieb of Akron, NY.

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated at Our Lady of the Rosary R.C. Church in Wilson with Father Paul Burkard officiating. Burial was in Greenwood Cemetery, Wilson.

\* \* \* \* \*

Ada Giles, 90, an Honorary member of the Wilson Historical Society, died July 18, 1994, at Inter Community Hospital at Newfane.

She was also a member of the Wilson Conservation Club; American Legion Auxiliary; and the Wilson Golden Age Club.

She was a former resident of Lockport and worked many years as a bookkeeper for the A. J. Laux Co. and the Pies Furniture Co. She moved to Wilson in 1956.

She is survived by two nieces and one nephew. Burial was in the North Ridge Cemetery with Rev. Susan Kaiser officiating.

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MEMBER IN THE NEWS:

Walter Evans, 69, has resigned his seat on the town council to fill the office of Supervisor which was vacated by the death of Harold Mosher.

Mr. Evans was appointed by the board and will serve until November when voters will decide who will fill out the last year of Mr. Mosher's term.

Mr. Evans is no stranger to the supervisor job as he was elected to the office in 1966 to 1970.

\* \* \* \* \*

STUDENT AWARDS:

Over the past years, the Wilson Historical Society has recognized two seniors at Wilson High School for high achievement in American History. This year the awards were presented at Class Night by Principal Wally Goodman to Paul Clark and Carrie Hageman.

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REMEMBER CLASS DAY, 1939?

Mary E. Stone was Master of Ceremonies; Ruby Farwell read the Class History; Frances Fenn gave the Class Poem; Martha Chapman read the Class Will; Corriene Schultz gave the Class Prophecy; and Glen Knapp was the "Class Grumbler".

\* \* \* \* \*

OVERSIGHT:

Belated congratulations to Eric Mittlefehldt, son of Gary and Bonnie Mittlefehldt of Wilson, who graduated from Wilson Central School this past June. Eric has been a member of the Wilson Historical Society since 1987.

\* \* \* \* \*

RECENT ACQUISITIONS:

Wally Moxham, Atty., has presented a number of items from the estate of Ida Wilson including Six Wood Carvings; Six Wood Plaques; Ten Photographs; Thirty-eight Snapshots; Discharge Papers (1918); Walter Wilson's Birth Certificate; Photo of the Wilson Harbor; also Framed Certificate signed by Pres. Ronald Reagan honoring the memory of Walter T. Wilson in recognition of service to our country.

Walter Zeitz: Box of hardware, pulls and handles; also Feed Bag from Ransomville.

Dorothea Marck: Pottery Bowl.

Carole Schnoor: Doll Suitcase; Four Baby Dresses; One Silk Coat; and Thomas Marks Year Books for 1991-2; 1992-3; 1993 and 1994.

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SOUNDINGS:

A real measure of our wealth is how much we'd be worth if we lost our money.

\* \* \* \* \*

CHEERFUL "GREETERS" HELP SELL WILSON:

From April through July, 1994, there have been approximately 475 visitors at the Wilson Museum and, of this number, about 25 came from the states of Maryland, Missouri, California, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Florida, Virginia, New Jersey, Connecticut, and Ontario, Canada.

It is important for the museum to be open Sunday afternoons from 2-4PM, (winter months excluded) and the society is grateful to the many volunteers who have made it possible.

At a meeting ca. 20 years ago, the trustees decided to open the museum to the public on a trial basis. It has been open ever since--thanks to about 50 volunteers a year who attend on Sundays to greet visitors.

It is difficult sometimes to arrange for volunteers to be in attendance each month--a job which is currently being well done by Marge Lederhouse, hostess chairman.

According to her she sometimes has to make a dozen phone calls to match up a volunteer with a given date. Her job is important, however, because without our Sunday hostesses the museum could not be kept open.

Sunday "greeters" can also provide a valuable public relations service for the community, because a pleasant smile and greeting can make a big difference how visitors may feel about the town. This image of Wilson can be further advanced when congenial hostesses are able to answer questions about Wilson and the surrounding area. We have also found that visitors always appreciate a friendly tip on some of the fine restaurants in Wilson.

Besides Marge, the society has had a number of good hostess chairmen over the years including Joe Higgins; Helen Borngraeber; Verna Caufield; Edna Rose; Margaret Wilson; Marietta Goodman; Clara Marcks; Sara Berry; and Helen Clark.

\* \* \* \* \*

FROM THE MAILBAG:

We welcome Mildred Gifford Cummins of Odenton, Maryland, the latest new member of the Wilson Historical Society. Mrs. Cummins has extensive roots in Wilson, and her grandfather Gifford was a Town of Wilson Supervisor in 1883.

Her grandmother and the grandmother of the late Alice Nelson of Oriskany were sisters. She recalled that when she was a little girl she often used to visit at the Nelson home at the corner of Route 425 and Nelson Road. Mrs. Cummins and her husband visited Wilson recently.

\* \* \* \* \*

MEMBERS IN THE NEWS:

William McLaughlin, a Life Member of the Wilson Historical Society, has been elected chairman of the Lockport Savings Bank board of directors. He is a retired CPA and former partner of McLaughlin & Slate, certified public accountants.

From 1974 through 1989, Mr. McLaughlin prepared the IRS forms for the Wilson Historical Society. He currently resides in Ransomville, and he and his wife, Bernice, attend the Ransomville United Methodist Church.

\* \* \* \* \*

Dr. James Hohensee of Wilson has been named to the staff of the Health Care Center at Lockview Plaza in Lockport. Dr. Hohensee completed his family medicine practise at SUNY, Buffalo, and is associated with Inter Community Memorial Hospital at Newfane; the Genesee and Niagara Co. Medical Societies; and the medical association of Orleans Co. and the state of New York.

A few months after joining the Wilson Historical Society, Dr. Hohensee became a Life Member.

\* \* \* \* \*

Dorotha and Kenneth Welker of Wright's Corners have made a memorial donation to the ICMH at Newfane in memory of Mrs. Welker's brother, Kenneth Gaskill, and her sister, Mildred Treacy. The money donated by the Welkers was used to purchase a birthing bed for use in the obstetrical department. The bed provides greater comfort for a mother in labor and is already in use.

Both Dorotha and Kenneth are Life Members of the Wilson Historical Society, and Mr. Welker was a former Mayor of Wilson.

\* \* \* \* \*

ICE CREAM SOCIAL:

The ice cream social was a big success and appeared to attract more people this year than ever before. Sally and Darrell Smith, co-chairmen, were happy with the attendance, and wish to thank everyone who helped out: Judy King; Lois Barnum; Shirley and Micky Hunter; Don and Wanda Burrows; Carol Smith; Joshua Smith; Gary Fitch; Carol King; Carole Schnoor; Eleanor Myers; Susan Sobiegray; Don Croop; Ollie Clark; and Renee' Weeks.

The Wilson Tourism Committee arranged for the "Bar Room Buzzards" to entertain the crowd from 2-4pm, and the Ontario RC Flyers also were set up and flew their radio controlled airplanes. The flying-club also provided a crew to mow and prepare the flying area consisting of Mary Ragland; Lynette Draper; Chris Draper; Dave Draper; and Irwin Gombert.

Club members also are exhibiting several of their large planes in the John Argue Memorial Building, and the public is encouraged to look at these beautiful reproductions on your next visit the Wilson Museum.

The annual Ice Cream Social, sponsored by the Wilson Tourism Comm., and Wilson His. Society, is not promoted as a money-making venture but, as the name implies, is a social gathering where old friends may relax, visit, and enjoy the music and entertainment. In spite of this, the Social has managed to more than cover expenses by providing reasonably priced drinks, sundaes, rootbeer floats, and funnel cakes.

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SEPTEMBER HOSTESSES:

Attendants at the Wilson Museum during the month of September will be as follows: Sept. 4th, Lois Barnum, director, Norie and Hoyt Desso; Sept. 11th, Don Burrows, director, and Wanda Burrows; Sept. 18th, Anne Faery, director, Helen and Lynne Sherrie; and Sept. 25th, Wally Goodman, director, Dan and Judy King.

\* \* \* \* \*

FINAL THOUGHT:

If you have to get hooked on something, it's pretty hard to beat fishing.

\* \* \* \* \*



(Coleman Printing)

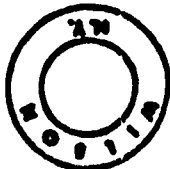
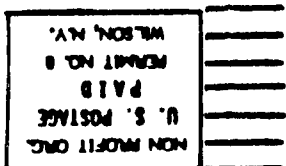
October, 1994, Vol. 23, No. 9

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

# NEWSLETTER

WILSON, NEW YORK 14172-9763

Wilson Historical Society



October 1994

## THE WILSON TRADITION:

One can hardly think of Wilson without bringing to mind the "Boathouse Wilsons", Timothy, Floyd, Walter, Emerson, Billie, Fred and Merle.

The boathouse we know today as the Boathouse Restaurant, was started ca. 1907 by Timothy Wilson. He and his wife, Flora Hurlburt, had eight children, but it was Floyd, Walter, and Emerson who followed in their father's footsteps and operated the boathouse.

Timothy's brother, Billie Wilson, had two sons, Fred and Merle, and the boathouse operated by them was just north of the other one.

Merle and Walter were probably best known for their attraction by young people, and many of the children who grew up in their era can probably recall the trips they took out on the lake to gather in the fishing nets.

We recall one summer when Merle loaded about 30 young Brownies from troop No. 35 into the "Docksetter" and took them on a cruise to Olcott and back. The sides of the 28 foot boat were so high, many of the Brownies could not see over them--even when standing up, however, it was a nice warm sunny day so quite a few of the Brownies curled up on the bottom of the boat and slept as the boat cruised over the smooth lake waters.

Young people liked to listen to Merle tell stories about the lake and the harbor, and one time in 1962, as a history project, 4th grader Timmy Schmidle, interviewed Merle and wrote down some of the interesting facts told to him about the harbor area.

"In 1895, many ships brought lumber to Wilson from Canada, and there was a "lumber lock" in front of Merle's boathouse. A lumber mill stood on the hill where the late Walter Wilson's cottage stands today.

"Around 1900, boats brought school kids with their lunches from Canada to visit the old Lake Island Park, and there was a pontoon bridge across the bay so they could walk over to the "island". The Sunset Beach Colony started in 1875, and the first cottage on the island was built by a Mr. Orvis of Toronto.

"Merle and his father started the boat livery service in 1910, and the Wilson family fished commercially for over 62 years."

Walter Wilson, co-owner of the boathouse, spent most of his life as a commercial fisherman, and also operated the "Docksetter" Ferry Service to Sunset Island.

His hobby was woodcarving, and he spent many hours carving out various forms of waterfowl from pieces of driftwood that washed up on the lakeshore. Most of his beautiful collection was left to the Wilson Museum where it is now prominently displayed.

Walter was also held in high esteem by the young people in the community, and we recall a letter we once received from Niagara Falls Attorney, Earl W. Brydges, Jr., who wrote: "The Wilson Brothers were so much a part of the community that as each of them passes, a piece of the village goes with them. When Walt Wilson invited you to go out on the lake with him at 5 AM to bring in the nets, you didn't sleep that night--you were too excited."

The first boat used by Timothy Wilson was the "Red Boat", and he later replaced it with the "O-SO-EASIE". The "Docksetter" was built in the Wheeler Shed by Walter, Floyd, and Emerson, and when it was done, a wall had to be removed before the boat could be launched. It was used to ferry people to the "Island" and could accomodate 35 to 40 adults. When it was used for commercial fishing it had a capacity of a half ton of fish.

It might be hard for one to believe, but one time Merle and his father, Billie, once lost their sailboat. They would usually take in the sails at night and pack them away, but one night, when the Luther Wilson Warehouse burned down they forgot, in all the excitement.

When Merle and his father walked home from the fire they discovered their sailboat was gone. They looked everywhere but it was no place to be found.

Finally, they decided to take a steamer to Toronto where they saw the boat at anchor in the harbor. They notified the Sheriff who quickly picked up the thieves and brought them to trial. During the trial it was learned that they had burned down the Wilson Warehouse so it would be light enough so they could see to sail the boat out of the harbor.

The thieves were sent to jail, but the historic old warehouse was never rebuilt.

\* \* \* \* \*

## OCTOBER MEETINGS:

October 12th: Board of Director Meeting; Wilson Museum; 7:30 PM.

October 17th: Monthly Meeting; Wilson Museum; 7:30 PM.

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BON MOT: Each passing day is a priceless gift==that's why we call it the present.

\* \* \* \* \*

SCHOOLHOUSE SITE APPROVED:

The following persons were appointed by Don Burrows, President, to select a site on the museum grounds for the Randall Road Schoolhouse: Lois Jennings, Dorothy Maxfield, Don Croop, and Arthur Schnoor.

The committee met in July and, after reviewing recommendations from the Planning Board, made an onsite inspection of the grounds and decided unanimously that the school should be placed at the northeast corner of the museum property.

All agreed that buildings in the museum complex should be in close proximity to each other so as to make them easily accessible to visitors.

The propose site was submitted to the Board of Directors at the August meeting, and members voted to approve the location rec ommended by the site committee.

It was also decided by the Board to have Ed Hastings make recommendations for possible foundations that might be used to support the schoolhouse.

In another related matter, the board approved a motion to appoint Wanda Burrows Chairmen of the society's Randall Road Schoolhouse Committee. Wanda will be in charge of the schoolhouse restoration once it is located on the museum grounds.

\* \* \* \* \*

RECENT ACQUISITIONS:

The late John Myers donated one Honey Extractor-"A.T.Root #7" plus a Copper Steam Generator and Steam Uncappling Knife--from Rt. 425 Barn Sale.

Eleanor Dessor: One Kitchen Scale and One Egg Beater.

Mae Quick: Coupons from Jim's Market in Wilson, ca. 1950.

William Abel, Lockport: Two Post Cards from Wilson.

Janet Sporleder: Limited Edition Calendar commissioned exclusively for sponsors of the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation, 1992.

Jeanne Halstead Hayes: Four Photos of the Restoration of the Wilson House, Fall, 1993.

Mary Allgeier, Naples, Florida: Class Day Program, Wilson High, 6/23/1939; also Menu in Folder from Hub Hotel, ca. 1930.

Veronica Connor, Ransomville: Program of Teachers' Training Class; also Photo, 1905, showing Marion E. William (2nd from left, 2nd row) (Mrs. J. Leo Connor)

Eleanor Myers: Cherry Table Desk, two drawer, refurbished by Hoyt Desso.

Leah Bigalow: Niagara County Sheriff's Badge worn by Alanson G. Bigalow; also an advertising spatula from Laffler's Store at North Ridge.

Loise Decker: Old Newspapers; light bulb; Packard Back-up Light lens. L. Decker;s father-in-law's; Shawl that belonged to L. Decker's grandmother, Ella Walter; 2 Sets of Binoculars; Stone Lead Melting Pots for making sinkers; Blue Glass Ladle; also Old Books.

Bob Witkop, Newfane: Hurlburt Company Stamp.

Margaret Geiser: Two Receipt Books; One Billing Statement Book; One Family Circle (1952); Books from Wilson Cold Storage.

Florence Mudge Donner, Euclid, Ohio: Volunteer Service Award, Council of Church Women; Two Sunday School Certificates for Teaching in Methodist Church(1924); Two Teacher Certificates, 1922,1924; Cert. Loyalty for Teachers,1922; American Red Cross, meritoriuos service, 1922; and Academic Diploma, Wilson, 1920: Also, Camp Cot; 8 German Books; Two Donner African Spears; Genealogies; Iron Building Penny Bank; Iron Horse Penny Bank; Diplopma, Wilson High, 1920; Passport, 1927; Papers for Afriucan Trip, 1933; Surveys of Donner and Mudge Farms.

Charles Manhardt, Newfane: One Book, Commercial Geography; Two certificates of Baptism; 4-H Certificate; and Preliminary School Certificate.

Mary Newman, Gasport: New England Primer, early 1800's; Juvenile Stories, 1839; two books of Bible Stories, 1840; and Toy Books, 1840.Also, Doll of Nancy Hayne(1837-1849) Given in Mem-ory of Mary's Grandmother Mary Stahl Miles (1878-1969); Doll Box made by Nancy Haye's father. Box includes Lace mittens, Sewing supplies; Writings of Nancy Hayne in Niagara Cataract (1846).

Arthur Schnoor: Stereoscope and 30 Sterographs; Buffalo News, 1963; and books, "City Ballads" 1885; "Farm Legends" 1875; Codey's Ladies Book" 1862 "Andersonville Thirty- One-Act Plays.

Carole Lee Wilson: 1972 Wilson Crest.

\* \* \* \* \*

MUSEUM ATTENDANTS FOR OCTOBER:

Oct. 2nd: Gary Fitch, Director, John and Jane Demmin; Oct. 9th, Dorothy Maxfield, Director, Marge and Bill Fritton; Oct. 16th, Wanda Burrows, Director, Marilyn and Ed Allgeier; Oct. 23rd, Carole Schnoor, Director, Charlotte Pease and Cheryl Brown; Oct. 30th, Ollie Clark, Director, and Helen Clark.

Directors should please make a note of the date assigned to you. If an emergency arises and you are unable to find a replacement, please notify either Don Burrows, Pres., or Gary Fitch, Vice-Pres. Museum hostesses as well as the public will be locked out if you don't.

\* \* \* \* \*

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL TIME:

All annual memberships in the Wilson Historical Society will expire on December 31, 1994. It has always been the society's policy to notify all members 3 months prior to the expiration date so everyone will have ample time to renew.

A 1995 renewal application is attached to the bottom of page three of this Newsletter for your convenience.

Please fill in all information requested and return your application and dues to Anne Faery, Box 731, Wilson, NY 14172. Your promptness would be deeply appreciated and make everyone's work a lot easier.

Please note that any member who has reached the age of 85 will be given an Honorary Membership, so if you qualify, please be sure to check the appropriate box on your application.

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SOUN DINGS:

Happiness isn't having everything you want. It's wanting what you have.

\* \* \* \* \*

IN MEMORIAM:

Robert J. Horton, 77, former Mayor of Wilson, died at the Newfane Health Facility on August 14, 1994, following a long illness.

Mr. Horton served as Mayor of Wilson from 1954 to 1967 and held office when the village of Wilson celebrated its Centennial in 1958.

He operated the Horton Hardware business on Young Street since 1940, and was a Navy Veteran of World War II; a member of the Wilson Volunteer Fire Co. No. 1 for over 45 years, and five years as Chief. He was a member of the Wilson Historical Society since 1972.

He is survived by his wife, Helen; a daughter, Kathleen of Kingston, Ontario; two sons, Charles (Ann) and Thomas (Cheryl); both of Wilson; also a brother, Charles, of Largo, Florida; also a granddaughter and two step-grandchildren.

Services were held with Rev. Ronald Haefer officiating, and burial was in Greenwood Cemetery.  
\* \* \* \* \*

Wirt Wakeman, 91, an Honorary charter/life member of the Wilson Historical Society, died August 15, 1994, after a long illness.

Wirt was a member of the North Ridge United Methodist Church in Cambria; the Lockport Senior Citizens; the Newfane Golden Age Club; the Niagara County Farm Bureau Extension Service; a past member of the Niagara Frontier Grower's Association; and a member of the Wilson Central School Board of Education for 22 years.

He is survived by his wife, Dora Campbell Wakeman; a son, Ross (Jean) Wakeman of Lockport; a daughter, Marcia (JAMES) Sweet of Gowanda, New York; also 5 grandchildren and one great grandchild.

Services were held at the North Ridge United Methodist Church with Rev. Harold Babb and Rev. Timothy Sweet officiating. Burial was in the North Ridge Cemetery at Cambria.  
\* \* \* \* \*

"SKETCHBOOK" ALERT:

Richard Schmidle, Chrm. of the Ways & Means Comm., reports that the first edition of Don Croop's "Wilson Sketchbook", is nearly sold out. He suggests that should you like to get a copy before they'e all gone, to please contact Wanda Burrows at the Wilson town hall or stop in at the Wilson Museum on Sunday afternoons from 2-4PM.  
\* \* \* \* \*

LAND ACQUISITION:

At the August 10th meeting of the Board of Directors, Don Burrows, Pres., reported that he had received the survey and deed for 5 acres of land which Dr. and Rosemary Badger of Lockport have donated to the Wilson Historical Society. As in the past, all lands or buildings acquired by the historical society become the property of the town of Wilson.

Dr. Badger graduated from the Veterinarian School at Cornell University. He married Rosemary Gafney, a former home economics teacher at Wilson Central School, and they made their home on Lake Street in Wilson where doctor Badger practised his profession for ten years. They moved to Lockport in 1946 and currently reside on Locust Street Extension.

This is not the first time the historical society has benefited from the generosity of the Badgers. In 1978 they donated 4½ acres of land which made it possible for the society to erect its first antique car building--now known as the Barnum Building. It also enabled the society to expand its ever-growing flea market--a feature of the Memorial Day Fair.

The five-acre acquisition will also provide a beautiful background setting for the Randall Road Schoolhouse and meet the society's need for any future expansion.  
\* \* \* \* \*

ARGUE BUILDING PROGRESS:

Clark Stimson, co-chairman of the Dr. John Argue Memorial Building, reports some interesting plans for the antique car building.

Work has already been completed on a new lower ceiling in the facility which will allow maintaining a better temperature level necessary for the preservation of the valuable cars exhibited there. It is also planned to build in an old garage type room in one corner where many of the car-related tools and artifacts donated to the museum may be displayed. This room could also be used for "tinkering" or working on some of the old cars when necessary.

Persons interested in helping out on the car committee should contact either Clark or Wally Goodman, co-chairmen.

It is also planned to display some of the Ontario RC Flyer Clubs's flying machine replicas.  
\* \* \* \* \*

RETROSPECT: Everything is nicer when shared with a good friend.  
\* \* \* \* \*

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1995.....MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION.....1995

NEW..... RENEWAL..... NAME.....Ph: ( ).....  
Address.....P.O. Box..... City.....Zip.....  
COUPLE \$8.00..... SINGLE \$5.00..... JR (under 18) \$1.00..... LIFE \$150.00.....  
ENDOWMENT FUND \$..... HONORARY (85+) Free..... TOTAL ENCLOSED \$.....

please make all checks payable to the WILSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY and return to:

ANNE ARGUE FAERY BOX NO. 731 WILSON, NEW YORK 14172

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SOCIETY LOSES FORMER PRESIDENT:

John Myers, 78, a charter/life member of the Wilson Historical Society, passed away on September 4, 1994, at Millard Fillmore Hospital, Buffalo, following open heart surgery.

Since 1972, John was a key figure in the society's renovation program, and there have been few improvements of the museum's buildings and grounds that he hasn't had a hand in.

He graduated from Wilson Central School in 1934, and later attended Cornell University and the University of Alabama.

He opened his own electrical business and most of the heating and electrical installations at the museum were done by him.

He was a member of the United Methodist Church in Wilson; past president of the Wilson Historical Society; Past president of the Lions Club of Wilson, and an active member of the Antique Radio Collector's association.

He is survived by his wife, Eleanor Hinchliffe Myers; two daughters, Sue Myers of Mallorca, Spain, and Kay Wright of Sandusky, Ohio; two sons, John, Jr., of Palo Alto, California; and Richard Myers of Oakland, California; also two sisters, Etta Davis of Lockport, and Jenny Treichler of Sanborn, New York.

A memorial service was held at Exley United Methodist Church in Wilson with Rev. Sue Kaiser officiating, and burial was in Greenwood Cemetery in Wilson.

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NOMINATION COMMITTEE REPORT:

Arthur Schnoor, Chrm. of the Nominating Committee, has announced that Don Burrows, Pres., and Gary Fitch, Vice=Pres., have agreed to serve again in 1995 in their respective offices.

All nominees selected for office will be presented at the Nov. 21st meeting, and voted on at the Dec. 19th meeting held at the museum at 7:30 PM.

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OCTOBER MEETING:

The program for the October 17th meeting of the society was not available, however, Nettie Stimson and Judy Rose will be in charge of refreshments.

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BOARD ACTION & REPORTS:

Don Burrows, Pres., is in charge of having new supply cabinets installed in the Barnum Building. Darrell Smith and Ed Hastings have inspected the storeroom area, and will be giving an assist in the construction necessary. Darrell has also sealed the roof on the caboose.

Richard Schmidle was appointed chairman of a committee to select the students who will be recognition by the Historical Society at the 1995 Class Nights Award Ceremonies. As chairman of the Ways & Means Committee, Dick has also been given the green light to order new caps.

A historic marker has been purchased to be placed in the front yard of the "Anchor Farm" on route 425. Erection of the new sign will be completed by the town highway department. The sign will indicate the site where the first evening school classes were taught in Wilson.

Wally Goodman announced that the society's Cadillac convertible was entered in the Firemen's Field day and was awarded a prize for the oldest car entered.

Walter Evans, Supervisor, attended a meeting of the board, was recognized by President Burrows who announced that Mr. Evans, as supervisor, is an Honorary member of the Board.

Bill Smith has resigned as chairman of the Breezeway and Shelter Committee because of illness in the family. Pres. Burrows announced that he has appointed Maxwell (Micky) Hunter to replace him.

He also reported that the Randall Road Schoolhouse auction which was held at the museum on September 10th was a great success. A large number of consignments and donated items were auctioned off by Shirley and Bill Urtel of "Action Auction", who donated their time for the schoolhouse project.

The Historical Society Board of Directors is taking what ever action is necessary to prepare a foundation for the school this fall in anticipation of having the building in place before the winter months set in.

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ACKERMAN DAIRY:

In 1908, the Ackerman Dairy consisted of 36 acres partly located in the village. A.E. Ackerman was the owner in 1891, and the farm consisted of 2 residences, a 30x50' stock barn, horse barn, wagon house, and 2 silos. 24 Guernsey cows provided village residents with milk.

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FINAL THOUGHT: Flattery is like chewing gum--enjoy it but don't swallow it.

\* \* \* \* \*

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(Coleman Printing)

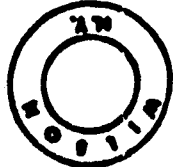
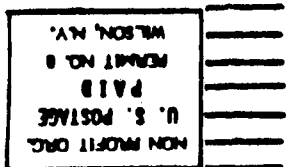
November 1994 Vol. 23 No. 10

DONALD W. CROOK, Editor

# NEWSLETTER

WILSON, NEW YORK 14172-9763  
Wilson Historical Society

November 1994



## STATE HIGHWAY OPENED UP WILSON:

Harriet Nelson died at the age of ninety-six. She lived at the corner of the present Nelson Road and route 425, and in her lifetime saw the townline road develop from an Indian trail to a log or corduroy road to cobblestone and finally a concrete state highway which was completed in 1920.

She once told her granddaughter, the late Alice Nelson of Oriskany, NY, that when the concrete road was being built, many of the original logs were found buried beneath the roadbed.

Paving the highway was heralded as one of the greatest events in the history of the town of Wilson, and when the highway was completed a celebration was planned starting at 10:45 AM on November 1st.

The whistles of the Niagara County Preserving Corporation were blown to summon the people in the village to gather at the corner of the Ide and Townline roads where the concrete work would be completed.

Approximately 300 persons assembled that morning including the Wilson Cornet Band who immediately began to play. Hervey Sanford also gave a short address and outlined the interesting manner in which the Townline became a traffic route opening up a better way to allow people to travel to Lockport.

He said that the route was originally an Indian trail and, in his words, "construction of the highway is one of the greatest events in our town and will not be forgotten."

When the last wheelbarrow load of cement needed to finish the last block was dumped, Supervisor Roland S. Singer was called upon for remarks, and he told of the difficulties encountered after the first contract was let out in 1915.

He explained that the cost of the eight miles of construction totaled \$170,000, but only three miles of the road was built by the original contractor, the Cheektowaga Construction Company of Buffalo.

When they failed to complete the highway, the road was contracted out to the F.G. Munn Construction Company who, in spite of having great difficulty in finding materials and help, finally completed the road.

The road was officially opened to traffic on November 13, 1920, and a luncheon was held in the Wilsonian Clubroom to celebrate the event.

Even members of the Buffalo Automobile Club motored to Wilson to try out the new concrete highway which, up until then, had been rutted and muddy.

State Congressman Wallace attended and was invited to comment, and the Ontario Band provided music while members of the Wilsonian Club served a standing lunch.

The completed highway, which was officially designated as the Wilson-Cambria Road, was eight miles long and extended from Brockway's Corners on the South Ridge to the Lake shore passing through the village of Wilson.

It was constructed of sixteen foot wide cement blocks, and was practically straight over its entire distance.

It was believed that the new highway would provide easier connections to cities to the south, and would surely bring rapid growth and prosperity to the village and town of Wilson. The road, which was completed about 75 years ago has, we believe, lived up to all expectations.

The cement blocks, of course, are no longer visible having been covered several times by asphalt, and this year the entire road was widened and re-paved.

New curbs and walks have been added where the road passes through the village giving the community a fresh, bright new look.

\* \* \* \* \*

## NEW MEMBERS:

It is a pleasure to welcome the following new members: George Gasior of Gothic Hill Road, Lockport, New York; Esther Woodard of Marion, Michigan; and Richard Culverwell of Wilson.

\* \* \* \* \*

## MUSEUM CALENDAR:

November 24, 1994: Thanksgiving.

November 8, 1994: Annual Bake Sale, Election Day; Town Hall and Catholic Church.

November 9, 1994: Board of Director Meeting, 7:30 PM at museum.

November 21, 1994: Regular Monthly Meeting, 7:30 PM at museum.

\* \* \* \* \*

## BON MOT:

As a person grows older and wiser, he talks less and says more.

\* \* \* \* \*

INSTITUTE HAD STRICT STANDARDS:

Notations in an old 1861 publication of the Wilson Collegiate Institute described the college as being pleasantly located on the shores of Lake Ontario. The building is large and convenient and has been thoroughly repaired during the past year.

Facilities include a Library with 800 volumes valued at \$850, and is also well supplied with Philosophical and Chemical Appliances, Globes, Maps, Charts, Skeletons, Geological and Mineralogic Specimens valued at \$670 dollars.

During the year, Charles Kelsey, A.B., was principal and taught Ancient and Modern Languages and Natural Science. C.J. Davis was in charge of the Commercial Department, Penmanship, and Mathematics.

Miss A.M. Clark was Preceptress and taught Higher English, Painting, and Drawing. E.V.W. Dox was President of the Institute Board of Trustees, and J.C. Brown was Secretary.

Tuition was charged for each course taken and one half had to be paid at the opening of the term, and half midway through the term. No pupil would be admitted for less than half a term.

Government of the school was firm and correct deoprtment and prompt obedience was insisted upon. Pupils might also be dismissed if teachers felt they would not benefit by remaining. Students were also expected to be in their repective rooms at half past seven in the evening.

The winter term started on December 9th and closed on March 14, 1862; the Spring term was from March 31, 1862 to July 3, 1862; and the Fall Term started August 18, 1862 and ended on November 21, 1862.

\* \* \* \* \*

ELECTION ODDITIES:

On Tuesday, November 8, 1994, Americans will again be able to exersize one of their most cherished privileges--the right to vote in a free election. This right, although not always practised by all eligible voters has, never-the-less, enabled our Nation to solve its differences peacefully and stay together as "one nation under God."

Research completed some years ago by Jan Sporleder revealed that since the early days of our Republic, the election process has been principally based on a two party system. This division began to formulate when the Federalist Party of Washington, Hamilton, and Monroe, was opposed by the anti-federalist movement supported by Thomas Jefferson.

By 1800, the popular Jefferson Republicans became the first political party to adopt the humanitarian ideas of the Declaration of Independance, but the Federalists tried to "smear" them by calling them "Democrats"--a terrible name for most Americans at the time.

The Liberal Republicans accepted the label, and as time went by they became known as the Republican-Democratic Party--which eventually evolved into the Democratic Party of today. Meanwhile, the Federalist Party fell apart, but by 1860 evolved again as the Republican Party of Abraham Lincoln.

Parties in our nation have formed over the years consistant with the mood prevailing in the country, and as a result Americans have supported everything from "Free Soilers" to "Know-Nothings", "Anti Masons", "Dixiecrats", "Greenbacks", "Mugwumps", Prohibitionists", and "Socialists".

Many elections have had their own unique distinction, for example, George Washington was the only President who did not campaign for election; Andy Jackson had more electoral votes than John Adams but lost the election; James Polk was the only Speaker of the House to become President; Teddy Roosevelt was considered by many to be the most personally popular of all presidents; Franklin D. Roosevelt was the only president to serve through four election campaigns; and the Eisenhour-Stephenson race was the first election to truly be effected by TV.

Whether you feel like a "Mugwump" or "Know-Nothing", the important thing is to vote, so make yours count on election day, Tuesday, November 8th.

\* \* \* \* \*

MUSEUM ATTENDANTS FOR NOVEMBER:

Nov. 6th, Nettie Stimson, Director, Jeanne Nablo and Helen Horton; Nov. 13th, Don Burrows, Director, Anne Rohring and Alice Davenport; Nov. 20th, Eleanor Myers, Director, Roger and Sandie Wilson; and Nov. 27th, Bobbie Hull, Director, Dick and Sue Schultz. Directors named above are responsible for opening and closing the museum at 2:00 and 4:00 p.m.

\* \* \* \* \*

RECENT ACQUISITION:

The World War I uniform worn by Ray E. Clark has been donated to the museum by his daughter, Virginia C. Klaiber of Williamsville, NY.

On July 1, 1918, Ray enlisted at Lockport, NY., and took the auto mechanics course at Buffalo Technical High School. He was transferred seven weeks later to Camp Hancock, Ga., then Camp Upton where he was attached to an ordnance regiment for overseas duty.

On Oct. 6, 1918, he left New York and on the following day his ship was attacked by a German submarine and badly damaged. They managed to reach Liverpool the following day and on October 29, 1918, his unit reached LaHavre, France and joined the 67th Coast Artillery. From there they were sent to Bordeaux, and on Feb. 10, 1919 were sent home on the America, an Italian ship. He received his discharge from Camp Upton.

\* \* \* \* \*

MEMORABLE MENU:

Wilson's Championship basketball squad of 1929-30 consisted of H.F.Pease, Capt., V. Bowersox, J.S.Welker, H.Swick, and L.C.Cornell. Reserves were J.F.Allgeier, C.E.Upton, M.C.Upton, and R.Swick; also Coach A.W.Blemaster and F.A. Galbraith, Manag er.

The Mens Club of Wilson honored the team at a banquet in the Masonic Hall, and a historic one-of-a-kind menu featured: "Ronald Celery", "Pickles de Maurice", "Cecil Olives", "Fruit Cocktail ala Herbert", "Chicken de Blemaster", "Howard Peas", "Stewart Potatoes", "Biscuits de Galbraith", "Salad de Bowersox", "Ice Cream ala Cornell", and "Allgeier Coffee."

\* \* \* \* \*

SOUNDINGS: Tact is the art of building a fire under someone without making their blood boil.

\* \* \* \* \*

DOUGLAS FIR WREATHS AVAILABLE:

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

The entire cost of this service will be \$25, and orders must be placed and payment made no later than Thursday, December 1st. For more information please call Donna Fritton at 751-9624 or the Town Clerk's Office at 751-6704. Committee members are: Barbara Mosher, Chrm., Maureen Bryer, Jean Figura, Donna Fritton, Dorothy Linnabery, Don Luff, Molly and Ronald Martin, Rena Rohring, Floyd Clark, Shirley Evans, and Eleanor Myers.

\* \* \* \* \*



I would like to order \_\_\_\_\_ wreaths @ \$25 to be placed at Greenwood Cemetery for the Christmas Season..

Name of person or family where each wreath is to be placed:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to the Town of Wilson, P.O. Box 537, Wilson, New York 14172-0537.

Sorry, no orders or payments accepted after December 1st.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

\* \* \* \* \*

ELECTION DAY BAKE SALE:

Dick Schmidle, Chrm. of Ways & Means, has announced that the Wilson Historical Society will hold its annual baked goods sale at two locations in the village on Election Day, November 8th from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Baked goods will be sold at both the Town Hall and the Catholic Church voting areas, and members and friends of the historical society are asked to bring their donations to either location starting at 8:30 a.m.

The annual Bake Sale takes on added significance this year as any profits realized will be allotted toward renovation of the Randall Road Schoolhouse.

\* \* \* \* \*

NOTEPAPER IS REAL BARGAIN:

One of the real bargains offered by the Ways & Means Committee is the package of note paper which sells for just \$3.25 ea. In the package are twelve sheets of attractive note paper with three different views reflecting Wilson's history.

The sheets are handy for those short notes you'd like to write to your friends, and the package also makes a practical "stocking-stuffer" for the coming Christmas Season.

\* \* \* \* \*

IN MEMORIAM:

June Diebold Rush, 70, daughter of Edward and Charlotte McCarthy Diebold, died Oct. 10, 1994 after a short illness. After her graduation from Wilson Central School in 1943, she served three years with the Navy WAVES during World War II.

She worked in the personnel department at Harrison Div. of GMC in Lockport and when she retired in 1989 was secretary to the Manager of Plant One. She was a member of St. Patrick's Church, Leo Dolan Post 410 American Legion, the Congressional Secretaries Club of Washington, DC; and the Keenan Quilters Guild.

She is survived by two sister, Arletta Robinson of Florida, and Janetlee Munnekhysen of Lockport. Burial services were held at St. Patrick's Church, and burial was in Mt. Olive Cem.

\* \* \* \* \*

NOVEMBER MEETING: Watch for program meeting notice in in your local newspaper. Shirley Hunter and Beth Walcrom will be refreshment hostesses on November 21, 1994.

\* \* \* \* \*

FINAL THOUGHT: Children learn three ways--by example, by example, by example.

\*\*\*\*\*  
1995.....MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION.....1995

NEW..... RENEWAL..... NAME.....Ph:( ).....

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

COUPLE \$8.00..... SINGLE \$5.00..... JR (under18) \$1.00..... LIFE \$150.....

ENDOWMENT FUND \$..... HONORARY (85+) FREE..... TOTAL ENCLOSED.....

Please make all checks payable to the Wilson Historical Society and return to:

ANNE A. FAERY BOX NO: 731 WILSON, NEW YORK 14172

\*\*\*\*\*  
SECOND NOTICE: PLEASE TRY TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP BEFORE JANUARY 1, 1995. THANK YOU.  
\*\*\*\*\*



(Coleman Printing)

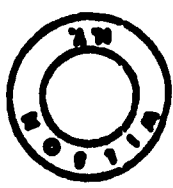
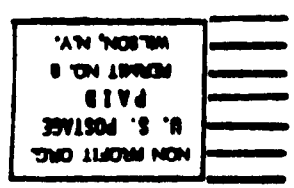
December 1994 VOL. 23 No. 11

DONALD W. CROOP, Editor

# NEWSLETTER

WILSON, NEW YORK 14172-9763

Wilson Historical Society



*December - 1994*

## FISHING FAMILY:

The late Merle Wilson spent 63 years of his life as a commercial fisherman in Wilson, and some interesting stories about his life might never have been recorded if it hadn't been for one of his young admirers, Ricky Schmidle, who once taped an interview he had with Merle.

It appears that Merle's fishing career began in 1901 when his father, William, decided to take his son out of school to help him. That was when Merle and his brother Fred began to learn the often dangerous business of commercial fishing.

The boat they used had a sail and 3 pair of oars, and they usually placed their nets up to 6 miles out on the lake where they'd often catch 5 or 6 hundred pounds of herring. The catch was usually packed in ice and shipped to New York City from the Wilson Depot.

The young fishermen admitted that they were scared many times, especially one time in January when they left the harbor at 8:00 a.m. on a cold, blustery morning. As the day went on, they found they were all alone in the lake about 6 miles north of Olcott.

The boys wanted their father to pull into the harbor, but the old fisherman decided he could find their way back to Wilson by following the shoreline. As darkness closed in, they rowed their boat against strong southwest winds as huge ice banks towered above them along the shore. They finally managed to bring their boat in between the old wooden piers at Wilson where 150 persons had lined up along the shore to give them a hand. They had waited patiently for hours, but many feared the Wilsons had been lost in the lake.

Merle noted that many of the fish that he had caught in his earlier years were perch, trout, whitefish, pike, and sturgeon, and that the first fish to disappear were the whitefish and trout. By the mid 1930's commercial fishing had fallen off dramatically.

One time in late October, Merle got tired of "sitting around" and decided to put some nets in the water again. His father told him it would be a waste of time, and when he talked with Fred Wheeler, he received little encouragement from him either. Fred, in fact, jokingly suggested he put his nets up in his front yard where he said he'd probably catch as many fish as he would if he placed the nets in the lake. None-the-less, they took off at daybreak and placed three nets--one off the piers and two west of the piers.

The following morning was one they'd never forget. All three nets were found loaded with fish and by the time they were all pulled into the boat they had over 1800 pounds of blue pike. The boat was so low in the water William Wilson, who was watching from shore, thought the boat had sprung a leak. After the men happily packed the fish in ice in 60 pound boxes, they were taken to a local distributor.

In 1940, Merle decided to build a new boat, and things went well until 1946 when a sandbar formed across the mouth of the creek and he could no longer get his 28 foot boat in or out of the harbor. He took the boat to Olcott and operated it from there for two years until in 1948 the government dredged out the channel at Wilson and built two new piers.

One time Merle took Frank Rignell on a fishing trip 6 miles west of Wilson. While setting their nets the motor conked out, and they had to rig a small sail and head for Youngstown. As they neared the Niagara River they were stopped by the Coast Guard and asked where they were from.

Merle asked if they would tow them into Youngstown so they could get their motor fixed. Instead the coastguard officer offered to tow them to Wilson. It was a ride they'd never forget. The waves were kicking up from a strong northeast wind, and when the coastguard vessel opened engines full throttle, Merle and Frank were soon drenched to the skin. They said that when they reached the Wilson harbor they felt like a pair of drowned rats.

Merle was grateful for the favor, however, and told the crew to go to the boathouse and get all they wanted to eat and drink. The coastguard captain refused to take any money, but told Merle if he'd write the coastguard base and make a report of what had happened, it would do them more good than getting a free lunch. Merle was more than happy to do so.

Merle gave up fishing and sold his boat in 1963. Since no one was interested in old nets and buoys, some of these were donated to the Wilson Museum.

\* \* \* \* \*

## DECEMBER EVENTS:

December 14th, Board of Director meeting. Wilson Museum, 7:30 PM.

December 19th, Program Meeting. Bringing history alive with the Boatmans. Museum 7:30 PM.

December 25th: Celebrate Christmas

\* \* \* \* \*

CHRISTMAS PRAYER: "Get on your knees and thank God you're on your feet."

\* \* \* \* \*

WILL CELEBRATE 65TH YEAR:

In 1920, Father Vincent McCarthy of the Immaculate Conception Church in Cambria, arranged to build a small frame church on Lake Street in Wilson with a seating capacity of 75 persons.

The church was able to serve the needs of the Catholic community until 1930 when, in order to accommodate an expanding congregation, they acquired the former Presbyterian Church

Wilson's new St. John's Mission was organized in November, 1929, under the episcopate of Bishop Lincoln Ferris, and the first executive council consisted of Dr. Henry Swicker, Chrm., Thomas Marks, Sr., Warden/Treasurer; Frederick Galbraith, Secretary; and Ashley Gale, Ernest Horton, and Seward Moot, Sr., Directors.

The Episcopal Mission acquired the former Catholic Church in 1930, and the new church was dedicated that same year as the St. John's Mission of Wilson.

Dr. Swicker presented the first class of young people for confirmation to Bishop Ferris on March 2, 1931.

Supportive groups within the church since its organization have included the St. John's Womens Guild; the Bishop Ferris Guild; the Altar Guild; and the Episcopal Young Churchmen.

The Rev. Evelyn Manzella is the current Vicar in Charge of St. John's Mission.

\* \* \* \* \*

CHRISTMAS ORNAMENTS AVAILABLE:

Brion Lonsbery and Charles Hartwig, representatives of the Wilson Business Association, obtained permission last March to use a picture of the Wilson Depot to decorate Christmas tree ornaments as a fund raising project for the Association.

Ornaments are now available for \$8.00 each and feature a reproduction of the village symbol, also one of the Wilson Depot. Contact a business association member for more information.

\* \* \* \* \*

NEW MEMBERS:

It is a real pleasure to welcome on behalf of the society the following new members:

Johanna K. Andritz of North Tonawanda; Naomi Beutel Tompkins of Vero Beach, Florida; Margaret Blemaster Klug of Glen Ellyn, Illinois; Chris Carlin of Ransomville, N.Y.; John Carpenter of Olcott, N.Y.. and Mary L. Stevens Reese of Wilson, NY.

We also welcome two junior members, George Michael Waters, Jr. who was born April 1, 1994, and Sarah Carpenter of Olcott, N.Y.

\* \* \* \* \*

SPECIAL THANKS:

A word of thanks to James Cornell of Boston, Mass., for a recent contribution to the society's Endowment Fund.

\* \* \* \* \*

SUCCESSFUL BAKE SALE:

Dick Schmidle, Chrm. of the Ways & Means Comm., notes: "I want to thank all those who contributed baked goods or money for our election day baked goods sale.

"A special word of appreciation to those who worked that day on the sale; at the town hall, Miles Linnabery, Celeste Crawford, Anne Faery, Shirley Evans, Mary McCoy, and Janet Naslund. Catholic Church, Charlotte Pease, Ellan Ellis, Jeanne Schmidle, Norma Ward, Peg Fritton, and Betty Hausman. A final word of thanks to Lucille Upton and her telephone Committee which assured that we would have baked goods to sell.

The efforts of all the above resulted in a profit of \$304 for the day. As noted before, these funds will be allotted toward the restoration of the Randall Road Schoolhouse."

\* \* \* \* \*

TUSCARORA PARK MOVES FORWARD:

Work has been started on a new pier and bathing beach on the west side of Tuscarora State Park, and the project is part of a plan that will include a playground, parking area, and handicapped accessible path to the water's edge.

Money for the park's development was made possible through the efforts of Assemblyman Joseph T. Pillittere who has also supported other projects in Wilson. Among these have been grants to help construct the Dr. John Argue Memorial Building; replace the roof on the old 1912 depot; help the Wilson Free Library; and recently, a \$12,000 grant to move the Randall Rd. schoolhouse to the museum grounds.

Joe grew up during the Great Depression, attended Canisius College, received an engineering degree at the University of Detroit; and served in the U.S. Navy.

\* \* \* \* \*

MUSEUM ATTENDANTS:

Because of illness, Marge Lederhouse, our hostess chairmen, didn't feel up to making calls for Sunday afternoon hostesses, however, the museum will be open in December. The following officers should be present to open and close the museum from 2 to 4PM:

Dec. 4th: Norm MacAskill; Dec. 11th, Arthur Schnoor; and Dec. 18th, Darrell Smith.

\* \* \* \* \*

RECENT ACQUISITIONS:

The painting of "The Hojack" by Fern L. Brauer, has been donated to the Wilson Museum by Jack L. Hutchison of Sanborn, NY.

Mrs. Zilpha (Archie) Petty: Buffalo Evening Newspapers, 7/3/1976; 10/9/1994; also Union Sun & Journal Publications, "Welcome to the Niagara Historic Trail", and the "Blizzard of '77" Janet Sporleder: 100 Plastic Coat Hangers.

\* \* \* \* \*

THE ONE ROOM SCHOOL:

The Randall Rd. Schoolhouse project reminds us that the one room school was once the backbone of America's educational system. Some of the dedicated teachers who once taught rural schools in Wilson include: Hazel Salisbury, Helen Horton, Dorothy Halstead, Bea Salisbury, Laura Eick, Helen Stevens, Dorothy Lort, Dora Wakeman, Eloise Culverwell, Lydia Southard, Ernestine Walpole, Bessie Crawford, Alice Carter, Blanche Wilson, and Mrs. Louis Swick.

\* \* \* \* \*

BOARD ACTION & REPORTS:

It is hard for the society to adjust to change--especially when it involves the loss of key personnel. That is why the board recently accepted, with regret, the resignation of Bobby Hull, secretary, effective December 31, 1994.

Bobby is joining an exclusive group of former secretaries who faithfully kept a record of all activities since the society was organized in 1972: Laura Eick, Susan Cruickshank, Martha MacAskill, Mary Budde, Judy Zauner, Faye Pisello, and Pam Groff.

Eleanor Myers requested that all memorials made in memory of John Myers be used for the inside restoration of the Randall Road Schoolhouse.

President Burrows reported that the schoolhouse auction raised \$3750, and an additional \$225 was received from the Lion's Club from sale of hot dogs and pop.

Thanks to Don Burrows, the society was able to acquire 100 chairs and 5 tables for \$215 at the schoolhouse auction.

Anne Faery reported that there has been a good response of renewals of membership in the society, and she hopes that everyone will be up to date when the New Year starts.

New steel cabinets acquired for the Barnum Building storage room have been assembled by Ollie Clark.

Permission was given to the "Friends of the Library" to hold a musical program in the museum on December 1st. The public is invited.

Norm MacAskill reported that he attended a recent Federation meeting where it was announced that the time is approaching when all historical societies will have to provide easy access for the handicapped.

\* \* \* \* \*

A CHRISTMAS STORY:

It wouldn't be Christmas without "Rudolph", Santa's reindeer with the shiny nose, who rose to popularity in 1949 when Gene Autry, the singing cowboy, recorded his biggest hit "Rudolph the Red-nosed Reindeer."

Actually the Rudolph story began 10 years earlier when Montgomery Ward decided to have an unusual theme for the Christmas Season. They approached an advertising copywriter, Robert May, who suggested having a reindeer with a shiny nose to help Santa deliver his presents each year.

His idea didn't catch on, however, until May wrote the poem which was put in booklet form and handed out by Montgomery Ward Santas all over the country.

The poem was liked so well it was put to music by Johnny Marks, and "Rudolph" leaped to popularity in 1949 when Gene Autry, the singing cowboy, recorded his biggest hit song.

\* \* \* \* \*

WILSON FREE LIBRARY:

On December 1, 1994, the Wilson Free Library will sponsor a musical program at the Wilson Museum at 7:30 p.m. The program will be presented by the Holiday Strings of Niagara Falls under the direction of James Flood, and the public is invited to attend.

On December 7, 1994, at 7 p.m., a work session will be held at the Library on Young Street, and Vickie Jancef will demonstrate how to make evergreen centerpieces for the Holidays.

\* \* \* \* \*

WORD OF APPRECIATION:

It takes time to compile, publish, and mail out the monthly newsletter--that is why it is very helpful to receive all meeting notices, programs, Sunday hostesses, refreshment hostesses, or other related material by the 15th of the month prior to publication. Your cooperation has always been appreciated.

\* \* \* \* \*

TO BE 70 years young is far more cheerful than being 40 years old.

\* \* \* \* \*

FINAL THOUGHT: If you want work well done, get a busy man...the other kind has no time.

\* \* \* \* \*

DECEMBER PROGRAM:

The guest speakers at the December 19th meeting of the society will be David and Karen Boatman of Williamsville, New York. The Boatmans will demonstrate how history can be brought alive through historical enactment, and will feature scenes from the Civil War era. Refreshments will be served following the program

Dorothy Linnabery, Chrm., is trying to introduce programs that will encourage more of our members to get out and attend meetings. She is open to suggestions and would like to hear from you. In order to help make it easier, we are attaching a suggestion blank which could help her to arrange for the kind of programs you'd like to have.

Dorothy Linnabery: We would like to hear more programs on Local History.....; Crafts.....; Show & Tell.....; Musicals.....; Antiques.....; Historical Re-enactments.....; Hobbys.....; Member participation.....; Professional speakers.....; Other.....use.back.....

1995.....MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION.....1995

NEW..... RENEWAL..... NAME.....Phone: ( ).....

ADDRESS.....P.O. Box..... CITY.....Zip.....

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

ENDOWMENT FUND \$..... HONORARY (85+) FREE..... TOTAL ENCLOSED \$.....

Please make all checks payable to the WILSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY and return to:

ANNE A. FAERY BOX NO. 731 WILSON, NEW YORK 14172