

# THELMA ROGERS GENEALOGICAL AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

118 EAST DYKE STREET, WELLSVILLE, NY 14895

Newsletter May 2008

Jane Pinney and Mary Rhodes

## Upcoming Dates:

May 1<sup>st</sup> – Joan Hand – Unofficial Historian of Jones Memorial on “Life at the Jones”

June 5<sup>th</sup> – Art Van Tine on Oil in Allegany County

July and August – NO MEETINGS or NEWSLETTER – watch for the next newsletter for info

We enjoyed Jim Pomeroy’s “The Story of the Buffalo & Susquehanna Railroad”, the room was full of railroad enthusiasts that night.

At our next program, Joan Hand will talk on “Life at the Jones”. Joan is a retired nurse, with 39 years of experience at Jones Memorial. She has collected a lot of history and hundreds of photos of “The Jones”. Of course, our meeting is at 7 PM at the Trinity Lutheran Church in Wellsville.

If there are any questions regarding Oil in Allegany County for Art Van Tine for our June meeting, please submit them early to either Jane or me.

We are sad to note the passing of Willie Allen. Willie was a long time member of the Historical Society, always interested in local history as well as the arts. Our thoughts go out to Ray.

**Our Building:** Jane has been busy preparing for the repairs/painting of the Museum this summer. She and Dave measured the entrance door and discovered that it is actually *oversized*, measuring 7 feet in height. She has spent many hours searching for a replacement that would be true to the design of the building, and located a door through Fassett Lane Lumber that will be made, primed and installed in June, prior to our painting contractor’s work in July.



**Membership** – This month, our paid memberships rose to 99 people. We welcome Rosalie Ames, Diane and Alan Forsburg, Thomas Gasedigne, Geralyn Gough, Jim Pomeroy and John Embser to our group. Virginia Macauley has also rejoined the society, Virginia was an early member of TRHS, and we are delighted to have her name back on the membership roll.

## Our Thanks For Your Donations:

- Memorial Donation for Willie Allen \$25
- Lady Elks - \$100
- Jerome and Sarah Coleman - \$100
- Esther Childs – A copy of her Gabby Hayes collection
- Ann Comstock – A collection of pens from Wellsville businesses.
- Eleanor Cott – Allegany Arts Association Scrapbook 1990-92 and newspaper articles; an ASPCA photograph of Bernie and Eleanor; an Elmhurst urn c. 1940-50’s; a painting “to Drusee Harris from Grandma Carter”; a cowbell; a fur muff and wrap; A Centennial Belles photograph.
- Dorothy Herke – Article and obituary of the accidental death of Miss Bertha Dornow.
- Don LaForge – 1982 calendar by Richard Saupe; a museum newspaper article; a Whitesville Sesquicentennial placemat.
- The Runzo Family – WHS yearbooks 1962 through 1965; Pink House note cards; Wellsville postcards; a Harrison Ford ruler.

## Wish List:

- Old area pictures that have not been copied and shown in the Pennysaver. We know they are out there. We will copy and return them to you.
- Area directories for the 1940’s and 1960’s

## Making the Circuit:

Jane and I have had two speaking engagements on behalf of the museum. We spoke with the Rotary Club in March and the Lions Club in April. Practice makes perfect!!

**Regarding Mildred** – An interested reader wrote to us with a little more on Mildred, the story of a “Village Dog” from our March Newsletter:

“I never saw “Mildred” to identify or confirm her breed, but with what we read about her daily desires of traveling, instead of staying home, she must have been a hunting dog, probably a small Beagle. The Gent family lived on lower Stevens St., and was a large family with a lot of boys, mostly. But there were also two girls. One, Mildred, was the age of the older boys and probably was handy “bait” for many of their puns. Ed Gent was among the older ones and I’m assuming was leaning toward the desire of taking up hunting and needed a hunting dog.

Whether sister Mildred was overjoyed and receptive with the dog receiving her name, consequently being her namesake – I never knew, but I think not. I expect the more she protested the more the boys kept calling the dog until the whole lower end of Stevens St. got the message. It was sad the way “Mildred” met her demise, and so abruptly. But at the same time she was fulfilling her ambition – to chase after something she knew she should chase after, whether trucks, cars or rabbits. She was just completing her last stand up on Wellsville’s Main St. where so many friends made her welcome.”

**Out of the Archives** - We thought we might do something a bit different this month for this section. The following is a list of a few “firsts” for the Town of Wellsville, collected by Jane Pinney over the years. Hope you enjoy.

**1769** – The first white man of whom we have knowledge to have traveled on foot through the valley was a Moravian missionary to the Indians named Rev. David Zeisberger who, came to the Allegany River area from Bethlehem, Pa. most likely following an Indian trail along the course of the Genesee River.

**1795** – The river was first called “Genesee River in 1795. From the Gazetteer of 1824, we learn that Genesee in the language of the Indians of this section means “Pleasant Valley”

**1798** – The first death in the area of Wellsville, according to county histories, was Zeria Dyke, who died January 21, 1798, at the age of ten months and five days.

**1814** - The first school in the area was kept by Ithamar Brookings. It was near the Dike settlement.

**1802** – The first through road, probably a rough trail, extended from Hornellsville through Andover, down Dyke’s Creek and to what is now the corner of Main and State Streets in Wellsville. From there it followed the Genesee River south through Alma to Shinglehouse and on to Olean.

**1803** – Nathaniel Dike erected the first sawmill a short distance from his house

**1822** – The first settler in the future Village of Wellsville was Job Straite. He and his family “squatted” on the land that is now Woodlawn Cemetery.

**1829** – the first mention of a railroad was in 1829, 22 years before Wellsville was to see one.

**1832** – Dr George B. Jones was Wellsville’s first resident medical practitioner. Silas Hills “opened” the first store by exposing some goods for sale in Van Buren’s Tavern

**1832** – The first saw and grist mill in the future village was erected by Daniel Kent, Gardner Wells and Daniel Tuttle at the foot of Mill Street (now Fassett Street)

**1833** – The first framed house was built by Gardner Wells on the road now known as Main Street. It was built in the vicinity of Wellsville Fire Department

**1836** – Welcome H. Coats built the first furniture factory in Wellsville. The first cabinet shop was a room in the Coats residence, which was near the southwest corner of Main and Madison Streets

**1837** – The first survey of the Village of Wellsville was made by Sheldon Brewster. He plotted the settlement into village lots and located fifteen streets

**1841** – The first attorney who settled in Wellsville permanently was Zenas H. Hones in 1841.

**1852** – The first steam engine used in the village was put in the shop of the Coats Manufacturing Company

<b>Officers TRHGS</b> Jane Pinney, President Don LaForge 1 <sup>st</sup> Vice Diane Converso 2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice Judy Hardy, Secretary Mary Rhodes, Treasurer Hilda Stout, Trustee 1 Yr Floy Donovan, Trustee 1 Yr Albert Kerton, Trustee 2 Yrs Dave Pinney, Trustee 2 Yrs Ann Comstock, Trustee 3 Yrs Jim Dello, Trustee 3 Yrs
---

**Museum Hours – Wednesday 1 – 4 PM from May 1 to October 31, or by Appointment.  
Call Jane at 585-593-4515 or Mary at 585-593-1965**