

*THELMA ROGERS GENEALOGICAL AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY
& NATHANIEL DYKE MUSEUM
118 EAST DYKE STREET, WELLSVILLE, NY 14895
Newsletter - September 2008*

Upcoming Dates:

- Sept 11 – 7PM at Trinity Lutheran Church, Chet Wilson will speak on his World War II experience.
- Oct 2 – Who is Thelma Rogers and How did We Become a Genealogical and Historical Society?
- Nov 6 – Dave Pinney on the History of the Wellsville Fire Department

September already, where did the summer go? The museum has been open every Wednesday, and we have welcomed many, many researchers, friends and passers-by. The 3 hour afternoons fly by so quickly, sometimes Jane and I don't even have a chance to speak to each other, as we are busy dealing with our guests. What a wonderful feeling!!!

Mrs. Brown's 4th Grade Class from ICS visited us in June, we enjoyed the class and the accompanying parents. (see picture) Don LaForge arranged the visit .



We (Jane and Mary) got involved with the "Walk the Villages" program sponsored by Senator Kathy Young and the Wellsville Chamber of Commerce. On Wednesday night, Aug 20th, we welcomed about 15 people to walk Main Street with Historian Craig Braack for a discussion of architecture and history.

We continue our meetings with the History Preservation Roundtable, which is a great opportunity for local historians to get together, talk shop and share thoughts.

We (the Museum) set up a display in the Chamber of Commerce window with some old typewriters borrowed from INK and a few we had hidden in our storeroom.

Eleanor Cott has reframed and/or matted a few photos and posters that needed to be "buttoned up". Joanne Allen has transcribed some old very hard to read letters, and both ladies have helped out during museum hours. .

On Sept 17, the Museum will host a Chamber After Hours event, a monthly get together of chamber members. We hope to set up an open house for museum members sometime in October.

Membership: Our total membership grew to 111 over the summer. New memberships were purchased by Jim Connor, Art Van Tyne, Rebecca Langfeld, and Brad and Rita O'Connor.

Building: Painting and carpentry have been delayed due to weather, but we still have reason to hope that it will be completed before Labor Day. We have cleaned out the back room and it is no longer a scary place to visit, and we are using that room more effectively for storage now.

FROM THE ARCHIVES: The following article from the Allegany County Reporter of January 7, 1908 caught my eye:

"TO CLIMB STEEPLE – Jack Finn Will Be at the Top of Immaculate Conception Church Spire Wednesday Afternoon – For the benefit of many who have expressed a desire to watch "Steeple Jack" Finn and his son, Jack, while at work at the top spire of Immaculate Conception church, which he has for the past few days been painting and repairing, Finn says that he will be on the steeple at 2 o'clock tomorrow, Wednesday, afternoon. He will replace the cross at the top of the spire, and it will be a good opportunity for people to see him at his daring work. The cross, which has been regilded and which will glisten like gold in the sunlight, is nearly six feet high, and three and a half feet across. At its great height on the steeple it looks so much smaller that many will be surprised to learn of its actual size."

And a follow up article on November 7, 1909 – *“WORKING ON CATHOLIC CHURCH SPIRES– Father and Son Risking Their Lives in Hazardous Job. “Jack” Finn and son are gold leafing the gold crosses on the spires of the Immaculate Conception Church this week. The work is very dangerous and the men are risking their lives in their hazardous undertaking. Messrs. Finn and son are specialists in this line of work and the present job is being performed a distance of 200 feet above ground: They recently completed a similar contract on a church spire at Penn Yan and their work is first class”*

John L. Finn and his family lived in Wellsville for at least 12 years in the early part of the century. In the 1900 census, he declared himself a “painter”, but by 1910, he was a “roofer/slater”, working on churches and high elevations throughout the area. Stories appeared in newspapers across the southern tier as to his work exploits. In 1908, Steeple Jack and his son removed a 55 foot standpipe in Waterloo and painted the statue of the Goddess of Justice which topped the court house spire in Ridgeway, PA.. The Finn’s reslated and painted the spire on the Baptist church in Friendship in October of 1908.

The Finn family moved to Albion New York where they continued to amaze their neighbors by their disregard for gravity. A 1929 article from the Syracuse Herald says “Albion Man May Paint Eiffel Tower at \$10 a Foot”. No follow up on that story, but the subject of the story was our Steeple Jack Finn. When father John L. retired, John Jr. became Steeple Jack Finn, and he and his brother William were simply called “The Finn Brothers”. “With us,” said Jack Finn with a grin, “business is always on the up and up.”

An article in 1934 from the Daily Messenger in Canandaigua NY says “One artist and 40 loyal citizens of this municipality of ours painted the Iron Man Tuesday afternoon. The artist did the work and the 40 gave him their moral support.”.

THANK YOU: This month our “Thank You’s” take a larger portion of our newsletter, due to the vacation we had from publishing. We feel it is important to share the information with you for several reasons. First of course, it is a genuine thank you for the donation to the museum. The written acknowledgement becomes an acquisition record when we publish the newsletters. Lastly of course, it lets our members know what items we have that may be of interest to them. We know the list is not the most exciting read, but it is important to the history of the museum. So, with that said, we want to thank the following folks who donated items to the museum over the last few months.

Officers TRHGS

Jane Pinney, President
Don LaForge 1st Vice
Diane Converso 2nd 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

Bob Ackerman – a laminated copy of “Map of the Morris Purchase of West Geneseo in the State of New York”; 1959 “Farm Plat Book and Directory for Allegany County”; an 1800’s Allentown Cheese Factory order form; a copy of “National Aluminum Works” form; a letter head and envelope of “The Pittsburgh, Shawmut and Northern Railroad Company, Angelica”; a 1909 bill from the Reporter Company in Wellsville; a 1904 Hotel Connor letterhead; “Scio Oil & Gas Company Wellsville NY” contains information regarding three deeds.

Kato Aldrich – “1916-1991 Dresser Rand 75th Anniversary” book.

Balloon Rally Committee – a 2005 Balloon Rally pin.

Richard Bartlett – a copy of Beer’s 1869 Willing map; photos of the Alma waterfall near Dutton Rd.

Basil GM of Wellsville (arranged through Ron Taylor) - a five drawer lateral file cabinet.

Esther Childs – Davie’s shopping bags.

Ginger Cole – Wellsville memorabilia – yardsticks, bank souvenirs, key chains, and other logo items.

Ann Comstock – a roll of raffle tickets; Identification for 3 family photographs in our files; “Andover and the Silk Mill Businesses”; family research books to copy; two 8X10 photos of Funland to copy.

First Trinity Lutheran Church – Carole Aldrich’s CD “Piano Classics”.

Walt and Phyllis Dennis – a 1957 Wellsville Centennial plate.

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Call Jane Pinney at 585-593-4515 or Mary Rhodes at 585-593-1965**

Lois Flurschutz – A copy of Walter Schrader’s memories of Main Street businesses. (Walter was a wholesale salesman for Scoville Brown for many years.)

Irene Fullam – Rex Fullam’s WWII dress uniform, including many badges, ribbons and stripes; six 8x10 Wellsville photos from Rex Photo Service to copy.

Dave Gardner – the chimes that were original to the restored Town Clock.

Joan Hand – a page from 1913 Vol 31, No 2 issue of The Horseless Age, featuring the Dyke Hose Co.’s recently delivered Lippert Stewart Hose Wagon. (The first motor driven fire truck in WNY.)

Joe Hart – “The Green and Gold” History of the Emerald Hook and Ladder Co. No. 3 by Joseph Hart.

June Helmer – Pretzels and snacks for refreshments at the June TR meeting.

Kandy Hirsch – a partially finished bat and an ax handle from Burchfield-Blackman Co., Belmont, in memory of Arden Burchfield and Charles Blackman; Rushford Directories 1971, 1990, 1991, 2006, 2007; Rushford Lake Guides 1992, 1993, 1995, 2003-2005, 2007.

Jim Iddings from Wyalusing, PA – A new “Open” flag for the museum.

Jones Memorial Hospital – Gently used notebooks, plastic page protectors, hanging files, file labels.

Kelly Kurtz from S. Williamsport, PA – Geocache Tours of Wellsville.

Don LaForge – two 1983 Balloon Rally cancelled envelopes; WHS Class of 1954 “A Brief Tour of Wellsville in the 50’s”; copies of Wellsville postcards.

Virginia Macauley – A washstand made by Coats Bros. c1870; Newspaper issues of the ’72 Flood, 1991 Ice Storm, and 1967 WHS Graduation; many early Thelma Rogers articles; 1957 “Our Town and Village, Wellsville, NY”; 1868 Manual of Babbitonian Penmanship; photos of Virginia during museum presentations; Lunn Lumber Co. advertising thermometer; Allentown Garage thermometer; 1914 Rand McNally NYS map; 1918 General Hospital postcard; 1972 TR newsletter by president Robert Macauley; 2 Wellsville Branch RBI ink blotters; 4 hand forged nails; a hat pin; a doll, hand-carved by Gerald Smith of Scio and dress made by Mary Richards.

Jim and Betty Meehan – a copy of the June 18, 1955 Little League Dedication Program and Roster of Participating Teams. (This was the first Little League game.)

Phyllis Moore – Many obituaries and articles to copy; many WHS graduation and “Year In Review” newspaper issues.

Sara Newark and Max Dunshie – copies of 1923 and 1931 letters written by Earl D. Jones.

Mary Rhodes – a beverage holder from Music Fest.

Hilda Stout – a Coats Drug Store pill bottle; a very old scrapbook to copy; Beach family genealogy to copy; turn of the 20th century receipts and statements from Wellsville businesses.

Family of Lloyd Taylor – a WWII Eisenhower uniform, with 3 caps, shirt, tie and sweater; a copy of Lloyd’s certificate of birth; Turbodyne newsletters 1978; Turbodyne articles 1976, 1977, 1974; Southern Firemen’s Association Convention book; 1997, 1998 WFD election articles; WHS Graduation issues of the 1980’s, 1990’s; Balloon Rally Specials 1983, 1986; 1972 Flood newspaper; 1976 U.S. Bicentennial Wellsville newspaper; four framed Army group photographs.

Peter Van Tyne - a framed photograph of JMH “demolition after the 1972 collapse”. Given to Ink with instructions for Pete to find a good home for it.

Marge and Larry Vossler – “100 Years – 1840 to 1940 Worthington” Anniversary book.

Wellsville Fire Department – a 2008 Convention Delegate Ribbon and “93rd Allegany County Volunteer Firemen Convention Book”.

See you on September 11Th!!

Mary

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