



# THE SENTINEL

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The Newsletter of the New Scotland Historical Association

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## EULOGY FOR TWO UNLOVED BUILDINGS: A HISTORY OF 40 AND 43 SOUTH MAIN STREET, VOORHEESVILLE

By Alan Kowlowitz

This spring Business for Good filed Demolition Permit applications for 40 and 43 South Main Street in Voorheesville. It is likely that these buildings will be gone by the end of the year, replaced by a café (43 South Main St.) and a parking lot (40 South Main St.). It does not appear that the community will mourn the loss of these unloved structures. However, each of them has a history and each has contributed to the history of the Village and surrounding community.

43 South Main Street has a varied and complex history. The site of 43 South Main Street was Lot 1 of the Slingerland and Sand subdivision in 1874, which was sold to Casper Louer, who was a section supervisor on the railroad. Louer sold the lot to Abram LaGrange, a grocer, in 1883 for \$375. LaGrange must have subsequently sold it to Jesse and E. Dayton Joslin sometime before 1892. The Joslin's continuously owned the site until 1927.

The *Altamont Enterprise* reported that the Joslin brothers built a meat market on the lot in 1892. Several butchers operated the market until 1893 when Daniel Albright took over the shop, first working for Thomas MacDougal and in 1896 on his own behalf until 1898. In 1896 the Joslin brothers built an icehouse next to the meat market. Albright left in 1898 to lease another shop. The *Altamont Enterprise* reported that the Joslins intended to continue to run a meat market at the site. Between 1898 and 1907 the meat market was operated by a parade of butchers, most of whom only lasted a year or less. These included Ed Young, Abram Relyea, Henry Bockhouse, Grant Clow, Lavery and Nasbolts, Jacob Arnold, Everett Carl, and Bert Woodworth.

It is unclear why there was such a frequent turnover in the operation of the meat market. We do know that during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century there were other meat markets in Voorheesville closer to Union Station, then the center of Village commercial activity. Competition must have been tough. We also know that during this period the advent of refrigeration, domination of meat packing by a few large corporations (e.g., Swift, Armour), and increased government regulation was transforming the industry. Clearly, operating a meat market in Voorheesville at the time could be a precarious business venture.

Between 1908 and 1927 it is unclear what commercial activity took place at 43 South Main Street. The existence of an icehouse nearby made the site attractive for meat and other food stuffs that needed refrigeration. However, a diligent search of the *Altamont Enterprise* did not turn up any convincing evidence of a business that can be linked to 43 South Main Street. However, the ownership of the building did remain in the hands of the Joslin brothers until August 1927 when Jesse Joslin sold 43 South Main Street to Theron E. Hoffmeister.

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ASSOCIATION**

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**PRESIDENT'S LETTER**

Dear Member and Friends:

The May 3, 2022 program, Voorheesville: An Italian Perspective, presented by Dennis Ulion, was the last in our series of 2021-2022 programs. We heard about the interesting personal experiences of his and other Italian families as they settled into the Voorheesville community over 100 years ago. Time marches on, life continually changes, but that program highlighted for me the importance of the New Scotland Historical Association as a repository of stories and artifacts of our collective, local history.

Part of preserving local history can be the documentation of oral history. NSHA is beginning to experiment in a joint project with the Voorheesville Public Library documenting the oral history of Smitty's. This is a good place to start because much of the early history of that site has already been documented by the Joint Historic Preservation Commission. But, no one has yet written down the personal stories that made it so popular. Like Dennis Ulion's program, it is the stories behind cold facts that makes history come alive. As the two different organizations collaborate, hopefully it will lay the seeds for continued successful efforts together.

The Trustees, Officers and Committee Chairs send their best wishes for wonderful summertime fun. If you are out and about on Sundays, remember that the museum is open from 2-4 p.m. Stop by and see what we have out for display. We always look forward to seeing our members and friends. Thank you for your support.

Sarita Winchell  
President

**RMEMEBERING SAM YOUMANS**

The New Scotland Historical Association is saddened to learn that Sam Youmans, the last surviving Charter Member of the association, passed away on May 9.

A lifelong New Scotland resident, Sam was born on May 8, 1921, and was raised on Youmans Farms, the family dairy and poultry farm. Sam attended the State School of Agriculture at Cobleskill, after graduating from Bethlehem Central High School. There he met his wife Kathryn, marrying on April 10, 1943.

Besides being a very active member of NSHA, Sam also was a member of the New Scotland Kiwanis Club, Senior Citizens, along with serving on many Boards and Committees of the New Scotland Presbyterian Church.

In Sam's honor, the Fall Sentinel will include Sam's "*Reflection of a New Scotland Milkman*" which was included in the February 1993 publication.

Source: Reilly & Son Funeral Home, Inc. website obituary

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Between 1927 and 1929 T. E. Hoffmeister, who sometimes is recorded as A. E. Hoffmeister, operated a lunchroom, confectionary, ice cream, tobacconist, and dry goods store. The store was known as Hoffie's Place. A photograph of it in 1928 was reproduced by Dennis Sullivan in his history of Voorheesville. Ironically, Hoffmeisters only owned the building and operated the store for two years; yet because of the 1928 photograph, that is the image most people have of how the building looked in the "old days." Such is the power of the photographic image. Houghmaster was the first proprietor of a business to sell ice cream, which subsequent owners continued to feature.

In 1929, Hoffmeister sold the store and building to Bernard Amsel, an immigrant from Hungary, who ran it as a general store between 1929 and 1935. Amsel operated similar lines of business to Hoffmeister's but also included clothing items. He advertised extensively in the *Altamont Enterprise*. In 1935 Amsel sold 43 South Main St. to Harry Sutin, who was an immigrant from the Russian Empire (Belarus). When Sutin took over the store, he offered free dixie cups to the first 100 customers. Sutin ran a similar business to Amsel between 1935 and 1946. The 1920 US Census indicated that both Amsel and Sutin were Yiddish speakers. They both lived in the apartment above their store and, if social notes in the *Altamont Enterprise* are any indication, they tried to integrate into Voorheesville community activities. This was during a period when several Italian immigrants were operating stores in the Village. Therefore, it appears that the business community in Voorheesville during the late 1920s and 1930s was more diverse than one might imagine.

Sometime before 1946, Sutin must have added a pharmacy to the business. When he sold 43 South Main Street to John Heller in that year, the *Altamont Enterprise* referred to his business as the "Sutin Pharmacy." John Heller operated the store first as Heller's Pharmacy and by the early 1950s as the Voorheesville Pharmacy. In 1960 Heller sold the building and business to Voorheesville Pharmacy Inc. James Garrity operated the business until 1963, when Harvey Goldstein took over its operation. Older Voorheesville residents remember the Voorheesville Pharmacy as selling a wide variety of items and for its soda fountain and ice cream.

In 1971 Goldstein moved the Voorheesville Pharmacy to what was then called Grand Union Plaza, present day Voorheesville Plaza. Increased suburbanization was moving the nexus of Voorheesville's commercial activity out of the center of the Village to the car-oriented shopping plaza.



*Hoffmeister's Ice Cream Parlor (1928) at the corner of Center and Main Street. Originally the sight of Daniel Albright's Meat Market. In front of store (l to r): Hoffmeister, Billy Flansburgh, Gladys Flansburgh and McLarey. Shaffer store to right.*

*(continued from page 3)*

Between 1971 and 1976 43 South Main Street was operated as a sporting goods store and then a framing business. Tim and Mike Rossner bought the building in 1976 or 1977 and converted it into a carpet store. They operated it as Voorheesville Carpet at the 43 South Main location until 1987, when they moved to a larger location further down on South Main Street. In that year, the Rossner's rented the building to Dr. Michael Jarus, who converted the building into a dental office. The building existed as a dental office until the Rossner's sold it to Business for Good. Dr. Jarus was the longest tenant of 43 South Main Street in the building's history, and the site will be remembered by present Voorheesville residents as "Jarus's dental office."

The history of 40 South Main Street is more straight forward and better documented. Thomas Bewsher Sr. had the structure at 40 South Main Street built around June 1893. Originally a tinsmith, Bewsher ran a hardware store in the mid-1880s. He sold the hardware store to the Joslin brothers in the early 1890s and opened a general or grocery store near his home in 1894. The house that Bewsher built was unique in the Village. The structure included a porch that extends slightly less than half of its west side and rapped around about one-third of its north side. It also includes a unique square-shaped tower or turret with a pyramidal roof. The turret is located at the corner of the house where the porch wraps around. The main part of the building has a flat roof, which is not typical for residential buildings in the Village. Bewsher remained a prominent businessperson in Voorheesville until his death in 1921. The Bewsher family continued to live at 40 South Main Street until 1957, when Adelaide Bewsher died. Adelaide was Thomas Bewsher's daughter and contributed as much to the Village as her father. She was Voorheesville's first librarian from 1915-ca.—1931, and a prominent temperance advocate.



*A photograph of 40 South Main Street as it appears in 2022.*

Michael Frohlich purchased the property in 1960. Frohlich owned the service station at 42 South Main Street. He utilized a barn on the property and rented out two apartments in the house. Harriet Frohlich inherited the property on Michael's death in 1974. On Harriet's death in 1977 her children Richard Frohlich and Mary Beth Felice inherited the property. They sold it in 1982 to Wallace and Dolores Hill, who lived in New Jersey. The Hill's renovated the building and added rental units. The Hill's executor sold the building to Stacy March in 2002. 40 South Main Street was one of the few buildings with multiple rental units in the heart of the Village when Business for Good purchased the property.

The next time you walk around or drive through the center of Voorheesville, please stop a moment to look at 40 and 43 South Main Street. Think about what those buildings and location looked like in their heyday, and contemplate what will be lost when they are demolished.

## STITCHING UP MEMORIES: THE QUILT IN THE HALL

By Judy Kimes

If you have visited the New Scotland Historical Association Museum, you have undoubtedly seen the quilt hanging in the hall. It is a beautiful and impressive sight. Its presence there visually expresses one of the main reasons the NSHA was organized in the first place; that is, to “preserve historic artifacts of the Town of New Scotland,” a purpose stated in NSHA’s 1972 application to the Board of Regents for its official charter.

Though perhaps not an artifact itself, the images on the quilt help to preserve in our mind’s eye historic landmarks that exist or existed throughout the Town of New Scotland.

After the granting of its permanent charter in August of 1975, another historic event was approaching that NSHA wished to commemorate – the United States of America’s Bicentennial. Communities throughout the nation searched for ways to acknowledge this monumental milestone. In the Fall of 1975, Lillian Batchelder of New Scotland initiated the Bicentennial Quilt project for the NSHA. In an introduction explaining how the quilt came to be, the following is written:

The women got together and brainstormed a list of sites in the town that they thought should be represented, being sure all areas of the town were represented. Then everyone picked the squares they would like to applique and embroider. They met and brought boxes of fabric scraps to exchange and share. In all, 26 women created squares for the quilt!



*Chairwoman Lillian Batchelder (top) and Kay Youmans quilting on antique frame set up in the museum.*



*Janet Berger (Klopp) and Evelyn Berger basting quilt squares together.*

Once the squares were complete, they were laid out, and the order was decided. It was quilted by Lillian Batchelder (Chairwoman), Evelyn Berger, Marion Parmenter, Min Lamboy, Madelyn Scherer, Kay Youmans, Dorothy Campbell, and Rachel Harvey. Each square was quilted around the outside, using an antique quilting frame, right here in the present museum.

The artists who created the squares themselves were Lillian Kirchner, Marilyn Holmberg, Ellie Haase, Lillian Batchelder (Chairperson) (4 squares), Marion Hatch (3 squares), Corinne Weeks, Dr. Frances Vosburgh, Marion Parmenter (4 squares), Minerva Lamboy, Kathy Olsen, Hazel Lonnstrom, Madelyn Scherer (3 squares), Arlene Pafunda, Kay Youmans (2 squares), Carole Green (3 squares), Evelyn Berger (2 squares), Martha Richards,

Loretta Whalen, Corrine Cossac, Dorothy Campbell, Rachel Harvey, Esther Mang (2 squares), Marilyn Farrell, Dorothy Kohler, Martha Slingerland, and Betsy Badgley.

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## BICENTENNIAL QUILT



*The postcard made showing the quilt. This postcard is still available at the museum.*

The Bicentennial Quilt was first displayed at NSHA's annual meeting in May of 1976. At that time, preparations were being made for another NSHA Bicentennial event.

The June 4, 1976, issue of the Altamont Enterprise reported:

### Quilt Show – Flea Market – Slide Show

The Town of New Scotland Historical Association Bicentennial event will be held on June 5 at the Voorheesville Elementary School.

The Bicentennial Quilt will be on display at that time. The quilt has 42 squares done in applique and crewel embroidery. There are nine churches, several schools, hotels, homes, a railroad station, and a suspension bridge to name a few. Many of these are no longer in existence in the town. The quilt will remain the property of the Historical Association, but it will be available to organizations to borrow for display purposes.

The following week, the Enterprise ran an article written by our own Marion Parmenter with the headline "500 Attend Bicentennial Event in Voorheesville."

The article reported:

The Bicentennial Quilt was on exhibit. Many folks enjoyed picking out the sites they remembered from the past, as well as those of the present.

The Historical Association's post cards of the quilt have finally arrived. They will be available at the Voorheesville Public Library and the New Scotland Town Hall as well as from individual members of the association. (There are some of these still available at the museum.)

It is worth the trip to the NSHA Museum to take a close look at this fabulous work of art. There is a guide near the quilt that explains what each square depicts and gives the name of the person who made it. You may find you feel a connection to one of the scenes. You may find you feel a connection to the one who created it. Without a doubt, this quilt was a labor of love.

The Bicentennial Quilt is a treasure that beautifully acknowledges beloved historic sites that existed or still exist throughout our town.

Our Town of New Scotland Historical Association Museum is open on Sundays from 2-4 throughout the summer.

With thanks to:

The Altamont Enterprise

The writings of Marion Parmenter

The scanning of photos by Don Slingerland

## **Editor's Corrections: March 2022 Sentinel - Smith's Tavern**

Thank you, Alan Kowolwitz, a member of the Joint Commission, for identifying some inaccuracies in the original article. The Commission didn't recommend that the building be preserved or that the demolition permit not be approved outright but that the **permit not be approved until:**

Commission members can access the structure so that they can complete their review and document its interior.

Stewart's Corporation provides an explanation of the reasons for the demolition and its plans for the site that are consistent with present zoning and the Village's Master Plan.

Additionally, the Joint Commission recommends that the Planning Commission urge Stewart's Corporation to allow representatives from Historic Albany Foundation to enter 112 Maple Ave. to identify and remove any hardware or architectural features that can be salvaged and used to restore other structures.

The Joint Commission also recommends that the Voorheesville Village Board consider erecting a historic marker at the site of the former Smith's Tavern memorializing its role in maintaining the Village's sense of identity and community as it transitioned from a "Railroad Town" to a suburban community.

Also, the building was saved because Stewart's Corporation withdrew the demolition permit application since they had a buyer for the building.

## **NSHA MEMBERSHIP FORM**

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\_\_\_\_\_

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_____ \$15 Basic	_____ \$50 Patron
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Every Sunday (except holidays)  
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