



THE SENTINEL

Vol. 18, No. 1

The Newsletter of the New Scotland Historical Association

Fall 2009

Maple Avenue Memories

By Dorothy Jane (Schultz) Gangai

In 1928, my mother Ethel, stepfather Bob Kuhn, sister Marian, and I moved from Albany to Voorheesville. The village had been established where train lines crossed.

We rented the first floor of a two-family house at 92 Maple Avenue. Our landlord was Elwood Albright and he and his wife, Frances, and daughter Marjorie lived two doors down the street to the right. Our neighbors upstairs were Clayton Bouton, and his wife Myra, and their son Alfred. Mr. Bouton was the principal of the Voorheesville School, which was Grades 1—10 at the time.

In our backyard was a barn occupied by our Shetland pony named Dan and a small shiny black cart. Sometimes, Bob would hook up the cart and Marian and I trotted down to the railroad underpass and turned around and came back to the house. I don't remember ever seeing a car [during our ride]. A garage housed the family car. Four or five white chickens were kept in a coop and an Angora rabbit lived in a hutch. There was a long space for a vegetable garden and a path ran down about 100 feet to the Vly Creek. At the bottom of the path was our burning barrel. Sometimes, Mother would let me walk down with a match and let me burn the contents. I felt like a very big girl.

Bob quickly established himself as a plumbing and heating specialist and was very successful in Voorheesville. Mother worked at the telephone company in Albany and took a bus to work each day. Each morning, after she left, Marian and I finished dressing and began to walk to school. As we got to the street from our driveway, the school was visible to the left. On the way, we passed two houses, a garage, and a tavern (now known as Smitty's). I took Marian to her first grade classroom and entered my fourth grade classroom.

After school, I gathered up my sister and we walked home, passing familiar faces along the way. At that age, we stayed in our yard until Mother came home. If we ever needed help or advice, we went upstairs to Mrs. Bouton and she was always kind to us. At night, we could hear the trains as they blew three warning blasts as they came into Voorheesville.

Down the street, to the right of our house, was a large white farmhouse owned by Clifford Severson. He had

(Continued on page 4)

Who was Jim Ramsey?

Jim was the person who has taken all the articles and pictures and created 32 issues of the *Sentinel* for NSHA since 2000. We three have had many laughs and some frustrations at times sitting in his home in Saratoga every three months putting the paper together. When NSHA needed new folks to create the *Sentinel*, he stepped forward and said he'd help us out with the publishing.

Some of you may have known him. While he was from Corinth, NY, he owned a mobile home at Kissel's while he attended SUNY Albany and then taught school in Guilderland for a few years. While at SUNY he also worked part time at the Stone Well. He eventually got a job in the Greenwich High School teaching Business—including computers when they came along. He moved to Saratoga in 1975 to avoid a horrendous commute!

While doing genealogy with his nephew a few years ago he discovered he was related to Bob—12 generations back! Small world!

When he became so ill in April and May we collected articles, pictures etc. as he instructed us to, but he was just too ill. The *Sentinel* had to wait. It was very difficult for us to lose such a wonderful long time friend (and cousin)—just bear with us and we'll try to figure out how create the *Sentinel*. This one will be larger than usual, as we have much to print! Thank you for your patience.

Bob and Marion Parmenter

Mark Your Calendar!

Tuesday, October 6, 2009

Speaker: Dr. Jon L. Hausman

**“Recorded Music
From 1880 Until Now”**

**Wyman Osterhout Community Center
New Salem
7:30 P.M.**

NEW SCOTLAND HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

P. O. Box 541

Voorheesville, NY 12186

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Editors

Marie Hornick

Willard Osterhout

Web Page

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear Members and Friends,

The month of May officially ended the year for the Association, though most activities continue and new projects are in the planning stages. The membership of the Board is almost the same, with one new member and one member taking on a new challenge. We welcome Sandy Slingerland as the new Exhibits Chairperson. We are fortunate to have someone with her creativity and dedication, as shown in the present display, "20th Century General Store." Taking on a new challenge is trustee Melanie Ernst, who has volunteered to be Membership Chairperson. Melanie's organizational and computer skills add depth to our ability to work with current technology.

The Board Members and their committees have special talents that make the association a success. Listed below are some of the many activities of the past year:

- Publishing of the Sentinel
- Updating the Website
- Keeping the books and auditing them
- Overseeing the presentation of seven entertaining and interesting programs
- Presenting a beautiful table with refreshments after every meeting
- Accessioning and organizing all of the artifacts belonging to museum (Belonging to?)
- Planning and preparing museum exhibits
- Finding, scheduling, and training museum volunteers
- Taking photos and preserving them
- Interviewing and taping Senior members of the Community
- Preparing a Disaster Plan
- Preparing and publishing a Historic Calendar
- Organizing a raffle
- Researching genealogy
- Placing the Historic Marker at the Slingerland-LaGrange Farm
- Researching information and erecting the Wyman Osterhout Plaque
- Organizing and presenting a scholarship to a High School Senior
- Giving professional legal advice to the association, when needed
- Collecting dues and encouraging new members to join the association
- Publicizing the many activities of the organization.

Feel free to call one of the dedicated Board Members and volunteer your help in the coming year. We particularly need people with knowledge of the computer to help in several areas.

We hope you had an enjoyable summer.

Peg Dorgan

Dues are Due!

Membership letters were mailed June 1st, 2009. Membership cards for those who have paid their dues are included in this issue of the *Sentinel*, if you have not already received them.

If you did not receive your renewal letter, or membership card, please contact Melanie Ernst, Membership Chair, at 768-8191. Thank you!

In Memoriam

With deep sympathy, we note the passing of
NSHA Life Member Judy Badgley Okesson
and Honorary Member Jim Ramsey.

Collections Committee Report

After several years of talking about it, we now have some shelves in the storage barn. First Janet Klopp and Marion moved all the various items that are stored in the shed—farm equipment, lumber, sheets of plywood including old Plum Fest signs, peg board, etc from one end to the other of the building. Thus we made room for the shelves, in addition to a place to work.

Then Bob and Marion purchased the needed lumber and commenced. The bottom shelves are about 33 inches off the floor. This was a suggestion from Sandy Slingerland that worked well. Many heavy items fit under the shelves on the floor, and now have a safe place out of the way. We placed two deep shelves above this space. The shelves are about 15 feet long.

Once the shelves were completed, Janet and Marion placed the items on the shelves and under them in an organized fashion. What an improvement! Next, Bob joined us to help move all the plywood, lumber, homesote, peg board, Plexiglas, etc. to a “permanent” location in the opposite end of the barn. Some items were re-hung on the wall.

By doing all this, and moving things around, we were able to clear the one end so that the Exhibits Committee can have exhibits in that end, to be viewed from outside. When we started, it was impossible to walk from one end to the other, let alone carry a 4 x 8 sheet of plywood! On the shelf end, we have a work table set up to use when we want it. A large cabinet that used to be in the office before we had the computer desk, can now be used by Sandy in the barn for display purposes.

We were all delighted with the results of the project. Oh yes, we needed more than 100 feet of heavy extension cord to run the saws out by the barn!

Marion Parmenter, Chairman

Mission Statement

The Town of New Scotland Historical Association preserves, protects and promotes history in the Town of New Scotland through the stewardship of material culture directly related to the town. The purpose is to promote an appreciation of local history, heritage and culture through research, publications and educational programs.

Electrical Project

Like an old house, our Museum lacks the upgrades that we take for granted in newer construction. The front room of the Museum was the original schoolhouse, built in 1903. Power was installed in the 1930s, before the second room was added. While there have been several renovations since then, this room still has very few outlets. As new exhibits have been created, the lack of electricity has become a problem.

The NSHA Board decided to use the proceeds of the 2009 raffle and any other donations from the membership drive to hire a professional electrician to investigate the system and complete the work, if possible. If we are fortunate to have the funds, we would like to have a line run from the Community Center to the barn in the back. This would make “lighter” work for those who have to use that space.

Permission was requested and granted by the Town Board to proceed with the project.

It's Time to Share

The Historical Association has plans to publish a book of memories (personal stories) of events, large or small, that occurred in the Town of New Scotland. All of the articles will be written or recorded by you, the citizens, and will cover the time period up to 1970.

Stories can reflect your school days, family reunions, starting a business, a church picnic, a humorous event, a tragedy, or whatever. Use names where appropriate. Don't worry about proper English or punctuation. This book is just a collection of memories to be shared.

Please send your article (of any length) to New Scotland Historical Association, PO Box 541, Voorheesville, NY 12186, att. book committee. Ask your friends or neighbors to consider doing the same.

(Continued from page 1)

many barns and a small icehouse filled with sawdust where he stored ice that he had cut from the creek. Clifford also had cows and acres of pasture land extending beyond the creek behind his house. In those days, milk did not have to be pasteurized and Clifford would deliver milk to many of the residents of Voorheesville. He also delivered ice to those who did not have refrigerators. If Mother ran out of milk between deliveries, she would give me a small pail and let me go to the Severson's for more. I remember how I enjoyed going there, as Mrs. Severson had a beautiful flower garden which included bleeding hearts, my favorites. Beyond Severson's farm was the white parsonage next to the Methodist Church and a few houses before the railroad overpass.

One day in 1931, Bob was driving the Voorheesville fire truck about a mile up New Salem Road from Maple Avenue, when he saw from his high driver's seat a small house. It was almost hidden in brush and weeds. He investigated, and found that the owner was deceased and he bought the house. After more than a year, the land was cleared and the house renovated. We moved from 92 Maple Avenue to the new house on New Salem Road and my sister and I joined the neighboring children as we all walked to school.

The inevitable sprawling of the city and the outskirts have affected Voorheesville. The population had grown so rapidly that the school found it necessary to find more room until they could make an addition on the school. They purchased 94 Maple Avenue, the house and small building behind it just next door to 92. Some classes, including home economics, were held in the front house, and grades 1, 2, and 3 were housed in the small building behind it.

Years have passed and there are many changes in Voorheesville, and Maple Avenue as well—now we have a village park with many seats and a gazebo, a large apartment dwelling on the Severson property, and a traffic light near the tavern. Our once quiet dirt road, lined with trees that met in the center and shaded our walks on hot summer days is a paved and busy thoroughfare. No longer can children run across the street without care and the trees were sacrificed for a wider road.

In 1983, my son, Glenn Schultz, and his wife Sue purchased the house from Mr. Thelander that once held classes for the Voorheesville School. I now find myself widowed and retired, living in the small building in back.

It is now 2009 and I remain in that small building behind the house at 94 Maple Avenue. In the evening, I can still hear the trains as they blow their three-whistle warning signal as they approach the overpass on Maple Avenue and it take me back.....

(Since writing this wonderful remembrance, Jane has moved to Good Samaritan Assisted Living Center in Delmar)



Marie Hornick presents the Senior Award to winner John Neri at NSHA's Annual Meeting.

NSHA Senior Award

By Marie Hornick

John Neri, son of Margaret and Louis Neri of Voorheesville, was the recipient of the New Scotland Historical Association High School Senior Award for 2009. The award, in the amount of \$500.00, was presented to John at the May 5 program meeting of the Association.

John presented an outstanding application, including an essay which earned him the award. An active student, John plans to attend the University of Vermont, with potential majors in American History and/or Anthropology. At this time, John is considering attending law school or teaching high school or college level history.

While in school, John took an academic course load which included honors courses; activities included class treasurer for four years, Model United Nations, Yearbook, and private piano lessons. Community service is important to John; he volunteered at the Albany Ronald McDonald House, taught in St. Matthew's Religious Education program, was a ski instructor for disabled children at the Double H Ranch, and completed several volunteer assignments in the Town of New Scotland, including volunteering on Senior Day for the last several years.

The High School Senior Award is sponsored by the New Scotland Historical Association for a graduating senior who resides in the Town and plans a college major or minor in some aspect of History or Museum studies. Funding for the award is from the Don and Ann Eberle Fund, a gift given to the Association to honor the Eberles' many years of volunteer service and love of history.

A Store in Feura Bush—

*as remembered by Dewey Vadney's daughter,
Norma Walley*

Vadney's Store in Feura Bush originally was run by two cousins—Ray and Dewey Vadney. Around 1920-21, Ray stayed in the original building and concentrated on selling feed and farm products, while Dewey moved across the railroad bridge and began a business selling groceries. At the time, there were no other grocery stores in Feura Bush. After a few years he expanded and sold Texaco Gas. He added on to the building as he could afford to.

Dewey sold Hosler's Ice Cream. On Saturday nights he would cut the men's hair while the women ate ice cream and had a social time on the store's veranda.

Norma remembers their house, with bedrooms and kitchen, was attached to the store. She was the oldest of five children. They were Bud, Bill, Peg, and Shirley.

"Gypsies" often camped nearby in late August so they could attend the Altamont Fair. They bought groceries as they needed items. Norma remembers her Mom helping to deliver a "gypsy's" baby right by their gas pumps in front of the store. Her mother wrapped it and put it in a Freihofer's bread box. The "gypsies" left the baby with her. They had a superstition that if the baby touched the ground, it was doomed. After several hours she called the sheriff. The sheriff took the baby to an agency, but the "gypsies" finally came and took the baby back after several days.

She used to accompany her Dad when he delivered ice. They peddled 25# blocks of ice year round all the way to Clarksville and to South Albany, which was the area by the railroad tracks in Feura Bush. They got the ice at the large ice house just south of Feura Bush.

Her father decided to build a garage large enough to hold thirty cars. He had a lift and did oil changes, grease jobs and changed and repaired tires. In those days oil, gasoline and kerosene were all siphoned into containers from larger Tanks. Norma remembered her dad used to get sick from doing this sometimes.

Dewey also repaired shoes in his general store. He put the soles on shoes. The soles were always stocked in the store.

He picked up produce in Albany. Soda was purchased right off Madison Avenue at a wholesaler. To-



Norma, holding her sister Peg, stands with her brother Bill in front of her father's store.

bacco was purchased at Dearstyne's.

When Route 32 was rebuilt, the construction people became good, steady customers.

Dewey rented out the grocery store building in 1936 or '37 to Clinton Wagner, who turned it into a bar and grill. About 1939 the grill, along with the garage, burned. A small building, which remained after the fire, was eventually moved to the site of the original store. Her Dad sold gas and did small engine repairs in this location for several years after the fire.

Norma worked in the store at that time. She remembers customers were always interrupting the family meal, when they needed to be waited on. She said that during the Depression there were many outstanding bills. It made him (Dewey) bitter, because he needed cash to stay afloat.

About 1935-36, Dewey purchased the farm where Shirley Vadney Mattice currently lives. This old stone house stands behind the field in back of the Stewart's Shop. The Vadney family moved there to live.

During the 1950's, Casey Schoonover bought up surrounding farms and land cheap and was trying to encourage industry to move to the area. Dewey put a trailer next to the store to live and ran the business from 7 A.M. to 9 P.M. daily. This was much smaller than the original building.

Her mom ran the little store and her dad did construction work—with dump trucks, back hoes, etc.!

*As told to Marion Parmenter
May 2009*



Dewey Vadney's Store

**Uptown, Central Avenue, or Simply
“The Avenue”**

In the last *Sentinel*, we visited “Downtown” and I thought it would be fun to make another trip, but this time up on “The Avenue” as it was popularly known. The stores and places that are mentioned are in no particular order. They were gathered from many different sources and individuals whom I talked with whom shared their recollections with me. After numerous discussions with a number of people, some of whom lived near Central Avenue, the list got so large I have decided to do it in two installments. All the places mentioned will be in no particular order. Enjoy the first part of the list and see what others



Public Bath #3

you can remember and I will give you the rest in the next *Sentinel*.

Albany Paint and Wallpaper, Boulevard Cafeteria, Modern Market, the dime stores: Neisner’s and Woolworth’s, Phil’s Bakery, Blue Note Shop, Toddle House, A & B Auto, Rosen’s Department Store, Spector’s Men’s Shop, Kernal Korn Shop—opposite the Colonial Theater, Public Bath #3, Frumkin’s Studio, Finkle’s Jewelers, Lawlers Shade Shop, Shaeffer’s Department Store, Yeager Pontiac, Capitol Buick, and Buster Brown Shoes.

This should get you going; now see how many more you can remember and look for my list in the next *Sentinel*!

Memories are food for the soul. Will



This later became Livermore Chevrolet

Historic Markers

The next time you see a new historic marker erected by the New Scotland Historical Association, you may notice that it looks slightly different in size and shape. The new signs will be made of sheet metal instead of the customary cast aluminum. There are two reasons for this. First, the signs of the past few years have not held up too well. Rust spots and chipping paint have required touchups or a complete paint job in a relatively short time. The price of the signs has also skyrocketed. They now cost at least \$850.00 each. The new signs are only half the price, and according to our research, they need less maintenance.

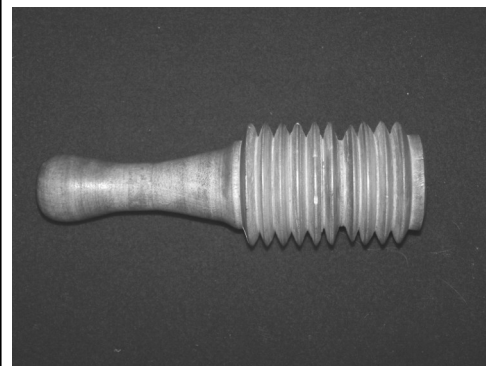
Hopefully the citizens of the Town of New Scotland will find the new signs to be easier to decipher and more informative than the signs of the past.

Regents Exams—How Times have Changed!

We never had our Regents Exams in our school (*Clarksville*), and I remember particularly one January when we went to Voorheesville to take the exams. Dad took us over in a box sleigh because of the snow, and we had to stay over night at Aunt Emily’s, my Dads oldest sister’s house. It is the only time I remember really getting homesick, and we were only five miles from home, but I wasn’t feeling good. Maybe it was nerves, but I remember calling Mother up at home. However, it didn’t keep me from staying and taking the exams. Usually I liked especially to stay with Aunt Emily as she was the telephone operator for the area, and she had a switchboard right in her home, and sometimes she would show me how to put in a call.

Another remembrance of Harriet Appleby Ross of Clarksville, Lorraine Felter’s aunt.

[8th graders in New York State, until 1962, took three-hour Regents exams in their academic subjects to qualify for attendance in high school.]



**What
is
it?**

New Exhibit

On May 3, 2009, an exhibit featuring a General Store of the early 20th century opened at the New Scotland Museum, located in the Wyman Osterhout Community Center in New Salem. Under the direction of then acting chairperson Sandy Slingerland, the opening marked the first presentation from the newly created Exhibits Committee. It will be the featured exhibit for approximately one year. On May 5, one year after the membership vote that split the Museum Committee into two committees, Sandy Slingerland was elected Chairperson of the Exhibits Committee.

With creative input from different sources, and hands-on help from many members, the Exhibits Committee presented a recreation based on pictures and information from many New Scotland residents whose relatives owned or worked in General Stores in the past. From the men playing checkers near the pot-bellied stove to the clucking crated chickens and the sleeping kitten on the counter, the recreation features artifacts loaned by residents and others owned by the Association. Sacks of flour and sugar, bolts of cloth, notions, patent medicines, canned food, canning jars (invented in 1858!), quilts, tools, and even a miniature model of a General Store are all there for visitors to see. Another part of the exhibit is a map of the location of the Town of New Scotland General Stores from about 1890-1930, although the exhibit also points out that the concept of the General Store extended into the 1970s or later. *(Checkers champion at the opening day was Peter Henner of Clarksville.)*

Bob Shedd and Don Slingerland provided invaluable help in locating, securing, and correctly placing artifacts, and, when needed, building the shelves or moving the shelves and counters to the right places. Marion Parmenter, now Collections Chairman, located many artifacts in the Museum collection to be used in the exhibit. When there were questions of any kind, the Parmenters, who have worked on many previous exhibits including the magnificent World War I and II and Korea tributes to local Veterans, answered questions, provided suggestions, offered alternatives to things that didn't work, and assured the new committee members that things would work out on time.

At the entrance to the exhibit, there is a long Thank You note to all the volunteers and donors of artifacts and information. This list will undergo changes, as more people are making suggestions and offering new information about timelines, captions on objects, etc. Please come enjoy a visit back in time to the beginning of the previous century.

Marie Hornick



Checkers Champion Peter Henner of Clarksville receiving his award from Exhibits Chairman Sandy Slingerland.



Some of the many visitors at the opening of the General Store Exhibit

Commemorative DVD

We want folks to know that NSHA recently purchased the DVD entitled **“Uncovering America’s Forgotten Colony”** produced for the New Netherland Project. This is a 30 minute DVD which can be seen in the museum. Please be sure to ask a Museum Volunteer to see it on your next visit.

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Thanks to all of our Corporate Sponsors for their continued support!

Bob and Marion found the probable answer to this at the Shelburne Museum in Vermont this summer. There were several items similar to this on display, with one almost identical—labeled various types of sausage stuffers!

Answer to "What is it?"

If you would like to become a member, please fill out the form and mail!

____ \$10 Individual

____ \$15 Family

____ \$25 Sustaining

____ \$100 Life (per person)

Name _____

Street _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____

Please send dues to: Melanie Ernst

Membership Chair

P.O. Box 250

Clarksville, NY 12041

Museum Hours

The museum is open year-round on Sunday

from

from

2:00 P.M. - 4:00 P.M.

Handicap Accessible

THE SENTINEL

New Scotland Historical Association

P. O. Box 541

Voorheesville, New York 12186