



THE SENTINEL

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The Newsletter of the New Scotland Historical Association

Spring 2006

Pastimes of Past Times

By *Stuart Lehman*

This April, a new exhibit will be going up in the Museum. Entitled "Pastimes of Past Times," it seeks to show how people had fun before television and computer games came along. It will bring back memories for many of us, and reveal the fun side of history.

Toys, games and sports have been around longer than civilization itself. Archeologists find ample evidence of dolls, game pieces and other toys in ancient Egyptian, Greek and Roman sites. Historians can find references in medieval manuscripts and documents from every period. However, as the world has changed, so have our pastimes, and many of the most significant changes have occurred within the past 150 years.

Go back to Colonial times and you will find most children hard at work with their parents, helping in the fields or with household chores, but even then there was sometimes time for play. Games and toys were hand-made and relied on the imagination. A young daughter of a wealthy family might have a wax doll shipped from England dressed in the latest fashions, but most girls would have been content with a wooden doll, carved with love by a relative and dressed in leftover pieces of homespun too small for regular clothes. An aristocratic young gentleman might be thrilled by cast lead soldiers from Prussia; his neighbors would carve muskets out of wood and imitate their fathers Militia drill.

Everyone would participate in outdoor diversions like sledding and skating. Mrs. Anne Grant describes the scene in Albany in the 1750s:

"Every boy and youth in town, from eight to eighteen, had a little low sledge... On this one or two at most could sit... perhaps a hundred at once set out in succession from the top of this street, (Today's State Street Hill), each seated in his little sledge... He pushed it off with a little stick as one would launch a boat; and then, with the most astonishing velocity, participated by the weight of the owner the little machine glided past, and was at the lower end of the street in an instant. What could be so peculiarly delightful in this rapid and smooth descent I could never discover... The conveyance was so low, that a fall was attended with little danger, yet with much disgrace, for a universal laugh from all sides assailed the fallen charioteer."

Fast forward to the 20th Century and you will find that the attitude toward childhood and leisure time had changed. Although chores still needed to be done, there was more time for fun. The toys themselves had also changed with the industrial revolution. Many companies competed to make the best toys, or to come up with the next sport or hobby. Some of their efforts are long forgotten, but many are classics that can still raise a smile of recognition today. Here are the stories of a few

(Continued on page 4)



Toys to loan for new exhibit?

See related
article on
Page 6.

This teddy bear
was a favorite
toy and dates
from 1918.

LAST CHANCE!

Sunday, April 2nd will be the **Last Chance** to view the **Agriculture Exhibit**. Come and learn about New Scotland's proud farming heritage. The exhibit depicts farming from the early settlers to the present. Slides of old farming photos will also be shown. Other activities are still in the planning stages.

This also is the day to bring toys, games, and books you would like to loan to us for the next exhibit, **Pastimes of Past Times**. See related article.

Refreshments will be served. The public is welcome, as always. Times are 2 - 4 P.M. at the Wyman Osterhout Community Center, in New Salem.

March Meeting

On Sunday, March 5th at 2:00 P.M. at the Wyman Osterhout Community Center Marvin C. Wolfe will discuss the history and fate of the Indian Fields Hamlet.

This event is co-sponsored by the Voorheesville Public Library and Feura Bush Neighborhood Library.



Van Hoesen's Hotel, Indian Fields, N.Y. Parts of it may still be under the waters of the Alcove Reservoir. (Courtesy of the Westerlo Historical Society)

NEW SCOTLAND HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

P. O. Box 541
Voorheesville, NY 12186

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

What unusual winter weather we are having. I am just like the flowers; I don't know if it is winter or spring

Speaking of spring, April 2nd will be your last chance to see our Agriculture Exhibit and the special one on the Helderberg Castle. After that, our museum committee will be busy working on our next exhibit about Old Time Toys opening April 30th. If any of our members have any items they would like to share for this, be sure to contact a member of the committee.

I have recently spoken with Judith Wing, and she tells me that the Feura Bush Neighborhood Committee is busy working on the Plum Fest for this year, which will showcase their hamlet.

Just a quick reminder that our March program will be on Sunday the 5th, at 2:00 P.M. Let's all hope the weather cooperates and I will see you all then.

Yours in history,
Willard Osterhout

Spring Programs

March 5, 2006 Sunday 2:00 P.M. **Marvin C. Wolfe:** His family owned land in Indian Fields. He will help us remember the history and fate of the hamlet.

April 4, 2006 **Andrea Lain:** Andrea is an archaeologist who lives in our town. She was project manager of the dig that unearthed the paupers' gravesite off New Scotland Avenue. On the Clipp Rd. farm owned by Andrea and her husband, is the grave of Dr. Valentine an early 19th century physician, who also ran an inn along the Delaware Turnpike.

May 2, 2006 **Stuart Lehman:** "The Doctor is In." Stuart, NYS Capitol Education Coordinator and Living History Re-enactor, will discuss medicine as it was practiced in the 18th and 19th centuries. He will bring a hands-on exhibit of the herbs, medicines, and implements used in the period from the Revolutionary War to the Civil War.

Regular Tuesday meetings begin at 7:30 P.M. at the Wyman Osterhout Community Center in New Salem. The Museum opens at 7:00 P.M. For information, please contact Martha Slingerland, Program Chair, at 768-2184.



What are these???

Answer to Winter 2005 What's it?: One of two symbols used by Bouck White on his pottery.

Museum Committee Report

Our computer program, Past Perfect, has arrived, and Dan Schryver and Marion Parmenter have been hard at work entering data from our collection records which begin in 1972. In over 30 years, the location of many of the objects has changed, probably many times. Even the rooms have changed. One challenge is to find each artifact and enter its current location in the data. We are working on 1999, so progress has been made. Thanks to Dan for putting in so many hours and figuring out how to do it—he deserves a few weeks in Florida!

Janet Betlejeski and Marion Parmenter will be going to Woodstock, VT, for a one-day training session about Past Perfect in late March.

Peg Dorgan led a committee in designing a new brochure. Many thanks to her daughter Meghan Barrow who put it all together for us. It has been distributed to several businesses in the area, libraries, and Town Hall, as well as downtown Albany.

Lorraine Felter and Marion cleaned out and organized the map cabinet. Many things have been stored elsewhere now in acid free boxes, etc. and are all cataloged.

We have begun work on our new exhibit entitled **Pastimes of Past Times** which opens April 30. Please see related story. Many special activities are being planned for the opening. We encourage children of all ages to come! Watch for more information!

Do You Remember?

My Recollections

I remember going to the one room schoolhouse in New Salem, now the Community Center and Historical Association Museum. We had gym once a week. Coach Harold Mead would come over from the high school. If we couldn't go outside, we would push all the desks aside, and play "Snatch the Bacon" in the middle of the room. If we misbehaved, we were sent to stand in the dark cloakroom with the door closed. The first school bus I remember was a jeep wagon. We had a lady bus driver whose name I recall but will surely misspell, Adeline VanDercroick. I believe our bus route covered Indian Ledge, Wolf Hill, Thacher Park and Beaver Dam roads plus portions of route 85A. I think at that time we had maybe 6 or 8 students who rode the bus.

I also remember sleigh riding down New Salem hill with my mother on the Flexible Flyer, from Osterhout's down the hill to Happy's. We would ride back up the hill in someone's car and pull the sleds behind us.

Growing up in Osterhout's Restaurant meant we always had a Juke Box with all the latest records. I would get some of the marked quarters from my parents so I could play records for free. At that time you got 5 plays for a quarter. On Friday and Saturday nights we could fall asleep upstairs listening to the Orchestra playing downstairs in the dance hall. At one time there were three families comprised of 11 people, 6 adults and 5 children, living upstairs. At times, that number might change if a waitress stayed upstairs for any length of time. Growing up in a public restaurant was certainly a different lifestyle, but I wouldn't change a single minute of it.

What good times they were,
Will Osterhout



An early photo of Indian Ladder Lodge operated by the Osterhout family where Willard and other family members grew up. Indian Ladder Lodge was located on the corner of Rt. 85 and Thacher Park Road

(Continued from page 1)

historic toys that have touched our lives:

The Teddy Bear

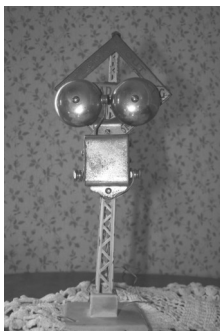
It is ironic that one of the most ferocious animals in the wild is the model for every child's best friend. In 1903, President Theodore Roosevelt was hunting for black bear in Mississippi. The hunting was poor and Roosevelt had nearly given up when his local guides managed to lasso a small unimpressive specimen. When the President was summoned to finish it off he declined. The Washington Post used the incident in a political cartoon that captured the imagination of the nation. Soon afterwards, a toy maker in Brooklyn named Morris Michtom began marketing a handcrafted "Teddy Bear" for \$1.50 based on the bear cub in the cartoon. At about the same time the Stieff Company of Germany had developed its own plush bear cub. New York City toy store F. A. O. Schwarz quickly imported 3,000 of the German design. Historians debate whether Stieff or Michtom is the true inventor of the Teddy Bear, but it caught on quickly. By 1907, an estimated one million of the new toy were on sale at New York department stores.

Lincoln Logs

Not many people can say they have lived in a house designed by famous American Architect Frank Lloyd Wright, but most of us have actually built structures designed by his son John Lloyd Wright. He invented Lincoln Logs in 1916. Oddly enough, although the toy brings to mind games of Cowboys and Indians, his original inspiration came from the earthquake-proof architecture he had seen on a trip to Japan. Tinkertoys, Erector sets, and age-old plain building blocks were probably also inspirations for the Architect turned toy designer. Western movies of the 1940s and 1950s, and the Daniel Boone and Davey Crockett television shows all boosted the popularity of Lincoln Logs. Over 100 million sets of Lincoln Logs have been sold. Although John Lloyd Wright's "buildings" were far smaller than those of his famous father, they are certainly more familiar.

Lionel Trains

Metal toy trains have been around about as long as real ones. It was not long before windup mechanisms were added to give them movement. But it took a roundabout way for the electric trains we enjoy today to become popular. In 1901 an inventor named Joshua Lionel Cohen created a way to add life to static store window displays. He had already invented a flash lamp and an electric fan motor. He put the motor in a little battery powered "gondola," and put it on a track to move merchandise around store windows. He meant to attract the attention of passersby and it worked too well. People ignored the merchandise and wanted to buy the gondola. He converted it into a trolley at first then invented a coupler that made train sets possible. In 1906, the transformer was invented and electric railroads began appearing in homes across America.



These are just of a few of the old time toys and games you will be able to see and perhaps even reminisce about at the upcoming exhibit, which opens on April 30. If you have any early toys that you would like to lend for the exhibit,

please contact Marion Parmenter at 765-4652. Toys from the Colonial period right up to the 1950s will be considered. The exhibit will be in place until April 2007.

If you would like more information on these and other great toys of the 20th Century, look for the book Timeless Toys, Classic Toys and the Toymakers who created Them, by Tim Walsh, (Andrews McMeel Publishing, Kansas City, 2005). For the definitive story of Theodore Roosevelt and the bear, the best source is Theodore Rex, by Desmond Morris, (Random House, NY, 2001). Mrs. Anne MacVicar Grant's lively recollections of life in Colonial Albany can be found in her book: Memoirs of an American Lady, originally published in London in 1808.

It's Maple Sugar Time!

By Donald Slingerland

Maple sugaring was not new to New York when the first settlers arrived in what was to become known as the Hudson Valley. Journals of early explorers indicate that Native Americans had a process for making maple sugar at least as early as 1609. The process involved making a "V" shaped slash in the tree and collecting the sap in a trough or container made from a short length of basswood or other easily worked wood. Hot rocks were then dropped into the container to boil down the sap into an easily stored dry sugar. European settlers adopted this process and with the use of iron cooking utensils were soon producing their own maple sugars and (later) syrups.

Slashing the bark was hard on the tree and by the late 18th century, the more modern method of drilling a ½ inch hole and inserting a "Spill" or spile was in use. Early spiles were made out of a small softwood branch, such as sumac, which had a soft center. The soft center was pushed out and the hollowed tube or "spile" was placed into the drilled hole in the maple tree. Over the years the hollowed log was replaced by the wooden bucket, which was in turn replaced by the metal bucket. The homemade wooden spile was replaced by a commercially made metal spile. Modern connection systems have done away with buckets almost entirely and now rely on plastic tubing and matching plastic spiles.

With the drop in price of imported cane sugar, the production of maple sugar declined. By the late 19th century, cane sugar was outselling maple sugar, and that trend has continued. However, this did not spell the end of the maple industry. Producers soon converted to making maple syrup instead of sugar. Today, more than 100 years later, maple syrup is a highly prized specialty item commanding relatively high prices and strong demand. Maple festivals, pancake breakfasts, and "sugaring days" remain a significant part of our modern world. *(NSHA has a block of wood loaned to us for the Agricultural Exhibit which has an old spile in it. Don found it in a piece of firewood when he split it open)*

Mark your calendar!!

Sunday, April 30th

OLD TOY EXHIBIT

OPENS!

All kinds of special activities planned.

38 Unionville-Feura Bush Road Feura Bush New York

By Judith and Tod Wing

The first entry on the deed for the property at 38 Unionville-Feura Bush Road in Feura Bush shows that it was conveyed from Peter W. Brate to Margaret Ann Jones on November 20, 1882. I believe that she was his daughter. In 1929, Benjamin Jones is listed on the deed as owner with his wife Nettie. The property remained in the Jones family until 1957, though there appears to have been some property sold off along the way. The original part of the house is the smaller portion on the left side, when you face the house from the road. The additional part was added somewhere around 1900. We were told by previous owners it was built for the farmer's son and his family. For many years the house was a duplex, either lived in by various generations of one family or, at times, part of the house was rented out. There is a shed attachment on the back of the house which contained a second kitchen. When I took up the old linoleum off the floor from this part of the house in 1968, the newspapers used as insulation underneath were dated 1938.

Norma Walley and her husband Steve spent some of 1947, the early days of their marriage, living in the left side of the house. She said there was only one pond at that time, which would have been the pond on the left coming up the driveway. That pond shows up on maps in the 1800s. So the second pond was dug in the swampy area in front of the house between 1948 and 1967. She laughs when she tells the story that it was so cold they had to move out. She speaks of Ben Jones and his wife Nettie Bump, growing tomatoes. According to Norma, there was an old farmer's road out the back of the property, where she picked beautiful blackberries. Presumably this is where Jones Avenue is now. Another story I heard was from Mr. Frank Fissette Sr. He talked about how he and Nettie built Fissette Avenue. Mr. Fissette said that it was a very swampy area and that he had hauled in truckloads of railroad ties and dumped them, to build it up. Following the construction of these roads, this large part of the farm land was sold off and houses built. Thereafter, the property consisted of: 12 acres, the house, a very large barn which was built in 1904, a smaller barn, a wood shed, a three-stall garage, a one-stall garage, and a three-holer outhouse.

Hazel E. Mosher is listed as having owned the house from



February 1957 to July 1957. The people who purchased the house in July of 1957 were named Matthew A. and Joan P. Kazlauskas. Their name was legally changed in August 1963 to Kayson. He was an intern at Albany Medical Center. We met people from all over the Capital District who said they had attended good parties held here during that time. I met Mrs. Kayson when she came back to visit from California and wanted to see the house. I remember the comment she made, "I knew it could be a great house." They had started the renovation to return the house to a one family home. They also had built the fireplace in the living room which I believe Charlie Houghtaling said he had worked on. "It was designed by my father-in-law," Mrs. Kayson said.

The family that next owned the house was a young family named Rust. Thomas F. and Marcia J. Rust purchased the house for \$12,700.00 in December, 1964. They had several children and quite a few pets. I know they did a lot of renovations, including putting down new wide board pine floors that look old. They also added three closets upstairs in the older part of the house where there were none. Because the house was a duplex, there are two sets of stairs and upstairs, two halls each leading to bedrooms and a bathroom. Until the Rusts, there was no way to get from one side to the other, but they broke through a wall, and put in a door between two of the bedrooms, so you can pass from one side of the house to the other. Not an ideal floor plan, but it has proved useful at times.

We (Charles "Tod" Wing Jr. and Judith G. Wing) bought the house in 1967. The mentioned outbuildings were all present. All except the wood shed and large barn were in very bad condition and had to come down. The wood shed eventually was re-roofed and reset on block piers by John Deragon and his sons. The large barn, Peter TenEyck told us, would last as long as we could keep a roof on it. We tried, but the last time we had it repaired the nails pulled out and roofing pieces blew off within a year. Finally, in 2002, we found an architect who was willing to tear it down for the large beams. We were sorry to see it go because it was a beautifully built, mortise and tenon (pegged) beam English barn, but glad some parts were saved for reuse by the architect.

The house was still in need of major renovations when we bought it. The narrow front porch was hanging by a thread. We had that rebuilt and widened around 1970, and later in 1988 had it enclosed with screens and windows for the winter.

The major trend in renovations over the years and various owners was to make rooms larger by removing walls. What is now not a very large living room was once two rooms and part of a hall. The kitchen is the largest room in the house, running from the front to the back of the house on the right side. It was originally at least two rooms. We tore down the wall of the pantry to enlarge the dining room in the middle of the house. In 1987, we gave our son and his wife two acres at the back of the property. So now the house sits on ten acres.

Though there are still renovations to do, we have greatly enjoyed living here for the last thirty nine years.



Plum Fest 2006

By Judith Wing, Chairperson

The Plum Fest will be held in Feura Bush on Saturday, September 16, 2006.

The Feura Bush Neighborhood Association has taken on the responsibility of coordinating activities. At their general meeting the following was decided. The good people of the Jerusalem Reformed Church will be putting on their famous breakfast, and Troop 81 of the Boy Scouts will discuss the possibility of holding a lunch at the same location. Planning for the location and main course of dinner is ongoing, but all sound like fun. Gerry and David Martin are in charge of this.

We are going to encourage people to put off their garage sales until September 16th and have a hamlet-wide sale for the Plum Fest. Liz Smith (475-9087) is coordinating this. There will also be a book sale to raise money for the Feura Bush Neighborhood Library, which is located behind the church. They are accepting donations of books for the sale while open on Tuesday, 7 to 9 P.M., Thursday, 3 to 5 P.M. and Saturday, 2 to 4 P.M.

Various historical programs, writings, places of interest, activities for the children and mementos for sale are being considered.

At this stage we are encouraging people to get involved and add to our list of ideas to pursue. We are happy to see a widening circle of people becoming involved. People to contact with your ideas are the newly elected President Judith Wing (439-2948), Vice President Diane Carroll (767-2334) of the Feura Bush Neighborhood Association, or Norma Walley (439-1702) who will be the liaison from the Neighborhood Association to the New Scotland Historical Association.

Toy Exhibit

By Marion Parmenter

This is an exhibit of toys which shows how people had fun before computers and TV.

We need your help with this exhibit. Scour your attic and closets and see what you have that we can borrow for this exhibit which opens Sunday, April 30. We are looking for all kinds of toys—teddy bears, dolls, trucks, cars, games, books, wind-up toys, stuffed animals, trains, Cowboy and Indian items, old children's records, tin soldiers, paper dolls, whatever you think would work with the theme that you are willing to share. In addition, if you have an old bike, scooter, sled, toboggan, pedal cars, or any other outdoor toys or large games, we plan to exhibit them in the barn. If you have any photos of children playing games, please let us scan them for the exhibit.

Our theme starts with Colonial times up to the 1950s. If you have anything you think we could use, please contact Marion Parmenter, 765-4652 or Martha Slingerland, 768-2184. We would like to borrow these the first week in April. The LAST CHANCE is Sunday April 2 and we invite you to bring your items then if possible. The exhibit will last through next March.

We have several closed cabinets now so that items will be secure. Feel free to talk to the committee about these concerns.

Help us to make this a success! We have many exciting activities planned for the day of the opening. Mother Goose has already agreed to be with us!

More Recollections

Willard is asking folks to send in their recollections of childhood to share in the *Sentinel*. Either give them to him, or mail them to the *Sentinel*. We thought it would be fun to share these in conjunction with our toy exhibit in future editions.

School Bus Memories

By Peg Dorgan

Many years ago, I rode the school bus over miles of back roads. One girl on our route had the unfortunate experience of breaking her leg in several places. Without handicap access to the bus or building, she needed to stay home until she healed. The kids on the bus took up a collection and put together a "Sunshine Basket"—a market basket filled with comic and coloring books, fruit and candy. Soon after, upon arrival at her house, the driver parked the bus and all of us piled out and went into her house to present her with the basket and our best wishes. As I think back, this was a great lesson in showing compassion.

The last day of school before Christmas was full of excitement and anticipation. We did not forget our wonderful driver, however. One of the high school girls took up a collection and we "gave" him a jacket or heavy flannel shirt. In return, he gave each of us a couple of large candy bars. I suppose, if it were today, the parents would be suspect of the driver and his candy!!!!

I remember when the number on the side of the bus was a 1! This meant that it was the first bus purchased after centralization had occurred.

Memories

By Martha Slingerland

Before the Railroad underpass in Unionville was made, children could ride their sled from the top on Unionville (or Conger's) Hill and coast to the Town line. Snow did not fall beneath the underpass, however, so that cut the ride a little short.

When I first started attending the Westerlo School, we had to go outdoors to the outhouses. Girls went around the east side of the building, boys around the west side. The outhouses were built back to back with a solid board fence separating the two entrances. Later on we got indoor toilets that, I think, were chemical. I know that the town hired a man to empty them frequently.

We used to ride our sleds down the hill in a sheep pasture across the road until the farmer informed us that his ram was sometimes out there and it would not be wise for us to do that any more. Then we settled for riding in the road. This did not seem to worry either the teacher or our parents. I do recall the teacher scolding some of the older boys for throwing horse chestnuts at some of the girls, though the incident occurred "uptown" and not on school property.

Kill-e-i-over was a popular noontime game. That involved throwing a ball over the school house to the opposing team. If someone caught the ball, your team ran around to the other side and tried to capture members of that team.

RIVER EXCURSION !

~ TO ~

Saugerties

— UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE —

Presbyterian Church, Voorheesville,

TUESDAY, JULY 28, 1896,

Via D. & H. R. R. and Steamer Whitney.

Train will leave	ALTAMONT,	8:00 A. M.
“	“	MEADOWDALE, 8:09 “
“	“	VOORHEESVILLE, 8:15 “
“	“	SLINGERLANDS, 8:23 “
“	“	DELMAR, 8:26 “

Arriving at Albany 8:42. Boat will leave Albany, 9:00 A. M., arriving at Saugerties, 12:30 P. M.; returning leave Saugerties 3:00 P. M.

Fare for the Round Trip, 75 Cents.

Children, 50 Cents.

Good Orchestra Music on Board.

This offers a fine opportunity to enjoy a delightful sail of 50 miles on the beautiful Hudson, at an extremely low rate of fare, and visit one of its many beautiful towns.

Parties desiring to take their lunch will find accommodations on the boat. Arrangements will be made at one of the leading hotels for dinner at a reasonable rate.

REV. WM. MARDEN, }
W. S. SWIFT, } Committee.
F. BLOOMINGDALE, }

Members of the Voorheesville Presbyterian Church, erected in 1886, sponsored this River Excursion. What an adventure this must have been in 1896.

Please support our Corporate Sponsors!

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Nichols' Market
Reilly & Son Funeral Home
Smith's Tavern
Stanton's Feura Farm
Stewart's Shops

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

In Memoriam

We note with regret the passing of
NSHA members
Patricia VanAtten of Clarksville
Richard Bailey of Voorheesville

**Museum will be closed:
Easter Sunday
Mother's Day**

World War I Banner Update

Between the raffle and the membership appeal, we have raised \$1211.28 toward the conservation of this wonderful old New Salem banner. At the February Board meeting, we voted to dedicate the \$600 we have in this year's budget for a conservation project to the banner. This brings our total to \$1811. We are hopeful that with your support, we will raise enough with this year's raffle to finally do this worthwhile project.

Museum Hours

The museum is
open year-round
on Sunday
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