



THE SENTINEL

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The Newsletter of the New Scotland Historical Association

Spring 2007

THE VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENTS AND AMBULANCE COMPANIES OF THE TOWN OF NEW SCOTLAND

By Marie Hornick

*This is Part III of an article on the Volunteer Fire Departments and Ambulance Companies in the Town of New Scotland. The information in this part of the article was taken from the official minutes of membership meetings of the Voorheesville Area Ambulance Service, supplied by VAAS member Denise Garrah, who gathered the information, from the Onesquethaw Volunteer Fire Company and Rescue Squad records supplied by OVFC Rescue Squad Captain Debbie Lobdell, from photo captions in *The Knickerbocker News* (June 10, 1952), and *New Scotland Township* (2000) from an article entitled "Fees for Ambulance Services in New Scotland," *The Altamont Enterprise*, November 18, 2004, and information from the *Altamont Enterprise and Albany County Post Special Section*, "Salute to our Lifesaving Volunteers," June 22, 2006.*

VOORHEESVILLE AREA AMBULANCE SERVICE, INC.

In May of 1952, a joint meeting of the members of the Voorheesville Fire Department and the Ladies Auxiliary was held for the purpose of organizing an ambulance service for the Voorheesville area. At the meeting, a membership corporation to operate an ambulance service was organized and the first Board of Directors was elected. Among the other original decisions made were that each member of the Board of Directors would reside in the Village of Voorheesville, and that the organization would provide free ambulance service for calls originating within the Voorheesville Central School District. While the volunteers were awaiting legal incorporation, temporary officers were chosen, and the Voorheesville Men's Club undertook the task of raising the initial operating funds. It was hoped that \$2,500.00 could be raised to begin the service to members of the community.

By the end of June, 1952, the fund-raising efforts had raised almost \$6,000, with pledges of several thousand dollars more to be paid over the next few years. A committee investigated the purchase of a 1951 Cadillac ambulance, and discussion took place regarding the use of telephones, since there apparently were none available for twenty-four hour service. In those years before the use of pagers, emergency phone calls went through the fire phone. Selected people had the phones in their homes where the volunteers who received the calls then had to go down the phone list supplied until a crew was obtained to take the call. Provision had to be made so those needing the ambulance would be able to secure service. Also determined was the kind of information needed from the people who would be calling the ambulance service, such as names, addresses,

(Continued on page 4)



L to R: Anglo Berger, Captain 1952-1978, Charlie Rzany, Bill Munyan, Dick Schultz, Ed Smith (1960)

**"From the Home Front to the Front Lines
New Scotland in World Wars I & II"
New Exhibit Opens**

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR!!
History of American Quilting
Sunday, March 4th at 2:00 P.M.
Wyman Osterhout Community Center**

Last Chance!

The Last Chance to see our Toy Exhibit entitled "Pastimes of Past Times" will be Sunday April 1st from 1-4 P.M. Be sure to come to visit this wonderful exhibit, made possible by the many folks who shared their old toys with us for the past year. There are old, cars, trucks, trains, dolls, books, games, and planes to mention a few of the items, and even some hands-on colonial games for all to try.

At the Last Chance, we are inviting folks to bring in World Wars I and II items they may have to loan to us for our next exhibit which opens April 29, entitled "From the Home Front to the Front Lines, New Scotland in World Wars I and II." (For more information, please see Museum Committee article.)

Everyone is invited to the Last Chance. Refreshments will be served.

NEW SCOTLAND HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

It is hard for me to believe that I am approaching the end of my second term as president of NSHA. It doesn't seem possible that four years have gone by so quickly.

I know a great deal has been accomplished during this period: a new computer system, the beginning steps of creating a website, a new security system for the museum, a couple of important restoration projects and the establishment of the Don and Ann Eberle Fund.

While the museum with its changing themes remains our main focus, all these other projects were made possible by all the hard work of officers, board members, committees and members in general. I have found it a most rewarding experience working with so many energetic and talented individuals.

Even as the end of my term approaches, I look forward to working in various other capacities to further promote and develop the NSHA.

Yours in History,
Willard Osterhout

Capital Financial Planning Endows Eberle Fund at the New Scotland Historical Association



L to R: Don & Ann Eberle,
Tod Slingerland

Latham, NY—November 8, 2006—Capital Financial Planning, LLC, headquartered in Latham, NY, has announced its endowment of the Donald and Ann Eberle Restoration, Education and Preservation Fund at the New Scotland Historical Association. This fund will be used by the Association for a variety of purposes, including the presentation of special programs and the restoration of artifacts. The Fund was created by Capital Financial Planning to pay tribute to the long-standing association of the Eberles with the organization, and to honor Donald's retirement after over 35 years in the financial services industry. The Eberles are residents of the Town of New Scotland and are active in the Association. Capital Financial Planning is an investment and financial planning firm with offices in nine states.

Don and Ann were honored at the February NSHA program.

High School Senior Award

New Scotland Historical Association Board members approved an award of \$500.00 to be given to a high school senior residing in the Town of New Scotland who plans to further his or her education in some field relating to history or museum work. The students competing for the award would be required to submit transcripts and references, and write a 250-word response to a given task.

The money is provided through the Don and Ann Eberle Fund, established by Todd Slingerland, principal managing partner for Capital Financial Planning, from which Don Eberle retired in October. The Fund, to honor Don's thirty-five years as a financial advisor, in addition further honors the years of volunteering both Don and Ann have given to the New Scotland historical Association. With the personal approval of the Eberles, funds will be used for the Historical Association's mission of preservation and education.

Any Town of New Scotland resident, whether from public school, private school or home-schooled, who will complete high school studies in the spring of 2007, is eligible to fill out an application if his or her intended coursework is in any kind of history (for example, American history, Political Science, International Relations, Archaeology, Anthropology, etc.) or museum work (for example, museum curator, conservator, archivist, museum technician or specialist).

Applications are available in local school Guidance Offices, the Bethlehem and Voorheesville Libraries, New Scotland Town Hall, and the Wyman Osterhout Community Center in New Salem. Additional applications may be obtained by calling Marie Hornick, 768-2933, and leaving your name, address and phone number. All completed applications must be postmarked no later than Friday, April 13, 2007.

Museum Report

We are delighted to report we now have a monitored Security System. I want to thank all the volunteers who have learned how to use it. In addition, the fire and smoke alarm system is now monitored. This certainly makes our collection much more secure.

I also want to thank all the volunteers for continuing to staff the museum on Sunday afternoons. Without them, we could not be open on a regular basis.

The museum committee has been hard at work on the next exhibit entitled "**From the Home Front to the Front Lines, New Scotland in World Wars I and II.**" We have contacted many local vets and their families, and have already collected quite an array of artifacts. Research has been done in the *Altamont Enterprise*, as well as the many articles, letters, etc. in our own collection. DVDs of interviews of New Scotland Veterans by the Saratoga Military Museum are now in our collection and more interviews will be done very soon.

If you have something you think we could use, please contact Bob or Marion Parmenter at 765-4652, or Martha Slingerland at 768-2184. We would love to talk to you!

We are asking folks to bring in any artifacts to loan to us at the **Last Chance** (to see the Toy Exhibit) on April 1st, between 1 and 4 P.M., if possible.

The toy exhibit will be dismantled on Monday, April 2. We will call folks to make arrangements for picking up loaned artifacts that afternoon.

Plans are being made for the opening of the exhibit----re-enactors, vehicles, etc. Mark your calendar for the Opening on April 29, 1—4 P.M.

Marion Parmenter
Museum Chairperson

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.

Security System!

The NSHA Board is happy to announce that we now have a monitored security system for the museum and office. In addition, the existing fire and smoke alarm system in the building is now monitored. We originally initiated this in an effort to keep all of the artifacts entrusted to our care as safe as possible. New regulations coming down to us from the New York State Education Department will soon require us to have these.

Upcoming New Scotland Historical Association Programs 2007

Sunday, March 4, 2007

"American Quilts and American History" - Bonnie Turner

Tuesday, April 17, 2007

"Fossils, Rocks, and Ancient Environments of the Helderbergs" - Chuck Ver Straeton

Tuesday, May 1, 2007

"Sammy Doughboy: World War I Remembered" - Robert Mulligan

Tuesday meetings begin at 7:30 P.M. and Sunday meetings begin at 2:00 P.M.

Museum will open one-half hour before programs

Location: Wyman Osterhout Community Center in New Salem



A look back in time...

Mrs. Floyd Curtis, Miss Marguerite Joslin, Mrs. Martha Slingerlands, Miss Lucinda Wright model for the **Luncheon and Fashion Show "Then and Now in Fashions"** sponsored by the New Scotland Historical Association October 9, 1971. The show was held at the Voorheesville Fire House.

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directions, etc.

At this June meeting, a formal constitution was also developed, so that by July 7, 1952, it was approved by membership vote. Officers were elected at that meeting and a decision was made to purchase the 1951 Cadillac ambulance, which became known as "The Silver



Blonde of Voorheesville." After some work to prepare the space, housing for the ambulance was donated by Mr. Heller in his garage. A list of supplies purchased in August of 1952 not only gives information about prices back then, but of some businesses long gone from our area:

Blankets from J.C.Huyck & Sons	\$29.11
Lights from E.E. Taylor	9.53
Incorporation fee & Certificate from NYSDOH	42.00
Pillows from W.T. Grant Co.	8.88
Linens from John G. Meyers Co., Inc.	35.37
Keys from F.W. Woolworth Co.	1.00
Inhaler	400.00
Insurance from Ten Eyck Ins.	595.24

Working with the Red Cross, a Highway Aid Station was established. Using supplies given by the Red Cross and Red Cross-trained personnel to aid in highway accidents and emergencies was another step in the evolution of the ambulance service. In March of 1953, two members became certified by the Red Cross as First Aid Instructors, who would then train other members. By July, a "Stork Club" (baby birth call) was formed. The Voorheesville Area Ambulance answered 63 calls in its first year, including 34 transportation calls and 24 emergencies (industrial accidents, auto accidents, a maternity case and an appendicitis case), all involving 248 hours of volunteer service.

In February of 1956, the VAAS Building Committee held a special meeting at the Fire House to discuss building a permanent site for the ambulance service. One of the ideas suggested was to build a two-stall affair in the back of the Fire House; the ambulance would be housed in one stall, with the other used by the village for equipment storage in lieu of oil, heat, insurance, etc. Another idea was to develop a plan for the VAAS to have its own building. By April of 1960, after considering several sites, property was purchased on Voorheesville Avenue, and, using volunteer labor, the total cost to construct the building was \$8,659.51, including the land purchase.

A new ambulance, a 1962 Eureka Cadillac, was purchased in 1965; by April of 1968, the New York State Department of Health required certification of ambulance attendants in volunteer service. Within a year, four VAAS members completed training as New York State Certified Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs).

Over the years, as the opportunity presented itself, newer model ambulances were purchased for the service; in June of 1979, trial use of pagers was instituted in place of the telephone

call list used since the beginning of the service.

By 1980, NYSDOH began the requirement of formal "call sheets" or "run records" which explained every call; the completion of a log book was also required. This record-keeping eventually evolved into the current Prehospital Care Report (PCR), a legal document that becomes part of the patient's hospital records. All members received pagers to respond to ambulance calls; crews set up schedules so that there was full coverage twenty-four hours each day. During this busy year for record-keeping and organizing, the Regional Emergency Medical Organization (REMO), a part of the NYSDOH, required extra copies of patients' reports for review. REMO shares information about the National Registry of EMTs.

The Town of Guilderland began to dispatch VAAS calls in July, 1981, and the Albany County Fire Coordinator assigned new radio call letters. In 1981, dedication of the new ambulance building included a plaque unveiled by charter member Ethel Smith in memory of her late husband, Ed Smith, also a charter member, who had designed the building and worked hard for its completion. By January of 1984, VAAS no longer had to depend on fund raising to pay operating costs; the service was to be contracted by the Village of Voorheesville and the Town of New Scotland. Annual costs were subsidized proportionally by the two municipalities, using tax revenue. Onesquethaw Rescue Squad would also be subsidized.

A new two-bay, two story, brick ambulance building was erected on the site of the previous building; it was completed in October of 1987 and added to a few years later in order to have an area to clean equipment, a washer/dryer area, and a bathroom with full shower in order to comply with the latest Department of Health regulations. The Voorheesville Area Ambulance Service paid for the new building with a traditional mortgage. By October of 1990, delivery was taken on a new PL-Custom ambulance; the volume of calls was such that a decision was made to keep the 1985 Road Rescue ambulance for a backup rig. The 1990 ambulance cost \$70,000 unequipped; the community once again generously supported a fund drive, raising \$35,000 to equip the new rig.

In the past three years, there has been some discussion regarding charging for ambulance service. Prior to this, because of there being too few qualified ambulance personnel at home during the daytime to staff the two ambulance squads, the Town paid for the services of an EMT to assist from 6:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M., Monday through Friday, helping both groups.

Continuing their volunteer work and educational mission, the Voorheesville Area Ambulance Squad showcased their newest ambulance at various locations during Emergency Medical Services week last May. Information about the squad and information about what to do in an emergency were shared with all visitors.

Current active membership involves thirty-five officers and members, of whom twelve are EMTs, the rest trained in CPR and First Aid. There are also twelve Associate members. Of the total membership, ten members are considered as veteran members, with twenty or more years of service. The current Chairman of the Board, John Scherer, has forty-eight years of service. Each year, members have answered increasing num-

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bers of calls. In 2003, there were 365, then 375 in 2004 and 439 in 2005.

The Onesquethaw Volunteer Fire Company's Rescue Squad

Onesquethaw's Rescue Squad was organized in 1967. A 1960 Pontiac ambulance was purchased; this served until 1972, when it was replaced by a 1970 Cadillac. By that time, a new firehouse had been built in Clarksville, complete with a large meeting room.

In 1975, an addition to the Feura Bush firehouse provided space for the ambulance to be stored. By 1976, one of the first modular ambulances in the area was purchased, and it was replaced in 1987 by a 1986 Ford walk-through model, NYS certified, to be followed in 1997 by a new Ford F-450 walk-through model. A replacement for this ambulance, also a Ford F-450, is due to be delivered in April, 2007. By January of 1984, the Onesquethaw Volunteer Fire Company's Rescue Squad was subsidized by the Town of New Scotland, similar to the funding provided for the Voorheesville Area Ambulance Service.

Among the latest equipment added was an automatic defibrillator. Rescue squad members are trained to use all the specialized gear aboard the ambulance. Many Rescue Squad members also double as firefighters or are also members of the Auxiliary.

Currently, there are about twenty-five members of the Rescue Squad. All members must take basic CPR and First Aid courses; in addition, approximately ten volunteers have taken the 110 hour classroom and hospital course for Emergency Medical Technician; they must be recertified every three years, in order to keep up with the latest techniques and life-saving equipment usage.

Unlike the Voorheesville Area Ambulance Service, which is separate from the Voorheesville Fire Department, the Onesquethaw Volunteer Fire Company Rescue Squad has always been a special squad within OVFC. Because of this internal structure, regulations governing the Rescue Squad are different from those governing ambulance companies not part of a particular fire company. Thus, as has been mentioned earlier in this article, when in 2004, a question arose of charging a fee for ambulance service in the Town of New Scotland, people learned that OVFC cannot charge for such a service.

In 2003, two hundred ambulance calls were received; the number rose to 216 in 2004, and the total was 190 in 2005. Both the Voorheesville Area Ambulance Service and Onesquethaw Volunteer Fire Company's Rescue Squad serve the Town of New Scotland with many hours of volunteer work, both in their training and in their actual saving of lives. These volunteers are in the tradition of neighbors caring for neighbors that has marked the growth of the town throughout its history.



OVFC's 1960 Pontiac Ambulance

Toys in the Attic

By Cathy Anderson

We have toys not just in the attic but from the cellar on up. In my bedroom is a Buddy L antique truck big enough for little kids to ride on and precise enough in steering for my husband to teach them how to drive. That truck is like an old friend and from time to time I ask myself why I keep it there taking up space and the answer is because it is like an old friend.

Most of the toys are in the attic. Lionel electric trains going back to the 1920s which were my husband's. Our four kids loved the trains and every Christmas each child would get a new engine. There are what seem to be miles of track, street lights, freight cars, tunnels, mountains and signals. When our boys were the right age for trains, they would set them up upstairs, the track going through our bedroom, into the bathroom, down the hall and back through the bedroom.

I often cursed all those little parts when I stepped on them in the night. There seemed to be more track-joining clips than there was track. But now that they are a thing of the past, I sometimes long for the trains of Christmas.

In addition to trains there is a pool table, lots of games and a good supply of tin toys. My favorite is one called "Travel Chicks," a freight car with a feed tray on top surrounded by chickens. When you wind it up, the chicks bob their heads into the feed tray. A very amusing toy.

There is also an old iron train engine, complete with a cow catcher that belonged to my husband's father who was born in 1882. It was always considered "special" and Dick kept it in his sock drawer. Now it is in mine.

There are much more modern things, including a "Battleship" game, lots of plastic soldiers, cowboys and Indians, a top which our oldest daughter called the hummin'. These toys are part of my life; when I go through them I always feel good because they take me back to the days when the children were small and life was too-busy to worry about things like war in the Middle-East. Old toys are both interesting and comforting and I wouldn't get rid of mine for anything.

Recollections

Things my mother taught me!

- Religion—You better pray this stain comes out of the carpet.
- Time Travel—If you don't straighten up, I am going to knock you into the middle of next week.
- Logic—"Because I said so, that's why."
- Foresight—Make sure you wear clean underwear, in case you are in an accident.
- Osmosis—Shut your mouth and eat your dinner.
- Contortionism—Will you look at the dirt on the back of your neck?
- Stamina—You'll sit there until your plate is clean.
- War—This room looks like a bomb hit it.
- Circle of Life—I brought you into this life and I can take you out.
- Behavior modification—Stop acting like your father.
- Anticipation—Just wait until your father gets home.
- Receiving—When we get home you are really going to get it.
- Family History—You are just like your father.
- Wisdom—When you get to be my age you will understand.
- Mother's Curse—One day you'll have kids of your own and I hope they act just like you!

I think we all learned these lessons. They sure put a smile on my face.

Will

A History of 527 Clipp Road

By Mark King

Clipp Road is one of the most interesting roads in the Town of New Scotland. Other than the reforestation of former farm fields and the disappearance of barns, a visitor from the 1840s would recognize few changes. From the intersection at Hurst Road to the intersection at diamond hill Road, there have only been two new houses built in the last one hundred and sixty years. Three stately stone homes of the area's earliest families still grace the landscape and limestone cliffs offer a glimpse into the area's former geologic history. It was these qualities that drew my family to purchase the former Belknap home at 527 Clipp Road. Our small house is built in a Greek revival style, though many of the details that define the style have disappeared through "modernization." The information that follows is the state of our knowledge of the property and area thus far.

Ironically, one of the best pieces of historical evidence we have on the property is the oldest. According to *Our Heritage: The Presbyterian Church in New Scotland*, the Patroon in his grant from the West India Company had been enjoined "to make prompt provision for the support of a minister and schoolmaster, thus the service of God and zeal for religion may not grow cool and be neglected among the Colonists." Fulfillment of this objective led to the construction of the Presbyterian Church in New Scotland. The "Presbyterians of New Scotland having raised their building and so given proof of their good purposes, applied through their Trustees to Stephen Van Rensselaer, the 4th Patroon, for a grant of land." For the sum of ten shillings, the church was granted a parcel of land marked by a black oak and containing one hundred and fifty-six acres on February 19, 1793. This land is what we now call 527 Clipp Road.

The property on "the clip," a term probably derived from the Dutch word for cliff, which skirts a good part of Clipp Road was a few miles from the church (located near the Town Hall on route 85.) and more acreage than the church needed. Jacob Moak, one of the early treasurers for the church, proposed a land exchange to the congregation. He offered his 73 ¼ acre property adjacent to the church, in exchange for the 156 acre farm along the "clip." The Patroon approved the transaction in June of 1795. Thus began a long history of the property as the Moak farm.

We know from the excellent genealogical work on the Moak family by Martha Slingerland and Grace Moak, that Jacob died in either 1795 or 1800 and "was Buried at sundown so that the men could finish their day's harvesting." Our property then appears to have been passed on to Jacob's son Joseph. Joseph Moak, who served as a Colonel in the War of 1812, had ten children, all of whom were presumably born on our Clipp Road property. Henry Moak, Joseph's brother, is also referenced as having lived on the clip.

This early Moak history is where one of the many questions surrounding the property's history arises. Remarkably, the 156 acre Moak farm remains to this day approximately 150 acres, but where did the earliest Moaks actually live? Just beyond our house is a cellar hole that was probably from a home older than ours. Perhaps this was the first Moak home on the property? The Town of New Scotland records the house we live in was



Clipp House, circa 1936

built in 1840 by a Moak; thus it would seem the cellar hole is from what may have been the first house on the property. This indicates that multiple lines of the Moak family probably lived and farmed the property at the same time. In fact, a member of the Moak family currently resides on Clipp Road.

We do not know when the property finally passed out of the Moak family, but it was probably in the early 20th century. As we move toward the present time, we are fortunate to have the memories of some long-time residents of the town to shed some light on the past. Albert Miller in particular has distinct memories of the Clipp. The millers have resided on the road since 1853. Albert was born on the Miller Farm on Clipp Road in 1925 and attended the one room school house which was located on our land, just north of our house. According to Albert the mysterious second house was a "fairly large two story, red with white trim" that was torn down when he was a boy. At that time our property was owned by George Hammond and his wife. Mr. Hammond was an Albany police officer. Mr. and Mrs. Hammond separated and she apparently continued to work the farm. During this time in the early 1930s, a large dairy barn on the property burned down one Sunday afternoon. Mrs. Hammond's sister also lived on the property and she was employed as a janitor at the one room school house. At some point in the 1930s, the farm was rented to Bob Ellis, who quarried and sold stone from the property in addition to farming. Quarry pits on our land and neighboring properties, as well as the stone houses on the road, attest to a long history of quarrying on the Clipp. Bob Ellis went on to run a dance hall in the small white house at the Route 443 end of Clipp Road known as Bob's End. Moonshine may have enhanced the festivities at this popular spot.

The Hammond period of ownership seems to have ended sadly with the foreclosure on the property. In 1936, the property was sold by the New York Stock Land Bank of Rochester to Burton and Elizabeth Belknap. Based on 1936 and 1937 photos of the house, the Belknaps spruced up the property but



Clipp House as it appears today.

this was also probably the end of farming on the property as Burton was employed by New York State and did not pursue agriculture. Elizabeth Belknap died in the 1960s and Burton married Marjorie Belknap who resided in the

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house until she died at the age of 99. We often contemplate Marjorie's life on the property, particularly in the winter when she survived with a 1940s furnace and walls insulated with cardboard.

My association with the property began in the late 1960s. Having grown up about a mile away, the old school house on the property and the stone houses were a source of curiosity. My earliest recollection of the land was walking on the nature trails Burton Belknap maintained. A small parking area across from the house provided public access to nature trails with small signs identifying trees and plants along the paths.

Our purchase of the house and land in 2000 came about in an unusual way. In 2000, we were living in a very quaint stone house at 635 Altamont Road. Though we loved the house, with two children, and a third on the way, we decided it was time to look for another home. One approach we took was to write the owners of a few homes in the area that we had admired, asking them to consider contacting us if they were interested in selling. Months went by and we continued the house hunt. To our amazement nine months after we had written to Marjorie Belknap, we were contacted by one of her relatives. Marjorie had died in 1999, and as her heirs were going through her papers, our letter resurfaced. They informed us they intended to auction the home and property and offered to show us the property. A roller coaster of emotions and tribulations followed our visit to the property. The house was in rough shape and many major systems and outbuildings in a frail state, but in a leap of faith, we made the purchase and began the task of renovation. Unfortunately, **during** our attempt to renovate the main house, the school house collapsed, bringing down our dreams of restoring the building. We also demolished a very unstable barn that was probably built from the other former barns on the property. This led to the birth of a new post and beam barn constructed largely of Norway spruce timbers grown on our property. Many other adventures and mishaps have filled our short time here and we look forward to many more.

There is much more Clipp Road history that space does not permit me to share, with the history of the school house #7 being a notable omission. I would be thrilled to learn of others recollections of the area and any old photos would be especially interesting. Feel free to call 765-3029 if you have anything you are willing to share.

I want to thank Chris Albright, Martha Slingerland, Joe Hogan, and Albert Miller for sharing information and insights.

Quilting in New Salem

By NSHA member Margaret Westervelt

When I read in the *Sentinel* that the March meeting of the New Scotland Historical Association will feature quilting, I was immediately reminded of the many times in the late 1930's when I was in high school that I got off the school bus and hastened to join the ladies of the New Salem Reformed Church at Mrs. Floyd McMillen's so I could quilt.

Those were Depression days, and many ladies were busy using up their scraps making lovely quilts. Not many had the facilities to finish the job, so the church ladies used their talents to make money for the church.

Pauline Smith coordinated much of the work, and was assisted by my mother (Mabel Hotaling), Mrs. Robinson, and

Mrs. Lonnstrom. Mrs. McMillen had a room where the quilt frame could be set up without interfering with her daily life. The ladies met at least once a week, brought their lunches, and had a very social time while accomplishing their work.

In those days, the filler for a quilt was cotton batting. Making small stitches, and getting completely through the material was the requirement. In fact, it was said that Mrs. McMillen inspected the work and if it was not satisfactory, one had to pull out the stitches with her nose! (A neat trick!) Accomplishing the work meant keeping one's finger under the quilt, so a quilter could be identified easily—the first finger on the left hand showed the effect of the needle's point. After the quilt was finished, Mrs. Robinson took care of the final finishing by binding it off.

Quilting, of course, has a long history. In fact, one of the quilts the ladies did was one my great grandmother started but did not get finished. My mother finished piecing it, and the ladies quilted it. I had it until I moved to Florida where quilts are not essential.

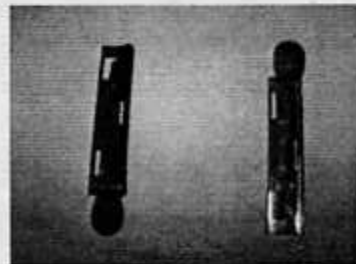
Interestingly enough, when the Hawaiian ladies saw the lovely quilts of the missionary ladies, they adapted the idea. Since they had no scraps, they devised an intricate substitute. They made a pattern, cut it out in one piece and appliquéd it on a sheet. They quilted around the pattern at 3/4 - inch intervals. Those quilts were seldom sold, but were made for family or for gifts to important people. When I lived in Hawaii, I once saw one of those quilts being started.

Quilting has certainly remained an intriguing pastime. The Hawaiian quilting has been adapted to pillows, and I have one which a friend in Hawaii made for me. It is a treasure. In 2001, I had the opportunity to visit the Quilt Museum in Paducah, Kentucky. There it became evident that quilting has become an art form. With the mechanized sewing machine, intricate designs can be produced, and quilts become a substitute for other wall hangings.

Here in Florida quilt shows are often featured. In many I have noticed quilts made by men—so it is no longer a lady's craft.

What is it??

A clue to this issue's "What is it?" can be found in the "Toys In The Attic" article.



Answer to Winter Issue "What is It?"

Part of an old hinge. It would be hammered into the wood and a hinge pin would go down through it.



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Museum Hours

The museum is
open year-round
on Sunday

from

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

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New Scotland Historical Association
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