



THE SENTINEL

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The Newsletter of the New Scotland Historical Association

Winter 2009

School Daze

by Will Osterhout

My formal education began in 1945, when at the age of 5, I started first grade at the two-room schoolhouse in New Salem. One must remember that this was the time when there was no pre-k or kindergarten for country kids, and thus I was thrust into the world of academics with just the preparation I received at home.

The New Salem schoolhouse, now the Wyman Osterhout Community Center and Museum, consisted of two rooms. One was used for grades 1-3, taught by Mrs. Phoebe Sisson, who lived just a few houses below the intersection in the village and walked to school each day. The second room held grades 4-6 and was taught by Mrs. Violet Chaffee, who lived directly across the old road from the school. I can still see her walking down her driveway. All subjects were taught to the different grades in the same room by just one teacher. Quite a difference today! Mr. Harold Mead or "Coach" would come over from the Voorheesville School once a week for physical education. Normally, we would play outside, mostly softball, but on inclement weather days we would play inside. When playing inside, we would move all the desks to one side and play "Snatch the Bacon" using an Indian club.

Many of you remember stories of the dunce chair and standing in the corner, but Mrs. Chaffee had a different solution for any disciplinary problem. There was a cloak room on her side of the school and if you misbehaved, she would send you in there to stand in the dark until told to come out. I remember spending some time there but for the life of me I can't remember why. I believe we were the envy of many children in the school district because we had indoor plumbing and central heat. No chilly trips to the outhouse or building the fire in the morning.

I left the New Salem school after completing 6th grade and started high school at Voorheesville the next year.

Starting high school was a very exciting time. I got to ride the big bus with a whole bunch of new kids. High school also meant I had my very own locker with a combination lock on it. I learned that I was to have different teachers for each subject, something which was completely new to me. Some of my teachers stand out in my mind for various reasons. Mr. Brayden, my guidance counselor, had a small office above the third floor. Mr. Brayden's office was where you were sent if you were asked to leave a class for some reason. I remember spending quite a bit of time with him and the file he kept on me became quite large.

If your offense was particularly severe then you would be sent to the main office to see Mr. Bouton, the Supervising Principal. I learned that this could be a very traumatic situation, depending on how many kids were ahead of you waiting to see him. As each student went in, he got madder and louder until it became your turn. I remember one particular visit I made, when before I could

open my mouth to proclaim my innocence, I was slammed up against the wall and told to shut up. Oh, how I remember those times. We must remember that during this time, teachers could use force to correct a situation. I do not believe their actions affected my self esteem or personality and I don't believe I was ever disciplined when I didn't deserve it.

How many remember Mrs. McGarr, who taught us typing? She had a habit of adjusting certain articles of her clothing while standing in front of the class. You were also not allowed to let your carriage go so far over as to ring the bell or you might get whacked with a ruler. Mrs. Stage taught us Social Studies. A very small woman with a very big temper! I remember she also taught me ballroom dancing in the gym during dance class. Mr. Berglas, who was my math teacher, once physically removed me from my desk and escorted me into the hall. Mr. Martin tried his best to get me to understand the English language. I wish I had paid more attention. Jane Salvatore, our librarian, ran the library with an iron fist. I was reminded of this practical joke by friend Robert Smith. It

(continued on page 4)



Some New Salem school students, Torch 1949

Willard is 2nd from left in front row. Top row, behind Willard is NSHA member Emily Mader Mattox, and last on the right is NSHA member Tim Moran.

Mark your Calendar!

Sunday, Dec. 6
2:00 P.M.

"The Roaring Twenties" as seen through dolls!

Speaker: **Ursula R. Mertz**, doll expert

Anyone who has questions about an old doll, bring it to the meeting.

Wyman Osterhout Community Center
Off route 85, New Salem

NEW SCOTLAND HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

P. O. Box 541

Voorheesville, NY 12186

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear Members and Friends,

With the difficult financial times that we are experiencing in our country, I think it is most timely that the Historic Sites committee decided to recognize Five Rivers for its history---more specifically, Five Rivers as an Encampment for the Civilian Conservation Corps from 1933—1936. Frequently, this present economic crisis is compared to the Great Depression when President Franklin D. Roosevelt put this program into action.

Young men 18—25 years of age, who were unemployed, unmarried, and from “needy”

families were given work at \$30.00 a month--\$25.00 was supposed to be sent back home. They built parks, roads, bridges and dams. They planted trees and treated other trees for disease and pest control. To quote Craig Thompson, Director of Fiver Rivers, “Enrollees were educated in skills that could be used later. It gave them self-discipline, self-esteem, and a sense of purpose which were critical to an even greater challenge ahead—WWII.” Oh, that the Stimulus Package of today could do the same!

Stop in at Five Rivers



Craig Thompson and Sandy Slingerland at the sign unveiling

and read the sign, which will give you a better insight into the purposes of the Center over time.

By the way, do you know how Five Rivers got its name? It was given that name as recognition of the five rivers which flow through the region of New York State served by the center: the Hudson, Mohawk, Hoosic, and Sacandaga Rivers and the Schoharie Creek.

Peg Dorgan

In Memoriam

With deep sympathy, we note the passing of NSHA members
Agnes Tucker and Donald Ardell.



What Is It?

(Answer on page 8)

Thank you!

To **Indian Ladder Farms** for providing cider for our programs this fall.
To **Olsen's Hardware and Garden Center** for providing several mum plants for the garden at the rear of the Community Center.

Membership—Melanie Ernst, Chairperson

The General Membership renewal cycle is almost complete for the 2009-2010 year; many thanks to the 134 members who have already submitted their dues. We have gained five new members so far and three current members have joined the ranks of life membership. We are also very grateful to those who sent additional funds to help with the electrical project for the storage barn and museum. Your generosity is very much appreciated.

This will be the last Sentinel mailed to those who have not renewed their membership.

A printable membership application is available on the NSHA website: www.newscotlandhistoricalassociation.org.

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.

Memoirs Needed!

As you can see in this issue, we have begun to receive some memoirs of events, large or small, that occurred in the Town of New Scotland in the time period up to 1970. Use names where appropriate—or leave them out! School days, organizations, church activities, businesses, accidents—whatever you remember and would like to share. NSHA plans to publish these stories in a book. Your NSHA Board has already started—our homework for our November board meeting was to bring a story! Now it is your turn!

Please send your memoir, of any length, to New Scotland Historical Association, P.O. Box 541, Voorheesville, NY 12186, Att. Book Committee. Or email it to us at: newscotlandhistoricalassoc@gmail.com

Exhibit Committee Report—Sandy Slingerland, Chairperson

The Exhibit Committee is currently beginning to make plans for the next large exhibit opening in the spring. Hopefully we will start after the additional electrical outlets have been installed. We have chosen the Story of CCC Camps as they relate to New Scotland and surrounding areas. Recently the NSHA placed a historic marker on the property of Five Rivers Environmental Center. This was the former home of a CCC camp during the 1930s. The event is featured in the *Altamont Enterprise*, Nov. 12, 2009.

Chairperson Sandy Slingerland is looking for folks to work with her on this exhibit, as well as looking for items that NSHA could borrow pertaining to CCC Camps to use in the exhibit. If you have pictures on this subject that we could scan and then return, it would be helpful. Send e-mail to sandyslingerland@yahoo.com or phone 768-2462 and leave a message. We



Buildings of the CCC camp at Five Rivers during the 1930's

Collection Committee Report—Marion Parmenter, Chairperson

Our Collection Committee was delighted to receive two large files and two large sets of metal shelves as a gift from Life Members Bonnie and Eric Foster. With a great deal of figuring and rearranging, we were able to fit all four pieces in the old coatroom. We are slowly beginning to put these to the best use for regular storage. It allows us to have more room in the office for archival storage, which was getting very cramped. Thank you for thinking of us, Bonnie and Eric.

We have also rearranged the photo and book collection corner. We added one wooden cabinet that is being filled with more books as they are added to our collection. A lamp has been added—a big improvement. Please feel free to make suggestions for this corner!

Janet Klopp, Sandy Slingerland and I attended a very informative Archival Workshop in Glens Falls November 13th. We continue to work and learn.

seems that either he or I locked Jane in the small room off the main library during the last period. We left, got on the bus and went home. It was a couple of hours later when the janitor heard her and let her out. The next morning she and Mr. Bouton were waiting for our bus in the parking lot. Both seemed to be extremely angry and were looking for us. We were taken to the office and severely chastised. Our punishment was to stay after school for a week and dust the books and the shelves in the library. No one got expelled in those days! I still think Bob must have locked the door. I would never have done such a heinous act. So many valuable lessons learned.



Clayton A. Bouton

Social life in school was varied and exciting. Basketball, baseball and football were the varsity sports that you were able to participate in, if you made the team, and everyone did not—what a concept. Boys today would be amazed to learn that we played six man football and Mr. George was my coach. Today, because I am considered a senior citizen, he doesn't talk about being my teacher. He just says "Tell them we went to school together!" Nice try, Ken.

Proms were held in the gymnasium at school and you decorated the day before. No limousines or huge ticket prices to go to some fancy restaurant or night club. A candy store was across from the school in John White's house. In later years the seniors ran a candy store, open at noon time, at the foot of the stairs on the ground floor. I always preferred to shop when Edie Hotaling was working. The gym demonstrations, senior play, basketball games with spectators in the balconies--does anyone remember when Charles Hines jumped down onto the gym floor during a game?

One particularly exciting gym demonstration was to include my friend Bob Smith bursting through a big white sheet of paper in a frame, with a torch in his hand, to start the evening. As he made his speedy approach, he accidentally tripped over my foot and went sprawling head first out on the gym floor. What a unique way to start a program.



Edie Hotaling in the candy store

Heller's Drug Store, the Canteen in the basement of the old Presbyterian Church (now home of Old Songs), and going to the Tollgate for ice cream.



Mike Pafunda

How many remember Mike Pafunda, the janitor? He would stand on the balcony and we would throw a basketball up to him so he could shoot a basket from there, and make it.

Other memories that come to mind are

Memories of Earl's Store

By Shelley Vonk Corrington who grew up in Clarksville behind Crooks Store. She now lives in North Carolina.

...I only remember being in Grandpa Earl's store one time. I remember it being dark in there, and with shelves along the walls that went to the ceiling. Mom had me by the hand. He was standing behind a glass counter with a wooden frame. It had a crack in the corner of one of the large front glass panes and it was taped with some sort of dark tape (I think). There were counters all around the circumference of the store parallel to the walls. I remember bolts of cloth and canned goods on the shelves, also cloth bags of flour or meal. There was a door going to the back room which was very dark, but I think there were bags of feed back there. There was also a small office. He had wooden boxes with thread, dyes and needles on the counter tops, (I couldn't identify them then, but since we have acquired a couple of those oak, wooden boxes—Putnam Dyes and Millwards Needles) which we have refinished and use. But best of all, I remember round candy jars on the counter top with side openings that had metal lids. Grandpa Earl called me "Sis." Mom later told me that he called all the girls "Sis." I remember him lifting down one of the jars and letting me choose a candy. Don't remember what I chose. The only other memories I have of Grandpa Earl were that he had a rocking chair next to the stove in Grandma's kitchen and he was there often, rocking and sleeping.....



Be sure to visit the **General Store Exhibit at the Museum**—it is a wonderful display showing many of the things Shelley describes in her article.



Vanderzee LaGrange Diaries

Foreward

These excerpts from the diaries of Vanderzee LaGrange were made possible through the kindness of his grandson, J. Earle LaGrange who made this priceless series of journals available to me.

“Van,” as he was known in the community, was not one to waste words but his diaries give a picture of farm and community life from 1865, when he was 19 years old until his death on March 17, 1927 at the age of 81. I hereby dedicate these writings to the memory of his grandson, J. Earle LaGrange who died very suddenly on July 18, 1982. He was a dear friend to all of us and especially to his church family here in Unionville. He provided me with a wealth of information, both written and oral and was largely responsible for developing my budding interest in family, church, and community history.

Martha G. Slingerland,
October 10, 1985

Vanderzee LaGrange

Vanderzee LaGrange was born near Guilderland Center on Sept. 8, 1845 to Myndert and Julia LaGrange. He was the fifth of their sixteen children.

His journals start January 1, 1865 and he records that on April 26 that year he went to Albany to attend the president’s funeral. This would have been Pres. Abraham Lincoln.

The following month, on May 6, he signed on as a crew member of the “Kate” at the Port of Albany, Captain Benjamin in charge. They loaded slate at Schenectady and took it to Buffalo. Then they loaded wheat and took that to New York City. They unloaded the wheat at Pier 2. There Van left the “Kate” and took the “America,” apparently a night boat, back to Albany, arriving at 8 O’clock on June 28th. And so back to farming.

On Nov. 5, 1868 he married Agnes Maria Slingerland, daughter of “Gen.” James Slingerland and Hester, his wife.

His first land purchase, in 1874, was the Peter Bartlett farm which was on the south side of Delaware Turnpike on top of Unionville Hill, approximately where Chet and Sharon Boehlke now live. In 1880 he bought the J. Scutt house “Acrost the road” and moved into the house now occupied by the Brian Burkins family.

In 1889 they moved again having purchased the Fisher place on Unionville-Feura Bush Road, now owned by Roger Contento. They called this place Crystal Spring Farm and raised fruit and berries extensively. They also did extensive improvements on the property including a fountain on the front lawn.

In 1913 they sold this place to Herbert Attwood of Flat Bush, Long Island and moved back to the old Slingerland farm where Agnes had lived as a child. Thus the old Slingerland place became the LaGrange farm.

Vanderzee LaGrange and his wife joined Union Church by letter from Jerusalem March 1, 1879. He was elected deacon Dec. 24, 1879 and became an elder April 14, 1889. He also served as Sunday School superintendent and taught the adult Bible class for about 25 years up to his death.

- 23 Nov. 1893: at night to Union Church. Organized Christian Endeavor
- 12 May 1902: to parsonage taking down barn
- 21 Feb. 1906: to Voorheesville after lumber for new Lecture Room. The congregation drew 18 loads.
- 3 May 1906: Brought lime out (from Albany) for Church
- 4 & 5 1906: helping lay foundation wall at church for Lecture Room
- 14 May 1906: to Feura Bush after Lumber for church
- 23 May 1906: to Voorheesville after window frames for Church Hall
- 1 June 1906: to church laying foundation of Lecture Room
- 4 June 1906: Raising church Lecture Room
- 11 June 1906: to stone house after poles for church scaffold (This was the farm with stone house on what is now Rock City Rd.)
- 6 Aug. 1906: to Albany Brought back Brick for Church Hall
- 19 Sept. 1906: Brought floor plank home for church hall



Vanderzee LaGrange

(continued from page 5)

- 21 Sept. 1906: Helping on new church hall (Also Sept. 22 & 24)
- 25 Sept. 1906: Classis of Albany met in Church. Took dinner in new Church Hall.
- 29 Sept. 1906: to Albany after stairs for Church Hall.
- 12 Oct. 1906: working on Church Hall
- 10 Nov. 1906: Went to Troy. Bought Stove fore Lecture Room
- 12 Nov. 1906: Brought stove home from Troy for Lecture Room
- 29 Nov. 1906: Working in New church Hall A.M. Night to Chicken Supper
- 17 Dec.. 1906: to Feura Bush after ceiling for Hall
- 24 Dec. 1906: to see Ginder at South Bethlehem about school house mason work
- 2 Mar. 1907: to Delmar to make contract with Schoonmaker for New School House
- 4 Apr. 1907: to stake out New School House
- 2 July 1907: Sold Old School House at Auction to Lewis Edinger for \$32.50
- 29 Aug. 1907: to Lehman's mills after lumber for school house
- 2 Sept. 1907: Drawing gravel for school house
- 7 Sept. 1907: Moving seats from old school to new
- 12 Sept. 1907: to Slingerlands to see Miss Barton about school
- 14 Sept. 1907: Working at new school house
- 16 Nov 1907: to Delmar after man to put seats in school house

(In the back of the book is a list of expenses incurred in building the school. It includes \$3.00 for moving seats, \$132 for new seats and incidental expenses on privies \$39.19.)

- 9 Mar. 1908: to church hall afternoon putting steel ceiling on
- 4 Sept. 1915: Helping put new seats in the church
- 9 Sept. 1915: to anniversary of our church afternoon and evening
- 22 Dec. 1916: to church helping paper
- 2 June 1917: to Union Church with plank to fix sheds
- 15 May 1923: to Church to see about new windows in church
- 27 July 1925: at night to church about Electric light
- 30 July 1925: to buy poles for Electric wire for church
- 14 Aug. 1925: Notify Ladies Aid to go to Albany to select fixtures for church electric
- 15 Aug. 1925: to Albany with Grace Oliver, Ida Slingerland, Eliza Oliver, Flora Morehouse to order electric fixtures for church
- 2 Sept. 1925: to Delmar RR station after electric light fixtures for church
- 11 Oct. 1925: to Union Church. VanEss preached Anniversary Sermon. Came here to supper
- 18 Oct. 1925: Rev. McCord, Rev. T.A. Beekman preached, Rev. Ballard offered prayer
- 19 Oct. 1925: to Albany with Dodge car. Grace and Tine Oliver with me to get flowers for church Classis meeting at night for 100th anniversary
- 20 Oct. 1925: to Albany Classis in Church. Supper at night and meeting for 100 year Anniversary
- 21 Oct. 1925: to Church Anniversary P.M. and at night. 4 ministers spoke after supper
- 13 July 1926: Consistory met with RR men at Parsonage about underground crossing
- 5 Aug. 1926: at night to church. Consistory sold parsonage to RR
- 8 Jan. 1927: Kenneth Creble was here. I signed deed to sell Parsonage to RR.

By this time Van was in his 82nd year. He died March 17, 1927. A lot of changes took place within his life span and he seemed to accept them all with good grace, even enthusiasm. He took his first automobile ride June 5, 1909 when he was in Rochester as a delegate to General Synod. The following April he bought his first Buick, 30 horse, \$1500. In June he was "building house for auto". He never lost his love for horses, or enjoyment of a good horse trade, though. Small wonder since it was sometimes necessary for the horses to rescue the auto from snow and mud.

Our church has served and been served by six generations of his family up to this time.

Martha Slingerland
Oct. 10, 1985

Winter Programs

We have three programs for the winter season; all will be on Sunday afternoons at 2:00 P.M. at the Wyman Osterhout Community Center on Route 85 in New Salem. All programs are free and open to the public. The Museum will be open for half an hour before the programs begin.

Sunday, December 6, 2009

Ursula R. Mertz: **“The Roaring Twenties—Dolls in the Image of Famous ’20s Personalities.”**

Sunday, February 7, 2010

Peter Hess: **“People of Albany”**

Sunday, March 7, 2010

Thomas Keefe: **“Campaign Buttons, Slogans and Other Political Memorabilia.”**

Each of these programs offers historical perspectives in different segments of our country’s history. Ursula Mertz is a recognized expert on American Composition Dolls, having published a two-volume encyclopedia on the topic. She also writes articles regularly for **“Antique Doll Collector”** and other doll magazines.

Peter Hess, who has a special interest in the history of the Albany area, is a past President of the Albany Rural Cemetery and often led tours to point out the graves of people well-known in American history.

Thomas Keefe has been a collector of political memorabilia for over forty years, and will be showing a perspective of

Genetaska Club Disbands

The museum recently received the minutes and other ephemera from the Genetaska Club of New Scotland. This group was formed in 1964, under the sponsorship of the Genetaska Club of Rochester. The members, who were interested in doing community service, were wives, widows, or friends of Kiwanians.

The founding members were: Dorothy Carr, Lillian Kidder, Lillian Batchelder, Lois_Herrick, Dorothy Tice, Jane Blessing, Myra Bouton, Marge Leland, Kay Youmans, Thelma McGarr, Mimi Long, Evelyn Wenzel, Rose Ricci, Ethel Boyce, Marion Drake, E. Bloomer, and L. Springer.

This club performed many service projects over the years. They assisted Kiwanis with barbeques, baked goods and salads, assisted with the Snack Shack at the high school, collected for the food pantry, prepared food baskets for Thanksgiving and Christmas for the Food Pantry, sorted art supplies at the Voorheesville Elementary School during the summer, and had Bake Sales on Election Day, to mention a few of their activities.

In 1976, members sold Spirit of ’76 pins and sponsored the Bicentennial Princess for the Town of New Scotland. (Cynthia Knox won.) A Community Service directory was prepared and given to newcomers to town. The members delivered holiday cards, baskets and flowers to shut-ins in the town and in nearby nursing homes.

In addition, for many years, they awarded gifts or plaques to 8th graders and later to 3rd and 6th graders at the Elementary School who improved the most in reading, science and math.

Donations were made to various organizations. NSHA records contain a letter written in October 1972, from the Genetaska Club with a donation of \$50.00. The letter stated: “Now that you have your new meeting room I’m sure this contribution will help out as you must have a lot of chairs and other furnishings that will be needed. Good luck in your new home.”

The list of their activities is very extensive. This is only a small sampling!

In recent years their numbers have shrunk. Women are now able to join Kiwanis. The current members voted to disband on April 29, 2009. The Town of New Scotland was very lucky to have had this very active organization for 44 years!

The Sentinel Committee wants to thank Fran Arthur for assisting us with the information for this article.



Members at time of disbanding were left to right: Fran Arthur, Sue Reilly, Evelyn Wenzel (founding member), Winnie Childs, Audrey Smith, Judy Douglas, Rose Mary Zongrone, and Anne Carson. Not pictured: Marilyn Farrell and Jean Rooney. Mimi Long (founding member), and Shirley LeVie, both recently passed away.

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

The item in the picture is a kerosene lamp burner.

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