



THE SENTINEL

Vol. 19, No. 2

The Newsletter of the New Scotland Historical Association

Winter 2010



NSHA Luncheon & Fashion Show

Oct. 9, 1971

L to R: Mrs. Floyd Curtis, Miss Marguerite Joslin,
Mrs. Harold Slingerland, Miss Lucinda Wright
Voorheesville Fire Hall

**An Old Fashioned
Christmas Celebration
Help us to kick off NSHA's
40th Anniversary Celebration
Sunday, Dec. 5
2 P.M.**

**Wyman Osterhout Community Center
New Salem**

NSHA History—the first ten years

As NSHA begins its fortieth anniversary year, we decided to write a series of articles about the history of the organization to share with the membership. This information was taken from the minutes of board meetings since the very first organizational meeting was held in March of 1971.

"The "Spark Plugs" for the formation of NSHA were **Jane Blessing**, who became the first president and was the prime mover and organizer, and **Elizabeth Ingraham**, who gave more than her share of time and energy in putting together and publicizing a very successful series of programs and events during the first year." This was a quote from a speech given to Kiwanis in the fall of 1972 by Dave Thurheimer who was with the Office of State History, working as a consultant to museums and local historical agencies. These two ladies worked for several months before the first official meeting, gaining support for the group.

The first meeting to consider formation of an organization and museum was March 24, 1971, at the Town Hall. On April 19, 1971, there was another meeting to organize a slate of officers and work on the constitution. At that time, the name "Town of New Scotland Historical Association" was suggested.

May 19, 1971 marked the first annual meeting, held at the Town Hall and led by Dave Thurheimer as acting chair. Officers were elected, the constitution and by-laws were accepted, and a philosophy of town-wide service and involvement adopted. Jane Blessing was elected President and Martha Slingerland became Vice President.

During the early years, there were many programs offered. These were held in various churches around the town as well as the Town Hall. On July 7, 1971, Town Supervisor Willis MacIntosh announced that NSHA would share the New Salem Schoolhouse with the Senior Citizens, once renovations were made. The renovations took nearly two years. The Voorheesville School District had turned the building over to the town in July 1970.

During the fall of 1971, NSHA sponsored a Fashion Show and Luncheon at the Voorheesville Firehouse. The NSHA board decided that we would collect only items related to town history, which is still part of our Collection Management Policy, and storage space was already becoming an issue. The application for a Provisional Charter was filled out and sent to the Board of Regents, along with a check for \$25.

In March of 1972, NSHA and Voorheesville Adult Education sponsored well attended mini-courses on history. At the 2nd Annual meeting in May, it was announced that we were accepted as a Tax Exempt organization by NYS Dept. of Taxation and Finance. Dave Thurheimer, who was also a resident of the town, became the Museum Chairman. Much had been accomplished in just a year!

In June of 1972, much work was being done to the build-

(cont. on page 4)

NEW SCOTLAND HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

P. O. Box 541

Voorheesville, NY 12186

OFFICERS 2010 - 2011

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Peg Dorgan 768-2852

Vice President

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Sentinel Committee

Robert and Marion Parmenter,
Editors

Marie Hornick

Willard Osterhout

Web Page

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President's Letter

Dear Members and Friends,

As I sit down to write this, my attention is constantly drawn to the window to watch the season's first snowfall. There is a certain excitement about this quick change of scene. The ground is becoming completely white and it is sticking to the trees. Now that I'm retired and don't have to be somewhere special, I appreciate the snow even more. Remember when we were kids and we couldn't wait to get a pair of boots and some warm clothes so that we could go out and make some tracks? When the flakes were large, I loved to study them to see the intricate patterns. The change of seasons makes life so interesting here in the great Northeast.

Speaking of memories: We had a great response to a request by NSHA for written memories in the Town of New Scotland before 1970. The historical association wants to thank all of the people who participated in this endeavor. There has been such a variety of tales from events in the one room school houses to the days after centralization. We learn of many annual celebrations that occurred in the various hamlets around the Town. People told of Christmas, Halloween and Memorial Day celebrations, parades, picnics, movie nights, Canteen visits and sports events of all kinds. Tragic stories of fires and deaths contrasted with other articles that made us laugh hysterically. It has all been very interesting to read.

Now that the stories have been collected, the work of typing, editing, layout, and printing will take place over the next few months. The goal for completion and sale of this book of memories is May 1, 2011.

Peg Dorgan, President

Exhibit Committee

Our much anticipated Display Boards have been ordered and should be here soon. We are hoping to display a lot more paper items, maps, pictures, news items of old, for easy viewing by all!

Funds to cover the expense of this large display board were made possible from the membership donations, proceeds and donations from the 2010 raffle and also money from the Don and Ann Eberle fund. Thank you to all who made this possible.

By the February program, the display boards should be up and running. Or plan a sneak preview when the museum is open on Sundays 2—4 before then, to see our progress!

Sandy Slingerland, Chairman

In Memoriam

With deep sympathy we note the passing of NSHA Life Member Marlene Prentiss.

Collection Committee

We are happy to announce that all of the photo collection has been transferred to special new binders with slip covers. These binders are much more substantial than the former ones we had, and will better protect the photo collection. Each photo in each album has a number assigned to it, and this number corresponds to the list of photos and numbers in the beginning of each album. This enables you to identify the photo with ease.

We do have post-it note pads on the table with the albums. If you can identify a picture or the folks in it, please write the number of the photo, name of the album, and what information you would like to add. Give the information to the volunteer on duty and the lists will be brought up to date.

When you are viewing these new albums, please take them to a table in the museum to be able to view them on a flat surface.

There are albums for each hamlet and village in the town, as well as albums showing NSHA activities over the years. In addition, there is an album which contains all of the *Sentinels*, beginning in 1993, with an index showing what is in each issue.

Take the time to come in and view these. These were purchased with the money budgeted for conservation purposes, in the Collection Committee budget, for calendar year 2009—2010. Thanks to all of the membership who made this vast improvement possible!!!

Marion Parmenter, 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.

New Scotland Historical Association Winter Programs 2010—2011

December 5th Sunday 2 P.M. *An Old Fashioned Christmas Celebration*---We will be kicking off the 40th Anniversary of the New Scotland Historical Association with an old-fashioned celebration featuring holiday songs and refreshments from an earlier time.

February 6th Sunday 2 P.M. *The Art of Surveying, Now and Then*
A historical overview of the art of surveying and the equipment used with some famous and not-so-famous local highlights. Presented by Cynthia Elliot, licensed surveyor and local resident.

March 6th Sunday 2 P.M. *The Civilian Conservation Corps*
A look at the history and operation of the CCC presented by Diane Galusha, author of *Another Day, Another Dollar: The CCC in the Catskills*.

All programs will be held at the Wyman Osterhout Community Center, 7 Old New Salem Road, New Salem, off Route 85; they are free and open to the public. Refreshments will be served. The museum will be open one half hour before the pro-

Clarification—IRS

For all of you who noticed the Altamont Enterprise article which listed us as not having filed with the IRS, we did file the Form 990N with an e-postcard, which was accepted in June 8, 2010. In checking our records, I found that there are two federal ID numbers for our group. I called the IRS, and am in the process of eliminating the old number. NSHA, under the current number, is fully compliant with all the IRS filing regulations for non-profits.

Janet Betlejeski, Treasurer

ing. Kiwanis painted the outside (Town Supervisor Tom Dolin, told me he was a Kiwanis painter!), the town painted inside. The board made a list of things that needed to be done. Some of them were a sign for the building, a ditch in front to be covered, new light fixtures needed, and ask Mr. Carl to move his cars! In the fall, NSHA held another Luncheon and Fashion Show, in addition to a Bake Sale at Grand Union.

By 1973, NSHA was finally meeting in the schoolhouse, and creating an exhibit area in their portion of the building. Sam Youmans became a Trustee in 1973. In August 1974, we held a Flea Market and Bake Sale at the school. We had our first discussion about writing a book about the town. In the fall of 1974, the DAR sponsored a contest to design a Town Seal. Tim Albright, a seventh grader designed the winning seal that everyone sees on town trucks, buildings, letterheads, etc. Tim's interest in history grew and he later became a NSHA President in 1994!

In May of 1975, we applied to the Bi-Centennial Commission for funding to print a book about the town, but this was eventually denied. This same Bi-Centennial Commission asked us to make up a list of sites for a Drive-Yourself Tour of our town. We participated in this and eventually the map was produced showing historic sites in all towns in Albany County.

In June of 1975 we loaned our hair and feather wreaths to the Albany Institute of History and Art for a special exhibit. We requested our Absolute Charter at this time, also. During the summer, we held a well attended Flea Market and Quilt show at the schoolhouse.

October 1975, found many interested ladies making lists of buildings we want to create for the bicentennial quilt we were making. This project was initiated by Lillian Batchelder. By February, the squares were all made, the quilt was sewn together and an old quilt frame was set up in the museum and the quilting began—around each square.

Also this month our Absolute Charter was granted. The NSHA Bi-Centennial Slide Project was begun by Town Historian Bob Parmenter—taking slides of old photos. In later years, he continued the project on his own and has hundreds of photos, which he continues to share with groups when requested.

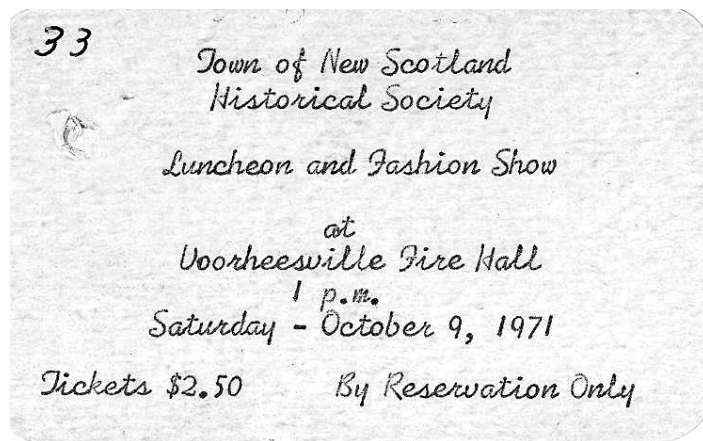
In Feb. 1976, we formed a telephone committee and began calling to remind members of programs. Dave Thurheimer met with Jane Salvatore, Dorothy Campbell and myself to teach us how to accession the artifacts in our collection. We used the form he provided for many years. June 5th found us having a Flea Market and Quilt Show at the Grade School. Our first Annual Christmas Program was held in December.

1977 found us concerned with security after a break in at the museum. We were fortunate the damage was minimal—some spray paint on copies of maps, words painted on the floor, etc. Yes, Sam Youmans got the paint off! The Town put heavy metal grating over the windows as a result. Another Flea Market was held in the Grade School. We had our 2nd Annual Christmas Program.

1978 found us deciding not to have a flea market. We continued to have annual Christmas Programs in 1978 and 1979.

A sign of the times in 1980, the historic sites tour which was planned was cancelled because of the **gas shortage!** In Oct. 1980, we held an Election Day Bake Sale. The original guest book was purchased for the museum.

1981 found us working on the production of our first calendar (1982) —which was very well received. We also held a

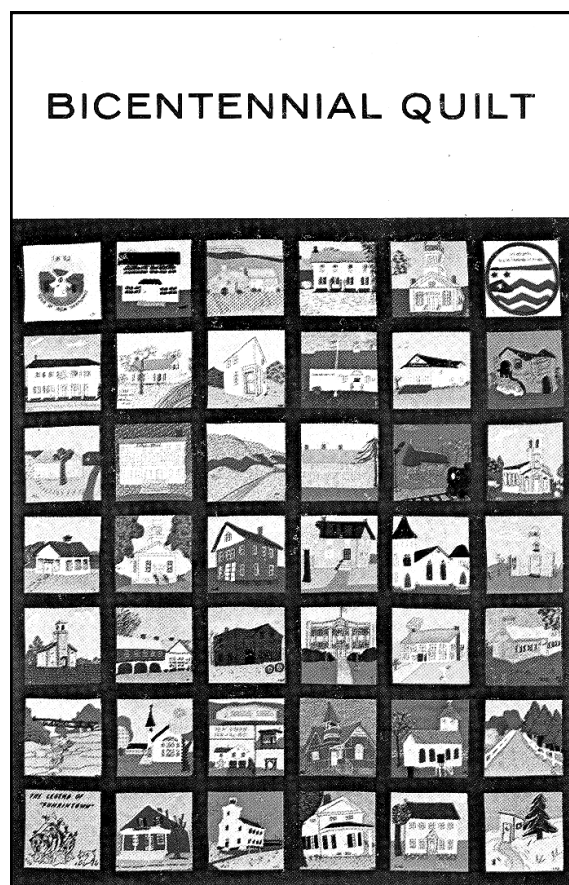


Card Party at the schoolhouse. We presented a scholarship of \$50 to Alissa Van Zutphen for archeology study at Helderberg Workshop, held an Election Day Bake Sale, and another Christmas Program.

May 5, 1981, at the annual meeting, we discussed the display cabinet we wanted—6 feet wide, 6 feet high and 2 feet deep. Can you find it in the museum?

Thus ends the first 10 years of NSHA—lots of activities, many volunteers, much interest in local history, a museum begun, record keeping in place—Jane Blessing and Elizabeth Ingraham would be more than pleased, I'm sure.

Marion Parmenter



NSHA Postcard of the Bicentennial Quilt.

Tales of a Highwayman

Willard Osterhout

The Beginning

High up in the Helderberg Mountains where I live, word finally reached me from the flatlands that a gang working the Village of Voorheesville was looking for part time help for the winter. I already had a summer job, so working down off the mountain in the winter had certain appeal to me. Upon further investigation, I found out that the leader of this gang was none other than “Wild Bill” Hotaling, a partner of mine when we used to work for “Old Hoag.” Wild Bill was assisted by “Big John Elmendorf.” I decided to stop in and see my old partner and find out what this job was all about. After learning the details, such as how much loot I was going to get, I made the decision to throw my lot in with these boys and learn the Highwayman trade from a couple of experts!

I learned that I would be working the Salem Hills area, along with Big John. Big John would be responsible for the main roads, which he could plow at 25 or 30 mph. He would whiz by, fill their driveways with snow and be gone before they even knew he was there. I, on the other hand, would do the individual courts. My modern day steed was to be a Dodge 4 wheel drive power wagon pick up. All of these courts had circles at the top with various radii. Many required that I back up many times to be able to push the snow around the circle. This, of course, had to be done at a very slow rate of speed. Residents could see what I was doing and had plenty of time to get out to their driveway entrance and verbally abuse me for putting snow there. Big John plowed with a dump truck, so he was higher up off the ground, while I in the pickup was at ground level. Very angry people could get up close and personal, face to face, and give me a piece of their mind. I must tell you at this point it wasn't about the wonderful job I was doing. Many times that would escalate to even more violent reaction, but those stories are for another time. I mentioned the part about backing up. Do that for a few hours during a storm and your neck begins to hurt until you don't know whether your head is on backwards or forwards.

I managed to survive that first winter without suffering any physical harm, but I think I ended up with a bigger personality disorder than I had when I started! Those people in Salem Hills could be a tough lot when they are angry.

Now that you know I started my career as a Highwayman, in future issues of the *Sentinel*, I will share some of my other humorous adventures with you. Until then, may the snows be light and you can hope that the doesn't put too much snow in your driveway.

During a Sentinel meeting, Willard got to telling stories about his work with the highway department...first Village, then Town. He had us in stitches. The next day we called Will and told him we had an idea. He should write a series of printable articles about his experiences! He came up with the title! First there was silence and then he laughed said he'd love to. He handed us this one and also one for the Spring Issue. We hope you enjoy them as much as we have. Keep writing, Will!

Bob and Marion Parmenter

An Online “Exhibit”

Marie Hornick

Our website is growing. We're trying to add copies of the *Sentinel* as they are produced, so there will be articles readers can look up to enjoy, or stories that change as the Association itself has changed over the years. As each exhibit takes its place in the Exhibits Room, the pictures of the previous exhibit are moved to the bottom of the Museum page, so that exhibit can be revisited in later years.

During the year we are about to begin, we are going to be adding a new online “exhibit;” members can suggest topics for this changing part of the website. Some of the ideas that have been suggested are old pictures from our collection; reprints of previous *Sentinel* articles; original short new articles; information about different historical markers; stories about different parts of our Town, anniversaries of events in which NSHA participated or created.

This will not be just reprints of things seen years ago: we'd like to hear from viewers and members about things they might find interesting to learn more about. Perhaps a member or viewer will have such a story, or the start of such a story, that we can research together and put online for everyone to enjoy. As of now, the plans are to change this “exhibit” three or four times in the coming year.



Entrance to Indian Ladder Drive-In, on Route 85 near New Salem, seen across the road from Sid Dunston's garage, early 1950s .

Picture loaned to NSHA, by Jean Jacobson Brown, formerly of Voorheesville.

Tinsel-Town of New Scotland

Allen Pinney

For those of you my age (V'ville Class of 1980) and younger, would it surprise you to know that for a time in our town's history we were a destination for movie-goers? Once upon a time we didn't have to drive *all the way* to Guiderland or Colonie to enjoy a night out at the movies. You could have ridden, driven or walked to the Voorheesville Theatre on Main Street, or to the Indian Ladder Drive-In in New Scotland or maybe even the Mayfair Drive-In in Slingerlands.

From 1908 to 1946, the Legion Hall was the home of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows (I.O.O.F.) and the Voorheesville Theatre, where every Saturday night you could go where it was "Always a Good Show" and "Where the Sound is Best" and see the latest Hollywood offering.

Over in New Scotland on Route 85, Don Hallenbeck ran the Indian Ladder Drive-In from 1949 to 1976. This open-air theater had parking for 300 cars and showed a variety of family-friendly films and even had a miniature golf course to pass the time before the start of the feature presentation. Heck, you could even go to church on Sundays to hear Wally Taylor preach from the roof of the concession stand. In the early '60s, while the Methodist Church underwent renovations, Mr. Hallenbeck donated the use of his theater to the congregation.

And if you were one of the lucky few to attend, you could have seen a flick or two at the short-lived Mayfair Drive-In in Slingerlands. Opened for only two short seasons in 1957 and '58, Don Conahan's "ozoner" was built -- in spite of the protests of his neighbors -- on a 90-acre lot next to his Sunset Tavern on New Scotland Road. In a cruel twist of fate, Mr. Conahan would never see the fruits of his labor, as he died just two weeks before the theater opened.

No, I never saw a film at the Legion Hall or the Mayfair but I did attend the Indian Ladder with my parents. I have a hazy memory of seeing "Le Mans" starring Steve McQueen and diving into the back seat during one of the crash scenes (c'mon, I was only 10)!

This little history lesson sprang from a conversation I had with my parents and led to me starting work on a documentary film and website entitled "Project Movie House." I am chronicling the rise and fall of these movie theaters (and others from my youth) that no longer exist and I could use your help.

If you or anyone you know have stories to share, photographs or memorabilia from any of these theaters or maybe home movies of attending a show I would love to speak with you. I can be reached by phone or email: 603-496-6089 or allen.pinney@gmail.com. Or if you prefer, you can contact the Historical Association and loan/donate any materials to the museum itself. I look forward to hearing from you soon!

(Allen contacted me during the summer to see if NSHA had any information on movie theaters and drive-ins in the town. I met with him this fall and showed him a postcard advertising movies showing at Indian Ladder, a photo on the movie entrance we had recently acquired, and also the plywood "Indian" which used to be on the fence at the drive-in, given to NSHA many years ago. Allen, whose parents are NSHA members, gave us a binder containing copies of pictures, articles and information he had gathered so far, with a promise of sharing whatever he gets in the future as he does more research. I'm sure many of our readers remember these theaters from the town's past. Marion Parmenter)

Early Cottage Industry

Margaret Hotaling Westervelt, *NSHA member*

My grandmother, Maggie Rarick Hotaling, was born about 1875 in Clarksville. When she was a little girl, before zippers and velcro, Troy was already the Shirt Factory City. Apparently, it was even before buttonhole machines had come into use. Shirts were brought out into the country, and ladies made the buttonholes.

Even though she was young, Maggie was instructed by her mother, and became really proficient at the task. In fact, she often said she was able to take just the right amount of thread to make a buttonhole.

The skill never left her, and when I was a little girl, also long before zippers and velcro, she made buttonholes for our clothes. My mother sewed, and made many of our clothes on her trusty Singer sewing machine. In fact, she even had an early electric machine, but the treadle one served her well for many years.

When garments were finished, except the buttonholes, off they went to Grandma's for the finishing touch.

I often wish I knew more details of the shirt-factory buttonhole jobs. I don't even know how much they were paid for their work -- no huge amount, I'm sure. Perhaps someone else has a bit of knowledge which will add to this picture.

From the Membership Chair.....Melanie Ernst

Attention NSHA Members! To help get everyone in the holiday spirit (and to help you find that perfect gift for the person who has everything) NSHA is offering the \$15 Family membership level at the \$10 individual level rate. Please see the enclosed form for additional information.

Also, Business Membership renewal letters will be in the mail in early December.

Thank you to all of our members for your continued support; we couldn't do it without you.

NSHA would like to thank:

Indian Ladder Farms for the cider we have enjoyed after our programs.

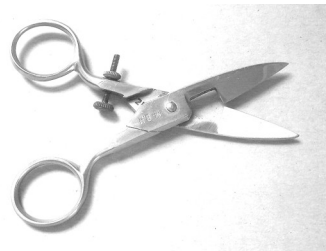
Olsen's Hardware and Garden Center for the Mums donated for the garden next to the sidewalk.

Scotland Yards (formerly New Scotland Rentals) for donating the use of a paint sprayer for our paint job on the barn.

Also, **NSHA Board Member Don Meacham** and his son for painting our storage barn!

Be sure to thank our NSHA Charter Members Martha Slingerland and Sam Youmans

for helping to found this wonderful organization. They have both contributed so much over the last four decades!



What Is It?

Ode to Firewood

Courtesy of the Colonial Fireplace and Stove Center in East Northport, NY

Beech wood fires are bright and clear
If the logs are kept a year.
Chestnut's only good, they say,
If for long it's laid away,
Birch and fir logs burn too fast,
Blaze up bright and do not last.
Elm wood burns like churchyard mould,
E'en the very flames are cold.
Poplar gives a bitter smoke,
Fills your eyes and makes you choke.
Apple wood will scent your room,
With an incense-like perfume.
Oak and maple, if dry and old,
Keep away the winter cold.
But ash wood wet and ash wood dry,
A king shall warm his slippers by.

Happy Holidays!

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Reilly & Son Funeral Home

Smith's Tavern

Stanton's Feura Farm

Stewart's Shops

Voorheesville Hannaford

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

In Case of Inclement Weather

If you are concerned about whether the meeting has been cancelled, please contact Peg Dorgan 768-2852, Peg Neri 765-3125, or any of the Board members listed in the *Sentinel*. It is much too difficult to call all of the membership to let them know.

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**

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

Handicap Accessible

THE SENTINEL

New Scotland Historical Association
P. O. Box 541
Voorheesville, New York 12186