

# *Fly Creeker*

NEWSLETTER of the FLY CREEK AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY (FCAHS)  
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## NEWS BRIEFS

- **Music to our ears ...** Don't forget: this Sunday, July 20, 1997 (not the 21st, as reported earlier), is the Fly Creek Community Music Day -- the FCAHS's only annual fund-raising event. It will be held, rain or shine, at the Fly Creek Fire House beginning at 1 P.M. There is no admission fee; guests are encouraged to bring lawn chairs. Music will be provided by Leatherstocking Bluegrass, The Senior Renditions (with guest fiddler Bill Powers), and The Weir Family. There will be door prizes, a bake sale, and refreshments. Also, the Fly Creek Post Office will mark its 175th anniversary with a special postal cancellation at the Fire House. A limited-edition cachet envelope, featuring the artwork of Freida Snyder, will be available for \$2.00 (including the canceled stamp).
- **Wasn't it grand ...** The FCAHS was represented at the grand opening of the Fly Creek General Store (formerly Aufmuth & Sons') last month. Owner Tom Bouton was kind enough to give us table space to advertise our organization and sell our merchandise. The store opened May 24, and the grand opening was held June 21.
- **Farewell to the Kings ...** Rev. Horace B. King and his wife, Marie, departed Fly Creek for Pennsylvania last month. The Kings occupied valued spots in our community and Society over the past five years, and we wish them well. The new pastor of the Fly Creek United Methodist Church is Eileen Kellogg.
- **Raining on our parade ...** The FCAHS was represented by a fine float at Springfield Center's bicentennial parade on July 4. Jim Fish navigated the float, which included a distinguished crew of charter FCAHS members holding a mock meeting. A summer rainstorm soaked the participants but didn't dampen their spirits.
- **Putting down her pen ...** After three one-year terms as our Secretary, Florence Michaels announced her resignation during the June FCAHS meeting. A replacement is scheduled to be nominated at the Annual Meeting in August. We extend our thanks to Florence -- who also completed two terms each as President and Vice-President -- for her faithful service over all these years.
- **Slowly building ...** With the addition of Jean Neff, our 1996-97 membership total stands at 118.

The FCAHS mourns the loss of Dr. Edward T. Farmer, who died at Cooperstown June 25, 1997. Dr. Farmer, a member since 1990, was a frequent attendee at our meetings, and was our guest speaker on September 25, 1991 (Early Aviation in the Fly Creek Area).

Dr. Farmer was born September 8, 1921 in Buffalo. After serving in the U.S. Army, and getting his D.D.S. degree, he opened his own dental practice in Cooperstown. He operated this from 1954 until his retirement in 1986. Among his many interests, Dr. Farmer was an accomplished pilot and organist.

Dr. Farmer is survived by his wife of 21 years, Mary. Other survivors include a brother, two sons, one daughter, and four grandchildren.

## MEETINGS

The next three meetings of the FCAHS are scheduled for July 23, August 27, and September 24, 1997. Meetings are held in the Fellowship Hall (basement) of the Fly Creek United Methodist Church beginning at 7 P.M., and are open to the public.

Attendees will meet at the church for the July meeting, then car-pool to Adirondack Leather Products, Inc., on Cemetery Road. Owner Greg O'Neil will give us a tour of his business there. The Society's Annual Meeting will be held in August, preceded at 6 P.M. by a covered-dish supper. Annual reports will be delivered, and election of officers will be held. And, in September, Linda Medwid of the Classical Bookstore will speak on "The Etruscan Culture of Ancient Italy: Their Art & Architecture."

The most recent meetings were held on April 23, May 28, and June 25, 1997. In April, Elaine Harvey spoke about "The Old Steere Homestead" on the south side of Route 28. Elaine read from a long 1988 letter by Frederick Dodge (given to us by Martha Dodge), reminiscing about summer stays at the home of his grandparents, Frederick & Evelyn Steere. It was evidently used as a tourist home between 1920 and 1950, when current owner Helen Winne bought it. Also during this meeting, the Society was presented with a copy of *The Cheney's of Otsego and Herkimer Counties, New York and Their Descendants*, a family history by Harold W. Cheney, Jr. of Martinsville, Illinois.

A late program change in May gave us an "Old-Fashioned Sing-Along," directed by Rev. Horace King. Music was provided by Elaine Harvey, Art & Freida Snyder, Carl Baker, and Len Price. And, in June, Hugh MacDougall told us "How the Fly Creek Band Helped Win the Civil War" in a scholarly yet amusing report. In the summer of 1863, Secretary of State William Seward conducted the Civil War Diplomatic Corps (a group of foreign ambassadors) on a tour of New York and surrounding areas. The main purpose was to show-case the strength of the Union, but it also concealed Seward's meeting to encourage the Supreme Court to uphold military draft laws. By consensus of the group, the favorite stop along the way was at Cooperstown, where they were serenaded by the Fly Creek Band. The band's repertoire apparently included only three waltzes, played over and over. [Submitted by Carolyn McLean.]

## RURAL EXPRESSIONS

The October 17, 1996 issue of the Oneonta *Daily Star* included a column by Mariane Kiraly. It shared old-time farming-related expressions and their origins from the book, *A Hog on Ice*, by Charles Earle Funk. Some of these follow; can anyone add any other old sayings and their meanings?

"Straight from the horse's mouth": in early horse-racing days, a horse's age -- critical to competition and rules of racing -- was often verified by examination of its teeth. Thus, this expression implies a reliable source.

"One-horse town": referred to a tiny place of such limited resources that a single horse could supply all the necessary transportation.

"To go haywire": haywire was used as baling twine is today, and would accumulate as hay was used to feed livestock. Lazy farmers used it to "temporarily" fix implements or machinery, never getting around to permanent repairs. This left a disorderly situation in which everything had "gone haywire."

"Hold your horses": to keep a team of horses from getting excited and breaking loose. As applied to people, it means to control one's temper or to have patience.

"Balled up": disoriented and confused. It originally referred to horses' feet becoming packed with soft spring snow until the animals were practically walking on snowballs. The horses would often lose their footing and fall, entangling their harnesses, and causing a state of confusion.

“Til the cows come home”: a long wait. Cows, it is said, would bring themselves home for the morning milking, only to wait with painfully-full udders for their master to get out of bed. The masters were known to go on late-night binges, delaying many a morning milking. [Submitted by Elaine Harvey]

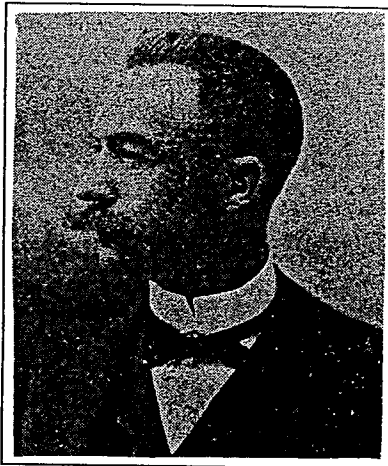
## FLY CREEK MAKES NEWS

The *Fly Creeker* can lay claim to being the hamlet's only current newspaper. But, in the last century, Fly Creek had at least three “real” newspapers: The *Fly Creek Pastoral Visitor*, *Gazette*, and *Hustler*. These papers are on microfilm at the NYSHA Library in Cooperstown.

The *Fly Creek Gazette* debuted in January 1885 as “a semi-occasional paper published at Fly Creek by John B. Hooker, Jr.” (who was 16 years old at the time). The subscription price was listed at 15¢ per year, encompassing ten issues. The four-page, 6x8” publication featured national news (such as the death of Vice-President Schuyler Colfax) and local advertisements. Volume 1, Numbers 1 and 2 are the only issues on file at NYSHA, suggesting that the *Gazette* did not survive past the second issue.

The *Fly Creek Hustler* appeared c. 1893, “published for S. Wilson Cheney & Co., Fly Creek, N.Y.” The 13x20½” pages were filled with a variety of material ranging from poetry to infomercial-type articles, extolling the virtues of products (e.g., Chamberlain's Colic, Cholera and Diarrhea Remedy) presumably sold at Cheney's store. Only one edition of the *Hustler* is on file at NYSHA, but it is identified as “Volume 10, Number 2.”

The best-documented former Fly Creek publication is the *Pastoral Visitor*. Published monthly, the 7½x10” newspaper lasted from April 1882 through April 1884. It included 6-12 pages each month covering Christian life, and activities of the Fly Creek charge (including Fitch Hill, Fly Creek Valley, and Toddsville) churches and other nearby Methodist Societies. There was information on births, weddings, deaths, socials, and music conferences. The *Pastoral Visitor* boasted more than 800 readers, and cost 25¢ per year for subscriptions. However, the publication sought readership rather than money. “If you are not able to subscribe,” said its policy, “you will receive the paper just the same.”



Just as the *Fly Creeker* strives to do, the *Pastoral Visitor* showed an awareness of its future historical value. “There are some things which we mention ... more as matters of history than as matters of news,” it states in one issue. “It should be remembered that our paper is published to be preserved, and these incidents will be looked up with no little interest after the VISITOR has been removed from Fly Creek.” We will plan to have more about the *Pastoral Visitor* in a future *Fly Creeker*.

The *Visitor* was the creation of Rev. Benjamin P. Ripley, pictured at left. Ripley was born July 18, 1853, and married Helen Laura Collins on June 19, 1876. He was pastor of the Fly Creek Methodist Episcopal Church (1881-83) during his 17 years serving Otsego County, including stints in Cooperstown, Laurens, Unadilla, Wells Bridge, and Westford (where he continued publishing the *Visitor* upon leaving Fly Creek). Among Ripley's editorials were a wish that “our village had a better name” and proposal of “further agitation on the matter.” As reported here in Summer 1994, a resolution to change Fly Creek's name was brought before the public in June 1894 -- a decade after Ripley's departure -- in which, ironically, “the affirmative was opened by John B. Hooker, Jr.” The resolution was soundly defeated.

It would be interesting to learn more about these Fly Creek newspapers, particularly the *Gazette* and *Hustler*. If anyone cleaning an attic or closet should come across a stray copy, we would love to see it! [Researched by Carolyn McLean]

## RECIPES FOR SUCCESS

Following are some recipes found in old, hand-written notes from an anonymous Fly Creek resident of the past. We note that these were prepared long before the fear of fat and cholesterol, and we take no responsibility for their reliability. [Submitted by Carolyn McLean.]

### ROOT BEER

1½ gal. molasses  
2 qts. yeast  
1 big pan full of roots: dandelions, burdock,  
& yellow dock. Put in anything else  
you care to: sweet fern, hemlock  
boughs, wintergreen, etc.  
Nearly or quite a bushel of hops  
1 bushel of wheat bran

### SUET PUDDING

1 cup suet, chopped fine  
1 cup raisins, chopped fine  
1 cup sour milk  
1 cup molasses  
1 teaspoon of soda

Stir thicker than cake; steam 2 hours.

Put in wash tubs and pour *boiling water* on till the tubs are full. Stir. Let stand and settle. We dip off and squeeze through a thin strainer. This forms the body of the beer. Fill the barrel *full*.

### HAIR DYE

Taking one part bay rum, three parts olive oil, and one part good brandy. The hair must be washed with the mixture every morning for awhile. The bottle must be shaken before each use.

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