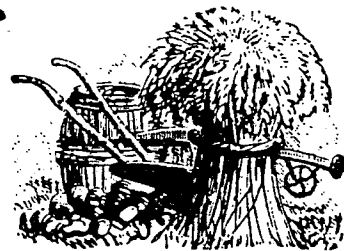


FLY CREEKER

NEWSLETTER OF THE

FLY CREEK AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P.O. Box 87, Fly Creek, NY 13337



VOLUME 5, ISSUE 2 * SPRING, 1993

Editor: Bill Deane. Associates: George Badgley,
Margaret Eldridge, Marie King, Paula Schaeffer.

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BRIEFS

* The last edition of the "Fly Creeker"-- the one in blue print, containing the 1992-93 roll of membership, among other things-- was incorrectly labelled. Instead of "Volume 4, Issue 4, Autumn, 1992", it should read "Volume 5, Issue 1, Winter, 1993". The editor just wanted to see if anyone was paying attention.

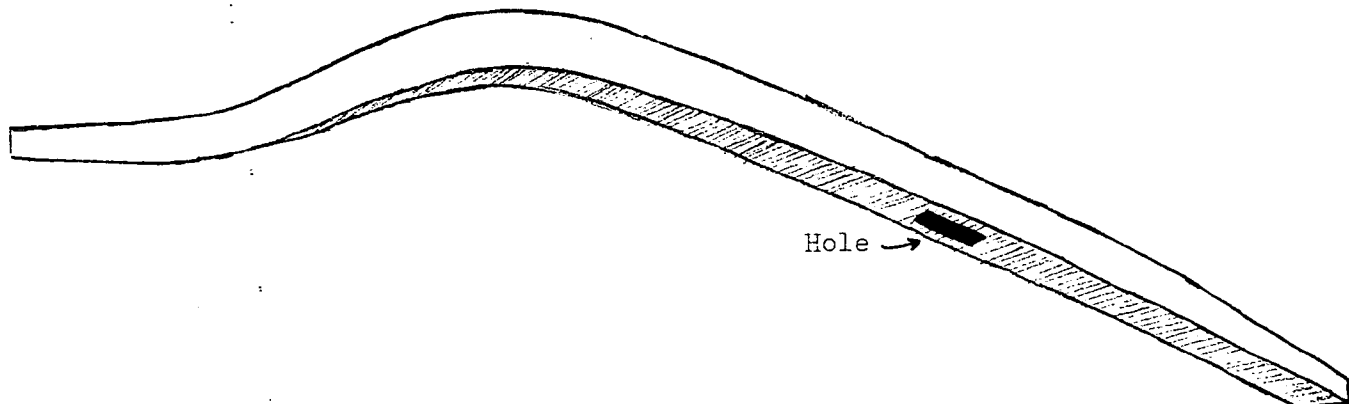
* The Fly Creek Area Historical Society (FCAHS) welcomes its newest member, Helen Winne. Renewals were received from Violet Decker, Edward & Mary Farmer, Beverly Felske, Clarence & Lucille Gilchrist, Tom Heitz, Douglas & Margaret Preston, Harriet Rogers, William & Selma Shepard, Mr. & Mrs. Edward Stack, Bernice E. Vaughn, James & Margaret Wolff, and charter members Ethel Shaw and Jean Shepard. This brings the 1992-93 membership total to 144, fourteen more than last year. Fly Creek's population is about 350.

* Fly Creek lost a piece of its history with the passing of A. Jack Aufmuth. Aufmuth, 62, died at his Fly Creek home on January 16, 1993. He had been sole proprietor of H. J. Aufmuth's Sons General Store since 1965, following 11 years there in partnership with his brother, the late Howard J. Aufmuth, Jr. Jack is survived by his wife, Dottie; two sons, two daughters, five grandchildren, and several in-laws, nieces, nephews, and cousins.

* Craig Haney, youngest member of the FCAHS, took a train to California on January 29, planning to bicycle back to Fly Creek in time for his brother's May wedding. Last we heard, Craig was in Pennsylvania and still pumping away.

* We welcome Dr. James Atwell to the community. Dr. Atwell, a charter member of the FCAHS, is moving to the area from Annapolis, Maryland, and was able to attend his first Society meeting on February 24.

* Sandy Bullard of Middlefield recently found an unusual object in the rafters of a two-story shed at the John Nelson farm in East Springfield. Sketched below, the solid piece of wood measures 16 inches in length. Can anyone identify this implement for us?



OBITUARY

Sally Blanchard died at her home on January 12. Born in Albany, December 19, 1925, Mrs. Blanchard graduated from Albany Teachers College and taught in Lombard, Illinois. She moved here in 1988, serving as a volunteer at Bassett Hospital, and operating the Farm Home at Fly Creek bed & breakfast at her home. She was active in community and civic affairs all of her life.

Mrs. Blanchard was predeceased by her husband, Frank J. Blanchard. She is survived by her mother, Emma Smith of Albany; her brother, Stanley Smith of Bradenton, Florida; four sons: Bruce, Brian, Frank, and David; and six grandchildren.

THE BRESEE HOME



This photo shows the Greek Revival style house belonging to Ruth and Philip Bresee, and located on Stone House Road, Fly Creek.

The acreage originally was part of the Balston Purchase. Following is a history of documented transactions involving the property:

1817-- A. Morehouse conveyed to Human Olmsted.

April, 1819 -- Human & Abigail Olmsted to David Patten or Eben

Morehouse to John Patten (documentation is unclear).

January 16, 1840-- David Patten to son John Patten.

February 20, 1855-- John Patten to Merrick Patten.

May 9, 1873-- Merrick Patten to Janette A. Williams.

August 23, 1876-- Williams to Ann Lum.

1885-- Estate of Ann Lum to Henry & Betsey Brooks. Subsequently conveyed from Brooks to Jedediah Sill.

February 27, 1900-- David Avery (Ex. of will of Jedediah Sill) to Elmer F. James.

March 1, 1909-- James to Edwin M. & Lena Jarvis.

July 5, 1940-- Edwin M. Jarvis to Edwin M. & Mabel Foster Jarvis. Subsequently conveyed to Howard J. Aufmuth, Sr.

April 8, 1948-- Aufmuth to Fred & Pauline Stiglic. The Stiglics later sold to James Kahn.

November, 1955-- Kahn to William Sheffield.

August 24, 1959-- Sheffield to Robert & Louise Cornwell.

May 1, 1980-- Cornwell to Philip & Ruth Bresee.

(Submitted by Dorothy & Peter Martin)

BLIZZARDS OF THE CENTURIES

At the FCAHS meeting of February 24, 1993, the Society was treated to an unexpected and interesting presentation. George Badgley-- in a late substitution for the scheduled program-- spoke about "The Blizzard of 1888", the legendary storm that pummeled New York state in March of that year. George read from the diary of his mother's first husband, George Henry Deuell, who was 14 and living in Dutchess County at the time.

Deuell left a remarkably detailed account of the blizzard, which began in his area on Sunday, March 11, 1888. The storm raged for three days, burying the region with drifts up to 14 feet deep. One of the area's oldest inhabitants called it "the worst snowstorm he ever saw or ever expected to see" (although other cold-timers maintained that, compared to the one of April 14-17, 1857, the 1888 storm was "a mere squall"). The diarist continued the story with accounts of family hardships, snow removal, and flooding that followed the blizzard.

In an eerie coincidence, this meeting was followed just 17 days later by a blizzard of comparable proportions. The Blizzard of 1993 hit Otsego 105 years-- almost to the day-- after the 1888 version, and broke the local records for one-day and one-storm snowfalls. Admittedly, blizzards nowadays do not have the impact of those of yesteryear, simply because we have more sophisticated weather-tracking and snow removal systems. Nevertheless, it was an epic storm that paralyzed the eastern United States last month.

The Blizzard of '93 hit the U.S. at the Gulf of Mexico, and continued a rapid and destructive path northeast through New England. The first flakes touched down on Otsego County early in the morning of Saturday, March 13, and were joined at midday by 40 to 55 mile per hour winds. Temperatures hovered around 10° F., with wind-chill factors of -40° F. The snow and wind continued all afternoon, evening, and night. By Sunday morning, the snowfall had tapered off, but the wind was still whipping it around wildly. Because of this, snow removal efforts before Monday were rather futile. By then, many of us required bucket-loaders, rather than conventional plows or snowblowers, to clear our driveways and end 48 hours of imprisonment within our homes.

Between 7 A.M. March 13 and the same time the next day, 27.3 inches of snow fell on Cooperstown, according to National Weather Service observer Harold Hollis. This broke the one-day record of 23" set on-- you guessed it-- March 13, 1888. All told, the 1993 storm dumped 28.3 inches of snow here, breaking the one-storm mark of 27.4" set December 25-28, 1969.

As members of a Historical Society, we strive to learn about and preserve history, but it is not often that we experience it first-hand. Humbling, isn't it?

SNOW BUSINESS

Cooperstown's Harold Hollis is one of America's more than 10,000 National Weather Service observers, a position he has held for more than 40 years. He maintains local weather records dating back to 1854, including snowfall documentation from October, 1869 to the present. Mr. Hollis notes that the 1992-93 snowfall total (through April 15) ranks fifth on the all-time list, and that another five inches' worth will vault us all the way to second place. On the right is a list of the ten snowiest area winters on record.

Some other winter records: the earliest measurable (at least one-tenth of an inch) snowfall was on October 4, in both 1974 and 1987 (although we had flurries last September 30). The latest was on May 20, 1976. And, the coldest recorded temperature was -34° F. on February 9, 1934.

Winter	Inches
1970-71	179.5
1955-56	129.0
1977-78	128.7
1886-87	126.0
1992-93*	124.0
1915-16	121.6
1976-77	120.9
1969-70	113.1
1946-47	113.0
1971-72	111.8

* Through 4/15.

SPRING MEETINGS SLATED, WINTER ONES RECAPPED

"Researching Your Home: How Old Is It?", is the scheduled topic for the next meeting of the FCAHS, April 28. Linda Norris of the Delaware County Historical Association will be the speaker. On May 26, Nadine Phillips of the Hartwick Historical Society will give a program on "Old Post Cards". And, on June 23 we will hear a presentation postponed from an earlier date: "Farm Outbuildings and Agricultural Legacy", by Richard Walker and Gilbert Vincent of Gallery 53. Meetings begin at 7 P.M. in the basement of the Fly Creek church, and are open to the public.

Our three most recent gatherings were held on January 27, February 24, and March 24. In January, James Cross of Waterville, a representative of the NYSEG Speaker's Program, narrated a slide show on "Barns: a Vanishing Art Style". He spoke of the origins and different styles of barns, lamenting that, of some 100 area barns he has documented over the years, only 34 still stand. Also during this meeting, Elaine Harvey showed two items she is donating to the Society: a handbill for a Fourth of July celebration here in 1910; and a photo of a 1913 dinner party at the home of D. Burditt of Fly Creek.

In February, George Badgley spoke about "The Blizzard of 1888" (see article on page 3). This was followed by an informal exchange of winter-weather reminiscences. And, in March, Larry Gardner presented a "History of Toddsville". Larry has lived in that town for more than 40 years, and authored Recollections of an Early Mill Town in 1974. He drew from that book and other published works, as well as his own personal notes and memories, and brought along various photos and artifacts to accompany his talk. Also during this meeting, it was announced that Otsego 2000-- which has pictures of and dates for all Otsego houses and barns-- had asked us to co-sponsor a public meeting in May, featuring a slide show of some of the area's historic buildings. (Submitted by Paula Schaeffer and Elaine Harvey)

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