

Fly Creeker

NEWSLETTER of the FLY CREEK AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY (FCAHS)

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NEWS BRIEFS

- **Mark Your Calendar ...** Among the Society's special events scheduled for the rest of this year are the following: Saturday, August 26 -- Community Day & Yard Sale (with a street dance from 7-11 PM); Saturday & Sunday, September 23-24 -- quilt show/workshop & luncheon at Heartworks Quilts & Fabrics (10-5 each day, featuring guest speaker Irwin Bear, owner of P&B Textiles); Sunday, October 8 -- harvest brunch buffet; and Sunday, October 29 -- community Halloween celebration. Watch the area newspapers for further details.
- **Label Shopping ...** With this newsletter we begin a new address label system, courtesy of Anne Geddes-Atwell, with help from Cynthia Ekeland. Please check your label carefully, and report any corrections by dropping us a note, or phoning Anne (607-547-5895) or Cynthia (607-547-2177).
- **New Record ...** Welcome aboard to our newest members, Sherlee Rathbone, Mike & Betty Staffin, and Fred & Jean Wyckoff. With those, plus the membership renewals of John, Alison, Karen, Sandy & Molly Phillips, the FCAHS has set a new record for membership. The current total of 193 breaks last year's mark of 186.
- **Snow Excuse ...** The Spring, 2000 issue of the *Fly Creeker* was incorrectly labeled "Winter, 2000." A blizzard on April 9, as the issue was going to press, apparently confused the editor.
- **Worth 1,000 Words ...** A photo of our Society's home appeared on page 17 of the Fall, 1999 issue of *Heritage* magazine. It was in a photo-essay entitled "Picturing the Grange: 130 Years of Progress," by Andrew Baugnet. Mr. Baugnet's photo exhibition, "Otsego County Granges," can be seen at the Smithy-Pioneer Gallery in Cooperstown through August 20.
- **Rummaging Through Our Purse ...** The Rummage and Bake Sale held on April 28-29 raised a total of \$858.15 for the Society. Thanks to everyone who helped make it such a success.
- **Twenty-five Years Ago ...** In June, 1975, the Fly Creek Grange hosted a regional version of the National Grange Needlework, Art and Photo Contests. Needlework category winners were Flora Card, Mrs. William Hughes, Mildred Green, Arlene Pearson, Norma Van Benschoten, Agnes Jordan, Shirley Foster, Dorothy Rathbun, Melodee Briscoe, and Arietta Eent. Art contest winners were Ms. Briscoe and Frances Martin. Photo and slide contest winners were Phyllis Moore, Anna Ritche, Donald Drake, and Claude Robinson.
- **Mysterious Toddsville ...** *Reflections of Toddsville* is a novel by Holly Van Horn, on sale at local bookstores. The book takes place c. 1895, and revolves around real people and places in Toddsville at that time. We're told it features romance with a metaphysical twist, involving time travel.
- **Net Change ...** Please note the editor's new e-mail address: DizDeane@usadatanet.net.

MEETINGS

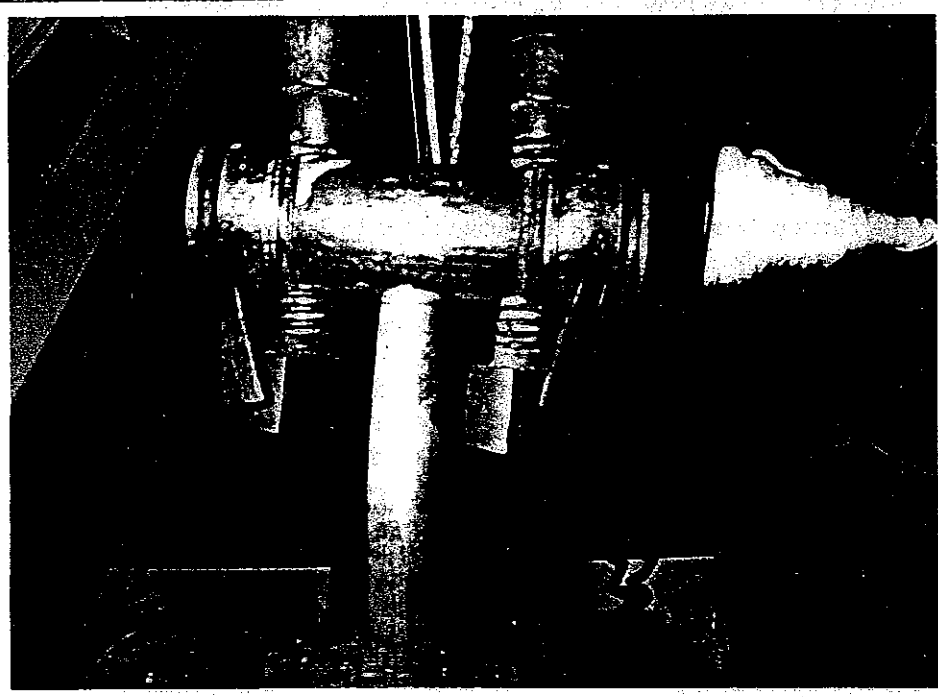
The next three FCAHS meetings are scheduled for July 26, August 23, and September 27, 2000. In July, Dorothy and Pete Martin will speak on "Research on Old Houses of Fly Creek." In August, the Society's Annual Meeting will be held, preceded by a pot-luck supper at 6 PM. Besides the annual elections and committee reports, guest speaker Kermit Weaver will talk about "The History of Social Security." The program for the September meeting had not yet been determined at press time. Gatherings begin at 7 PM at the building formerly known as the Grange Hall on Cemetery Road, and are open to the public.

The three most recent FCAHS meetings were held on April 26, May 24, and June 28, 2000. Our Programs Committee of Elaine Harvey and Freida Snyder continue to consistently provide us with programs that are both entertaining and educational.

In April, Sandy Bullard spoke from her self-published book, *Hop Time!*, which explores hop-growing and harvesting in Otsego County during the nineteenth century. She says she hopes her book will help preserve the memory of the unsung, hard-working people of this area, a goal we all share.

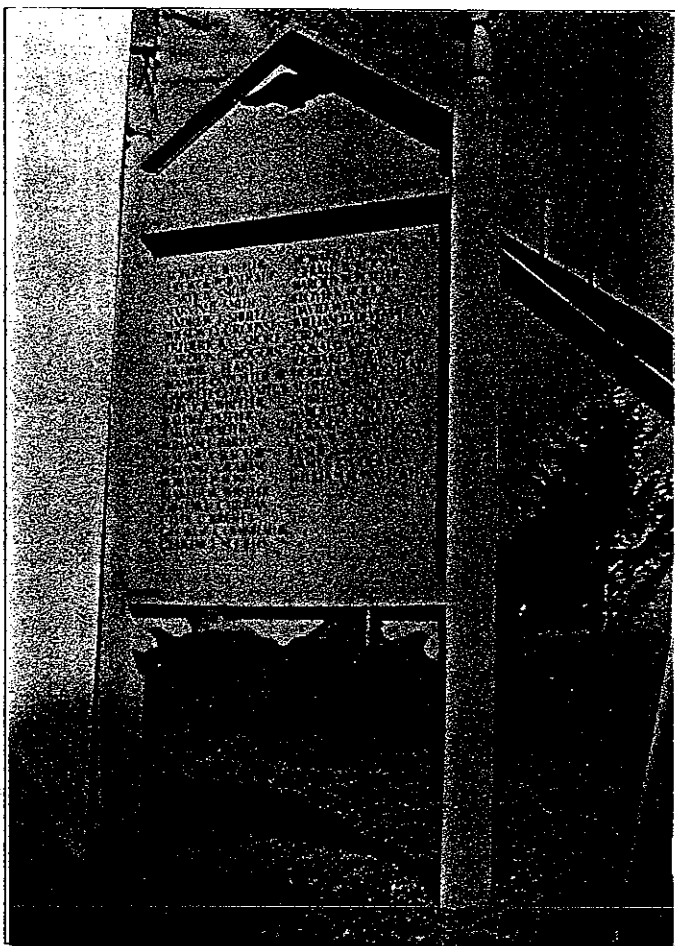
In May, Warren Ainslie showed us that even a mundane subject can be fascinating, in his program on the art of "Making Colonial Corn & Besom Brooms." While he actually assembled a broom in front of us, Mr. Ainslie discussed the history of brooms (from the early Romans and before), along with the folklore and superstitions relating to them. He also discussed the materials used in making brooms, and early broom manufacturing in America.

In June, Dick Smith discussed "Old Phonographs and Phonograph Records." Dick offered an informative and entertaining history of recorded sound, starting with the miraculous invention of Thomas Edison and continuing with the business advances by RCA-Victor. The highlight was Dick's playing of antique records on antique record players, allowing members to reminisce while considering the technological advances we have seen and heard since. [Submitted by Carolyn McLean]



(SEE FOLLOWING PAGE)

HONOR ROLL



The photo to the left shows a "Roll of Honor" which was posted during World War II. Listed on the sign are 41 Toddsville residents who served their country in that war, including two (marked with stars) who lost their lives in the line of duty. People's names were added as they entered military service.

The sign stood in front of the Toddsville School on the east side of County Route 26, one-half mile above State Highway 28. On a few occasions, a party was held there when one of the servicemen came home on leave. The school desks would be moved aside to provide room for dancing and other activities. When the school closed in the early 1950s, the building was sold and converted into a house, now painted red. It is not known exactly when the sign was removed or what became of it.

The 23 men listed in the first column are Robert S. Wheeler, George W. Walrath, Carl Smith, Marvin R. Smith, Andrew Shultz, Wilson O. Crouse, Frederick G. Short, Carlton C. Rogers, Arthur Cleary, Bennett O. Potter, Jr., Garrett O. Devenpeck, Percy R. Wheeler,

Ralph Potter, Earl D. Potter, William L. Harvey, Walter A. Race, Jr., William F. Graham (Merritt Harvey's half-brother), Howard P. Jones, Kenneth W. Wheeler, Gifford Curran, Clyde L. Kroft, George Olmstead, Jr., and Clarence Olds.

The 18 people listed in the second column are Howard D. Johnson, Gerald W. Rogers, Harold W. Potter, Floyd N. Houck, David Welsh, William D. Devenpeck, Grace Welsh, Donald Gray, Richard E. Race*, Douglas I. Olmstead, Alfred W. Page, Robert E. Carey*, Harold A. Caulkins, Douglas Carey, John M. Schultz, Leslie A. Parshall, James Cleary, and William R. Walrath. [Submitted by Merritt & Elaine Harvey]

SPINNING WHEEL

The photo on the opposite page shows a spinning wheel owned by Dorothy E. Torrey (2719 West Creek Road, Newark Valley, NY 13811; telephone, 607-687-1839). The paper label on the spindle reads: "Miners Patent Wheel Heads, Manufactured by S. W. _____ow, Fly Creek. Superior to any ever before made for durability dispatch & usefulness. Warranted cast Steel Spindle."

Does anyone know the full name of the manufacturer, or anything more about this item? If so, please let us know! [Submitted by Jean Neff]

FLY CREEK'S FIRST FAMILY

[Editor's Note: The following are recollections of some of Fly Creek's earliest days, as dictated by Emma E. Jarvis Hicks (1845-1928) to Grace Hicks in 1920. This was passed on to Esther Pope Rhyde, and submitted by her daughter-in-law, Helen Turner Rhyde, to Elaine Harvey.]

My grandfather, William Cooper Jarvis, was the son of Dr. Bill Jarvis and Mary White, who came from Burlington, New Jersey with Judge William Cooper. Grandfather William was the first white male child born on the Cooper Patent, and he was given 100 acres of farmland, located between Fly Creek and Cooperstown, by Judge Cooper.

William was interested in brass manufacturing and had a factory in Fly Creek. Hard times following the War of 1812 led to the failure of the business, and he lost his property, including the 100-acre farm. William was married to Daphne Taylor by Father Nash at the Episcopal Church, Cooperstown, in 1813. Daphne's father, Erastus, gave her a small farm known as the Barras Farm, just south of Babcock Place on Twelve Thousand. William and Daphne had two children, Erastus (who died in infancy) and Lorenzo Taylor Jarvis, my father.

Lorenzo married Abigail Preston and the couple lived at the Barras homestead, since taken down. It was here that my brother Rufus and I were born. Lorenzo later bought the adjoining Turner farm, plus the "Smith Lot" over the mountain and a wood-lot up on the mountain to the north, where we children used to go to pick up chips after the winter wood-cutting.

Grandfather William was a cabinet-maker by trade, and 50 years ago every neighbor had a piece of furniture made by him. His shop (which later burned) was located by the brook in the big meadow near the Gulf road leading to the sugar bush. When maple logs were taken to the mill, care was taken to put aside curly or birdseye maple to make bedsteads, tables, chests of drawers, or desks. These old maple pieces are much sought-after and prized these days.

Grandfather used to play the flute. On winter evenings he would sit by the big fireplace and play while Grandmother would sing hymns. Their big kitchen was the room now used as a living room, and the present kitchen was my grandparents' sitting room, opening into their bedroom.

We children had many chores to do before and after school. One was to pick up stones in the meadow across the road from the house. Another was to cut up apples and feed the geese (Grandmother had a flock of twelve white geese which were plucked twice a year to make feather beds and pillows). Little girls also had to knit all their own stockings, and were obliged to do "20 times around" each day.

The farm produced nearly everything a family needed. Sheep supplied food as well as wool for clothing and blankets. Every farm family grew flax and had a flax wheel and wool wheels for spinning. The dye tub stood in the chimney corner. "Aunt Dillie" Gibbs did the weaving for the neighborhood. Very little money was handled. Butter and eggs were taken to town in exchange for cotton goods, milk for a best dress or a shawl so carefully used that it lasted a lifetime. Everyday shoes were made from home-tanned calf skin, boots from cowhide. Wheat, rye, corn and buckwheat were raised, then ground into flour or meal at the mill. "Trout potatoes" were stored in the cellar.

Hops was the most profitable crop. Charcoal was needed to dry the hops, and Father would make a huge pile of green logs, cover it with earth, and let it slowly burn. If it burned too fast, we children dipped water from the brook and poured it over the burning logs. It took a week to burn the charcoal, and Grandfather sat up nights to watch it.

1948: FLY CREEK GRANGE TURNS FIFTY

[Editor's note: the following comes from an unidentified 1948 news clipping, and was submitted by Carolyn McLean.]

The Fly Creek Grange celebrated its fiftieth anniversary, July 31st at the Fly Creek Grange Hall, with an attendance of one hundred and twenty-five. Guests were present from Hartwick, Fly Creek Valley, Pierstown, Wharton Valley, Worcester, Burlington, Hinman Hollow, Oneonta, Laurens, Roseboom, Hartwick Seminary, Red Creek Valley, and Connecticut.

The Grange has three charter members: Ettie Wedderspoon, John B. McManus and Leona Wood. Ettie Wedderspoon and John B. McManus were present and were presented with fifty year certificates and gold 50 year service pins. Sister Wedderspoon was also presented with a corsage of yellow roses and Bro. McManus with a yellow rose boutonniere.

John B. McManus was the first Master. Other past Masters present were Edwin Jarvis, Kenneth McRorie, Fred Chapman, Robert Jones and Lena McRorie. Mr. and Mrs. Edwin Jarvis presented the Grange with a beautiful oil painting, "A Fiftieth Anniversary" picture, and Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth McRorie presented a picture of the "Seven Founders of the Order."

The stage was very beautifully decorated with flowers and ferns. The Worthy Lecturer, Lena McRorie, presented "An Anniversary Pageant." Those taking part were Myra Roberts, Irene Mozolewski, Louis Tabor, Francis Brooks, Florence Routzon, Frances Stucin, Lena McRorie, Amber Chapman, Richard Tabor, Genevieve and Clifford Snyder, Maggie and Grover McRorie, Stefan Mozolewski, Dora Winnie, Marvin Routzon. The fairies were Emily Stucin and Carol Winnie.

Guest speaker was Past State Gatekeeper, George Ritter, who gave a very inspiring talk on the Grange. Other speakers were Otsego County Deputy Kenneth Augur and Juvenile Deputy Hilda Augur and Pomona Master, Matthias Smith. Kenneth McRorie has served the Grange as Secretary for twenty-six years, and Harold Sitts, Steward, with a perfect attendance for fifteen years.

Ice cream and cake were served and a beautiful large decorated anniversary cake was made by Sister Frances Brooker. The tables were decorated in yellow.

1898: PIERSTOWN GRANGE BURNS

At 3 o'clock on Saturday morning last [April 30, 1898] William Shults was awakened by their pet dog barking and jumping up at a window, and Mr. Shults at once saw that his room was as light as day, that looks out upon the Grange Hall. He arose and gave the alarm. The fire was then discovered to be in the end of the large stabling shed nearest the hall, but it was a very short space of time before the wind carried the heat and flames to the main building, and the work of devastation was swift. At 4 o'clock nothing remained of the fine building and its surroundings. A number of the neighboring farmers had been summoned and gathered at the scene of the fire, but their efforts to save the least were of no avail. The hall was insured for \$800, but the loss of the fine stabling shed and property belonging to the grange, including organ, stoves, dishes, chairs, etc. amounts to fully \$1,000. The beautiful flag, 11x17 feet which was to have been unfurled to the breeze on the approaching Arbor Day with appropriate exercises, was numbered among the loss. No action has yet been taken in reference to rebuilding the Hall. Cause of fire unknown. Truly, a sad calamity has overtaken the members of the Pierstown Grange.

The above was copied verbatim from the May 5, 1898 issue of the *Otsego Republican*. We don't know when the structure was rebuilt, but in 1945 the Pierstown Grange celebrated its 50th anniversary. It is still in existence today. [Submitted by Carolyn McLean]

OFFICERS OF THE FCAHS, 1989-2000

President

Florence Michaels	1989-91
Peter Martin	1991-96
Dr. James Atwell	1996-2000
Richie Carr	2000-

Vice-President

Peter Martin	1989-91
Florence Michaels	1991-93
George Badgley	1993-96
Jim Fish	1996-99
Richie Carr	1999-2000

Secretary

Irwin Curlis	1989-91
Carol Mezger	1991-92
Paula Schaeffer	1992-93
Florence Michaels	1994-97
MerriLynn Fish	1997-

Treasurer

Maxine Potts	1989-92
Alice Lavrinos	1992-99
Cynthia Ekeland	1999-

Trustees

Bill Deane	1989-90
Ruth Bresee	1989-91
Margaret Jensen	1989-92
Alice Lavrinos	1990-93
Elaine Harvey	1991-94
	1999-
Ed Thorne	1992-
Gerda Winnie	1993-96
Craig Haney	1994-
Maxine Potts	1996-99

FLY CREEK AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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