

# *Fly Creeker*

NEWSLETTER of the FLY CREEK AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY (FCAHS)  
Editor: Bill Deane, PO Box 47, Fly Creek, NY 13337; 607- 547-5786; DizDeane@usadatanet.net  
Assistants: Jim Atwell & Anne Geddes-Atwell, George Badgley & Deborah Dickinson,  
Carolyn McLean, Robin Moshier  
VOLUME 13, ISSUE 2 \* SPRING, 2001

## NEWS BRIEFS

- **New Personnel for a New Century ...** Fly Creek has a new minister and a new Postmaster. Thomas Pullyblank took over as interim pastor of the Fly Creek United Methodist Church on January 7, 2001, following the departure of Eileen Cornwell. And Ruthann Perri became the village's new Postmaster about the same time, replacing Kathy Bleuer.
- **Genealogy Pool ...** Carolyn McLean and several other members have formed a committee on genealogical research. Perhaps some of you have family histories or family bibles which would be helpful to this committee. Would you be willing to jot down details of your own family history -- names of your parents, siblings, and children, for example? Correspondence can be addressed to Carolyn in care of the editor.
- **Dust Off those Soft Shoes ...** By popular demand, the FCAHS will resume a schedule of dances beginning in May. Dances will be held on the first Saturday of each month throughout the spring and summer, between 7-10 PM at the FCAHS/Grange Building. The first three dances of the year are scheduled for May 5, June 2, and July 7, 2001.
- **Growth Spurt ...** Welcome to our newest members: Grant Campbell (whom we're glad to have back), Sandra Chase, Dick Cooke, Mary Devenpeck, Dick & Alene Foutch, Charlotte Randall, Gail Rogers, Lois S. Streett, and Mark & Sarah Wilcox and family. These, plus renewals received in the past three months, bring our 2001 membership total to 168. On the following page are additions to the membership list published in the last *Fly Creeker*.
- **Hot Seat for the Cold War ...** Carolyn McLean passed on a copy of the November, 1996 *Oniota*, newsletter of the Oneida County Historical Society. At the time, the Society was helping with a local exhibit called "Utica in the Fifties." One of the more unusual items donated was a portable toilet designed for use in a basement fallout shelter. This was at the height of the Cold War and paranoia about a nuclear war. Perhaps some of our members can contribute artifacts or memories from that time in American history.
- **Dizzy Makes Doffy Daffy ...** At least two names were misspelled in the last issue. June Wyckoff was mistakenly listed as "Jean" in the membership list, and Dorothy "Doffy" Streett was erroneously called "Daffy" in the article about "Fly Creek Valley's Maple Shade Farm." Editor Bill "Dizzy" Deane apologizes.



## SENATOR SEWARD TO SPEAK AT APRIL MEETING

The next three FCAHS monthly meetings are slated for April 25, May 23, and June 27, 2001 (the fourth Wednesday of each month). Gatherings are held at the FCAHS Building/Grange Hall on Cemetery Road beginning at 7 PM, and everyone is welcome.

The April meeting will feature State Senator Jim Seward speaking on the history of the Erie Canal. In May, Esther Hutchinson will outline the "history of buttons." And in June we'll be hearing Cooperstown High School students, reading their entries from the Society-sponsored local history contest.

The three most recent meetings were held on January 24, February 28, and March 28, 2001. The January meeting featured a narrative slide presentation on "Pierstown in Years Past." There was discussion of Pierstown's noted places, such as Leatherstocking Falls, and its celebrated residents, including Erastus Beadle ("Father of the Dime Novel") and Joseph Campbell (President Eisenhower's Comptroller General). The program was given by Sue Drake and Ed Reilly with an audio-tape narration by Katherine Hanor, who was unable to attend. At the February meeting Mr. Bob Banta presented a slide lecture, "Travels of the Trolley," on the Oneonta-to-Mohawk trolley line. Fine slides of vintage post cards and photographs traced the history of the line, which closed down around the beginning of World War II. Pat Yourno recalled that former President Theodore Roosevelt used to take this line when visiting his sister in Jordanville. The March meeting brought Fly Creek's Gary Bush and a program on "Model Railroading." Gary showed a Lionel video illustrating their line and demonstrated several trains from his own extensive collection. [Submitted by Jim Atwell]

### FCAHS 2001 ROLL of MEMBERSHIP (Addendum)

Following are additions to the FCAHS roster published in the Winter, 2001 *Fly Creeker*. Charter members are marked with an asterisk, and contributing or sustaining members are denoted in bold print:

AINSLIE, Vera	JENKINS, Arthur & Ruby
ANDREWS, Arthur & Margaret	JONES, Robert L.
AUFMUTH, Jayne and H. James	KNAPP, Jean
*BADGLEY, George & Deborah Dickinson	LUDLAM, Henry & Toni
*BALDWIN, Rev. Kenneth R.	<u>LYONS, Irving &amp; Joan</u>
BARTHOLD, Dr. Joseph & Joyce W.	MACKIE, Dr. Robert W.
BOUTON, Ron & Carol	MIHALKO, Carole L.
BOYD, William	MOSHIER, Robin
BROPHY, Marion	<b>MUMFORD, Rolan &amp; Trula</b>
<b>CAMPBELL, Grant T.</b>	<u>NEFF, Jean</u>
CHASE, Sandra L.	OPDERDECK, Carl & Cynthia
<b>CLARK, Francis &amp; Margaret</b>	OSTAPECK, Lady
COE, Linda, Jason & Eric	PHILLIPS, John, Alison, Karen, Sandy & Molly
COOKE, Richard & Dora	<u>RANDALL, Charlotte</u>
<u>DEVENPECK, Mary</u>	ROGERS, Gail
<b>ELLSWORTH, Catherine Lake</b>	<b>SHARPE, Stuart &amp; Bonnie</b>
FAMULARE, Dorothy	SITTLER, Lester
FARMER, Mary	<b>STACK, Edward W. &amp; Christina H.</b>
<b>FAUROT, Craig &amp; Pat</b>	<u>STAFFIN, Mike &amp; Betty</u>
*FINCH, John & Jean	STREETT, Lois S.
FISH, Jim & Merri Lynn	<b>TILLAPAUGH, Marjorie</b>
<b>FOUTCH, Dick &amp; Alene</b>	WILCOX, Mark, Sarah & Family
GOODSPEED, Charles H. & Annie L.	* <u>WINNIE, Ernest &amp; Gerda</u>
HELFAND, Elliot & Martha	
<u>FOUTCH, Maud</u>	

## LETTERS FROM THE HOMESPUN ERA

Following is the text of two hand-written letters in the possession of Sally Rezen. Both were addressed to "Mrs. Esther Sprague, Otsego Town and County," and they are reprinted with their original spelling and grammar.

Dear sister it is with pleasure that I once more take my pen in hand to converse with you by the Silent language of my pen we through the goodnefs of god that preserved us are in good health and four of my Children goes to school every Day and I and my two youngest are to home alone O how glad would I be to have you and Mother Come and See me I have wanted to see you since you wrote to Hosiah more than ever I did in the world O that I had wings how soon would I come and see you I expect that you have spent many lonesome hours Since you was left a widow but O remember the promise in Scripture I will be a father to the fatherlefs and a kind husband to the widow

I have a dear little babe to take care of and I have not any way to go to meeting without going on foot and I have not been to meeting but a few times this year I have got so cold and lifelefs in the things of religion that I do not enjoy my self as I have done in times past I hope that it is not the case with you I hope that you live faithful to the lord and pray for me an unworthy Sister give my love to Mother and brothers and Sisters tell them I want to write to them all but I have not paper you must not fail to write to me when harden returns give my respects to mifs Eddy and mifs Bourne tell them I have not forgot them and I hope they remember me tell Mother that I want a pair of cards to card my tow and I want she Should send me a pair If she has any Chance to Send them this winter and when She comes to see me I will try to pay her for them it is hard times here about getting any thing and cards are not plenty in this Country I meant to write more but for want of time and paper I must not write much more I Have not much hopes of ever comeing to Otsego again I have not much flax or wool and I want to have the priveilege of going to the factory and getting weaving as I did when I lived there they have a factory to Rochester but they wont put out weving twelve pounds of wool is all that I have this year for my family I must come to a blose by subscribing myself

your sister Cynthia Westcott

Mendond December 23, 1820

Dear sister it is with pleasure that I take my pen in hand to inform you of our healths wich is good at present but I am afraid it will not be long for the Wooping Cough is in the school and I expect nothing but my children will have it but I must trust to that all wise being who preserves us through sicknefs and health I want to see you all verry much but I don not know when I Shall the time was so Short while I was with my friends that it seems more like a dream to me than any thing else I hope that if ever I Should Come there again I Shall not be so hurried about as I was when I was there you must come and see me as soon as you can Sally \_\_eans letter informed me that Richard had received my letter after I got home so I Shall not mention any thing of my Journey Warren and Hosiah intends to come down this winter if they can get ready before it is to late I am fearful they will not come for Warren has a great deal of grain to thrash and sell to make payment for land before he can come give my love to mother and brother and Sisters and all that takes the trouble to enquire after me

I am in a hurry and it is verry cold and I cannot write much more at present I had like to forgot our bad luck we have met with since I came home while I was down there Samuel brought him a mare which I much please with in hopes that I Should get a chance to go to meting Some times but my hopes ware soon blasted for madison went to the Blacksmith to get her shoe and when he got of to hitch her She fell down and died in an instant and fell on to Madison and hurt his hip So that he complains of it yet we did not know but she was well as she ever was when he went away with her but we found it was the bots you must send me a letter when Davis returns if you can I must Send you a piece if my bonnet and gown for it is the first wollen gown I have made me in four years I am your affectionate sister

Cynthia Westcott

Mendon January <sup>th</sup>, 1822

## FLY CREEK VALLEY SOCIAL LIFE AFTER WORLD WAR II

Soon after moving into our farm (see "Fly Creek Valley's Maple Shade Farm" in the Winter, 2001 issue) in December, 1945, we were greeted by friendly neighbors. There was no telephone service, so people made calls by automobile.

Claytie and Morrison Lamb, who had moved from New Jersey a few months before us, were two of our first acquaintances. They had retired from a bakery business -- one of the largest in the New York area -- and moved to Fly Creek Valley with a friend, Jake, who had been living with them during World War II. Morrison had been born in rural St. Lawrence County, gone to Utica for nursing training, and then moved to New Jersey, where he did maintenance for the bakery machines. He met Claytie while he was in Utica. I'm not sure where Jake came from; I believe he was originally from Pennsylvania. Morrison and Jake were very helpful in getting us organized. Claytie helped me master cooking on a wood-stove. The three of them were very social. They had a TV, and we used to go to their house to watch sporting events.

Early on, Felix and Mary Pernat drove up with their daughter, Shirley, who was a bit older than our daughter Sandy. Felix and Mary were of Slovenian ancestry, and this was the first time we realized there were so many Slovenians in the Valley. Felix told us his family had farmed since about the close of World War I, and he had grown up in the Valley. He was an excellent farmer. He was one of the first in the area to have electricity, and I think he had water in the barn earlier by gravity flow.

John and Catherine Hribar called with their son, who was in grade school. Catherine had grown up almost across the road from the Pernats. John was one of a large clan of Hribars, also Slovenian, and was an electrician and plumber. Catherine worked at home and took care of John's mother as well as their son.

The Rodes were probably our most helpful neighbors. Frances was John Hribar's sister, and Felix was his partner. Felix had been born in Slovenia and come to this country when he was quite young. They had three children. Thelma, the oldest, was a wonderful baby-sitter, and close enough to my own age that we enjoyed each other's company. After Thelma married at sixteen, her sister Eleanor became our sitter.

The Extension Service, operating out of Cornell, started a Home Demonstration Unit shortly after World War II. The Otsego County agent came up the Valley and talked with various long-time residents. They started the Twelve Thousand Unit.

Twelve Thousand was a section of Fly Creek Valley dating back to the 1700s, and named for the number of acres it contained. For the purposes of the Unit, the huge rectangle went from the West road to the East road, up the eastern part to the second east-west road, along that road to another road running south, parallel to County Highway 26, which finally bends left and joins 26 at the corner of our farm property.

All the women living in or near Twelve Thousand were invited to join. The agent explained to the group that there would be various home-making training meetings held around the county. Each individual Unit would send to the training session one member, who would then return to teach the other Unit members. The subject matter consisted mainly of changes associated with the coming of electricity and telephone service.

The Twelve Thousand Unit was wonderfully social. We met for lunch, sometimes even starting in the morning, and stayed together well into the afternoon until close to milking time. Sometimes we did needlework. We learned all about the new appliances coming into our homes. The reports from the training sessions were interesting.

We met almost all our neighbors through the Twelve Thousand Unit, but there was another way: the annual silo-filling circuit. Every fall, when the corn was ripe and there had been a frost, it was time for the farmers to fill their silos. The corn was blown into the silos. A few farmers had tractors which they could hitch up to the silo blowers, but most had a horse affixed to the blower wheel. We never had a horse, but had a small tractor Mike Selan had bought before World War II.

The area farmers -- at least twelve of them -- made a schedule of when each silo was to be filled. Then all of the farmers met at one farm, right after the morning milking and breakfast, and hitched up the silo blowers and the pipes running up the silo. Several farmers harvested the stalks of ripe corn. Others fed it into the blower and up into the silo. Every so often, as the silo began to get full, two or three men would climb in and smooth out the corn. Eventually the silo would be full, about in time for the evening milking. The next day, the men went to the next farm.

The farmers' wives and mothers brought food for lunch, though it was more like dinner. The hostess fixed the main dish and set up the table. Then, for about an hour, everyone laughed and gossiped while the excellent food was eaten. Silo filling went on for up to three weeks, depending on the weather. It was not done on a Sunday, unless it was the first clear day after several days of rain.

Halloween time in Fly Creek Valley meant not only pumpkins and candy. It was a time for hard but social work at the end of the growing season. [Submitted by Lois S. Streett, Boothbay Harbor, Maine]

## OLD JOBS

The following is from the newsletter of the Newark Valley (NY) Historical Society, and shared with us by Pete and Dot Martin. In the newsletter, Ginny Mullen listed more than 100 old occupations, along with their explanations or modern counterparts, put together from various sources. She encouraged it to be shared with other newsletters, and her wish has come true. Following are some of the occupations listed:

**Accomptant** -- accountant.

**Baxter** -- baker.

**Bluestocking** -- female writer.

**Boniface** -- keeper of an inn.

**Brewster** -- beer manufacturer.

**Chandler** -- dealer or trader; candle-maker.

**Chiffonier** -- wig maker.

**Clark** -- clerk.

**Clerk** -- clergyman, cleric.

**Collier** -- coal miner.

**Crowner** -- coroner.

**Currier** -- one who dresses the coat of a horse with a currycomb; one who tans leather by incorporating oil or grease.

**Dresser** -- surgeon's assistant in a hospital.

**Drover** -- one who drives cattle, sheep, etc., to market; a dealer in cattle.

**Duffer** -- peddler.

**Hacker** -- maker of hoes.

**Higgler** -- itinerant peddler.

**Hind** -- farm laborer.

**Holster** -- groom who takes care of horses, often at an inn.

**Hooker** -- reaper.

**Husbandman** -- farmer who cultivates the land.

**Lavender** -- washer woman.

**Leech** -- physician.

**Maltster** -- brewer.

**Monger** -- seller of goods (ale, fish).

**Peruker** -- wig maker.

**Pettifogger** -- shyster lawyer.

**Pigman** -- crockery dealer.

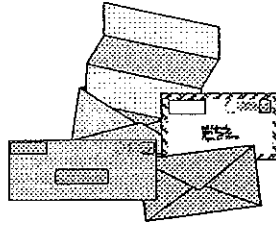
**Puddler** -- wrought iron worker.

**Ripper** -- seller of fish.

**Sawyer** -- one who saws; carpenter.

**Shrieve** -- sheriff.

**Snobscat/Snob** -- one who repairs shoes.



## ***LETTERS TO THE EDITOR***

The *Fly Creeker* will print letters of general interest about area history, the Society, or the newsletter itself. The Editor reserves the right to edit letters for grammar, space, etc. Address correspondence to Bill Deane, at P.O. Box 47, Fly Creek, NY 13337; or e-mail to [DizDeane@usadatanet.net](mailto:DizDeane@usadatanet.net).

"I am working to find history on a house and property I recently bought in Fly Creek Valley. The house is located at 1591 County Highway 26, and includes the property just beyond the house (away from Honey Joe Road), that goes up on the hill. It is a beige house that sits fairly close to the road across from two broken-down barns. I understand this was a farm owned by the Hinds family and the house is approximately 100 years old. I am interested in any type of information that can be found and a picture of the house in its original state would be wonderful.

"I am enclosing a donation for the FCAHS in appreciation for its efforts. I find the information Carolyn McLean has shared with me to be very interesting and it has sparked my interest for more. Thank you for your help."

Teriann Sammis  
1216 Blake Ave., Lansing, MI 48912

---

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

---

---

---