

Fly Creeker

NEWSLETTER of the FLY CREEK AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY (FCAHS)

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MEETINGS

The final two FCAHS meetings for 1999 are scheduled for October 27 and November 17. In October, we will hold a round-table discussion, seeking ideas for the Society's building and activities, particularly in fund-raising (e.g., Music Day, Tractor Fest). Criticism is also welcome, and a suggestion box will be stationed at the Fly Creek General Store until that date. In November, in honor of Veterans Day, Elaine Harvey and Len Price will present a "History of Patriotic Songs." Audience participation encouraged! Gatherings begin at 7 PM at the Grange Hall on Cemetery Road, and are open to the public.

The most recent FCAHS meetings were held on July 28, August 25, and September 22, 1999. July's program was one of the most entertaining this year. In a wonderfully funny and informative talk, Betty Smith of Toddsville recounted her childhood crush on cowboy movie star Roy Rogers. In fact, said Betty, she followed Roy's career through his long life; and she collected hundreds of Rogers-related mementos, scores of which she brought to the meeting. Betty's tone was a perfect blend of warmth and informality. She brought back lots of memories of Saturday matinees for members of a certain age.

In August we gathered for our Annual Meeting, opening with a delicious pot-luck supper. The trestle tables were decorated with flowers and candles, and the meal ended with a variety of desserts, including Irv and Joan Lyons' contribution of ice cream and cake. Annual elections during the meeting installed the following: President, Jim Atwell (convinced to reconsider his retirement, announced in the last issue); Vice President, Richie Carr; Secretary, MerriLynn Fish; Treasurer, Cynthia Ekeland; new Trustee, Elaine Harvey. In addition, formal designations were made to Jim Fish as the Grange Hall's Superintendent of Building & Grounds, and John Phillips as Project Director for Renovation. Departing Treasurer Alice Lavrinos was warmly saluted for her seven years of hard and effective work in that role.

The following month, on a chill fall evening, members entered the Grange Hall to find it cheery and warm: our sheet-metal wood stove, as old as the building, had been re-piped, cleaned, and fired up for the first time in many years. Jim Fish and Ed Thorne did the careful work that all appreciated. The evening's presenter was one of our area's premier farriers, Elizabeth Partlow (whose name was misspelled in the last issue). Liz has been shoeing horses and mules since 1974, and she brought along a range of equipment -- including her 125-pound anvil -- to demonstrate the craft. She didn't bring a horse, but said she could do her demonstration, even without a volunteer from the audience. Metal rang on metal as she shaped shoes for an audience that leaned forward in fascination. [Submitted by Jim Atwell]

The Society mourns the untimely loss of Gerald B. Ellsworth, who died in Cooperstown on July 20, 1999. He was only 53.

Jerry was born in Cooperstown on February 22, 1946, and married Catherine Lake on July 10, 1971. She and their son, Christopher, are among his survivors.

Jerry was very active in community activities, particularly those involving theater, school, and church. As his Oneonta *Daily Star* obituary said, he also "was well known for his walking tours and in assisting the 4C's in bringing Santa Claus to Cooperstown." Jerry joined the FCAHS shortly after presenting "Raisin' Cane" at our June 26, 1996 meeting. He also led off our November 11, 1998 program, "An Evening of Ghost Stories."

NEWS BRIEFS

- **Population Explosion ...** We welcome our newest members, who bring our record 1999 membership total to 186: the Ainslie-Hamblin family; Dr. Joseph & Mrs. Joyce Barthold; Mrs. Ellen Chamberlain; Linda, Jason & Eric Coe; Elizabeth Hamby; Angela Harrington; Jim Hickey; Nancy McRorie; Dr. Carl & Mrs. Cynthia Opderbeck; Bernard & Jeannette O'Neill; and Edwin Tipple.
- **Trick or Treat ...** A Halloween Brunch will be held at the Grange Hall on Sunday, October 31, from 8 AM to 1 PM. the menu will include pancakes, sausage, scrambled eggs, home fries, applesauce, coffee cake, milk, juice, and coffee. The cost is \$4 for adults, and \$3 for children 5-12 (no charge for children under 5), with all proceeds benefiting the FCAHS. Costumes are encouraged, as are food donations -- be prepared for a phone call!
- **Be Y2K-Compliant ...** Annual dues for the year 2000 are due by the first of the year. An application appears on page 5. A list of paid-up members will appear in the next newsletter, so make sure you get your check in on time! And, the Holidays are coming -- how about a gift membership for that friend or relative of yours who hasn't gotten around to joining?

FCAHS PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 1999 Annual Report

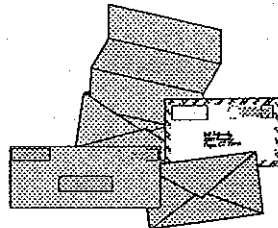
[Editor's note: following is the text of the annual report delivered during the Society's Annual Meeting on August 25, 1999.]

The Publications Committee consists of Jim Atwell, George Badgley, Carolyn McLean, and Bill Deane. We held our annual meeting in the Fellowship Hall of the Fly Creek Church on April 28, 1999. Besides publishing our quarterly newsletter, the Committee handles publicity work for the Society, including posters and news articles about our monthly meetings and special events, and mass-mailing letters on various subjects.

Besides members of the committee, FCAHS members who have been particularly helpful to us over the past year include, alphabetically, Pam Deane, MerriLynn Fish, Elaine Harvey, Alice Lavrinos, Dot Martin, Pete Martin, and Sally Rezen.

The Committee again published four newsletters over the past year, making a grand total of 41 issues and 184 pages since 1989. The Autumn, 1999 issue is expected out in October.

Respectfully submitted,
Bill Deane, Chairman, Publications Committee



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. Please address correspondence to Bill Deane, at P.O. Box 47, Fly Creek, NY 13337; or e-mail to DizDeane@aol.com.

NEWS CLIPPINGS

[Editor's note: Elaine Harvey submitted copies of Fly Creek area-related articles copied from a dozen newspapers dated between 1933-62. Following are excerpts from these, with our thanks to Elaine. The source is or appears to be *The Freeman's Journal*, unless otherwise specified.]

November 15, 1933, Fly Creek Valley. Dorr Van Horn spent Sunday and Monday in Herkimer with his parents, Dr. and Mrs. U. G. Van Horn.

The snow drifts are a leap ahead of town snow fences this season. In some places cars have difficulty in getting through.

Fly Creek. Fly Creek Methodist Episcopal Church. Rev. Frank W. Young, Minister. Sunday, Nov. 19th: 2 p.m. Worship service with sermon by the pastor. Subject, "Will Christ Come?"

January 4, 1939, Fly Creek. Fly Creek Methodist Church. Rev. Wilbur C. Dodge, Pastor. Sunday Services: 1 p.m. Sunday School. Mrs. Paul Michaels, Supt. 2 p.m. Divine Worship. Preaching by the pastor. Holy Communion.

September 4, 1940, Twelve Thousand. Wyllard and Lavern Ainslie are spending the week in New York and attending the World's Fair.

Grange meeting Saturday evening, Sept. 7 at W. J. Ainslie's.

Fly Creek. Howard J. Aufmuth and Harvey Christiansen enjoyed the week-end in New York and at the World's Fair.

The Fly Creek school opened Tuesday morning with the following staff: Principal, Mrs. Florence Michaels; intermediate, Miss Charlotte MacDonald; primary, Mrs. Adelia Kiley; bus driver and janitor, George Meyers. Mrs. H. J. Aufmuth presented each room with a new flag, three feet by five feet to take the place of the old room flags. The previous room flags had been in use over fifteen years and their soiled appearance has not been pleasing. The school and teachers assuredly appreciate Mrs. Aufmuth's thoughtful act.

November 6, 1946, Fly Creek. Mrs. Ernest Winnie and son returned home from the Bassett hospital last Saturday.

Over 300 attended the Otis and Eleanor show at the Grange hall last Friday night.

At the last Grange meeting the following officers were elected for the ensuing year: Master, Lena McRorie; Overseer, Myra Roberts; Lecturer, Sarah Eldred; Steward, Harold Sitts; Assistant Steward, Stanley Stucin; Chaplain, Louise Tabor; Treasurer, Fred Dulin; Secretary, Kenneth McRorie; Gate Keeper, William Seufert; Ceres, Etta Wedderspoon; Pomona, Carrie Sauer; Flora, Mrs. Grover McRorie; Lady Assistant Steward, Dora Winne; Executive committee, Francis Atwood; Pianist, Lizzie Hooker.

January 8, 1947, Fly Creek. Dance, Fly Creek Grange Hall, Wed., Jan. 15. Ernie Russ and His Orchestra. Refreshments.

Fly Creek Methodist Church. Rev. Clarence L. Andrews, Minister. 1:30 p.m. Sunday School. 2:15 p.m. Church service. Theme: "Good Stewards."

September 1, 1948, Fly Creek. At the last Grange meeting the "Graces" were honored with a special program. The stage was the setting for the court for the "Graces" which was decorated with flowers, grain and fruit. The program opened with a drill of six ladies. At this time Flora, Ceres and Pomona were presented with flowers, grain and fruit the symbol of their office. Welcome song "Legend of the Graces" by Myra Roberts. Song "Bud and Bloom." Tableaux "The Harvest." Piano solo, Elizabeth Hooker. A paper read by Edwin Jarvis in regard to Oleo. Pantomime and tableaux representing Ceres, Pomona, Flora at work. Solo by Stanley Stucin. Reading the Psalm of our Grange by the Worthy Lecturer. Flower contest, Frances Brooks was the winner of the vase of flowers. Mr. and Mrs. Glenn Gray of Springfield Grange were guests. The Service and Hospitality committee held a party at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Clifford Snyder. The proceeds went toward the new table covers.

December 15, 1948, Fly Creek. Smith's Feed Store. D & H Coal, Mobil heat fuel oil, Kasco feeds. Smith's Dairy and Poultry Feeds -- Custom Grinding and Mixing. Fly Creek, Phone 326-W.

Bouton's Greenhouses, Fly Creek. Cut flowers, corsages, funeral designs, potted plants. Free delivery. Phone Cooperstown 398-F-2. (Continued on following page.)

NEWS CLIPPINGS (Continued from Previous Page)

The Neighborhood club will hold their regular meeting December 16 at the home of Mrs. Lee Winnie. This will be a Christmas party. Each member is requested to invite a guest. There will be an exchange of gifts. Remember your guest. Dinner will be served at 12:30.

A Christmas party will be held at the Grange hall on December 18 for Grangers and their families. Gifts will be exchanged. Each one to bring a twenty-five cent gift for a man or woman and the children will also bring a gift. Please bring popcorn and candy.

July 12, 1950, Fly Creek. Miss Betty Susman has returned home from Little Falls after spending a week with her grandparents.

Mrs. Mabelle Tice of Washington, D.C., was a week-end guest at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Fred Weigel.

Toddsville. The 39th Home Bureau Unit will have a picnic Wednesday, July 19, at the home of Miss Margaret McManus on the Lake road. Please bring table service.

October 19, 1960, Fly Creek. Mr. and Mrs. Paul Michaels entertained about 20 members of the family on Sunday, October 16. The occasion was a celebration of the 56th wedding anniversary of his father and mother.

February 21, 1962, Fly Creek. Mrs. Walter Elkan, RD., returned to her home last Friday from Bassett Hospital. Mrs. Elkan fractured her hip four weeks ago and is now recuperating on crutches.

April 5, 1962, Fly Creek (The Otsego Farmer). Fly Creek Methodist Church, Fly Creek, N.Y. The Rev. Albert F. Almstedt, Minister. Sunday, April 8 -- 5th Sunday in Lent. 9:30 a.m.-- Morning Worship and Sermon. 10:30 a.m.-- Sunday School.

DEATH of the BADGER PLANT

The December 31, 1958 edition of Cooperstown's *Freeman's Journal* contained an article about the Badger Horse Power Works factory in Fly Creek. The century-old plant, located "just south of the four corners on the Toddsville road," was in the process of being torn down.

The factory was said to have been built by Asahel Jarvis, of the pioneering Fly Creek family. The Jarvises "were engaged in the manufacture of machinery, guns and all types of equipment used about the countryside." Meanwhile, Orestes Badger had disposed of his foundry to Charles Metcalf and H. Bliss, and he was looking for a new home for his business. Badger bought the Jarvis building in 1828, making the following public announcement late that summer:

"To manufacturers -- The undersigned takes this method of informing the public that he has purchased the establishment of (Chester and Kent) Jarvis in Fly Creek, Otsego County ... which is being put in complete repair for building cotton and woolen Carding and spinning machinery and is now ready to contract for building any of the various kinds of machinery in use for those purposes. He intends to turn his attention principally to the building of Cotton Machinery, and is at considerable expense adding the necessary apparatus for this branch of the business. (Signed,) Orestes Badger."

Over the next 22 years, Badger manufactured many things, including tread power for horses, power-driven saw equipment, and a popular threshing machine -- the Badger Undershot Thresher -- which he invented. Following his death in 1850, his son, Ezra W. Badger took over the business. Ezra proudly reminded the public that "there has never been a single machine returned or condemned, and there are hundreds who will testify to their value and usefulness." At the State Fair, Badger's machines took first prize on portable saw mills for farm use, and second prize on Horse Powers.

George Gross took over the business in 1872, renaming it Otsego Agricultural Works. Later it was known as Novelty Works. By 1958, the building was just a ghostly reminder of Fly Creek's former period of prosperity. According to the *Journal*, "For the last fifty years it has been little used and has reached such a state of decrepitude that it had to come down." [Submitted by Elaine Harvey]

THE LEGACY OF HONEY JOE

In one of the "Reminiscences of Times Past" FCAHS meetings, a member recalled the name of "Honey Joe." Joe was a notorious Slovene bootlegger of the Fly Creek Valley area during the Prohibition Era, and the road he lived on, off County Route 26, bears his name. The January 17, 1978 Oneonta Daily Star had a feature article, written by John Lough, about this character and his product. Excerpts follow:

"Honey Joe, with his crocks and beehives, practiced an art as old as Egypt, the making of mead or honey wine. Only up in the north end of Otsego County where I was born and raised, they called it metheglin. And metheglin was one of the commonest -- and safest -- of the potions consumed by us of the younger generation when we started to wander from the temperance fold.

"Easy to make and inexpensive, it was stock in trade for many of the county's bootleggers back in the tail end of 'dry time' before Franklin D. Roosevelt got elected and repealed the Volstead Act. All the ingredients for metheglin are easy to come by. You need a crock or tub or jug. You need some honey and some water and some yeast. You need some spices to taste. The number, quantity and kind are up to the palate of the imbiber.

"Without the spices what you have is the same honey wine they were making as long ago as history records. The ancient Greeks loved it and later on the Anglo-Saxons used the basic recipe to make their 'nut brown ale.' In fact the word 'beer' is the direct descendent of the old saxon word for bee, 'beo,' and some old world taverns still use a picture of a beehive on the sign.

"However it came out, metheglin was as healthy a potion as ever slaked a thirst. Mild -- even when fairly well aged -- it could be imbibed in some quantity without ill effect. Nevertheless it has sufficient 'kick' as to lend the requisite gaiety to any occasion.

"Honey Joe is gone now and I don't know anybody who makes metheglin any more in Otsego County. They still make it further south in the Appalachians such as in the mountain country of North Carolina.

"Before Honey Joe departed wherever in the hereafter he may have gone, he added to the experimentation of the Greeks, the Romans and the Saxons, and put some metheglin through a still ... Ken Morris up at Hyde Park ... has the last bottle of distilled metheglin in the world as far as I know ... And that is the legacy Honey Joe left." [Submitted by Carolyn McLean]

**2000 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION
FLY CREEK AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P.O. Box 87, Fly Creek, NY 13337**

Name(s): _____ Renewal ___ New Membership ___

Address: _____ Telephone: _____

Check applicable box(es):

- Please register me as a member of the FCAHS. Enclosed is a check for \$10.
- Please register us to a family FCAHS membership. Enclosed is a check for \$15.
- Please accept the enclosed tax-deductible donation, in the amount of \$ _____ (minimum \$20), and enroll me/us as a contributing/sustaining member(s).

BYRON J. BOUTON

Byron J. Bouton was born in either Berne or Rensselaerville, Albany County, NY, but spent most of his life in Otsego County and nearly half of it in Oaksville. His life began May 3, 1850 (or 1851, by some sources), as the youngest of eight children (six sons) born to Ezra and Sally Sutherland Bouton. Byron began his work career in 1874, after learning the trades of stone mason, bricklayer, and carpenter in Oneonta. Among the building projects he worked on were Bassett Hospital and the Otesaga Hotel.

Byron married Ida Elnora Gay of Exeter on September 17, 1884, beginning a union which lasted more than half-a-century. They moved from Exeter to Oaksville shortly after the turn of the century. The couple had three children, all of whom lived in this area: Erastus Bouton, Frank J. Bouton, and Mrs. George H. Turner. The three produced twelve grandchildren for Byron, including Frank's son Ron Bouton. Ida died July 3, 1937.

The *Oneonta Star* had a feature article about Byron on the occasion of his 89th (or 90th) birthday in 1940. Bouton was still working at the time, walking to Cooperstown and back to assist son Erastus in the building of a 60-foot stone wall. Byron also actively pursued his hobbies, which included cabinet work and fishing. He offered the *Star* his secrets for a long life:

"Keep traveling to keep young and to be able to work ... Get up in the morning, eat a big breakfast, then do some work. At noon eat lots of meat and potatoes and after some more work eat pork and beans, puddin' and milk for supper. Then go to bed at 8:30 every night."

Shortly after suffering a paralytic stroke, Byron Bouton died at the home of his daughter in Schuyler Lake on March 28, 1943. [Submitted by Ron Bouton]

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