

# *Fly Creeker*

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

- **Tribute ...** Beverly Felske is the first honoree of the Fly Creek Area Historical Society's Tribute Program. Beverly Irene Campbell was born July 4, 1924, and lived in Fly Creek for the first 18 years of her life. She graduated from Cooperstown High School and married Harold Felske at Christ Church in Cooperstown. Beverly – who had two daughters, five grandchildren, and two great-granddaughters – was a special friend of Sally Van Horne (Rezen), Betty Wood, and Clemma Fritts (Turner). Beverly died in Melbourne, Florida on July 6, 2003, aged 79. A tribute gift in her memory was given to the Society by Grant T. Campbell of Johnsonville, New York.
- **It's Their Treat ...** Reminder: those in charge of refreshments for the first three meetings are Freida Snyder & Elaine Harvey (January), and Inge Roemer & Judy Thorne (March). Because of the covered-dish supper in February, no refreshments will be needed.
- **Genealogical Help Wanted ...** Three out-of-state people visited the FCAHS building over the summer, seeking genealogical information on Fly Creek area families – can anyone help them? Mel Huddleston (910 N. Easy St., Payson, AZ 85541) is looking for information on the Cheney, Cook, and Hoke families of Fly Creek. Anne & Robert Schmalz (22 Ashland St., Dorchester, MA 02122) seeks information on Piara Parsons and William Chauncey Harp (Where was he from? When was he Town Clerk of Exeter?).
- **Clerical Longevity ...** Pam Deane, Otsego's Town Clerk, recently completed her 12<sup>th</sup> year in that position. According to Town records dating back to 1825, the only people to serve longer in that post are George Pomeroy (1825-40) and Floyd Mumford (1930-44).
- **Position Filled ...** Tom Heitz, a Fly Creek resident and former FCAHS member, was recently appointed as the Town of Otsego's new Historian. He fills the vacancy left by Marion Brophy's death last May 22.
- **25 & 50 Years Ago ...** Here are three recent Fly Creek-related entries from local newspapers, looking back at news items from 25 and 50 years ago. The bottom two were submitted by Elaine Harvey:
  - Daily Star*, October 27, 1953 – Otsego County Rural Letter Carriers' Association and its auxiliary re-elected most of their officers at their annual meeting Saturday in Fly Creek Grange Hall ... (Among the) auxiliary officers elected (is) Mrs. Kenneth McRorie of Fly Creek, vice president."
  - Daily Star*, November 10, 1953 – Carol Winnie has been elected president of the Cheerful Chicks 4-H Club of Fly Creek. Other officers elected are Patricia Aufimuth, vice president; Joanne Winnie, secretary; Lacey Smallwood, treasurer; Joan McManus, news reporter.
  - Freeman's Journal*, November 8, 1978 – Big Bear Supplies, a new industry situated on the old Parslow farm, Parslow Road, Oaksville, is a project of the Hargrove brothers. At present, all three brothers [Kevin, Bruce, and Ted] are in residence in the farm... They purchased the place from Bill and Marge Okvist. The brothers manufacture and handle a full line of trapping supplies. They feature instant death traps and also deal in wild furs and hides.

### NEWS BRIEFS, Continued

- **Members Only ...** Final reminder: dues for 2004 were payable by January 1. We had 165 members in 2003, but only 57 are signed up for '04. If your name isn't listed among the list of paid-up members on page 5, please use the application on that page to renew now. Please also consider a gift membership or the FCAHS tribute program. And welcome to our newest members, Edwin & Adele Johnson.
- **Going Postal ...** Pete Martin submits an evolution of first class postage rates, which is helpful in dating old letters. Postage stamps were used beginning in 1847, and cost 2¢ starting on July 1, 1882, and 3¢ starting on November 3, 1891 (?), before the price decreased after World War I. Following are the rate changes since 1919:

Date	Amount	Date	Amount	Date	Amount	Date	Amount
7/ 1/1919	2¢	5/16/1971	8¢	11/ 1/1981	20¢	1/ 1/1995	32¢
7/ 6/1932	3¢	3/ 2/1974	10¢	2/17/1985	22¢	1/10/1999	33¢
8/ 1/1958	4¢	12/31/1975	13¢	4/ 3/1988	25¢	1/ 7/2001	34¢
1/ 7/1963	5¢	5/29/1978	15¢	2/ 3/1991	29¢	6/30/2002	37¢
1/ 7/1968	6¢	3/22/1981	18¢				

### MEETINGS

The first three FCAHS meetings of 2004 are scheduled for January 28, February 25, and March 24. In January, Dominick Reisen will speak about the newly-formed Otsego County Historical Association, of which he is President, and how it will interact and cooperate with local historical societies like ours. In February, following a covered-dish dinner at 6:00, Peter Martin and Richie Carr will talk about Fly Creek's oldest cemetery, the Old Chapel Burial Ground, which they have thoroughly documented with a written and photographic survey. The tentative program for March has Dr. Sherilynne Lacy, Assistant Professor of History at Hartwick College, speaking about "Women, Doctors, and Medicine in the Late Nineteenth Century."

FCAHS meetings are normally held at the FCAHS Building/Grange Hall on Cemetery Road, Fly Creek (one-tenth of a mile from the blinker light) on the fourth Wednesday of each month. However, due to anticipated snow build-up there, plan on going to the Fly Creek church's downstairs Fellowship Hall for the upcoming three meetings.

Please also mark your calendar with the remaining meeting dates for the year: April 28, May 26, June 23, July 28, August 25 (Annual Meeting, preceded at 6:00 by a covered-dish dinner), September 22, October 27, and November 17 (the third Wednesday, so as not to conflict with Thanksgiving). As usual, there is no meeting in December.

The final two FCAHS gatherings of 2003 were held on October 22 and November 19. In a well-orchestrated event at the October meeting, the Historical Society welcomed eight of last year's candidates for Town offices: John Schallert and Tom Breiten for Supervisor; Nancy Iverson, Les Weir, and Wes Ciampo for two Town Board positions; and Jim Wolff, Dora Cooke, and Lawrence Pelovsky for two Town Justice positions. Each candidate briefly addressed the attendees, then participated in a question and answer session. Breiten, Iverson, Weir, Wolff, and Cooke were the winners in November. In his last full day in Otsego County before moving to Arizona, outgoing Supervisor Bill Gates spoke about the Town of Otsego and his four years in office in November's "Hail and Farewell!" program. Bill expressed pride in leaving the Town debt-free for the first time in many years. Many of Bill's former co-workers were on hand to offer a farewell gift and testimonials about his years of service.

## LETTERS of the LAW

[The following is the text of a letter in the possession of Sally Rezen. It was written in 1847 by O. Ellsworth and addressed to Col. H. B. Sprague, Esquire of Cooperstown. It is copied with its original grammar and spelling. Note that Wisconsin did not become a state until 1848, and that James K. Polk was U.S. President from 1845-49.]

Milwaukie W.S. Jan 10 1847

Dear Sir I have delayed writing to you longer than I ought to have done. I write so little it is quite a task for me to undertake. I recieved your draft in due course of mail. Once you wished me to say whether I thought your charges were too much. I think that is a charge you are verry unlikely to have brought against you in a hurry, I must take the liberty to congratulate you though at this late hour on your accession to double blessedness. I understand that Austin has not done as the writings require of him. In that you must be the judge and if you think best put him through. Were I there I should disturb him some in matters he alleges he brought of me as it is I shall let it go for the present. The writings are strong enough to hold him + I hope you will make him toe the mark for he has got more things wrongfully than he would have got honestly in some time. I wish you would pay George Story nine dollars for a trunk + Mr Shaw for getting those hop roots whatever he demands. I never heard a word from them since they started. better luck next time. Orlando said something in reference to your letting the place. You must act your own judgment in reference to that as far as I am concerned. I only reserve the privilege of obtaining a barrel or two of hop roots if I can get any one to take charge of them through, which I think I can in the spring. I wish you would pick of that when you let the place you doubtless can obtain as much as though you made no reserve any how I want the roots + I think quite as much of \_\_\_\_\_ hops as any other. I was a good deal disappointed in not getting them last spring I think they would do well here. There is a yard about twenty five miles from here, the only one in the Territory that I know of. I have seen a specimen of this hops I think they was a verry inferior article + not much "taller" in them. I have heard of people's gifts laying in thier heels but never any greatness in partickular attached to a mans "boots." What a pity tis that some people as well as others are not to the "manor born" + too born lucky, it is better to be born so than rich, some have the faculty to make others cheatery enuse to thier benefit. We have had no snow nor cold weather till New Years day, the weather has been singularly mild + fine till then, when we had about six or eight inches of snow which makes fine sleighing + weather cold enough for three days past. Wheat is 50 a 54 corn 30 a 34 oats 16 a 18 pork 16/ a 18/ per hundred other things to match. Our Territory has just been delivered of a convention to form a state Constitution for the dear people. It is quite too democratic to suit anybody. It prohibits banks the buying + selling drafts under a penalty + the circulation of notes under twenty dollars, & allows a man to hold forty acres of land or property to the amount of a cool thousand beside the wife can hold all she can get by gift devise or purchase all to be free from execution for the husbands debts. What a pity tis our assembled wisdom took what was said by the party for effect + as in contradistinction to the whigs in earnest and have adopted A hard money currency. Bitter will be the effect upon wisconsin if they adopt this Constitution - she needs credit capital +c. Your man Polk gets it endways out here by people concerned in navigation + all use more or less, for vetoing the harbor bill. We have piled up here a steamer that cost sixty thousand dollars besides her cargo damaged + a liberal sprinkling of small craft to keep her compay. Milwaukie has in agitation the building of a Railroad to the Mississippi which I think will soon be done. the magnetic telegraph is in contract to be put through to here, there will be no chance for rogues here much longer they will have to emigrate. "We are a great Country a growing Country.. I wish if you think of it some time you would tell Ball's the butchers that I have found out the whereabouts of John Sherwood to be about thirty miles from here. I shall have business that way soon + will get the bill I took from them if possible.. they may think I have got it + neglected to transmit to them. I wish you would prove a better correspondent than I do I should like to hear from you often. My better half joins me in wishing you all prosperity + happiness with your new wife +c +c I have the honor to subscribe myself Your Most

Obedient Friend + Servt  
O. Ellsworth

## DAVID SHIPMAN: FACTS and FICTION

A small 1971 booklet, *Daniel Boone* by Bertha Barnes, states that Boone was the "prototype of James Fenimore Cooper's Leatherstocking Tales." This was also given as the correct response on a recent episode of the game show JEOPARDY! Of course, we know that the same claim has been made on behalf of Fly Creek's own David Shipman.

Larry Gardner, in his *Recollections of an Early Mill Town: Toddsville*, quotes from Cuyler Carr's article in *The Farmer's Journal*, March 18, 1927. Carr's grandparents told him they remembered Shipman, with a grandmother recalling fright at David's wild appearance, and a grandfather claiming to have been at the burial of Shipman's wife. His memory of that event concurs with that in Jim Atwell's article in the Spring, 2003 *Fly Creeker*.

Continuing in the 1927 article, Carr states that Shipman lived at the point where Oaks and Fly Creeks merge, called Shipman Lot. The burial ground, Shipman Burying Lot, was set near his cabin, until it became too wet for graves. David was buried in the Adams Cemetery. He had a son who had a large family of children on a farm which, until recently, had been occupied by Tony Cop and his mother.

In contrast, according to Federal Census records researched by Alan Taylor and reported in his book, *William Cooper's Town*, David Shipman was married but had no children. David was born in Connecticut about 1730, and moved to Hoosick, NY in 1772. Other records showed that he retained property in Hoosick even after moving to this area about 1787, although no deed for him was ever recorded in Otsego County. Shipman's name appears on a very old map as a settler with a cabin where Oaks Creek enters the Susquehanna River. This is also where land agent John Christopher Hartwick demanded that Cooper have "Shipman a wicked intruder" removed from the premises. It seems obvious that this conflict inspired Cooper's son, James Fenimore Cooper, in his book *The Pioneers*.

However, the author was reportedly annoyed when anyone suggested that his most memorable character was not totally from his own imagination. Larry Gardner offers the following, from *James Fenimore Cooper: The Leatherstocking Saga*, edited by Alan Nevins of Columbia University: "In the preface to *The Deerslayer*, Cooper remarks that the physical Leatherstocking was a composite of several frontiersmen he had known in early life, but that in mind and spirit he was purely a creation ... the pioneer seen from a poetical point of view. To some extent the portrait was affected by Daniel Boone ... It seems clear, however, that the character of Leatherstocking was not at first planned, but was found by a happy accident, and grew upon the author. Cooper had seen in boyhood an old hunter named Shipman about Cooperstown; in pursuits, rude accoutrements, and speech a typical pioneer unhappy at being overtaken by civilization. He introduced the man into *The Pioneers*."

Later, the author's daughter Susan Cooper wrote that her father must have had at least a vague recollection of the old hunter named Shipman, who brought venison to their home. Alan Taylor reports that Shipman died in Otsego County on February 28, 1813, with no mention of his burial site.

Bob Jones, the son of the long-time Fly Creek Hardware store owner "Jonesie," is an FCAHS member living in Texas. Bob recalls, as a child in Fly Creek many decades ago, seeing Shipman's clearly-marked grave in the cemetery of the Fly Creek Presbyterian church (organized 1828), across the road from the FCAHS building. This grave was not located in Bill Deane's recent, cursory check of the cemetery.

There are also conflicting accounts in the *History of Otsego County, 1740-1878*. In this book Elder Bostwick, a Baptist minister from Hartwick, claims to have been at Shipman's wife's burial. But long-time Cooperstown resident Calvin Graves says he knew Shipman well, and there was no wife. Meanwhile, Aden Adams and Colonel Cheney do not question that Shipman had a son with a large family.

It's not what one does or whom one knows, but who writes about one. Almost 200 years after David Shipman died, we are still talking about the old squatter. [Submitted by Carolyn McLean]

TRIBUTE PROGRAM

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

To participate, please fill in information below and make check payable to FCAHS Tribute Program:

THIS TRIBUTE GIFT OF \$ \_\_\_\_\_ IS GIVEN BY: PLEASE NOTIFY:
Name \_\_\_\_\_
Address \_\_\_\_\_

IN MEMORY OF / IN HONOR OF (circle one): Name \_\_\_\_\_

OCCASION (circle one): Birthday Anniversary Wedding Graduation Birth
Get Well Thank You Promotion New Home New Job
Communion Confirmation Bar/Bat Mitzvah Other \_\_\_\_\_

2004 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION
FLY CREEK AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P.O. Box 87, Fly Creek, NY 13337

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Renewal \_\_\_ New \_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_ @ \_\_\_\_\_

- Please register me as a member of the FCAHS. Enclosed is a check for \$10.
Please register us to a family membership (note: this extends to all family members living in one domicile). 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).

FLY CREEK AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY: 2004 Roll of Membership

- AINSLIE, Michael
AINSLIE, Vera
BOYD, William V. & Rita
CAMPBELL, Grant T.
CARR, Richard D.
CARR, Richard H. & Ann
CHENEY, Harold W. & Waltraut
DAVIS, R. Helen
\*DEANE, Bill, Pam & Sarah
EKELAND, Cynthia G. & Anita Graham
ELLSWORTH, Catherine L.
FAUROT, Craig & Pat
GLAZER, Steven & Christine
HANOR, Katharine B.
\*HARVEY, Merritt & Elaine
JOHNSON, Edwin & Adele
KNAPP, Jean
LARSEN, Doris M.
\*LAVRINOS, Nicholas & Alice
LYONS, Irving V. & Joan
MARTIN, Homer & Leila
\*MARTIN, Peter L. & Dorothy J.
McLEAN, Carolyn S.
ORILIO, Nancy
PALMER, Peter
RANDALL, Charlotte
REZEN, Paul & Sally
ROBERTS, Susan
SMITH, Joan S.
SMITH, Russ
\*SNYDER, Arthur J. & Freida
SNYDER, Ben & Julie
STACK, Edward W. & Christina
SUSMAN, Elizabeth & Robert Grodd
STAFFIN, Mike & Betty
VAN HORN, James R.
\*WYCKOFF, George W.
\*= Charter Member.
Bold = Contributing/Sustaining Member.

**WHERE THERE'S A WILL ...**

Art Andrews shares with us his "translation" of the 1836 last will and testament of his ancestor, Zattu Andrewson (the "on" was eventually dropped by the family). The will was written in old English, thus the need for translation. Zattu would died in February, 1839, and be buried beside his first wife.

In the name of God Amen. I Zattu Andrews of the town of Otsego & County of Otsego & State of New York being of sound mind and memory do make & publish this my last Will & Testament to manner & form following: I give to my wife Lois two hundred dollars at my decease & she take care of herself in lieu of dower, she is to take her clothing.

I give my daughter Abigail Aplin fifty dollars should she leave my house, or she may make it her home at my house as long as she remains a single person without the fifty dollars as mentioned above.

I give & bequeath to my granddaughter Alcina Abigail Carpenter all my real and personal estate to her & her heirs forever if she have any, otherwise my property to return to my children & grand children at her decease except the reservation of one quarter of an acre of land, a family burying [now called Adams Cemetery, on County Route 26 south of Day Road], where my first [wife, Amy Tourtelotte, who died May 1, 1834] is now buried.

The goods in my possession, money & clothing left by my daughter Amy to go to my [11-year-old] granddaughter Alcina Abigail.

I give to my sons Abraham T. Andrews and Olney Z. Andrews one dollar each the above bequest to be paid should there be enough remaining after discharging my just debts & funeral expenses.

I hereby appoint Laban Mathewson the Executor of this my Last Will & Testament. In Witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand & seal this twenty-fifth day of April 1836. I hereby revoke all other Wills made by me & sealed, published & pronounced to be my last Will & Testament in the presence of us the Witness and the Testator.

It is my desire to have a set of gravestones put up at my grave.

Zattu Andrewson

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**P.O. Box 87**  
**Fly Creek, NY 13337**

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