



Historical Highlights

Official Publication of the Sand Lake Historical Society

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A Library for the Town of Sand Lake

With the moving of the Sand Lake Town Library to new and enlarged quarters in the newly acquired Municipal Building, it seems timely to review the Library history.

First, it is a surprise to discover that the history of a Town Library predates the Town itself. In 1808, the "Sand Lake Library Society" was organized. At that time, Thomas Thompson called together a group of citizens who lived in the Sand Lake area (read: Averill Park) to meet at his home to discuss the establishment of a library. Ten men responded to the call and, after a discussion, agreed to each contribute \$10 to the cause. With this \$100 the first library society in Sand Lake and the second library in Rensselaer County was established.

The first directors were William Van Tress as chairman, Uriah M Gregory, Stephen Gregory (the Gregory House), Aretus Lyman (a local mill owner), Joel Bristol and Nathan Crandall. Thomas Thompson, in whose home the meeting was held, was a brother of Calvin Thompson, who became the first Supervisor of the Town of Sand Lake in 1813.

How long this library operated is lost in time, and what other efforts transpired between that time and the 1950s is not known. To obtain information on the many efforts to establish a library, a number of telephone calls have been made to search people's memories. The following is a result of that search. Perhaps you could add or correct some of the information obtained.

Sometime in the early 1950s, Mrs. Beyrl Moul worked hard to establish a library in the Methodist Church in West Sand Lake. It started as a bible school project but soon included adult material and was opened to the public.

Some time later, Mrs. Paula Dunn headed a group to form a Town Library. Fund-raising events such as card parties and teas were held. As a result of this effort, a Town Library Demonstration Project, sponsored by the State, was held at the High School during the summer of 1962. School librarian Ms. Audna Clum agreed to staff the project for the summer.

A library committee petitioned the Sand Lake Town Board to allocate funds for the establishment of a Town Library. A referendum was placed before the people of the town two successive years; each time the proposal was voted down. The supporters of the library proposition were discouraged, and the effort was temporarily abandoned.

From 1964-75, St. Henry's School Library was offered as a community library. Many volunteers offered their time and effort to staff the desk and cataloged books. It was soon affiliated with the then-Upper Hudson Library Federation, thus offering a better selection of material. Mrs. Mary O'Donnell, representing the community library committee of St. Henry's School, reported 800-1000 books were borrowed by school children and 4385 books were borrowed by the public. The library ended with the

closing of the school in 1975. Mary O'Donnell later became librarian of Algonquin Middle School.

Early in 1986, the Town Board appointed a committee to investigate the possibility of establishing a Town Library. By September of the same year, the committee presented their report. The objectives of the proposed library, a tentative budget and many letters of support resulted in the Town Board officially approving the establishment of a library and appropriating \$45,000 in support. Other financial support came from many contributors, including \$4,000 from the Kiwanis. Sharon Bonk, Meg Distell, Ann Evancoe, Charles Graber, Bob Katz, Stuart Lipschutz and Barbara Martinage were appointed as trustees, working with Elizabeth Heller as liaison to the Town Board.

The Library received a provisional charter from the New York State Board of Regents on April 24, 1987. The new Library rented a space in 43 Mall and opened its door on August 15, 1987, with a formal dedication on October 28. Nola Reis (director) and Ruth Bordt were the first paid staff. Official full approval by the Town Board came at a meeting on December 10, 1987.

The Library started with books contributed by people, mostly from cellars, attics etc. As the Howe Branch of the Troy Public library had recently closed, 2700 books were purchased from them at \$1/book. Some 620 volumes were purchased new and 1157 were donated. At first it was not a very large collection, but it grew gradually to what we have today.

In 1989, Maria Lyman and Marilyn Oestreich founded the Friends of the Library. This organization is still active, generating additional support for the library.

The Library received its absolute charter from the Board of Regents on June 26, 1992. But a year earlier, it was evident that the Library would soon outgrow its 1500 square foot space at the 43 Mall. A long-range planning committee was appointed to study expansion options. One option was the building a new separate library building. To find a permanent solution to the space problem, the committee worked with the Town Board, who at that time was studying the possibility of building a new town hall. A plan to include the Town Library in a new municipal building was worked out. In 1996, a referendum to build a municipal building to house town offices and include a library was presented to and passed by the voters.

Conditions soon changed, a new administration was elected and the vacant Capital Mutual Insurance Company building became available. A study was

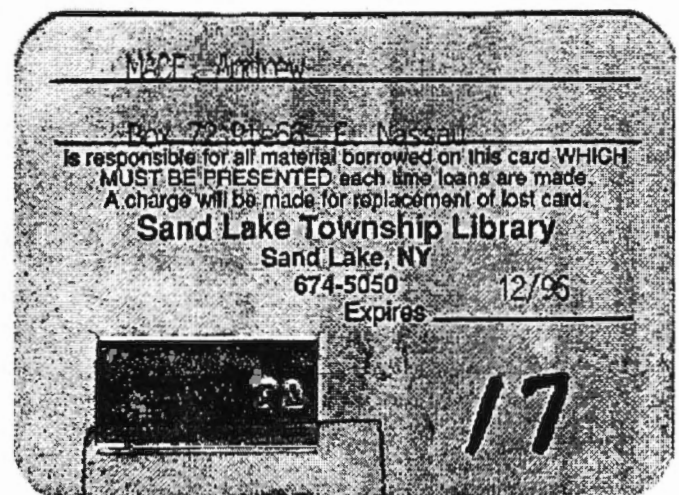
made to determine the practicality of converting that building to Town Offices. After much study and discussion, the Town Board passed a resolution to purchase the building and convert it into Town Offices, including an enlarged space for the Town Library. A contract for the renovations was let, work started, and the building was ready for occupancy in June 1999.

On June 19, 1999, a great number of volunteers began the week-long process of moving books, shelving and equipment to the new location. On June 28, the Library reopened its doors in the new and improved location. The Library still awaits additional shelving (being donated by Siena College) and furnishings. When completed, a local history display of books and material from the Historical Society's collection will be a feature.

At the present time 10 staff people (paid) and several volunteers are active in operation of the Library. The new facilities are a great improvement over the 43 Mall location. Town citizens can be well proud of our Sand Lake Town Library. We've come a long way!!!

The Municipal Building was dedicated on August 21, 1999. The Town Library rededication will be in the fall after the additional shelving and furnishings are in place.

[Publisher's note: Yours truly was privileged to be a small part of the beginnings of the Sand Lake Town Library. Working with the newly formed Board of Trustees, I put



together a "potential library user" survey form that was distributed throughout the Town. The form itself along with the tallying of results and reporting on same constituted a Seminar project for my Master of Library Science degree as well as helping the new Board to plan library service to the community. — Andrew Mace]

Family memories

In the Fall 1998 issue of Historical Highlights was an item entitled "Save your Family Memories." The Circle Theater Players and the Sand Lake Historical Society were requesting family memories on their ancestors immigration. In this issue are some of the many responses that were received. After reading these interesting accounts, we would be pleased to receive stories you may have about your ancestors.

The Henkel Family

Asmus Henkel was born in 1800 in Germany; his wife Marthe Ringler was also born in Germany in 1801...Coming over on the ship they met the Radz (Rhuts) family migrating from Friedewald, Province of Hassen...

Asmus and Martha had two sons, one of whom was accidentally killed in New Baltimore while crossing the railroad track with a farm wagon...

Martha died in 1871 and Asmus spent his remaining years with Catherine and Nicholas on their large farm in Barbersville, town of Poestenkill. He must have had a good disposition as the grandchildren spoke of him with great affection. One of the things I remember about him was that he had charge of the beehives and that the bees never stung him while swarming, etc. He lived to be 92 years of age and is buried with his wife in Barbersville Cemetery.

The Henkels from Detroit visited the Radz quite often and it was during one of these visits that Elizabeth married George Acenour (said to be a distant cousin). Thy lived in Berlin and had three children.

I have a very pleasant memory of visiting the Lizzie Acenour family at their home in Berlin one Sunday (probably 1914) when Auntie Henkel, her son William and his wife Augusta were here from Detroit. Our family had driven over Berlin Mt. that morning. Uncle Philip, Aunt Mary, Carrie and Lew came in the afternoon. We had a very pleasant day.

The Radz Family

Nicholas Radz, Sr. was born June 26, 1826, in Friedewald, Germany, Province of Hessen. Coming over on the ship from Germany, Nicholas met Catherine Henkel and her family. The Henkels stopped in New York while the Radz family continued north to "Steam Mill, Town of Sand Lake" in Rensselaer County.* Later, Catherine and Nicholas were married and settled in Steam Mill in a log house, where at least seven of their nine children were born.

Sand Lake Mt. joined Berlin Mt. to the east, and the emigrants worked at cutting down the virgin forests. The area abounded in sawmills mostly operated by water power from the area streams, Steam Mill being the exception. Naturally when the forests were exhausted, the workers had to look for a livelihood elsewhere.

Nicholas purchased a farm on Berlin Mt. in the vicinity of Kendall Pound, also quite close to where the Boston Post Road ran at the time. There was good soil on the mountain for farming, but the market (Albany) was too far away. After a few years, Nicholas and Catherine bought the Whyland Farm in Barberville, Town of Poestenkill.

Nicholas, Sr. was a hard-working farmer who raised nine children and retired in his old age, leaving the farm to his daughter Libbie who had to remain at home to "look after" her parents. In summertime, the house was always overcome with relatives and friends — the Hessers and Ewers from New York, the Henkels from Detroit. As one of the younger grandchildren, I only remember my grandparents in their later years. Grandpa, sitting in the large sitting room where the south windows were filled with plants, including one huge Calla Lily. Grandma would be moving about the kitchen, and her apron pocket always held either a penny or a pink mint candy for me.

When Nicholas Jr. married, he and Amellia stayed with the Radz family for one year and then moved down the road to a new house built by Andrew Radz, his brother. This home is located across from the Cemetery in Barberville. This is where Nicholas and Amerilia brought their family. He was a farmer and later supplemented his livelihood with mason work. He worked on chimneys and such as he did not mind climbing. — *Helen Radz Ruether, daughter of Amelia Taylor and Nicholas Radz, Jr., and great-granddaughter of Asmus And Marther Henkel, June 1979.*

**Steam Mill First steam mill in Rensselaer County, east of Taborton. built 1831 by Butts, Horton And Knowlson.*

Town Historian receives award

Judy Rowe, Historian of the Town of Sand Lake, was recently awarded the Daughters of Liberty Medal by the SAR. Judy was recognized for the many years of faithful volunteer service given to the SAE. This award is second only to the Gold Good Citizenship Medal and ranks above all other SAR medals that can be awarded to ladies.

Historical Society Awards

Winners of this year's Sand Lake Historical Society Memorial Awards are Tristan Greszko and Patrician North of the Class of 1999. The awards were given this year in memory of Society members Vivian Catlin and Mary J. Niemiec. The awards were presented to Tristan and Patricia during the awards program for seniors and their families on May 27, 1999, at the Averill Park High School.

Patricia is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Stephen North of Rockery Terrace, West Sand Lake.

Tristan resides with his guardians, Bill and Tina Anthony, Holloway Lane, Averill Park.

September Meeting

Carol Lynn & Gene Langley as *Wellyn Song*, offering music that builds bridges from the past and offers hope for tomorrow, will be our feature of September's meeting. Due to the renovation of the "old" Town Hall, the Meeting will be held at the *Sand Lake Baptist Church on Tuesday, September 14, at 7:30 p.m.* This promises to be a gala evening. Come and bring your friends!

SLHS on the WWW!

Decoding the above headline, it means that our new President Mark Lewis has begun a Web site for the Society on the Internet. The URL (address) is: < www.geocities.com/Athens/Rhodes/7561/ >

If you have access to the Internet, check it out, and be sure to leave comments at the site!

Sand Lake Historical Society Board of Trustees 1999-2000

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Dues are due!

Some of you might notice that the date on your mailing label is "highlighted" in color. For example, the date might look like 1998-1999. If so, this is simply to draw your attention to the fact that we have not received your renewal for 1999-2000. If this is the case, won't you send your dues in today? It's only \$5.00 for an individual member!



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SAND LAKE TOWN LIBRARY

8428 Miller Hill Road
Averill Park, NY 12018

PHONE: (518) 674-5050
FAX: (518) 674-5050

Library Staff

Director:	Carolyn McLoughlin
Adult Services:	Carolyn McLoughlin
Youth Services:	Jane Minotti
ILL:	Sue Mudrey

Hours:

MON:	10:30am - 8:30pm
TUE:	10:30am - 8:30pm
WED:	10:30am - 8:30pm
THU:	10:30am - 8:30pm
FRI:	10:30am - 8:30pm
SAT:	10:30am - 5pm
SUN:	Closed

Summer Hours:

Same as above.

Holiday Closings:

New Yr, M.L. King, Pres, Meml, July 4, Labor, Thanksg, Christmas Eve, Christmas, New Yr Eve.

Directions:

The library's new location will be the second floor of a renovated office building with the Town Offices on the first floor.

From Troy: Take Rt. 66 south into Averill Park. The library is on the left just before the light at the intersection of Rt. 43 and 66. The library is located on the second floor—drive goes up a hill to parking behind the building on the second level. Entrance is also at that level.

From Albany: Take I-90 to exit 8. Stay on Rt. 43 until the intersection of 43 and 66 in Sand Lake. Take a left onto Rt. 66. Library is the second drive on the right with parking and entrance behind the building on the second level.

Board Of Trustees

President: Sue Larsen
Board meetings: Third Tuesday of every month at 7:00pm.
Annual meeting: April

Friends of the Library

President: Barbara Martinage

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The Upper Hudson Library System (UHLS) is a state-funded cooperative library system that serves its member libraries by enabling them to improve services to the population of its service area.

[URL: <http://www.uhls.org/uhrs/snlk.html>]
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French, Ross & Mary 99-00
PO Box 221
Averill Park, NY 12018

Historical Highlights
Bob Lilly, Editor
Andrew Mace, Publisher

FORWARDING/ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED
Sand Lake Historical Society
POB 492
West Sand Lake, NY 12196

TRIP TO COOPERSTOWN

Sponsored by Esquatak Historical Society

October 17, 1999

8:00 AM – 6:00 PM

Cost = \$40.00 includes

transportation, luncheon buffet at Farmers' Museum

admission to Farmers' Museum &

Fenimore Art Museum which is featuring

a Folk Art Exhibit

Deadline to register is September 15

Call Carol Walther (732-7444)
