



Historical Highlights

Official Publication of the Sand Lake Historical Society

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A Walk in Their Shoes **September 11, 2001, 8:00 p.m.** **Algonquin Middle School**

Ever wonder what it was like to be in our community, then called Ulinesville, at the time of the Underground Railroad? To find out, a historical drama workshop, sponsored by Circle Theatre Players, was held this summer for 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th graders.

To start their research, the students read books from the National Civil War Museum in Harrisburg, PA, and the local libraries. Mrs. Ruth Jackson taught them songs and movements of the slaves on the plantations. Researcher Scott Christians and Sand Lake Town Historian Judy Rowe shared the events and sites involved in the local history of the Underground Railroad. Next the students drafted their script, developed their characters, put together their costumes and props and painted their backdrops.

The show, *A Walk in Their Shoes*, features Andrea Avery, Kayleig Benson, Megan Breen, Melissa Constable, Jessica Sahl, Katie Dahl, Drew Edmans, Shelly Forster, Cassie Gazeley, Jessica Hazleton, Falon Martin, Jenna Nikles, Taylor Pariseau and Alyse Timber.

This project was partially funded by the Arts Center of the Capital Region Arts Grants program.

Special thanks go to the town historians of Sand Lake and Berlin, The Sand Lake Historical Society, Sand Lake Supervisor Colleen Regan and the parents and grandparents who have been involved for their support.

A public performance of the show was given on August 9th.

The Show will be repeated at the regular meeting of the Sand Lake Historical Society on Tuesday, September 11, at 8:00 p.m. on the stage at Algonquin Middle School. Refreshments will be provided. The public is welcome and urged to come and bring a friend.

For further information on this project, contact Co-Directors Joan Fuess (674-2154) or Valerie Cavanaugh (674-2426).

Future meetings

Tuesday, October 9: *Bea Danks* and *Lee Barnum* will present a program on oral history.

Tuesday, November 13: *Walter Fleming*, "the 19th Century Tinsmith," will conduct a presentation on 19th Century tin ware. He will display and explain many examples of antique and reproduction tin items used in the kitchen, home and everyday living. If you have any early tin ware that you would like to bring and show, Mr. Fleming will be happy to explain its history. Walter Fleming has done extensive work for the Smithsonian Institution.

Fox mansion named to historical registers

The Town of Sand Lake Historian's Office has received notice that the Fox Mansion, previously accepted by the New York State Register of Historic Places, was accepted by the National Register of Historic Places and listed April 25. [See notice in *Historical Highlights*, Vol. 27, #3, Spring 2001.] Peter Shaver of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation at Pebbles Island compiled the nomination.

The Fox house in Sand Lake, built in 1840 for the Albert R. Fox family, is one of the finest Greek Revival style residences in Rensselaer County. The two-story frame house has all the hallmarks of the Greek Revival style, including two-story pilasters framing all five bays on the facade and a stylish one-story porch with ionic columns supporting a heavy entablature that extends across the front onto symmetrical one-story flanking wings.



the Rensselaer Glass Factory from the stockholders of that company. The company failed in 1824. In 1825, the factory was sold to Richard Knowlson, who leased it under various names to short-lived companies.

Albert and his brother Samuel Fox purchased the failed Glass Factory on Glass Lake in 1838 and Fox ran it successfully. By 1845 the glass factory expanded and purchased a glass factory in Durham, New York. It was the largest manufacturer of window glass in New York State.

On December 25, 1852, a great fire destroyed the factory buildings on Glass Lake. The Glass Lake factory was never rebuilt. Albert moved all the remaining tools, horses, fire engine and wagons to the Berkshire Glass Factory where he became superintendent.

In addition to his involvement in glass manufacturing, Albert R. Fox was New York State Senator 1848-1849.

Albert R. Fox died May 30, 1892.

Many local residents will remember when the Fox house was known as the Doll Museum. At that time Lillian Eauclair Sproule was the curator of Yesteryears Antique Doll Museum. The Museum gained international fame for its fine collection.



The surrounding grounds are excellent condition and contain a large fountain on the south side. It is remembered that the Sand Lake Baptist Church, of which Mr. Fox was a member, held their baptisms at the fountain in the 1800s.

The Fox house has been meticulously maintained and is the first property in the Town of Sand Lake to be accepted to the Register.

But who was Albert R Fox? A short review of the glass blowing activity at Glass Lake shed a little light on our subject.

Albert R. Fox was born February 18, 1810 in Nassau, son of Isaac B, Fox and brother of Samuel H. Fox. Little is known of his early education, but he did graduate from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute's Class of 1830.

Isaac Fox formed a partnership with Nathan Crandall and A.V.P. Gregory in 1818 to purchase

West Sand Lake Post Office

The new West Sand Lake Post Office, now nearing completion, will be displaying pictures from the Sand Lake Historical Society's collection. Recently Mary and Ross French met with Postmaster Rose Wells and reviewed a number of village scenes of West Sand Lake. Nine pictures were selected to be enlarged and framed. These views will be mounted on the walls of the new Post Office.

President's letter

Our first order of business is to give a big "Thank You" to Linda Ormsby and Bea Danks for serving as co-presidents and Bea as president during the past several years. Your faithfulness and perseverance to the Society carried us over a challenging time.

Images of America: Sand Lake burst on this year's scene and has exceeded both Bob Lilly's and my expectations of acceptance. I repeat the statement Bob and I made at our Annual Meeting at the Arlington House: We are humbly proud. Book sales by the Society are nearing the 1,000 mark. And we have between 20-25 brand new Society members, due primarily to interest the book has generated. Sand Lake's history is enjoying a rebirth.

At our summer picnic at Crystal Cove we opened the meeting to project ideas for the Society. (In a brainstorming session all ideas are accepted.) From the generated list we gave persons the opportunity to rate their first and second choices. There were 24 first choice votes and 26 second-choice votes.

Preserving the Trolley Station, which was Tremont's Lumber from 1958 to 1985, received 13 first choice votes and 5 second choice votes (13/5). Having a Display Area/Museum received 3/8 votes. Other ideas receiving more than one vote were: another book (3/1); young people participation (1/4); historical plaques for businesses (1/3); publications (1/3); award for preserving historical building specifications (2/0); house tours (2/0).

This is an awesome list and will serve as a guide to our activities in the future. Do you have ideas for implementing any of these suggestions? Please share them with us at our membership meetings. We are striving to have them announced ahead in *Historical Highlights*.

Members of our Board of Trustees would also like to hear your thoughts. They are as follows with their term of office: Nancy Davis (2002), Marion Hacker (2002), John Kacharian (2002), Iona Mosher (2002), Michael St. Germain (2003), Barbara Mohan (2003), Mary French (2003), E. Berenice Danks (2003), Lee Barnum (2004), Ross French (2004), Joan Fuess (2004), Lynn Patanian (2004). We welcome membership participation in our ongoing activities.

Response to filling positions has been gratifying. Here's our "Who's Who". Do contact any of them with your area of interest. President - Mary French; Vice President & Corresponding Secretary - Marion Hacker; Recording Secretary - Lynn Patanian; Treasurer & Membership Chairperson - Barbara Mohan; Program Chairperson - Michael St. Germain; Chairperson of Ways & Means - Linda Ormsby; Co-librarians - Robert Lilly & Edna Pierce; *Historical Highlights* Editors - Robert Lilly & Andrew Mace; Publicity Chairperson - Mary French; Refreshments Chairperson - Bea Danks; Oral History Chairpersons - Barbara Mohan & Joan Fuess.

We have one very important position to fill. We need an archivist. Persons on the Acquisitions Committee are

Ross French, trustee; Barbara Mohan, treasurer; Bob Lilly & Edna Pierce, co-librarians; and Ada Miller, member-at-large. Please let us know if you or someone you know would be interested in working as our archivist/curator.

Wow!! This is a lot to start off with. And we have a **good start**. The future can be vigorous and invigorating. What will be your investment in **Sand Lake's** history? Your effort will make a difference and we welcome your assistance. Together we can make significant strides in carrying out our motto: *Preserving the Past - Enriching the Future*. — Mary French, President

History awards

At the end of each school year, the Sand Lake Historical Society presents Excellence in History awards to two seniors of the Averill Park High School. The awards — \$150 to each student — are given in memory of deceased members of the Society for past distinguished service. This year's recipients are William McGuire and Jennifer Rodden. We wish them well in their continuing studies. The awards were given in memory of Dr. Gregory Benson and Coulman and Daphne Wescott.

Tremont calendars

How many of you remember the calendar published yearly by the Tremont Lumber Co.? Each year, there was a different scene of the old days in the Town of Sand Lake. A few of these calendars have been found, but wouldn't it be nice if we could assemble a complete set!

Do you have any in your collection? If so, we would like to hear from you. The Society hopes to catalog the issues and, if possible, collect a complete set. Call Ross French at 674-5710 with any information you might have.

Local history collection

Our collection of books, papers and pamphlets in the Sand Lake Town Library are now in good order thanks to the efforts of Edna Pierce and Bob Lilly. They have been working at the Library for the past year, organizing our collection. This collection consists mainly of information on the history of Sand Lake, but there are also some items on surrounding towns and counties.

The reference collection is assembled in a book cabinet located in the rear of the main reading room of the Library. Next time you visit the Library, take time to review this collection.

Hard cover books have been arranged on the top shelf of our cabinet. Pamphlet and papers have been sorted according to town and county and placed in magazine holders. Each magazine holder has been labeled to indicate its contents. In addition a *Guide* has been prepared, containing an index to the collection.

Sand Lake Historical Society 2001-2002 Membership

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CITY, STATE, ZIP CODE

☐ I am enclosing dues for 2001-2002 renewal / new membership (circle one) @ \$5.00

Mail to:

Sand Lake Historical Society
Post Office Box 492
West Sand Lake, New York 12196

Please detach and return this with your check payable to "Sand Lake Historical Society."



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<http://members.aol.com/sandlakehistory/>



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