



Historical Highlights

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December meeting

Tuesday, December 11: The December 11 meeting will be a Christmas covered dish dinner at 6:30 p.m. at Sand Lake Baptist Church, 2960 NY Route 43. This has been a favorite time of food and fellowship. Along with your special dish please bring a nonperishable food item for Four Doors.

Sinter Klaas, the Dutch version of Santa Claus, will be present at our dinner. Richard A. Walsh, a native of Albany, will be dressed in the Bishop's garb of Saint Nicholas and explain the Dutch beginnings of Santa. A professional actor, Walsh has performed Sinter Klaas for the Christmas program at the Albany Institute of History and Art for several years.



Thank You

- ✓ Thank you to John Kacharian for the gift of a Karaoke sound system to be used at our meetings. It has proven very beneficial.
- ✓ Treasurer Barbara Mohan reports that we now have over \$10,000 in clear profit from the sale of *Images of America; SAND LAKE*. Thank you to all who have assisted in the sale of the book. Let us know if you need copies for Christmas. They are available at the Town Clerk's and Town Historian's offices. Also Linda Ormsby (674-3624) and Ross or Mary French (674-5710) will get you copies.
- ✓ Karen Wood, a Sand Lake resident for 31 years and a record keeper in the New York State Tax Department, has agreed to be our Archivist. Welcome Karen, and thank you for your willingness to serve.

Moscow, the Civil War Horse

By Judy Rowe

Walking through the Sand Lake Union cemetery in the fall is a pleasure for the eyes. A riot of colors - reds, yellows and oranges span the artist palette of every shade. Framed by evergreens, maples, oaks and beeches, splashes of colors greet every visitor.

I found a little piece of Sand Lake history many years ago while looking through clippings on Sand Lake in a library. Edger S. Vanolinda in his "Around the Town" column in the *Times Union* wrote "Averill's Horse Lies in State" about a horse named Moscow who belonged to James K. Averill. When I got home, I called then-town historian Madolyn Carpenter, who started laughing; she had heard the story when she was a child.

This year, after I became Sand Lake Town Historian, I received a letter from Evelyn Howard from Rhode Island, who was interested in the Averill family. The family wanted to mark Jennie Averill's grave. Many letters and visits later, Evelyn called to inform me that a stone would be erected for Jennie Averill in spring 2001. The big news was that the family decide to mark Moscow's grave as well.

Just who was Moscow? We'll let Edger Vanolinda tell the story:

"Moscow" was a familiar sight in and about the environs of Averill Park. With his master, the Colonel, astride, he pranced proudly at the head of every Decoration Day parade. When his first owner past away, the son took over the care of the animal and rode the spirited steed at all subsequent celebrations.

Then came the time when the pet, put out to pasture, was too old to play his accustomed role. When the next Decoration Day came around "Moscow" was standing in his favorite spot, back of the barn. His ears came to attention when he heard the band playing its familiar numbers. Kicking up his heels, and neighing joyfully, he started to race to the road on which the parade was taking place. Suddenly, he came to an abrupt stop, slumped to the ground and when those in the parade reached his side, they found him dead.

It was then that his owner, carrying the expressed wish of his father, had the beloved pet interred in the family cemetery plot, at the feet of his former master and friend. However, a horse takes a lot of territory. So, an orchid to Col. Averill for his foresight in seeing to it that the beloved "Moscow" now rests in peace, rather than to become an essential ingredient in the manufacture of glue.

I am one of the volunteers from the Fort Crailo Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution [DAR] who mark graves of soldiers who fought in the American Revolution. This spring, when I gathered my American flags to mark the graves of these soldiers, I placed a flag near the stone of Moscow, the Civil War Horse. To view this monument, enter the Sand Lake Union Cemetery. To your left you will see a flagpole that marks the Averill plot. In the back area of that lot, you will see the small flag near the stone that marks his grave with the inscription *Moscow; Civil War Horse*.

Friends have helped in researching for details about Moscow. One found an Averill who had served under General Custer in the Civil War. Certain facts are known, yet we do not have the whole story. We do

know that during a battle, Moscow's owner was wounded. The horse carried his master to safety. Later the horse was presented to James Averill. Averill's affection and love for this special horse became evident when he purchased the burial lot for his family. The lot was large: Moscow was to be buried near his owner. James K



Averill died May 21, 1881.

Rensselaer County Historical Society

Many have read in the local papers about the restoration of the Joseph B. Carr building and the Hart-Cluett Carriage House. This has been named the best restoration project in the Hudson Valley for 2001 by Hudson Valley magazine. The Rensselaer County Historical Society has published *The Marble house in Second Street*, a biography of a town house and its occupants, 1825-2000. This interesting book is in the Sand Lake Historical Society's local history collection at the Sand Lake Town Library. You are invited to review this book and many other publications in our collection.

Excerpts from Seventy-fifth Anniversary History

Second Evangelical Lutheran Church West Sand Lake, New York

On Sunday, May 10, 1914, the Second Evangelical Lutheran Church of West Sand Lake, which had its inception in the anti-slavery movement and the founding of the Franckean Synod, celebrated its 75th anniversary. Rev. George H. Kling preached the morning sermon from the text, Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set. — *Proverbs XXII, 28*.

The Second Evangelical Lutheran Church, which was incorporated May 8, 1839, grew directly out of the founding of the Franckean Synod two years earlier. This synod was composed largely of pastors and congregations who withdrew from the older Hartwick Synod. The division was caused mainly by a difference in opinion as to the attitude the church should take toward the great moral questions of temperance and slavery — especially the latter, which was agitating the country at that time. The majority of members of the Hartwick Synod did not think the question of slavery one which, especially in its political aspects, was within the jurisdiction and legislation of the ecclesiastical body. The minority took opposite grounds and they with their congregations left the Hartwick Synod and organized the Franckean Synod May 24, 1837. Rev. John D. Lawyer of "Sand Lake district" became its first President and Andrew Weatherwax, a lay delegate from this district, its first Secretary. The other delegate, John Uline, introduced the first set of resolutions against slavery.

Rev. Mr. Lawyer was the leader of the movement in this section. He resigned from Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church (locally known as the First Church) and, with a large number of its members, formed the body that on May 9, 1839, became incorporated under a new constitution and changed its corporate name to Second Evangelical Lutheran Church of West Sand Lake. The constitution forbade its pastors from engaging directly or indirectly in liquor traffic or slave trade and required them to sign the total abstinence pledge.

During the pastorate of Rev. Jesse Robinson (1838-39), the church was incorporated and a portion of its present site secured at a cost of \$300. The site was a part of a farm of 325 acres that Barnhardt Uline purchased from Stephen Van Rensselaer April 25, 1793. Mr. Uline built the first house here, and the village was formerly called Ulinesville in his honor. He was a charter member of this church until his death April 13, 1858.

The first Church Council (May 1839) was: Elders - John Uline, John Lape, Jr., John Potts and Jacob Pink;

Deacons - Jacob P. Lape, Jacob Craver, Jr., Andrew Weatherwax, Philip Leiffert and Samuel Warner; Clerk - Joseph Uline.

During the 10-month pastorate of Rev. Isaac Kimball (1839-1840), the church was completed and was dedicated on October 5, 1839. The church was built of brick, and its dimensions were 40 by 50 feet. In 1842, a new cemetery was started under the control of the congregation. Several years ago it passed under the control of the Elm Wood Cemetery Association.

Rev. Nicholas Van Alstine (1850-60) was the next pastor. A steady numerical growth attended his ministry. In 1854, a high-grade select school was opened in the basement of the church.

Subsequent historical research by Judy Rowe, Sand Lake Town Historian, has found that Rev. Van Alstine's code name was Paul, and he wrote many articles under that name related to temperance and anti-slavery. At one meeting when Judy spoke on the Underground Railroad, she invited Robert Van Alstine, Sr. and his son Robert Jr. and their families. Robert Sr. delighted the group with the story that his father, Rev. Van Alstine asked him to ride with him to Lansingburgh. When they reached the area of 119th street, Rev. Van Alstine stopped the carriage, and the fugitive slave who was riding with them got out. He shook the Minister's hand and thanked him for sheltering and feeding him. Then the fugitive slave followed his new stationmaster into the house. By morning he would be on his way to Canada and freedom along "The Invisible Road to Freedom" - the Underground Railroad.

In 1870, the church was remolded and enlarged at an expense of \$1600. In 1888, there were further repairs and alterations, which included removal of the gallery, installation of memorial windows and erection of the church tower. In 1890, the basement was made 18 inches higher and contained the prayer room, the dining room, furnace room and a kitchen.

On September 18, 1899, occurred the death of Joseph Uline, the last male charter member.

In 1910, a \$1500 pipe organ was installed. A steel ceiling was put in and the sidewalls redecorated. The pastor was Rev. George H. Kling. The Church Council included Elders C.H. Ackanowr, Jesse Snyder, B.F. Traver and J.P. Wagner.

The only surviving charter member then was Mrs. Hannah Craver Kelley of East Schodack who was more than 95 years of age.

In 1926, it ceased operating as an active church when the First and Second Evangelical Lutheran Churches reunited and became Trinity Lutheran Church. Many will remember when the VFW met there. Between 1944 and 1954, services were held there again while the



present brick building of Trinity Lutheran Church was being rebuilt after the August 14, 1944, fire. The Second Evangelical Lutheran Church was located on the site of the present Sand Lake Dry Cleaning and Laundromat.

We congratulate Trinity Lutheran Church in the celebration of their 225th Anniversary of the founding of the original log church in 1776 on the present Thomas I. Cipperley property.

Sand Lake Veterans Memorial Park

For many years, the Sand Lake Veterans have been alternated memorial programs and services at one of the two sites where there are monuments dedicated to Sand Lake Veterans. One site is at the four corners in the village of West Sand Lake, adjacent to the pizza restaurant. The site is very narrow, resulting in crowding into the streets and problems for the parade groups. The other site is at the Sand Lake [Elementary] School near Tremont Lumber and Hardware store.

Last year, a group of veterans was invited to a meeting of all Sand Lake Veterans to discuss possibilities for improving the present circumstances for observing Memorial Day events. It was agreed that changes were necessary. Several subcommittees were formed, mainly to locate a suitable tract of land for a Veterans Memorial Park.

After a search of several months, a desirable section was located on the Averill Park High School property, bordering on School House Road and Route 43 [triangular in shape], and a proposal was made to the school board. Several meetings were held with Superintendent Michael Johnson and the school board, school attorney and the Sand Lake Town Board. This resulted in tentative approval to convey the land for use as a Veterans Memorial Park, pending the resolution of several legal actions. These are now close to completion.

One of the committees formed was the design committee, naming John Kacharian as chairman. The committee considered various aspects for the design, which resulted in a preliminary layout and features. This was presented to a general membership meeting of the Sand Lake veterans in mid-October for review and comment. Following review by the two veterans organizations, the VFW Post and American Legion Post [it is to be noted that all Sand Lake veterans are not members of the posts], general acceptance of the plan resulted from this review. Additional details will be added during the next few months. Target for the start of construction is spring 2002.

The design developed features several elements. The site will have a low iron fence all around the property, with a gate at School House Road. There will be three flag poles displaying the United States Flag, The New York State flag, and the POW/MIA flag lighted from below. Also featured will be a low wall of brick or stone with walkway above, all handicapped acceptable, with the same treatment for various walkways through the

grounds at lower levels. The bricks will be sold to town and area persons as a commemorative item to inscribe their own personal words. This will be part of a fundraiser along other ways to raise money to help for the needs of the Memorial Park.

Other features are: relocation of the two existing monuments to the new park; addition of other monuments (with general inscriptions), a small fountain, podium, lighting, signage, benches, a place for wreaths, an area for posting color guards, shrubs, flowers, trees, a small storage building, military artifacts and other features. There will be ample space for the people to attend Memorial Day services and special events.

The cost estimate has not been developed as of this date. Several local contractors have offered their services, which will help to defray the total project cost.

Combined with a beautiful site, setting and a great design, an outstanding park will emerge to serve Sand Lake Veterans, their families and friends, visitors and the Town. This will be a showcase with a purpose, to be admired by all, and a fitting tribute to those who served their country.

President's letter

9-11 now has an indelible place in history. As we remembered where we were on Pearl Harbor Day, so too we will remember where we were on Tuesday, September 11, 2001. Iona Mosher and I were in Alaska. The evening before, we took a plane ride to the top of Mount McKinley. Spectacular!! The next day all planes were grounded. That Tuesday a lesson was relearned: If you can't do anything to help the "event of the day," do your best with the task at hand. Our task at hand was to enjoy a trip to Denali National Park. The beauty of the day and the unspoiled terrain of this intact ecosystem brought home the message: God is the Creator.

The next impact of what had occurred was in the realization that many parts of Alaska depend solely on planes for delivery of supplies. Our impact was whether we would have plane travel from Fairbanks, Alaska, to Albany, New York, at 6:30 a.m. Friday morning. We did and arrived home without incident. Then the flood of activity that had been occurring in New York State welled in upon us. We were much nearer to Twin Towers now.

In the days ahead we will find ourselves being alternately closer to or farther from, more personally involved with or less personally involved, with the war against terrorism. The question we all will be facing is how we will write the history given to us.

May we be found faithful in carrying out whatever tasks and responsibilities are a within our God-given power. Ultimately that is how we will write history and will be a means available for "GOD BLESS AMERICA." Shalom, *Mary French, President*

Writers wanted!

We are in need of volunteer authors, researchers and oral history editors for Historical Highlights and the Society collection. Early schools, early living in the town and farms of Sand Lake, come to mind. There many topics to chose from. This could be an individual or committee endeavor. Are you interested? Let us hear from you.

E-mail history discussions!

There is a new Capital District Preservation Task Force Discussion List. The list is to discuss all matters relating to the natural and human history of the Capital District. This can include announcements, reviews, postings, requests, dialogue for and against, requests for help, meetings and anything else relating to the preservation of natural and human history of the Capital District.

To subscribe to the list, simply send e-mail to preservation-subscribe@yahoogroups.com. To send messages to members of this group, simply send e-mail to preservation@yahoogroups.com. To learn more

about the group, please visit <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/preservation>. — Don Rittner, Moderator, Capital District Preservation Task Force

Society members might also be interested in NYHIST-L, which “deals with all aspects of New York State history and is intended to be a forum for announcements, discussion, and research inquiries and referrals. The list [focuses] exclusively on New York State history. All aspects of New York State's past are of interest to the group, including political, social, military, legal, and religious history. The list is open to students and professionals from many fields as well as to persons who are simply interested in NY history.” The list is hosted by the New York State Archives, State Education Department. For information on joining the list, go to <http://www.archives.nysed.gov:80/services/listserv.htm>.

[Ed note: We hope to post this information on the Society's web site soon:
[http://members.aol.com/sandlakehistory/.](http://members.aol.com/sandlakehistory/)]



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