



Historical Highlights

Official Publication of the Sand Lake Historical Society

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Winter 2003

Upcoming Meetings

- ⇒ **December 10** will be our Christmas Party at 6:30 p.m. at Sand Lake Baptist Church. Bring your favorite dish to share. Also bring a Christmas artifact and/or memory for a Christmas Show & Tell.
- ⇒ **January 14, 2003**, at 7:30 p.m., Eugene Burns, a neighbor of the Andrew Meneely family in Watervliet (West Troy) , will give a slide program on Meneely Bells. When the foundry closed in 1952, he was able to get postcards returned from the western territories before they became states and has quite a collection of them.
- ⇒ **February 11** will be Historical Video Night. We're dusting off our collection and reviewing them to bring you our best selections.
- ⇒ On **March 11**, Caryn Neidringhaus, a professional fiddler, and her students will do a program on the history of Hudson River fiddling, from its origin in Scotland. This should be a good, toe-tapping time.

Sand Lake Heritage Day

Linda Ormsby, Ginny McGreevy, Bea Danks and Marion Hacker are working on a Sand Lake Heritage Day in the spring. Many families have old pictures, documents or letters that would add to the store of local history. Often these are treasured keepsakes. This is a way for you to share those items. You can bring them in, have them copied and take them home with you. At the same time you can view our exhibits and learn about our town's history. We'll keep you posted!



Where is this man going?

Ross French climbs the bell tower of the Zion United Church of Christ, Taborton, to view their bell. See that bell and many others in the town, in our feature article inside! Also inside: An update from President Mary French and a look at an important anniversary at St. Henry's Church.

Bells of Sand Lake

The Hudson Mohawk Industrial Gateway's Meneely bells program on May 19, 2002, the 200th anniversary of Andrew Meneely's birth, has given a renewed interest in bells and was the impetus to researching the bells within our town. The networking has been fun and enlightening.



There are two bells in front of the **Church of the Covenant**. The one on the left in the picture above is an 830-pound Clinton H. Meneely (Troy) bell purchased in 1886 for the Averill Park Methodist Episcopal Church, which was located four buildings in from Route 43 on Burden Lake Road. It is inscribed as follows:

PRESENTED TO THE
AVERILL PARK M.E. CHURCH
BY THE
SABBATH SCHOOL
JUNE 17, 1886

The bell on the right is a 700-pound bell purchased in 1840 from the (Andrew) A. Meneely Bell Co. of West Troy (Watervliet) for the First Presbyterian Church of Sand Lake. Interestingly the church's bell tower was built in 1890. There is an unanswered question: Where was the bell located from 1840 until 1890?



St. Henry's Roman Catholic Church has a 603-pound bell purchased in 1881 from Clinton Meneely Bell Co.

Inscribed is:

LEONE XIII
FRANCISCOI, ALBANIENSKI
AD 1881

(On opposite is inscribed):

CLINTON H. MENEELY
BELL COMPANY
TROY, N.Y.

LEONE XIII is Leo 13th, Pope at the time. Does anyone know the reference to FRANCISCOI, ALBANIENSKI?

Another unanswered question: What happened to the bell from St. Mary's in the Woods, East Poestenkill, the German Catholic Church that became St. Henry's?

Sand Lake Baptist Church has the receipt for a 1,018-pound bell purchased in September 1890 from Clinton Meneely Bell Co. for \$300.00. This replaced an original 1805 bell whose whereabouts are unknown.

It has Latin inscriptions [translated] as follows:

LAUDO DEUM VERUM
[I praise the true God]
PLEBEM VOVO
[I call the people]
DEFUNCTOS PLORO
[I mourn the dead]
FESTA DECORO
[I honor the feasts]
SABBATA PANGO
[I sing the Sabbaths]
EXCITO LENTOS
[I wake up the sluggish]



On opposite is inscribed):

CLINTON MENEELY
BELL COMPANY
TROY, NY
A.D. 1890

During the time when Americans were being held hostage in Iran, the bell was tolled at noon 52 times, once for each hostage. On August 10, 1980, Congressman Gerald Solomon presented the church with an American flag that had flown over the nation's Capitol for this exceptional community service.



In the front yard of **Lake Avenue Community Church** is the bell relocated from the Alps Baptist Church. It is unique because the tolling hammer can be seen on the side of the bell. This is a 620-pound Clinton Meneely bell purchased in 1876, with "Meneely and Kimberly" markings on the yoke.



Zion's United Church of Christ of Taborton has a 300-pound bell purchased for \$90.00 from the Jones Foundry Co. in Troy. It was dedicated on New Year's Day in 1882.

There is no inscription on the bell.

The following is from church historian Marion Smauder:

We at Salem United Methodist Church of West Sand Lake are the proud owners of a Meneely bell. It was cast by the Clinton Meneely Bell Co. in Troy, NY. The bell was delivered to what was then Salem Church, Evangelical Association on June 30, 1891. It was brought to the church by Edward Welker, a church member on his flat bed wagon drawn by his team of horses.

How and by whom it was hoisted to the high church tower we do not know. It hung in this place, where it was rung every Sunday, until it was taken down by William Carey from the Albany Crane Co. and moved on



Wednesday, August 18, 1971, to its new home on the grounds of the Salem United Methodist Church on Shaver Road in West Sand Lake. There you will find it today on a rocky knoll near the church.

Mrs. Anna (Laiback) Zweig financed the moving of the bell as a memorial to her husband, Merrill Zweig. A bronze plate stating this information can be found in the narthex of the church.

The bell weighs 1,014 pounds and was cast (1 part) Block tin from Maylay Straits, Singapore, India and (3 ½ parts) ingot copper from Minnesota Copper Mines. It is a genuine cast bronze bell. This information was given to me from Edward Kehn from Wynantskill. Mr. Kehn [was] from Kehn's Bell Service, third generation of Kehn family with the former Meneely Bell Co. "Meneely made the best bells obtainable, and the one you have is no exception," said Mr. Kehn.

The bell bears these inscriptions:

A.D. 1891
SALEMS CHURCH, EVANG. ASSO.
WEST SANDLAKE, NY

REV. H.P. MERLE, PASTOR

FRANK KELLER
PETER BOWER
COMMITTEE: PHILIP WICKS
DANIEL MASTIO
GEORGE EWIG

MRS. G.E. WELKER, TREASURER
LET HIM THAT HEARETH SAY, COME REV. 22:17

(on opposite side of bell)
CLINTON H. MENEELY
BELL COMPANY
TROY, NY

During this current year of 2002, our bell was used in reverence as a reminder of two special days. Mike Davis rang it in honor of Mr. Andrew Meneely. All the Meneely bells in this area were to peal out at a special time on May 19th. Woody Hacker rang it in remembrance of the tragic attacks by terrorists to our country on September 11, 2001.

Stop by sometime and see a bit of our history in our church yard.

The Bible Baptist Church of West Sand Lake now occupies the former West Sand Lake Methodist Church property. The bell is still in the belfry and is a Jones Foundry Co. bell, which weighs 600 pounds and was purchased in 1865. Inscribed is:

JONES & CO.
FOUNDERS
TROY, NY
1865



The Sand Lake District #7 School bell has remained in its original location at what is now the Sgt. Walter

Adams American Legion Post No. 1021. It is a 150-pound bell purchased in 1893 from Clinton H. Meneely Bell Co. It is inscribed:

SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 7
SAND LAKE, N.Y.
1893

(on opposite side of bell)
CLINTON H. MENEELY
BELL COMPANY
TROY, N.Y.





Linda Ormsby has two bells at her home. One is a steel bell (l) 14 ½” in diameter and the other (r) a railroad bell.



West Sand Lake Fire Company has a bell, still in the belfry of the original fire house. On June 27, 1883, a 104-pound bell was purchased from the Clinton H. Meneely Bell Co. for \$36.00. Subscriptions were raised to pay for the bell and to erect a bell tower. Cost of the bell tower was \$43.28. In October the bell was set in its present position.



Inscribed on the bell is:
CLINTON H MENEELY
BELL CO.
TROY, N.Y. U.S.A.
A.D. 1883
3

In addition to ringing the bell for fires it was rung for calling the Fire Company meetings to order. James H. Bailey was Chairman of the Board of Fire Commissioners during the 1940s. When his daughters, Jeane and Norma, had the responsibility of ringing the bell for fires, there was sometimes an argument over whose turn it was to ring the bell!

The Fire Company is also in possession of a locomotive bell that was mounted on their Sanford fire engine from 1929-65. Then it was put on the new fire engine and remained there (circa. 1966-99). Known as the "Sanford Bell," it now occupies a position of honor in their trophy case.

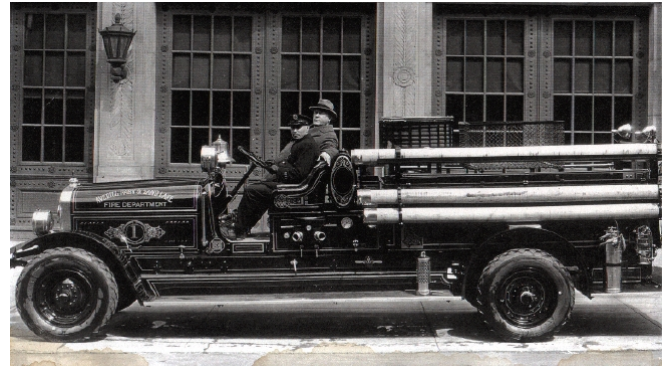
Methodist Farm has a locomotive bell that was a gift from the D&H Railroad through Elmer Yaddow who worked for the railroad. When the chapel was completed (circa. 1958) from an existing pavilion, the bell was mounted in the belfry. It is rung on Sundays at 6:30 and 6:45 p.m. to call “all farmers” and their guests to Vespers at 7:00 p.m.



Glass Lake Methodist Church, now the Perry-Komdat Funeral Home, never had a bell.

Trinity Lutheran Church has an electronic carillon with an outside speaker which plays selected music.

The **West Sand Lake Elementary School** has a cupola, but no bell. Does anyone know if the school ever had a bell?



The history of the **Averill Park & Sand Lake Fire Company** notes that fire alarms tolled out on the village church bells. We can draw the conclusion that they never had a bell on the firehouse. But like West Sand Lake, Averill Park-Sand Lake had a bell on their 1928 Seagrave, pictured above.

Most interesting while working on this article was the networking with the church historians, Thelma Culver (Taborton), Edwina Randall (Church of the Covenant) and Marion Smauder (Salem United Methodist) and West Sand Lake Fire Company historian Michele Sprague. Personnel at the other places were very helpful as well. And contacts with the “farmers” at Methodist Farm were local and as far as Florida.

The project saw a “ripple effect” when Joe Connors, Arthea Connors Gibbs’ son, who is a chimer for St. Patrick’s Church in Troy, became very interested in our project. He loves bells and grew up in Sand Lake. Joe came out to Sand Lake, and he and Ross French climbed towers, photographed bells and got several of the inscriptions of all the available bells in the town for the accompanying collage.

Joe, a bell historian, secured more information from original Meneely bell records. Joe has also made these records available to the Hudson Mohawk Industrial Gateway, who in turn put these records on the Internet. You can also visit Joe’s web site <allchimes.com>, which has abundant information about chimes and bells. A special thanks, Joe, for your help.

An added beauty of this search is that other bells, from a farm or forgotten place, will surface. Buried facts will surface about some of these bells, making this a history, completed with the knowledge available only to the day of this writing. — *Mary French*

President's Update

We have received a complimentary copy of the Anniversary Booklet from Zion's United Church of Christ of Taborton. It can be reviewed in the historical section of the Town Library.

In the last issue of *Historical Highlights*, we mentioned the plaque with the section of the Monitor and found out the text was in error. We have had a corrected plaque made, which reads:

PORTION OF ARMOR PLATE MANUFACTURED IN 1861
BY THE ALBANY IRON WORKS, TROY, NY
FOR THE UNION WARSHIP, MONITOR
PRESENTED TO THE SAND LAKE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
OCTOBER 11, 1983
BY ELLIS C. RIPPLE, MANAGER OF
PORTEC, LAST MEMBER OF
THE WYNANTSKILL IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

Archivist Karen Wood is completing an inventory of the archival collection of the Historical Society. The inventory will be available in the historical section of the Town Library. We would like to make the collection as accessible as possible to our members.

At the October and November meetings, Appreciation Awards were presented to the following deserving members for their exceptional contributions to the Sand Lake Historical Society:

- *Ada & Wesley Miller* for their outstanding archival service;
- *E. Berenice (Bea) Danks* for outstanding service;
- *Robert J. Lilly*, *Historical Highlights* editor and spearheader of projects on the library, schools, supervisors and mills; and
- *Ross French* for outstanding work on the photography project

Town historian Judy Rowe is looking for help in cross-indexing names in the many files in her office. Here's an opportunity to look at the interesting information on our town's history and to make it user-friendly.

Oral history can slip through our fingers. We had standing room only at our September meeting, when Ernie Hoffman, Paul Nash and Edna Pierce were our presenters and so many others added their memories as well. We need persons who would be willing to get on tape or video the reminiscences of our people's rich heritage of the town's history. John Allendorph is chairman of the Oral History Committee. Let him or any of our trustees know who we should visit and who would be a visitor.

Joe Connors, Artie Connors Gibbs' son, would encourage any Historical Society members to visit Artie at the Hallmark Nursing Home on Marvin Avenue in Troy. If she were able, Artie would be right in the middle of all that's happening in our Society.

Who would enjoy our programs and projects? Invite them to our meetings. See you all there!. -- *Mary French, President*

St. Henry's Celebrates 100 Years

On September 14, 2002, St. Henry's Roman Catholic Church celebrated the 100th Anniversary of the laying of the cornerstone of their present church building. The celebration began with a Mass celebrated by Bishop Howard Hubbard. Later, the parishioners continued the celebration with a dinner at the Crooked Lake House. Other events will be held throughout the year.

The cornerstone for the present church was laid on September 14, 1902, with Father Henry Miller as pastor. Built of Troy brick, 85' by 45' in size was built to seat 300 parishioners. In 1982, the church was renovated, a 20' addition was added to the rear of the building and a new entranceway added.

Although the present building is 100 years old, the history of St. Henry goes further back. In the mid-19th century, spiritual guidance was given to the German Catholics of the Sand Lake-Poestenkill area from The Very Reverend Theodore Noehthen, pastor of the old Holy Cross Church in Albany, who began saying Mass in private homes of Poestenkill. Then a generous parishioner named William Wiegand donated land in the mountains of East Poestenkill, and St. Mary of the Woods was built, about 1860.

In 1862 John Aken, a church warden and owner of the Interlacken Knitting Mill on Burden Road, donated land on Main Street, Averill Park. Six adjacent lots were purchased, and, on October 25, 1868, Bishop John Conroy appointed Father Gabriels to organize a new parish. Work began on a wooden church building in 1869, and, on April 17, 1870 (Easter Sunday), the first Mass was celebrated in the new St. Henry's Church by Father Edgar Wadhams, Vicar General of the Albany Diocese. Today, Rev. Brian Raiche continues the tradition.

[*Editor's note: In the Fall 2002 issue was a story of the 150-Year Celebration of the Zion's United Church of Christ. Started in 1852 and meeting house in 1865. Note the similar dates. What is the reason for this sudden influx of Germans to our area? Perhaps this would be an interesting research project! Who's interested?]*

The numbers after your name: Are the numbers after your name on this issue of *Historical Highlights* 02-03 or even 04? If so, that's great and we thank you for renewing your membership. We look forward to having a fully up-to-date membership list and appreciate any persons who have not renewed completing the form below when you send your dues.

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