



Historical Highlights

Official Publication of the Sand Lake Historical Society

Volume 35, Number 2

1974 · Celebrating our 35th Year · 2009

Winter 2009

From the president

Our September meeting had a surprise presentation. A certificate of appreciation was presented to Judy Rowe acknowledging her unceasing commitment in carrying out the motto of the Sand Lake Historical Society - **Preserving the Past...Enriching the Future...** Judy was caught completely by surprise and stated this recognition meant more to her than any of her other accolades.

We were happy that Alice Tiffitt's family was able to attend for both the Town Historian and the Sand Lake Historical Society to express their gratitude for the role she and her late husband Harold, our first town historian, have had in making history available for the knowledge and enjoyment of the community.

In October, the Society and Town Historian's office prepared an exhibit for New York State Archives Month entitled "The Invisible Road to Freedom" showing a map with locations of the Underground Railroad in the Town of Sand Lake with related pictures and information.

The Bicentennial Planning Committee meets each month and welcomes community organizations to send representatives to become involved with their expertise in assisting with events leading up to our 200th birthday in 2012. A report appears elsewhere in this newsletter.

On a very necessary note, our archivist Patricia Robelotto, who enjoys making good order of "stuff," is itemizing and describing the holdings of our society for a complete inventory. That is AWESOME!!

Our 35th anniversary of the Sand Lake Historical Society is 2009. We have an historical calendar to celebrate the event. This is beyond those that come in the mail. Think of family and friends who would enjoy a new look at our Town's past each month. It will cost more than the freebies but it's worth it. (See "Gifts of history" on page 2.)

Please review the few changes to our bylaws (posted elsewhere in this issue). We will be voting on them at our March program meeting.

Be sure to note all the programs, which are set up for the rest of our year. Mark your calendars and watch the *Advertiser*, the *Record* and our web site for additional publicity.

Join with me in celebrating a blessed Christmas, a happy Hanukah as well as any other commemorative holiday that has importance and significance for you. — *Mary French*.

Upcoming Programs

📅 **December 9, 6:30 p.m.:** How wonderful it is to be welcomed so warmly again by Ronald Berti and Barbara Neu at their historic Knowlson House. It is our covered dish Christmas party, which becomes a sumptuous feast with so many wonderful culinary creations. The trustees will be providing desserts so you may choose something different. The Society will be acknowledging two places in the Town that have been historically preserved. Robert and Renee Phaneuf and Miller and Stephanie Young are recognized for preserving the Averill Park Variety Store. Ronald Berti and Barbara Neu are recognized for their preservation work with the Knowlson House. Also David Graham will give a talk on what went into the recreation of Norman Rockwell's painting "The Street Was Never the Same." Mr. Rockwell used the house at 296 Fourth St. in Troy in his painting. That recreation took place this past summer. This should be a great time. Also it's a time to remember persons less fortunate; please bring nonperishable food items for Doors of Hope.

📅 **January 13, 2009, 7:30 p.m.:** David Pitkin will speak about Ghosts of the Northeast, the subject of his book by the same name. He promises to include the ghost of the Crooked Lake House!

📅 **February 10, 7:30 p.m.:** Mark Silo will give a presentation with slides about his new book *The 115th New York in the Civil War: A Regimental History*. This regiment fought in battles unknown to most and also endured mass arrest

and banishment by its own army and a cabal of its own officers against its commander. They joined briefly in the famous combat between Grant and Lee in Virginia, fought alongside African-American units and witnessed the liberation of thousands of slaves and captured Union soldiers. Mark Silo utilizes the words and recollections left by 67 of these men as well as vast amounts of resources regarding the events and battles.

🔪 **March 10, 7:30 p.m.:** we welcome Stuart W. Lehman, a re-enactor and Museum Educator who portrays a Colonial Physician. He will bring a hands-on exhibit of the herbs, medicines and implements used in the Revolutionary War period. He will discuss the use of herbs and the skills of trephining, purging and bloodletting — including the use of medicinal leeches. Attendees will gain a new perspective on the art of medicine, 18th Century style! Mr. Lehman is currently an Education Coordinator for the New York State Office of General Services where he develops and presents programs and conducts research related to the New York State Capitol.

🔪 **April 14, 7:30 p.m.:** Warren Broderick will present “Stephen Van Rensselaer's Wilderness: A 200-Year-Old G.I.S.” In 1785, the “Patroon” of Rensselaerswyck became the sixth lord of the manor of a private landholding of over 850,000 acres comprising much of the present Albany and Rensselaer counties. He engaged two teams of surveyors to undertake the five-year-plus task of mapping and surveying his extensive land holdings, which resulted in detailed and highly accurate maps and surveys. Sections of two of these maps covering a mountainous region in central Rensselaer County were digitized, and information on corresponding survey lots was data-entered and mapped and analyzed in a Geographic Information System (G.I.S.). As a result, information from 200 years ago on settlement, forest, soils, terrain and hydrology has been studied in conjunction with current G.I.S. data layers.

🔪 **Annual Meeting, May 12:** Michael Barrett will present “The Anti-Rent War of 1839-1869.” Thirty years of armed resistance, terror, imprisonment and strife swept across upstate New York. Lacking financial and political power, resisters to having rent collected on land they felt was within their ownership adopted the Boston Tea Party tactic of “Indian” disguise in order to stymie law enforcement and eviction.

2012 Bicentennial Planning Committee

In our past two reports to the *Historical Highlights*, we gave an account of our Kick-Off Dinner honoring Doris Gauch and Sid Gallant and our participation in the Memorial Day and Summerfest parades, as well as manning an information table at the Summerfest.

In September we had an information table at the Salem United Methodist Fair.

A budget was submitted to the Town Board.

The Salute and Scoot fund raiser held on September 28, 2008, was organized by Alan Blond, the Fitness Coach. \$400 was realized from this endeavor.

Planning for a Logo contest continues. More to come on that in the future!

The suggestion of obtaining the memories and reminiscences of octogenarians has met with enthusiasm. An initial outgrowth has been to involve the Girl Scouts who could be working for one of their awards on this project.

What group or organization do you belong to that could become involved with a bicentennial occasion? Your input and expertise are vital in assisting with events leading up to our 200th birthday in 2012. Meetings are from 7-9 once a month in the Town Hall meeting room.

Watch for announcements in the *Advertiser*.

— Nancy W. Davis

Gifts of history

Now is an opportune time to obtain copies our books of for Christmas gifts. The Historical Society realizes a 50% profit from their sales and receives a 10% royalty

for sales in other venues. The cost of *Images of America: Sand Lake Revisited* is \$21.60 (including tax) and \$3.00 shipping, for each copy. *Images of America: Sand Lake*, our first book, is available for \$20.50 (including tax). And the Society's 35th anniversary calendar for 2009 is available for \$16.00 (including tax) and \$2.00 shipping. Copies are for sale at the Town Clerk's Office and at Historical Society meetings.

The VHS or DVD of *A Journey by Postcard from Crooked Lake to West Sand Lake* is available for \$18.00 with postage \$1.75 for each copy. Robert J. Lilly's book *The Wyanants Kill: a small stream, but mighty* is available for \$16.20 (including tax). You may contact Mary French (674-5710) or send an order to Sand Lake Historical Society, PO Box 492, West Sand Lake, NY 12196.

SLHS on the Internet

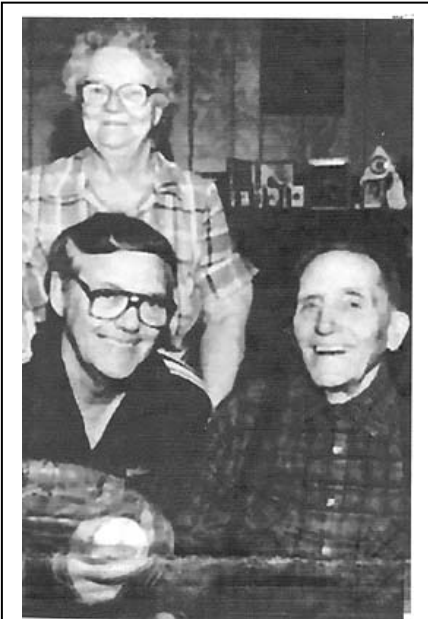
After nearly nine years of free (or nearly free) hosting on AOL, the Sand Lake Historical Society web site was forced to move when AOL closed down their home pages at the end of October. Fortunately, the gracious and helpful folks at “rootsweb” (an ancestry.com community) offered to host our web site free of charge. To make it all even easier to find on the Internet, we now have a new and permanent address:

<http://sandlakehistory.org> is all you need to remember! Everything you saw on the site before is still there, and more is being added.

Our e-mail address remains the same:
sandlakehistory@aol.com!

Elroy Face: Sand Lake's Baseball Claim to Fame!

ElRoy Leon Face was born February 20, 1928, in Stephentown, NY, to Bessie and Joseph Face. Rich Castle became closely acquainted with the Face family when he went to live with them after his mother died in 1943 and has been a lifelong friend of ElRoy. Mr. and Mrs. Face ran



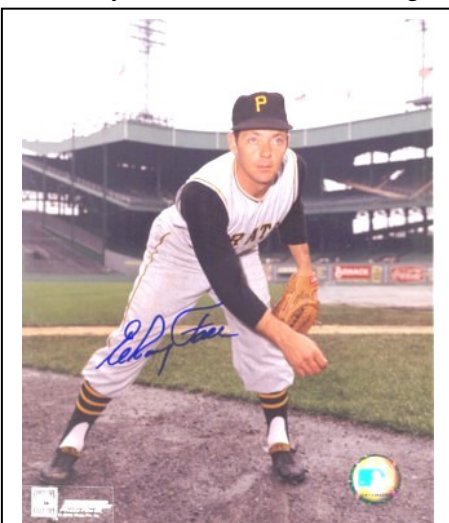
Bessie and Joe Face with now-famous son ElRoy.

the Faith Mills boarding house on Burden Lake Road (circa 1941-47). Mrs. Face did most of the cooking but from time to time would help ElRoy with the baking. Rich adds, "When it came to down-home cooking from scratch, there was no one better than Bessie Face. I think there were 12 rooms in the boarding house and it was always full. She would feed everyone at the dining room table.

She not only fed the boarders but all us kids too."

ElRoy was quite a musician who played guitar and sang. His recorded single, "Cross Your Heart with Love," played on many local juke boxes and Rich Castle recalls "playing it over and over many times." *[Publisher's note: if you wish to search for a copy, the record is on the ROBEE label, 45 rpm single R-111: Cross Your Heart (With Love) b/w Bells, Bells, and was issued in 1961.]*

ElRoy attended Averill Park High School in 1945 and



ElRoy Face was nicknamed "The Baron of the Bullpen."

1946. A highlight for Averill Park was in 1945. Peter Weaver, class of '46, shared the following in his memories of Prof Stahlman: "I remember him especially as coach, yes coach of the school's baseball team the year that they took it all. The pitcher was ElRoy Face, who struck out almost all

opposing batters throughout the season. The fielding was strong whenever it was needed. Mr. Stahlman guided the team skillfully as it played the scheduled games, and then defeated Castleton at Hawkins Stadium, home of the Class A Albany Senators." *[Editor's note: See team picture in Spring 2008 Historical Highlights]*

ElRoy was in the Army from 1946-48. After his tour in the service he worked as a carpenter and auto mechanic. He played on several farm teams. His career took off after a talent scout stopped by a ball field in Lebanon and watched 21 year-old Face work out against an East Greenbush Semi-Pro team. When the scout read in the paper the next day that ElRoy had 18 strikeouts in one game and 19 in another, the scout was interested and a contract was signed that day.

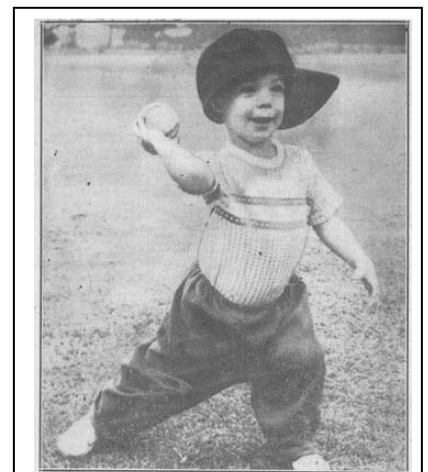
ElRoy batted and threw right-handed. He always prided himself on his pickoff move. He recounts a game against the Cincinnati Reds when he was called in to pitch. There were two men on base, one at first and one at second, with no outs. He picked off the runner at second and then picked off the runner at first before he ever threw a pitch to the batter. Rich Castle comments, "Now that's what I call getting out of a jam. Not done very often, if ever done at all."

On December 1, 1952, ElRoy was drafted from the Dodgers by the Pittsburgh Pirates. He was the shortest pitcher at 5'8" and 155 pounds to take the mound for the Pirates and wore number 26. In 1959 in a five-part *Times Record* series on Face, George Yamin writes, "ElRoy bubbles with confidence —

not irritating ego but an easy-going assurance that he is doing his job well

and has proved his claim to fame the hard way, by winning games under difficult circumstances." He further quotes Face, nicknamed "The Baron of the Bullpen": "Sure I like to win, to set a record, to go down as the pitcher who has won the most games in a row; but first I want the wins for the team, to see the final score read in favor of the Pirates. These fellows have made it possible for me to be on such a streak. A man's pitching streak like mine is as lucky as the ability of his fielders and hitters."

ElRoy was famous for his fork ball, which he learned from Yankee reliever Joe Page. Reacting to an Internet statement that he learned it from a monk in the Himalayas, Face responded at that time, "I was never even out of the country except for Hawaii." He appeared on the *Ed Sullivan Show* to demonstrate his famous fork ball pitch,



Another Face to Feed. Gene Allan Face, 2, makes like pop. Roy, the Pirate relief pitcher, at Fort Myers, Fla. Dad set relief record with 18-1 record last year. Gene looks more like a starter.

ElRoy's then two-year-old son Gene Alan takes after his father in this 1960 UPI telephoto.

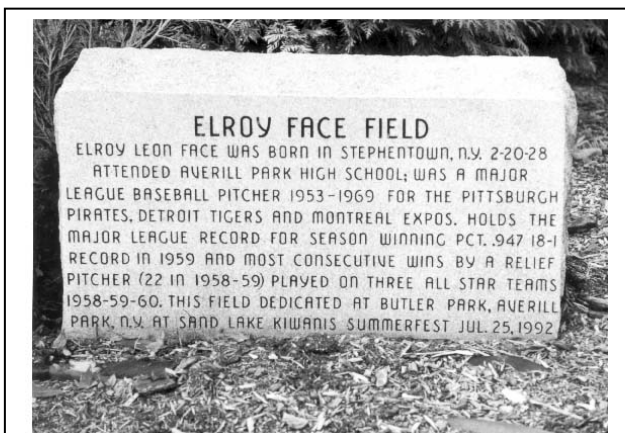


Ed Sullivan had ElRoy as a guest to demonstrate his famous "fork ball" pitch.

which he used to confound opposing hitters saying, "It would come in hard and break away anyway it wanted to, sometimes in, sometimes out, mostly down. To throw the forkball, you place your fingers to the side of the seams, throw straight and snap the wrist. That causes the ball to create a forward spin and causes it to do a sudden drop just before the plate. To the batter it comes in like a fast ball but then does its thing." It is said that the fork ball is known to cause damage to the shoulder and elbow and is not recommended for young kids unless it is thrown more slowly.

Career Highlights and Awards

- The Sporting News - National League Reliever of Year Award in 1962
- Four times led National League in games finished 1958, 1960, 1961, 1962
- Three times All Star Selection 1959, 1960, 1961
- World Series Champion against the Yankees in 1960
- Seventeen consecutive wins 1959 earning .947 the highest single season winning percentage in Major League history.
- Enshrined in 1999 on the Wall of Great Achievement in the Ted Williams Museum in St. Petersburg, FL



The ball field at Butler Park was named for ElRoy Face at the Kiwanis Summerfest in July 1992.

He was on the ballot several times for the Baseball Hall of Fame but never got in. Face is quoted, "I was telling my wife the other day I could get into the Hall of Fame. In my will I would be cremated and spread my ashes over Cooperstown." In a 1959 fun story, we hear that ElRoy always parked his car near Forbes Field in a gas station where he paid \$1.00 a game. The owner told him he could park free until he lost a game. Needless to say he won 17 games and didn't have to pay to park until September.

When asked what his most embarrassing moment was, ElRoy replied it was the first time he ever played with false teeth. When a fly ball was hit and he called off one of the other players, his teeth fell out in his glove. "That was pretty embarrassing."

In 1961, Mr. & Mrs. Face moved to Pennsylvania to help run the ElRoy Face Motel that ElRoy had purchased. They returned to Stephentown in 1968 after the motel was sold.

ElRoy played with the Detroit Tigers, and then with the Montreal Expos before finishing his final game with them on August 15, 1969.

After retiring, he returned to carpentry and moved to North Versailles, PA. He attends baseball camp for kids in the winter in Florida, run by Pirates teammate Bill Mazeroski. Enjoying golf, he regularly attends Pittsburgh area celebrity golf tournaments and graciously signs autographs. At the Yellow Creek Camp Grounds in Penn Run, PA there is a dam named the ElRoy Face Dam.

On July 25, 1992, at the Sand Lake Kiwanis Summerfest, the ball field at Butler Park was named in honor of ElRoy Face. Town, State and Key Club resolutions and awards were presented to him, and Rensselaer County declared it ElRoy Face Day. In his

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ROY FACE

PITCHER PITTSBURGH PIRATES

Ht: 5'8" Wt: 155 Throws: Right Bats: Both
Born: Feb. 20, 1928 Home: Pittsburgh, Pa.

In 1956, this relief ace tied a big league record when he pitched in nine games in a row. Roy once won 17 consecutive games as a bullpen ace. In 1967, he was credited with 15 saves!

MAJOR LEAGUE PITCHING RECORD							
YEAR	TEAM	W	L	PCT.	SO	BB	ERA
1953	Pittsburgh	6	8	.429	56	30	6.58
1955	Pittsburgh	5	7	.417	84	40	3.57
1956	Pittsburgh	12	13	.480	96	42	3.53
1957	Pittsburgh	4	6	.400	53	24	3.06
1958	Pittsburgh	5	2	.714	47	22	2.89
1959	Pittsburgh	18	1	.947	89	25	2.71
1960	Pittsburgh	10	8	.556	72	29	2.90
1961	Pittsburgh	6	12	.333	55	10	3.82
1962	Pittsburgh	8	7	.533	45	18	1.88
1963	Pittsburgh	3	9	.250	41	19	3.21
1964	Pittsburgh	3	3	.500	63	27	5.18
1965	Pittsburgh	5	2	.714	19	7	2.70
1966	Pittsburgh	6	6	.500	67	24	2.70
1967	Pittsburgh	7	5	.583	41	22	2.43
Maj. Totals 14 Yrs.		98	89	.524	808	339	3.49

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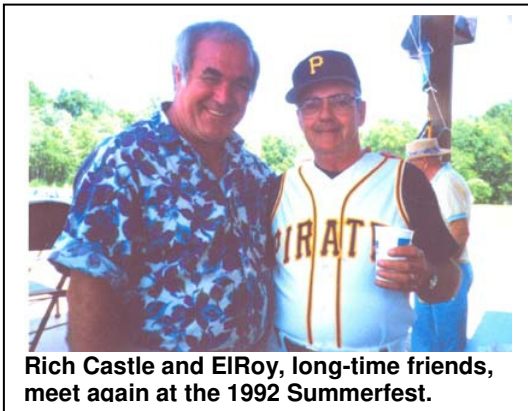
Baseball card with ElRoy's stats.

remarks during the ceremonies, he commented that winning three games against the Yankees in the 1960 World Series was a true highlight but that "today's festivities" meant the most to him. In his remarks, Prof. Stahlman recalled coaching the baseball team in 1945 and,

with ElRoy's pitching ability, winning the Hudson Valley League championship. Back then Prof was impressed with his baseball ability, his being highly competitive and with his determination to make good. He had a "strong young arm, and a good fast ball which he kept knee-high."

In the July 30, 1992, *Record*, John Scanlon noted “Little ElRoy” made it a point to stop at the Ale House in Troy to offer “a picture for a pitcher.” The order was hollered back, “That’s a small pitcher.” Johnny Bachinki made Thursdays “ElRoy Face Night” at the Ale House. “Face was a little guy as far as big league baseball pitchers go and, for that reason, in Troy at least his name became synonymous with a “small pitcher” of beer. Scanlon quoted *Record* columnist Mary Hilt: “Smiles radiated as major league baseball pitcher ElRoy Face signed bats, balls and explained his “fork” pitch to large crowds at the Sand Lake Kiwanis Club’s Summerfest.” In December 1993, the Kiwanis Club redesignated the athletic field at Butler Park ELROY FACE FIELD with an attractive engraved stone enumerating his pitching accomplishments.

Rumors are that ElRoy may be invited next year to the Troy Valley Cats for a day in his honor. Watch your local papers for a date. Let’s hope it does happen!!



Rich Castle and ElRoy, long-time friends, meet again at the 1992 Summerfest.

Many thanks to Rich Castle, Billie Rivet, Ray Diamond and Mike Stahlman for their contributions to our feature article on ElRoy Face.

Sittin’ on a Million

The preview of *Sittin' on a Million* narrated by Annmarie Lanese was a Historical Society program in November 2007. Now you have the opportunity on Friday, February 13, at 7:30 p.m., to see the finished product narrated by Annmarie's partner in the project and fellow filmmaker Penny Lane. Joining us also at the Sand Lake Center for the Arts will be two of the actresses from Circle Theatre Players who portrayed this famous madam in the film. Reservations may be made by calling 674-2007. Tickets are \$8. The evening is for mature audiences only.

Sittin' on a Million is a documentary about the life and legend of Mame Faye, Troy's second most-known resident, who ran a world famous house of prostitution in Troy for almost 40 years. It is a movie about what we choose to remember and what we forget, what we cherish and what we destroy, and the shared narratives that collectively make up history. It asks us to consider the role of memory and imagination in creating history, and reminds us about all those ordinary, extraordinary people erased from the official record.

The title of the film comes from Mame Faye herself as she approached girls working in the factories in Troy

making \$20 per week and offered them five times that. “You’re sittin’ on a million dollars, honey,” she would tell them. Join us and learn more about this prosperous businesswoman. — *Joan Fuess*

Errata and more....

In our Winter 2008 issue of *Historical Highlights*, we gave an update on gas stations. The following statement is erroneous. “At the site of Tiff’t’s Beach, John Udvary ran a store and had gas pumps. Harold Tiff’t bought that property from Udvary in 1945.” John Udvary should be John McNary.

The Fall 2008 *Historical Highlights* featured an article on the Sand Lake Center for the Arts . To give a more complete history of the transition of the Sand Lake Presbyterian Church to the Town Hall, the following is an important fact. In 1967, the Presbyterian congregation merged with the Methodist congregation, now known as the Church of the Covenant. However, for a number of years after that merger, the old Presbyterian Church was used by the combined congregation as a youth “Coffee House” open to all in the town. Andy Mace recalls spending many hours there with friends watching movies and just “hanging out” with everyone.

Yankee Doodle...keep it up!

Rosemary Supkis encourages us to delve deeper into the patriotic song *Yankee Doodle* (see article in the Winter 2008 *Historical Highlights*) through information, which can be found in Stuart Murray’s book *America’s Song*. He tells of the legacy of “Yankee Doodle” from its origin in the Dutch term “Janke” used in colonial days to deride the New Englanders. The term became “Yankee” as Dr. Shuckburgh used it.

Proposed amendments to Constitution and Bylaws November 2008

The following amendments to the Bylaws are being posted at least 60 days for you to vote on at the March program meeting.

Article IV. Section 4.01 The following understanding shall apply in scheduling meetings of the membership:

- (a) Regular meetings of the Society shall be held on the second Tuesday of each month (except July and August), ~~at 8:00 p.m., in the Sand Lake Town Hall, unless adequate notice is given for a change of meeting date, time, and/or place.~~ Replace with: *at a time and location to be determined by the Board of Trustees*

Article VIII Definitions and duties of Standing Committees Section 8.01

- (e) ~~Delete~~ *The Acquisitions Committee shall be comprised of two (2) Trustees, the Chair of the Finance Committee, the Archivist/Curator, the Librarian, and one (1) member-at-large. It shall oversee the acquisition, lending, and deaccession of objects and books in the collection in accordance with the society’s acquisition’s policy.* Replace with *The Acquisitions and Collections Management Committee shall be comprised of two (2) Trustees, the Chair of the Finance Committee, the Archivist/Curator, the librarian, and one (1) member-at-large. It shall*

oversee the acquisition, lending, maintenance, and deaccession of objects and books in the collection in accordance with the Society's acquisitions policy.>

Editor's note: the Collections Management Committee is being combined with the Acquisitions Committee and the other committees are assuming the vacated spots in the section.

- (f) Delete < The Collections Management Committee shall assist the Archivist/Curator in maintaining the archival collection and shall be chaired by the Archivist.> The Library Committee(now assumes #f in the section)
- (g) The Publications Committee(now assumes #g in the section with an additional change) It shall be responsible for the selection of the contents of the newsletter and for its composition, printing and distribution one (1) month prior to the Annual Meeting and at least delete <three (3)> and replace with <two (2)> other times a year.

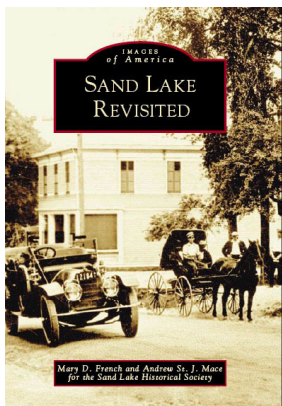
Gifts of history, continued

2009 SAND LAKE HISTORICAL CALENDAR



The Corners of Sand Lake was often called "the Jersey spot." On the left is Horton's Store, which was burned and moved back when the road was widened. It is now Ed's Shellen's Garden. The large house across the road was nicknamed the hotel. Green Island Farm is now at that location. On the far right are the steps and water pump for Cooper Hotel.

**Our 2009 Sand Lake Historical Calendar is only \$16.00, tax included.
(Shipping \$2.00 extra.) See page 2 for more information.**



<http://sandlakehistory.org>

E-mail: sandlakehistory@aol.com

Historical Highlights
Mary French, Editor
Andrew Mace, Publisher



FORWARDING SERVICE REQUESTED
ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED
Sand Lake Historical Society
Post Office Box 492
West Sand Lake, New York 12196



Sand Lake Historical Society
Membership Application

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

\$3 per student (13-22) _____ \$5 per individual _____ \$8 per family _____

Total enclosed: \$ _____

Please make checks payable to *Sand Lake Historical Society*. Mail to: Sand Lake Historical Society, Post Office Box 492, West Sand Lake, New York 12196

Give this slip to someone you know to become a member.



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