



Historical Highlights

Official Publication of the Sand Lake Historical Society

Volume 38, Number 2

Winter 2012

From the president

Your Sand Lake Historical Society has had a meaningful and varied set of programs during this fall. We look forward to your attendance at the upcoming programs and events of this winter. Your attendance and support of your local historical society is important as together we keep alive the history of the people, places and events of our local community and the surrounding region.

Past events — this fall. I thank all who supported our September 17 dinner and program with the Town of Sand Lake Bicentennial Planning Committee. The performance of songs and piano music from the time of the Civil War by Walter Stock was very enjoyable and historically accurate.

I thank you for your support of the Dedication of Sand Lake Veterans Memorial October 1-2 and the Civil War encampment, held in cooperation with the Town of Sand Lake BPC. Despite the cold and rainy weather, our spirits were not dampened as we gave tribute to the veterans associated with Sand Lake who have served in all past conflicts and wars.

I thank you for your attendance on October 11 for the fascinating program by Joe Ferrannini of Gravestone Matters. He showed much of the work he has done in recent years to conserve and preserve gravestones in several local and area cemeteries.

I thank the presenters for our House History Workshop on October 22, which was also a joint venture with the Town of Sand Lake Bicentennial Planning Committee. Thanks to Diane DeBlois, Robert Dalton Harris, David E. Ernst, Beth Ernst, and Fred Erickson. They presented valuable information about how to research history of your own house and property and the stories that often emerge from such research.

I thank you for your support of the comic and currently significant play *The Sky Is Falling*, presented on November 8. This play was written and directed by Poestenkil resident Barbara Leavell Smith. All of the actors and actresses presented the modern dilemma and many possible solutions to protect our environment.

December event and program. I invite you to our annual Christmas covered dish dinner and program on Tuesday, December 13, at 6:30 p.m. Again, we will be gracefully hosted by Barbara Neu and Ron Berti. We will gather at their beautifully restored home, originally the Knowlson House, on Schumann Road, Sand Lake. Bring a dish to share; dessert, place setting and beverage will be provided. Please also bring nonperishable food items for Doors of Hope.

The speaker will be Mr. George Raneri, former teacher and principal at the Sand Lake School. This year Fred and Dee Erickson will receive a Certificate of Appreciation for historical restoration of their home, which was a toll house and tavern on the Albany – Sand Lake Turnpike.

I encourage your attendance at the four events Sand Lake Center for the Arts is sponsoring for the Civil War and Bicentennial Celebrations (see below).

Please enter into your calendars the dates and topics of the upcoming programs in early 2012. If you have any suggestions for programs for the 2012-2013 program years, please contact me at your earliest convenience that we may respond to your ideas. You can reach me at 518-674-8204 or rkloesch@aol.com

I also thank the officers and trustees of the Sand Lake Historical Society for their year-round leadership of our several activities. — *Rev. Dr. Robert Loesch*



Did you ever wonder what happened to the Totem Pole at Totem Lodge? Find out inside!

First Town Christmas Parade!

The holiday season is just around the corner and the Sand Lake Youth Department would like to invite you to help us celebrate! We will be holding our first annual Christmas Parade on Friday, December 2nd. The parade will begin at 7PM and will be followed by a Tree Lighting and other Holiday activities at the Sand Lake Town Hall. The parade route will go from Lake Avenue Community Church to Old Route 66 to Route 43, through the village, and will end at the Sand Lake Town Hall. Santa and Mrs. Claus will appear at the end of the parade on the youth department float and will be available to meet the children at the Town Hall. —*Barbara Glasser, Sand Lake Youth Supervisor*

Gifts of history

- 1 Have you found someone to give a copy of *Sand Lake Revisited*? The Society realizes a 50% profit from their sales and receives a 10% royalty for sales in other venues. The cost of *Sand Lake Revisited* is \$21.60 (including tax) and \$3.00 shipping, for each copy.
- 1 *Sand Lake*, our first book, is available for \$20.50 (including tax). Copies are for sale at the Town Clerk's Office for the Society. You may also contact Mary French (674-5710) or send an order to Sand Lake Historical Society.
- 1 The VHS of "A Journey by Postcard from Crooked Lake to West Sand Lake" is available for \$18.00 with postage \$1.75 for each copy.
- 1 Robert J. Lilly's book *The Wynants Kill: a small stream, but mighty* is available for \$16.20 (including tax).
- 1 And Marvin Bubie's book *On the Trail of Henry Hudson and Our Dutch Heritage Through the Municipal Seals of New York State* is available for \$27.00 (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.
- 1 New: A new set of 6 note cards for \$7.00 (tax included) are available from Mary French 674-5710 and the Town Clerk's office: Carousel at Crystal Lake Park; Parade at Younghan's Race Track and Fairgrounds; Summer campers "roughing it" c. 1915 at Methodist Farm at Crooked Lake; Hikers dressed 1928 style at Camp VanSchoonhoven; Victorian lady rowing her dog on area lake; Family relaxing on their porch at lakeside cottage. (See pictures on page 5 of this issue)
- 1 Just in time for Christmas are the ornaments for \$12.00 (including tax). The note cards and ornaments are available from Town clerk's office or Mary French. Order information is also available on our web site.

Dues are due!

The number after your name on this issue of *Historical Highlights* is your membership date. Dues are for the year June 1 to May 31. If the number is 2011 you're due and we thank you for renewing your membership on the form in this issue. You may also receive *Historical Highlights* online. Beginning in May 2012, individual dues will be \$10.00 and family dues \$15.00. You may also become an Individual Life Member for \$100.00 or Family Life Members for \$150.00.

Sand Lake Bicentennial Planning Committee update

Shared hosting music by Wally Stock and the generous meal on September 17th with the Sand Lake Historical Society, yet talked of as a memorably fine event.

Participation report in the Civil War Encampment October 1 and 2 includes rainy weather and appreciation for all who attended and helped. On "The Advertiser South" page 26 of October 27th read more about those who contributed to these events. Members of the Committee who attended the dedication of the Veterans Memorial will tell of the honors bestowed on those who served, as well as admiration for the creation of this memorial. Recalling the cannon salute stirs one's heart!

The second "Classy Chinese Auction" with support of re-enactors and others who came out in the rain realized \$92.00 toward the fund for an award to a graduate of APHS 2012, who has participated and excelled in public service. Grateful for contributions and support! Watch for the next basket! Items by crafters in our locale to be featured!

The Library display through November features local dairy farming in Sand Lake recalled as a thriving necessity.

Well along in producing a Children's Activity Book, look forward to adding this to your holiday/Christmas gift list!

Contributors to the display in recognition of the sesquicentennial of the Civil War at the Sand Lake Town library during October are appreciated. Exhibitors Albert Miller, Bill Fowler and I with a bonus quiz by Eric Silver and handout by Judy Rowe, Town Historian about MOSCOW made it possible.

Meeting dates are posted in the three post offices. Best of the holiday season to all. — *Nancy W. Davis, co-chair*

Upcoming SLHS programs

- 1 December 13, 2011 - Mr. George Raner will present a program on the history of Sand Lake School (now for sale) at Ron Berti and Barbara Neu's historic Knowlson House. (See Pastor Bob's invitation.)
- 1 January 12, 2012 - Cosponsored with SL Library, Marvin Bubie will present his new book *Celebrating the Revolutionary War Municipal Seals*. The program will be at Sand Lake Baptist Church.
- 1 February 14, 2012 - Gary Mercer will present a show & tell of his bottle collection from 1800's and earlier.
- 1 March 13, 2012 Knickerbocker Mansion Project Director Stana Iseman & Barbara Pagoda, Regent of Fort Crailo, National Society of DAR, will speak on Colonial & Revolutionary War costumes. A sale of prepared dessert will be part of the program.
- 1 April 10, 2012 Rensselaer County Historian Kathy Sheehan will speak on the Troy Fire of 1862.

Remembering Marion Hacker

Long-time honorary member of the Sand Lake Historical Society Marion Hacker died November 17th. We remember Marion for her one of a kind table decoration themes and background knowledge of events and oral history of the Town and Historical Society. Her generous contributions to and welcoming presence at events will be sorely missed. Our thoughts and prayers are with her family.

The Totem Pole at Totem Lodge

When an email request for information for places on Burden Lake came and included a website on the restoration of the Totem Pole from Totem Lodge, I was so pleased. Several times the question has come up...What happened to the Totem Pole at Totem Lodge? Where did it go? Now these questions have been answered.

Maryanne Schultz, PhD, Director, Visual Resources Center, School of Architecture and Planning at the University at Buffalo, who did the photographs of the Totem Pole's restoration, replied to my email. "I'm happy you enjoyed the information and photos of the Totem Pole you found on the museum's website. It is perfectly fine for you to incorporate anything from the website into the *Historical Highlights* newsletter."

How much we appreciate being able to share with you the "rest of the story"!

Many persons came to the Troy & New England Railway trolley station in the Town of Sand Lake to be taxied to Totem Lodge. Totem Lodge got its name from the Totem Pole.



One post card from Joe Connors' collection shows the Totem Pole on the "beautiful lawn for rest and play." The other post card gives a rear view of the Totem Pole and shows the "approach to lake from sunken gardens." (See p.5)

Text from wings.buffalo.edu/anthropology/museum/pole.htm follows:

From 1904 – 1958, the Totem Pole stood at Burden Lake near Albany, New York. Originally the Totem Pole was a gift

to Matt Larkin, "the father of the jukebox," to be erected on his lush Burden Lake estate. Upon its arrival from the Northwest coast to Albany, a wood-carving friend of Larkin altered the Pole to incorporate the likeness of several of his friends and added a skeleton with top hat and trumpet at top. Once the estate was enlarged to 65 cottages, dining room and theatre (seating nearly one thousand guests), by the Katz family, it became well-known as the Totem Lodge County Club. At this time, it was said that some of the greatest Broadway stars performed at the Lodge on the weekends. After falling upon bad times, the Totem Lodge was sold to David Schoenholt, who opened it as a boys' camp and later, a 'one-day' country club. In 1958, a violent storm caused the Totem Pole to fall. It remained at the Lodge until the Schoenholt family donated the Totem Pole to the Museum in 1978.

There is some disagreement about who originally manufactured the Totem Pole. Dr. Margulis, who worked most closely with the Totem Pole research and conservation, believes that it may have been carved by the Haida Indians on the Charlotte Islands off Alaska before it was transported to Albany, New York in 1904. Others have suggested the Totem Pole was not carved by a Native American, but mimics native design elements. Regardless, this Totem Pole is a striking example of early 20th century North American material cultural history.

Dr. Frank J. Dinan, Professor of Chemistry at Canisius College, Buffalo, New York, developed a special combination of urethane monomers to infill the Totem Pole. The reaction of the urethanes formed a special foam to fill decay and deterioration from weather and insect damage. The polymer provided strength and rigidity to allow structural support in its rebuilding.

The Totem Pole originally arrived to the Museum in segments. Five of the six segments were conserved and refitted as two columns in 1987. The efforts of Dr. Jonah D. Margulis, former Buffalo Public Schools psychologist and administrator, and Mr. Sumner Nunley, former Buffalo Public Schools chemistry teacher and acting head of science for the schools before his retirement, were instrumental in the Totem Pole's restoration. Most of the work and materials on the Totem Pole were provided by a volunteer team.



Dr. Jonah D. Margulis and Mr. Sumner Nunley restoring the Totem Pole

Now the Totem Pole at the Anthropology Research Museum at the University at Buffalo is all that is left of Totem Lodge. The buildings were razed in 1985. There is however the legacy of Totem Lodge grounds remaining for persons playing golf at the Burden Lake Country Club.

Now enjoy some close-up views of the Totem Pole beginning at its base.



The torso and head of the base of the Totem Pole is seen (right); looking down with a close-up of the head is left. The face showing the fang teeth and protruding tongue is the middle photo.

Above the base on the Pole can be seen the carved likenesses of several of Matt Larkin's friends. Above those friends' carvings are these figures.



Going up the Totem Pole, this bird is seen next. Shown on the left is the front view of face and wings and on the right is a close-up of the side of the head and beak.



Above the bird are these figures (left below); above that, the "skeleton" at the top. Currently, the top is not part of the reassembled totem pole, as it was the most damaged. The two views here (center and right) are of the skeleton in storage; horn and arms are missing.



SLCA-Sponsored Events for the Civil War and Bicentennial Celebrations

January 8th, 1:30 p.m. Sundays at the Center — A Visit with author Ann-Elizabeth Barnes (excellent for school age children and adults alike) \$5. Ann-Elizabeth Barnes is co-author of "A Free Woman on God's Earth", the true story of Elizabeth Mumbet Freeman, a slave who won her freedom. Ms Barnes founder of this hands-on history program, will be at SLCA dressed in period clothing, with kitchen-ware, toy, games and clothing. She will tell the story of Mumbet, followed by a fun-filled hour of play and experiential learning about slavery in the North in the Colonial era.

January 13th, 7:30 p.m. Scott Christianson, author of Freeing Charles: The

Struggle to Free a Slave on the Eve of the Civil War presents a lecture and slide show on Charles Nalle, an escaped slave from Virginia who was placed in Sand Lake by the Underground Railroad. He later moved to Troy and was arrested to be returned to his owner. Harriett Tubman and a crowd of both white and black citizens rescued him and smuggled him to Watervliet where he was again captured and again rescued. Later the citizens of Troy paid \$650 to gain his freedom from slavery and reunited his family. Following the program there will be a question and answer period and book signing along with prints by Mark Priest depicting the events in Troy.

Charles Nalle Project - January 27-29. There will be one weekend of performances January 27 – 29, 2012, of *The Legacy of Human Poverty*, a play written and directed by Eric Washburn, is based on the life of an actual fugitive slave, Charles Nalle. He escaped slavery to the Sand Lake area before the Civil War and his two subsequent arrests were followed by rescues by local citizens. In the play, important moments from Charles Nalle's life are remembered by his son during meetings with a white man at a Troy restaurant in 1932, with significant consequences.

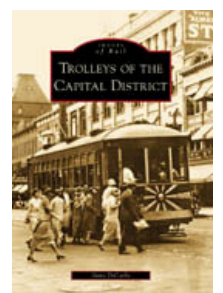
To reserve your seat. Contact the SLCA-CTP box office at www.slca-ctp.org or info@slca-ctp.org, or 518-674-2007.

March 10th, Squire Jacob Concert featuring Reggie and Kim Harris. For over 30 years husband and wife duo Kim and Reggie Harris have been combining their musical talents and concern for civil rights on concert stages through much of the world. Two hundred and more times each year they entrance festival crowds, concert house audiences, American history museum visitors, and school children with their "Music and the Underground Railroad" songs and workshops. Their best known recording, *Steal Away: Songs of the Underground Railroad*, was released in 1998, and its sequel, *Get on Board! Underground Railroad and Freedom Songs, Volume 2*, followed in 2007. These serve as the backbone of their teaching and performing, while spirituals and gospel songs are liberally incorporated into their work as well.

Trolley web site

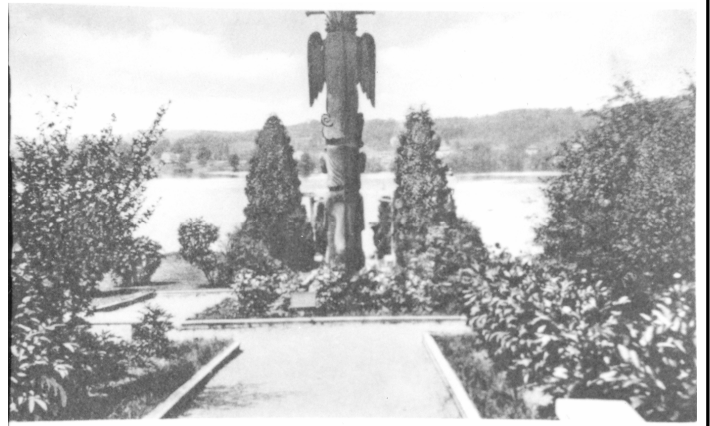
Gino DiCarlo has a great website on trolleys and has done an excellent job on the Troy and New England Railway, our local trolley: <http://gino-trolley.com/>

Gino has also authored *Trolleys of the Capital District*, available in local bookstores or from Arcadia Publishing.



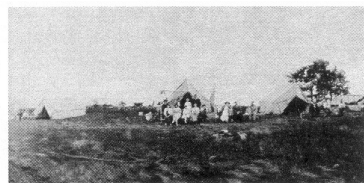
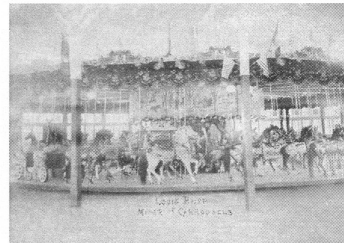
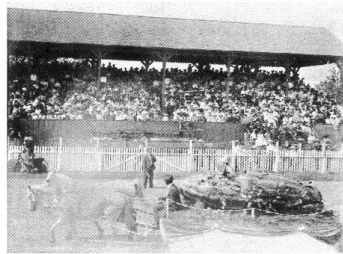


Totem pole "on the beautiful lawn for rest and play." (post card from the Joe Connors collection)



Totem pole from the rear, showing "the approach to lake from sunken gardens." (post card from the Joe Connors collection)

Leisure Activities In The "Good Ole' Days"
Town of Sand Lake, N.Y.



Sand Lake Historical Society
P.O.Box 492
West Sand Lake, N.Y. 12196

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(term ends)

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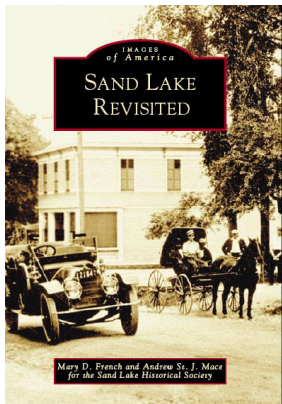
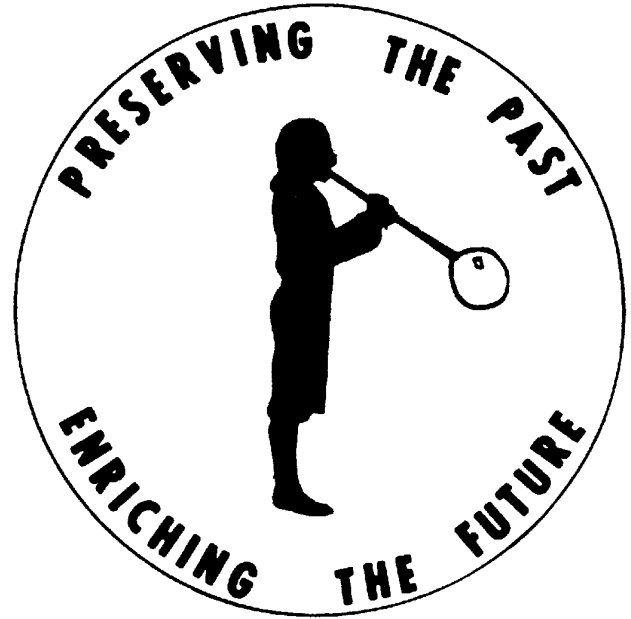
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<http://sandlakehistory.org>

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Historical Highlights

Mary French, Editor

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



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