



Historical Highlights

Official Publication of the Sand Lake Historical Society

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Winter 2013

From the president

Your Sand Lake Historical Society has had a meaningful and varied set of programs this fall. We hope you will join us at the upcoming programs and events this winter and spring. Your attendance and support is important as together we keep alive the history of the people, places and events of our local community and the surrounding region.

A **Final Review of 2008-2012 Bicentennial Events** was presented by the Town of Sand Lake Bicentennial Planning Committee co-chairpersons: Fred Erickson and Nancy W. Davis. The program was presented following a pot luck dinner on **September 11** at Sand Lake Baptist Church.

The activities of **Boy Scout Troop #526** was presented by Troop Master Chuck Hacker and three Scout leaders on **October 9**. The troop is sponsored by the Kiwanis Club of Sand Lake. (The scheduled program about the History of West Sand Lake, presented by Chuck Viens will be presented at a date in late 2013.)

"**My Family and World War II**" was presented as a last-minute substitution by me, about my father, an Army Air Corps Chaplain during WWII in Europe. The program was a tribute to all Veterans and their families on **November 13**. The scheduled program for November was postponed to February 12, 2013, due to the illness of the speaker, Michael Esposito. On this evening, we also celebrated **Mary and Ross French** for their long and faithful service to the Sand Lake historical Society. Mary was one of the founders of the Society at the time of the preparation for the nation's Bicentennial in 1976 and led many of the duties during this entire period. Mary and Ross are moving to Poughkeepsie, New York in early December.

We continue to support and share in the programs and events celebrating the **Bicentennial of the Town of Sand Lake**, founded in 1812, organized by the Bicentennial Planning Committee. This included the dedication of the Town Bicentennial Time Capsule on November 11.

Special thanks to our officers and trustees for their voluntary time and energy for all our activities. Thank you to our members and supporters throughout the year. — *Rev. Dr. Robert Loesch, President*

Upcoming programs, December 2012-June 2013

We invite you to mark your calendar with the dates of our upcoming programs and join us as you are able.

- † **Tuesday, December 11, 6:00 p.m.: Holiday Pot Luck Dinner at Knowlson House**, 42 Schumann Road, Sand Lake, home of Ron Berti and Barbara Neu-Berti. Please bring a covered dish entrée or salad. Dessert and beverages will be provided by the Trustees. Program: Peg Harbour-Holland, "Introduction to Genealogy and Resources of the Capital District Genealogical Society" (Please note the change of time and location of this special program!)
- † **Tuesday, January 8, 7:30 p.m. at Sand Lake Baptist Church**: Jim Bonesteel, president of the Rensselaer Plateau Alliance, will present "History of the Rensselaer Plateau."
- † **Tuesday, February 12, 7:30 p.m. at Sand Lake Baptist Church**: Michael A. Esposito will speak about "Troy's Little Italy". Mr. Esposito, a life-long resident of Troy is the author of *Troy's Little Italy* (Arcadia Publishing, 2009).
- † **Tuesday, March 12, 7:30 p.m. at Sand Lake Baptist Church**: Mac McEvilly will tell the story of an Irish Civil War soldier.
- † **Tuesday, April 9, 7:30 p.m. at Sand Lake Baptist Church**: Kathy Arbogast will speak about "Buttons." She is active with The Mohawk Valley Button Club and the Half Moon Button Club. (You may bring your buttons to be identified, but not to be appraised).
- † **Tuesday, May 14, 6:00 p.m.: Our Annual Dinner Meeting and Program**. Dinner will be served at Uncle Marty's Adirondack Grill. The speakers will be Marty and Val Balga, on the history of "Uncle Marty's Adirondack Grill."
- † **Tuesday, June 11, 7:30 p.m. at Sand Lake Baptist Church**; *program to be determined*.

Sand Lake Baptist Church is located on Route 43 in Averill Park, almost opposite the Walter Adams American Legion Post.

Gifts of history

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 **now only \$12.00** (including tax). *Sand Lake*, our first book, is also available for **only \$12.00** (including tax); add \$3.00 shipping, for each copy. Copies of both books are for sale at the Town Clerk's Office for the Society. Robert J. Lilly's book *The Wynants Kill: a small stream, but mighty* is available for \$16.20 (including tax), and Marvin Buble'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)

A set of 6 note cards for \$7.00 (tax included) is available, including: 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; and Family relaxing on their porch at lakeside cottage. The note cards are available from Town Clerk's office. Order information is also available on our web site. You may send an order to Sand Lake Historical Society, Box 492, West Sand Lake, NY 12196 for any of the above items. -- *Gloria Waldron Hukle, Ways and Means chairperson*

Sand Lake BPC update

1812 — "200 Years Old" — 2012

"A peak into yesterday in the future," says Judy Rowe. The Time Capsule, a project of the S.L.B.P.C. was suggested by Mary French, spearheaded by Town Historian Judy Rowe, produced by Peter Stevens, and supported by all who contributed contents. The contents are recorded by the International Time Capsule Society at Oglethorpe University in Georgia. Thanking Mary, Judy and Peter for the incentive to establish a collection recording today for discovery tomorrow - 2112!

The glimpse into the current lifestyle includes glass of Glass Lake, *Images of Sand Lake* and *Sand Lake Revisited*, a photo of Crystal Lake, the supplement of the *Legislative Gazette*, items from local churches and Kiwanis Club, list of some donations. Burial took place on November 11 at Veterans Memorial Park with assistance of several people with the golden shovel. Participants at the ceremony, including Fred Erickson, Mary French, Nancy W. Davis, Peter Stevens, Rev. Dr Robert Loesch and the Veteran's sound system, were appreciated!

Connie Gatt, President of the Sand Lake Garden Club, reports the Bicentennial Tree is planted. Landscaper Werner Scheeren chose and planted the evergreen tree that grows in Butler Park. Credit to this organization for their effort to support the 200th birthday of Sand Lake!

A Victorian Tea Party, one event of the Bicentennial, will continue at the Library Fair in 2013. The Red Cross Blood Drive, as well! Honoring the people of Sand Lake will continue through the historian's office as Judy Rowe requests continued visitors with stories, reports, and photos.

Commemorative envelopes and Children's Activity-Coloring Books are available at the S.L. Town Clerk's office. The books are for sale also at Park Place, Jiff-E-Mart, Young's Pharmacy and General Store and Sunoco On-The-Go.

— *Nancy W. Davis, S.L.B.P.C. Co-chair*

Immigrant life 1910-1914

Life was very hard in spite of these humorous incidents. In truth they represent rare islands of fun in an unending sea of grinding struggle. While most men went into the restaurant trade, the women worked as seamstresses in sweatshops. The term sweatshop referred to a garment factory which had closed windows and doors. The resulting lack of fresh air and ventilation combined with the hectic pace at which the workers were forced to labor for long hours at a time made the atmosphere intolerably warm and caused them to "sweat." These were grim and frightening places for these young girls who had never experienced the seamy side of urban life. The culture shock must have been tremendous. All of the horror and indignities of the pre-Union industrial America were present there.

The insides of the buildings were open loft floors with row upon row of sewing machines. A pit boss monitored the progress of his squad of girls. Underage children were employed to bring work to the girls and retrieve the finished product from them so they didn't have to get up from their machines. The young married women were encouraged to bring their children to fill these jobs. This parent-child working relationship made the Triangle fire even more of a calamity.

Breaks in the work were few and far between. The girls were forced to sew a fixed amount of "pieces" an hour. The "pieces" were later sewn by another crew into the finished garment in another part of the factory, hence the garment industry term "piece-work." All the sewing machines were treadle operated. Electric machines were too costly when you could make the worker provide the "horsepower." Mary Balestrero remembers my grandmother, Clarina Mortara (Nonni), telling her how even after many years she still could hear the voice of the "Head of the Squad" crying: "Quick, quick." My mother remembers her work week always included a half day on Saturday well into the 1920's.

The conditions in those places were deplorable. None of the machines was built with worker safety in mind, and loose threads and material cuttings cluttered the floors, creating a first class fire hazard. The owners did not hire bilingual managers. If there were any safety procedures, there was no one to tell to the girls in their own language. As a result, when the fire started, panic ensued, and the bodies of scores of girls and children were found huddled up against the locked doors.

Before World War I, Clarina would speak of seeing signs on the sweat shop walls that said: "If you don't come in on Sunday, don't come in on Monday." They went on strike in 1914 to secure the right to have a half a day off once a month. She was working in a sweatshop in Washington Square when, on March 25, 1911, she witnessed the infamous Triangle Shirtwaist Company Fire across the street. One hundred and forty-five people died, including seventy-five young Italian girls. The catastrophe had been exacerbated by the fact that the owners ordered the doors locked to prevent entry by late arriving workers. Their policy was that if you were one minute late, you lost a day's pay, which Nonni said was 50 cents.

The buildings themselves were old by 1910 standards, and had inadequate and rickety fire escapes that collapsed under the weight of the fleeing workers, had narrow winding interior staircases, and had no fire doors or fire extinguishers. Nonni said the trapped girls were so desperate to escape that some of them threw themselves out the windows, hoping the people in the crowd below would break their fall. It was a nightmare that she remembered all her life and was reticent to talk about and always brought tears to her eyes upon re-telling. Once she briefly revealed the names of a few of the victims. I think she may have had some close personal friends about her age of 17 who perished in the flames, but, her willingness to expand upon the details was very limited, brief and stoically matter-of-fact before welling up with emotion.

Conditions steadily got better due to the increasing membership in the International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILGWU). Union strikes and tough labor negotiations eliminated child labor and slavishly long hours. The women were now paid by "the piece." Their wages were directly determined by their productivity. I remember Nonni discussing how she got 1/4 of a penny for a button and 1/2 a penny for each button hole. You do this for eight hours a day and it adds up.

Nonni was an early union member, and she remembered ILGWU President David Dubinsky when he was a union organizer and went into the sweatshops to speak to the workers. She said more often than not, for all his effort, he got beaten up by management thugs. She admired him for his perseverance in pursuit of what she felt was a serious attempt to better her working conditions. As I recall it now, initially, she was more concerned with working in a safe environment than with better wages.

While she felt the Union had vastly helped her economically and in improving her working environs, she was resistant to the strike requests of the subsequent leadership. She felt you should only go out on strike for a good cause. She always said that when one goes out on strike, no matter how much of a wage increase one gets, one never makes up the wages lost during the strike. She felt that the later Union management was too eager to ask the workers to strike for issues that could be negotiated with a little bit more effort. In those last years, she consistently voted with the majority of the Union against going out on strike.

The first job that Nonni had in 1910 paid \$3.00 a week for about 60 hours work. A U.S. Immigration Commission study of 1910 showed an Italian family earned \$688.00 per year or \$112.00 less than the \$800.00 needed to survive. This explains the need for the early arrivals to huddle in railroad flats. With the pitiful wages they earned, they needed to band together to survive. This is the enduring theme that my mother keeps trying to pound through my head: They either helped each other or they starved. In later years, this helpful spirit born of early immigration days was so ingrained that it was the underlying principle of the Fubinese Society.

No matter what they earned, there was a formula by which the Fubinese handled their money. A quarter of their monthly income was sent back to Fubine. In 1914, Italians sent \$66 million back to Italy. This was a much-needed infusion of money to villages that were depleted by immigration. One half was contributed to their room and board. The remaining quarter was theirs to do with as they please. Virtually all of them saved as much as they could so they would have a nest egg for marriage and the raising of a family. When Teresa Maria DeMartini got married she had accumulated about \$200.00 in six years by saving about 65 cents a week. This was a goodly sum in those days.

There was no doubt that these people came to better their lives. They worked hard to make a new life. Few Fubinese took a criminal bent. Many of these people represented the "intelligentsia" of Fubine. Few, if any, had any formal education; they had a native, innate intelligence that served them well. They had inquisitive minds that responded well when exposed to learning. They were never satisfied with their station and constantly worked very hard to improve themselves. In spite of their long hours at their regular jobs, many had a second job or, like Rosa Gotta, took in washing to earn extra money.

They all were able to do something, and no matter what it was, they all did it well. The first immigrants had it the hardest, but as more came they all helped each other. As a result, they did not need any outside help. Had there been any public assistance available at the time, it is doubtful that they would have accepted it. They had too much pride and integrity.

One could reasonably say of the Fubinese at that time that their Eleventh Commandment was: "Thou shalt learn how to do something constructive and do it well, so that thou shalt always be able to earn a living."

Nonni used to say to me that only the tough stayed. It is safe to say that the experience alone toughened them all. We can all take pride in their perseverance in the face of such hardships and humiliations. -- excerpted from "The Far Side of Heaven," a family history by Ronald E. Berti



Above is a picture of the Time Capsule and the poem "Little Town," one of many enclosures. See the full list on the next page!

**Sand Lake Historical Society
Trustees 2012 – 2013**

(term ends)

Rev. Dr. Robert Loesch, President (2014)

Mary French, Vice President (2013)

Christine Kronau, Recording Secretary (2014)

Bonnie Hellum, Corresponding Secretary (2013)

Jacqueline Tremont, Treasurer (2014)

Joyce Baum (2014)

Robert Baum (2014)

Gloria Waldron Hukle (2014)

John (Mac) McEvelly (2014)

Barbara Neu (2014)

Patricia Robelotto (2014)

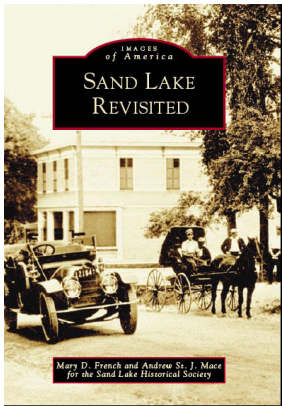
Judy Rowe (2014)

Joe Ferrannini (2015)

Woodie Hacker (2015)

Katie Komdat (2015)





<http://sandlakehistory.org>

E-mail: sandlakehistory@aol.com

Historical Highlights

Robert Loesch, Interim Editor

Andrew Mace, Publisher



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Sand Lake Historical Society

Post Office Box 492

West Sand Lake, New York 12196



Sand Lake Historical Society

Membership Application/Renewal

Name _____

Address _____

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\$3 per Student (13-22) _____ \$10 per Individual _____ \$15 per Family _____

\$100 per Lifetime (Individual) _____ \$150 per Lifetime (Family – two persons) _____

Receive newsletter electronically? Yes ___ No ___ | Total enclosed: \$ _____

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



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Time Capsule Memorabilia

This list of the memorabilia for the time capsule was sent to the International Time Capsule Society at Oglethorpe University to register the capsule. We weren't too sure several times in our planning stage, but it turned out very well. Peter Stevens helped out so much. It was amazing how much we were able to get into the space. – *Mary French*

- † **The Legislative Gazette of August 14, 2012**, featured SAND LAKE'S BICENTENNIAL with advertisements, historical articles, and greetings from Town Supervisor, Bicentennial Co-chairs and President of Sand Lake Business Association.
- † **Town of Sand Lake Bicentennial Program August 25-26, 2012** – participants, schedule of events, acknowledging monumental in kind donation of time and energy.
- † Images of America books *Sand Lake* (co-authors Mary D. French and Robert J. Lilly for the Sand Lake Historical Society) and *Sand Lake Revisited* (coauthors Mary D. French and Andrew St. J. Mace for the Sand Lake Historical Society). These two books give a pictorial and narrative history of the Town's highlights, events, organizations, businesses and people.
- † **Sand Lake Town Library book mark** of hours, materials, services and programs.
- † *Rensselaer County Visitor's Guide* – tells what is beyond Sand Lake and within our County.
- † **Sand Lake Center for the Arts 2011-2012 brochure** with program highlights and advertisements of supporting businesses.
- † **Town of Sand Lake Bicentennial Community Designation Day, Saturday, September 13, 1975**, recognized by American Revolution Bicentennial Commission for participation in national bicentennial events.
- † **Cancelled commemorative envelope** with Glass Lake painting by Joseph Hidley from Rensselaer County Historical Society Collection, Troy and New England Railway trolley stamp and cancellation design of motto "A Place of Picnics, Porches, Progress and Preservation," June 12, 2012.
- † **Sand Lake Union Cemetery gravestone donor request form** to repair stones with no family members available. This was a BPC project.
- † **Sand Lake Bicentennial 2012 Essay Contest** – Two fourth grade winners chose as their topics *Crystal Lake Amusement Park – A Trip in Time* by Kaiya Leveroni and *Sand Lake Union Cemetery* by Xander Michaels. This was an excellent opportunity to have school children involved.
- † **1976 Bicentennial Quilt post card** – a graphic history of organizations at our National Bicentennial.
- † **Time magazines:**
 - Special Issue July 1776 Independence- foundation of history
 - Special issue September 1789: The New Nation - continued foundation of history
 - Special Anniversary Issue October 1983: The Most Amazing 60 Years in History
 - Special Issue The Healing Begins August 19, 1974, Resignation of Richard Nixon and swearing in of Gerald Ford
- † Centennial Celebration brochure 1874 -1974 of Church of the Covenant, United Methodist and April 29, 2012, June 3, 2012 bulletins and memorial service of Elizabeth Berenice Danks.
- † *The Record* Sunday August 26, 2012 headlining TOWN TURNS 200. Newspaper reporting is significant.
- † *The Record* Wednesday November 7, 2012 OBAMA ELECTED.
- † **Invitation of Averill Park Education Foundation** – 2012 Annual Appeal and Extravaganza on November 9, 2012, with the theme "A Step Back in Time" featured District No. 1, No. 8, No. 9 one-room schools and District No. 7 with two rooms. It was neat to have organizations extend the bicentennial event.
- † **Sand Lake Baptist Church history** by Albert Fox.
- † **Program for Things That Go...Vehicle Parade** May 1, 2010.
- † The Uline Genealogy 1756-1998.
- † **Town of Sand Lake logo** from: *On The Trail Of Henry Hudson and Our Dutch Heritage Through the Municipal Seals in New York*, compiled by local author Marvin Bubie
- † **Business card of Crystal Lake Crafts** featuring unique water fountains designed by Stu Lipschultz – local business
- † **Trinity Lutheran Church:** Brochure 1776 -2011, a Newsletter *The Messenger* Nov. 2012 and an Introduction brochure to Trinity Lutheran and Gilead Lutheran (the two churches share a pastor).
- † **St Henry's Catholic Community:** baptismal candle, a bulletin October 19, 2012 and a welcoming brochure.
- † **Bicentennial Activity and Coloring Book** – a BPC project featuring history of the Town.
- † **The Advertiser, November 11, 2012** – weekly business and local news – free to residents.
- † **Flyer for the Car Cruise** – one of the features of the Main Event Aug 25, 2012.
- † **Kiwanis Club of Sand Lake, NY, Inc. 2012-2013 Directory** (Installation Dinner).
- † **West Sand Lake Fire Company business card** featuring "Old Joe", the first fire apparatus.
- † **Menus from:**
 - Water Wheel Restaurant - menu with a message to great-grandchildren to take note of cost of meals
 - Lakeview on Crystal Lake takeout menu and a catering menu

- A.J. Pizzeria
 - Lee Sun
 - The Towne Tavern
- (The Town can boast of many fine and varied restaurants.)

1 Coins and Medals

- An American flag pin from Town Historian Judy Rowe presented at a DAR event. The flag and the organization both resound with history.
- 2001 New York quarter (25¢) - Coin gives date New York joined the Union and Statue of Liberty.
- Five rolls of 50 pennies with one package solid copper. Donor wanted persons who opened the time capsule to have a gift.

1 Other Objects

- a piece of the pot used to melt sand into molten glass – Rensselaer Glass Factory was begun in 1804 and closed after the last fire of 1852.
- Hartgen Archeological Association Inc. and Boy Scout Troop 526 archeological excavation at 31 Schumann Road July 23, 2012 – personal item clay pipe stem. Location was near Rensselaer Glass factory.
- Artifacts from Peter Stevens' yard also near Rensselaer Glass Factory: Kewpie doll, glass pot chard, glass slag pieces, small ball, metal tray. These denote random items buried over time.
- Piece of charcoal from Loren Dobert, son of George Dobert, one of the long-time charcoal burners in Taborton. Charcoal burning was thriving business on "Taborton Mountain."
- Brown glass slag – another reminder from Rensselaer Glass Factory.
- One dollar bill – a staple in cash transactions
- Fred Erickson's hat, which easily located him during the Main Event.
- Averill Park School football award – the letters "A" "P" with football designs within the letters.
- American Airlines kid's flying wings.
- Hess toy truck promotional badge
- 2 pairs of 3D glasses from Superbowl 02.01.09
- A patch and a badge from the Hendrick Hudson Fish and Game Club. This is an old, established organization in the town.
- Averill Park-Sand Lake Fire Department patch
- IBM Selectric typewriter ball
- 1 package Sylvania flashcubes – used before digital cameras.
- WWII Japanese and Philippine currency and script.
- *Little Town* – poem in a framed setting compliments of William Glasser Plumbing Heating Averill Park – a long-established businessman.

1 Photos and Pictures

- Photo of BPC co-chairs Fred Erickson and Nancy W. Davis reading the Bicentennial citation from New York State Governor Andrew Cuomo at Town Hall.
- Crystal Lake photograph 8/18/12 by Joe Johnson. The red ball denotes the lake's use by boats to mark their course on a very beautiful setting.
- Handout compiled by Chuck Viens with pictures from West Sand Lake to Sand Lake on NY Route 43 for Main Event Trolley Tour August 25, 2012.
- Sand Lake Baptist Church bell – The bell called persons to worship and firemen to a fire.
- Co-chair Fred Erickson easily identified with his hat
- Town's 200th birthday cake courtesy of Pie Squared and Flowers in the Park in front of Pie Squared Bakery and Sweet Shop proudly displayed in the parade
- Civil War re-enactors from Morgan's Artillery in parade August 25, 2012
- Interfaith Service Sunday August 26, 2012 Rev. Merry Watters, pastor, Church of the Covenant, United Methodist; Rev. Dr. Patricia Bush, pastor, Salem United Methodist Church; Father Thomas F. Holmes, St. Henry's Catholic Community; Rev. Glenn Van Oort, retired pastor of Reformed Church in America, who gave a call to freedom again in 1812 and Rev. Glenn Van Oort's granddaughter.

1 CDs

- The Sand Lake Bicentennial Parade 08/25/2012
- Things That Go ... Parade May 1, 2010
- Valentine's Day Dance

- 1 PowerPoint program of Town of Sand Lake veterans from Revolutionary War to 2012 conflicts. Civil War veterans totaling 277 who served are listed on typed pages.

More information about the International Time Capsule Society at Oglethorpe University may be found at http://www.oglethorpe.edu/about_us/crypt_of_civilization/international_time_capsule_society.asp