



Historical Highlights

Official Publication of the Sand Lake Historical Society

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Our 47th Year

Fall 2020

From the president

One thing I can say to you all: This is certainly an historic time. When I last saw some of you, it was a fun and well attended night with a presentation on Burden Lake. Then we all started wearing a mask, washing our hands, using hand sanitizer and looking for toilet paper!!! Hopefully you are all doing well (and found some toilet paper. The younger set didn't know about the Sears catalog).

Unfortunately, we lost some people in Sand Lake to the virus; my condolences to anyone who knew and loved them.

We were able to finally have our Annual Meeting at Butler Park catered by Arlington House, and those who attended seemed to really enjoy it and were happy to "get out"! We have resumed our presentations starting with October and November, but there will be no Christmas gathering.

Hope to see you all soon; do your best to stay safe! —
Jacqueline Tremont, President; 518-527-9926

Upcoming programs and events

† November 10, 7:00 p.m. at Sand Lake Town Hall

Courtroom: West Sand Lake resident Lieutenant Colonel (Ret.) John Brownrigg will discuss the *Four Freedoms We Celebrate on Veterans Day* along with recent and ongoing community efforts to commemorate

our veterans. Lieutenant Colonel Brownrigg is a veteran of two tours in Vietnam, where he was awarded the Combat Infantry Badge, two Army Commendation Medals, two Bronze Stars, two Purple Hearts and the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry. Upon leaving active duty in 1972, he served an additional 22 years in the Army National Guard and Army Reserve. His reserve assignments included serving as an aide to Governor Rockefeller and developing numerous innovative training programs. Upon the completion of his presentation, Lieutenant Colonel Brownrigg will join fellow area veterans William W. Glasser, Jr. (USA, 1968-71), Paul Glasser, Jr. (Corporal, USMC, 1989-93), and Shari Mantini (Captain, Nurse Corps, USAF, 1986-96) for a recollection of their most memorable military experiences. Due to limited seating, please e-mail jtre115@yahoo.com or call 518-527-9926 if you would like to attend in person. Face masks and additional COVID-19 precautions will be required per <https://sandlakehistory.org/covid-19.htm> The presentation and subsequent discussion will be simulcast on Spectrum Cable TV channel 1303 beginning at 7:00 p.m. on the 10th and live-streamed online (later available for playback) via https://townhallstreams.com/towns/sand_lake_ny

† There will be no holiday party in December.

† **Tuesday, January 12, 2021, 7:00 p.m. at Sand Lake Town Hall Courtroom: *Sand Lake Show and Tell III!*** What's in your attic, cellar, closet, or junk drawer? Did you save old calendars from a local business? Photos from a special event in town, Sand Lake Springs bottles, local post cards? Items from your Scouting days? Join us January 12th and bring whatever you have at home relating to the Town of Sand Lake to share and talk about. We'll take a few minutes and try to talk about everything brought. It's part of *your* history, but it's also part of *Sand Lake's* history! So, look in those closets and attics! It promises to be a walk down memory lane.

In this issue:

Why is our glassblower wearing a mask? (That's a rhetorical question!) What connects the Anti-Rent Wars of the 1840s to the current Covid-19 pandemic? That, along with Cipperly family history, a lost "landmark," a question of "body snatching" and more – inside this issue!

Notes: Our apologies for the delay in this fall edition. There was no Vol. 46, No. 4, Spring 2020 issue of *Historical Highlights* as such. Rather, it was combined with Vol. 47, No. 1, Summer 2020.

Recap of past programs 2019-2020

- 1 Tuesday, December 10: *A Christmas celebration at the Berti's in Sand Lake*. Special thanks to Michelle Schultz and Fred Erickson for a presentation on the famous response to the 1897 “Yes Virginia, there is a Santa Claus” letter to the editor of *The New York Sun*. Covered dishes were delicious and the home decorated beautifully.
- 1 Tuesday, January 14, 2020: *Show and Tell* was enjoyed by an enthusiastic group who shared local artifacts and memories, including milk bottles from local dairies, well-remembered Tremont Lumber Company calendars, various post cards, pieces of Glass Lake glass, even a framed poster from the 1965 appearance of the Mills Brothers Circus in town!
- 1 Tuesday, February 12: Dr. Jennifer Thompson Burns spoke on *A “Forwarding Agent,” “Libeler,” and an “Unimpeachable” Man: The Abolition Movement Told Through the Life of Rev. Abel Brown*. (Brown spent some time in Sand Lake in the early 1840s as pastor of the Sand Lake Baptist Church.) A large crowd enjoyed the presentation despite equipment failure that prevented an accompanying PowerPoint presentation from being shown. (Dr. Burns has since shared a copy of that presentation with us, and we hope to get it on our website in some form soon.)
- 1 Tuesday, March 10: *History of Burden Lakes*.* Connor Kopcho has had an interest in history, having grown up on Burden Lake. He became fascinated in particular with the history of Totem Lodge, started doing research, and one thing led to another. His research, love and Totem Lodge memorabilia was demonstrated to a most enthusiastic audience!
- 1 ~~April 14 Program: CANCELED~~
- 1 ~~May 12: Dinner and Annual Meeting. POSTPONED (see below)~~
- 1 ~~May 29 Fundraiser Event: CANCELED~~
- 1 ~~June 9 Program: CANCELED~~
- 1 Tuesday, September 8: *Dinner (in a box!) and Annual Meeting at Butler Park*. The Annual Meeting included election of Trustees: *Nancy Perry* (three-year term; replacing outgoing trustee Joan Fuess), *Bud Whitney* (three-year term; replacing outgoing trustee Dawn Vink), Jim Powers and Michelle Mosher Schultz (both for 2nd three-year terms). Also, in keeping with what has become a bit of a fall tradition in SLHS, Town Historian Bob Moore updated us on what’s been happening in and around his office!

- 1 Tuesday, October 13: *Historic Roads & the Shaping of Our Town*.* Rensselaer County was the interior link between the colonial coastal commerce of New York (via the Hudson River “highway”) and New England. The United States Post Office Department was responsible for establishing post roads and committed to concentrate the mail – both letter communication and newspapers – on the most expeditious route available to passengers. We learned how these roads developed and went in and out of postal favor across the Rensselaer Plateau from the 1790s to the 1860s, thanks to **Diane DeBlois and Robert Dalton Harris**, partners in the historic document business aGatherin’ – based in West Sand Lake – since 1973 and specialists in postal history and in ephemera.

*Please note that the March 2020 and October 2020 programs were recorded and may be viewed. Links may be found on our website at <https://sandlakehistory.org/pastprog.htm>

SLHS online

If you haven’t already done so, look for us on Facebook! It’s a great place to get the most up-to-date news on meetings and events, along with other items of interest from us and from other places and groups in the Capital District. And you might see things you won’t see in our newsletter or on the website!

Our page is getting noticed more and more! This past December, we hit a milestone: 500 likes! And if there has been *any* benefit to us during the pandemic, it is that more and more folks are discovering and liking our Facebook Page, currently at 602 likes (as of 10/24/2020) along with a number of other “followers”!

We started the tradition awhile back of awarding complimentary one-year memberships to every 100th “Like” of our page; #600 is... *Stacy Bowman* of Averill Park! Welcome to the Sand Lake Historical Society!

New on Facebook in September 2019 was **Sand Lake (NY) History**, a companion *group* to our **Sand Lake Historical Society page**. This group allows members to share information and to ask or answer questions about our Town’s history. This, too, is proving popular, currently with over 400 members!

Follow the link on our website or go to <https://www.facebook.com/SandLakeHistoricalSociety> — “Like” us...and enjoy! There’s a link to the Sand Lake (NY) History group from that page.

And there’s always our web site, [https://sandlakehistory.org/!](https://sandlakehistory.org/)

Cipperly family history 2020

Last week I finished photocopying the Journal of Peter Cipperly that was generously shared by Tom Cipperly. Tom is the great grandson of Peter Cipperly. The journal, filled with family history, was presented to I. Ramond Cipperly by his grandfather Peter in 1915 when Ramond was 26. Peter had used the resources of the N.Y. State Library in Albany to record in longhand the history of their ancestors, the Palatinates, who landed on Governors Island in 1710.

The Palatinates fled the lower Rhine valley in Germany for England after getting into trouble with German Roman Catholics. The English king placed over 3000 of these people on six ships and sent them to America. From New York harbor, many traveled north to settle the Hudson and Mohawk valleys. "They were perhaps at once the most miserable and most hopeful set of people ever set down on our shores."

The journal states, "Barrent Cipperly settled at West Camp on the Hudson and they were given 40 acres of land to settle on, and they were to cut the pine trees of the land and make them into turpin tine and tar and ship it to England to pay for their passage over." The family name was originally Zipperly and they migrated from Wurttemberg Germany. After about five years in West Camp they moved across the Hudson to Rhinebeck, Dutchess County and a few years later Michael, son of Barrent Cipperly and four sons, "a short time before the Revolutionary war took up land on the Van Rensselaer Manor."

Joseph Henry Cipperly, one of the sons "was in the revolutionary army and fought at the battle of Saratoga and saw the surrender of Bergoin (Burgoyne)." Another son whose name has been lost settled two miles south of Joseph "took the side of England was a Tory and they tortured him so to make him change his views that he died." Joseph was a blacksmith and settled in Cedarhurst, West Sand Lake (Troy Sand & Gravel today).

I remember Tom when he was on the Averill Park Board of Education in the 1980s. Special thanks to Tom for sharing this family history and your lifelong contribution to the Town of Sand Lake. – *Bob Moore, Sand Lake Town Historian*

At the time of his death in 1927 at age 99, Peter Cipperly was thought to have been the oldest resident of Rensselaer County. He also achieved some notoriety for at least two other events.

He was mentioned in a July 18, 1908, *Times-Union* article as follows: *Peter Cipperly, an aged man, this morning went to District Attorney O'Brien with what looks like important information and his story may*

eventually be of great value. Mr. Cipperly, who is a farmer and lives at Snyder's lake, says that he boarded an Averill park car at Albia about 3 o'clock the afternoon of July 7. His attention was attracted to a young woman and a youth of about 19 or 20 years of age sitting

ahead of him. He couldn't get a good view of the young woman's face, but the pictures shown him of Hazel Drew caused him to think that the young woman he saw that day was none other than she. The young man with her was tall, slim built and had an intelligent face. He was very attentive to the young woman, Mr. Cipperly said, and never took his eyes off her. Mr. Cipperly couldn't give much of an idea as to what kind of clothes the young woman wore, but when he was shown Hazel's hat he said it resembled the one which she held in her lap.

District Attorney O'Brien, thought this information was so important that he at once started his detectives at work to run down his possible clew....

We all know just how big a story the Hazel Drew murder was back then! A similar accounting by Mr. Cipperly appeared in the Washington, D. C. *Sunday*



...and his story may eventually be of great value.

Star of July 19, 1908, also noting that the young man with her had a “dark complexion.”

An article in the March 16, 1927, edition of the *Troy Times* (the day of his funeral), commenting on Cipperly’s diary, noted that “[the] book contains a clipping from a Troy paper of 1875. which reads: *Peanuts grown In Rensselaer County. Peter Cipperly of Snyder’s Lake, North Greenbush [has] had a successful experiment raising peanuts. He is probably the first man to gain this distinction in this part of the country. This morning he exhibited at the Press office a vine having about 100 developed nuts. They were grown from one peanut. The vine has the appearance of a pea vine. The growing crop is treated about the same [as] a potato crop. This is the second experiment that Mr Cipperly has made. His crop this year being about a dozen hills. He believes that peanuts can be profitably cultivated In Rensselaer County....*”

Calico Indians and COVID-19!

In the 1840s, a ruthless NY Governor, Silas Wright, tried to crush the Anti-Rent War and its leader, Nassau’s Dr. Smith Boughton (aka Big Thunder). The Van Rensselaer family and other rich landowners had oppressed our local communities creating a feudal system of land ownership that left many area residents indentured servants just two decades before the Civil War.

The Anti-Rent War was fought locally and across the region to overthrow this tyranny. To protect themselves and their families from recrimination, the farmers dressed as Calico Indians in elaborate masks and costumes in their operations and protests. Governor Wright and his corrupt supporters conspired to pass a state law to prohibit the wearing of masks in public in order to facilitate the arrest of these protestors. That anti-mask law has been on the books ever since.

[In May 2020], 175 years later, the NYS Legislature repealed that law.** It was for another obvious reason but we will take it.

Big Thunder is celebrating. – *David Fleming, Nassau Town Supervisor (from his Facebook post)*

**Justification for S. 8415, sponsored by State Senator Jamaal Bailey: “Historically, loitering laws have been used for no legitimate public safety purpose. New York State’s statute dates back to the 1845 rent riots. Since then, the law has been used to criminalize protest, as well as to arrest New Yorkers “masquerading” as a different gender. Further, in a time when masks and other face coverings are recommended for health reasons and the Governor has mandated the use of face coverings in certain situations, it’s necessary to repeal the statute that prohibits the use of masks in public to avoid confusion. It’s essential to ensure that New Yorkers know that they cannot be prosecuted for following the Governor’s guidance.”

As enacted by Chapter 3, New York State Laws of 1845:

AN ACT to prevent persons appearing disguised and armed. Passed January 28, 1845.

The People of the State of New-York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

§ 1. Every person who, having his face painted, discolored, covered or concealed, or being otherwise disguised, in a manner calculated to prevent him from being identified, shall appear in any road or public highway, or any field, lot, wood or enclosure, may be pursued and arrested in the manner hereinafter provided : and upon being brought before any judge or other officer, hereinafter designated, of the same county where he shall be arrested, and not giving a good account of himself, shall be deemed a vagrant, within the purview of the second title, of chapter twenty, of the first part of the Revised Statutes : and on conviction, as provided in the said title, shall be committed to and imprisoned in the county jail of the county where such person shall be found, for a term not exceeding six months...

Paragraph 4 of subsection 35 of section 240 of the (current) Penal Law as repealed by S.8415, reads: “Being masked or in any manner disguised by unusual or unnatural attire or facial alteration, loiters, remains or congregates in a public place with other persons so masked or disguised, or knowingly permits or aids persons so masked or disguised to congregate in a public place; except that such conduct is not unlawful when it occurs in connection with a masquerade party or like entertainment if, when such entertainment is held in a city which has promulgated regulations in connection with such affairs, permission is first obtained from the police or other appropriate authorities...”

SINGULAR AFFAIR— TWO RESPECTABLE RENSSELAER COUNTY PHYSICIANS CHARGED WITH BODY SNATCHING.

*From the Troy Daily Times, Monday
Afternoon, November 20, 1865*

The lower part of the county is considerably exercised over the arrest of two well-known physicians, at Bath. Their names are Dr. Alexander H. Hull and his son Dr. Wm. H. Hull, of Sandlake. They seem to be victims to a popular prejudice against the procurement of bodies for purposes of dissection. The Albany Express gives the following version of the case:

“It appears that about 11 o’clock on Friday night, two men crossed the river from this side of the Bath ferry boat. Reaching the opposite shore they were

joined by a third party. After consultation with each other one of the men returned to the ferry and inquired of the ferryman if he would consent to allow him to carry a bundle aboard. 'It depends altogether upon what the bundle is', said the ferryman, 'It is a box containing a corpse,' responded the man. 'Then you cannot cross on this boat,' said the ferrymen, who imagined something was wrong. The fellow then left, but returning in a few minutes begged of the ferryman not to divulge what he had spoken to him about. The ferryman considered the affair something in which the public was interested. He therefore notified officer Wentworth of the facts in the case which induced that officer to arrest a well-known physician of Sandlake who, it was alleged, had charge of the body. The other parties escaped and it is believed they carried the corpse with them, for although the officer instituted a diligent search it could not be found. The Sandlake M. D. was detained in custody until Saturday morning when the affair was investigated by Justice Stall. The officer testified that he made the arrest on the information received from the ferryman; that he had searched for the body but that it could not be found. Of course the evidence was not of such a character as to warrant the Magistrate in holding the accused, and he was therefore discharged."

The other papers state that both the Doctors Hull were arrested, and the body was said to be that of a man named Shaper, who committed suicide about ten days ago. The Argus puts a quietus on the case. It says:

"The case of reported Body Snatching in Bath: We are glad to learn that this excitement has been entirely allayed by a careful examination. No "dead body in a bag" has been found, and no dead body has been missed. Dr. Hull who has been thus unfairly assailed, is a highly respected physician of West Sandlake, of many years practice. His son is a most worthy and promising student of medicine. We regret that honorable men should thus suffer from mistake and unnecessary public excitement. The study of anatomy and the dissection of the human body has long since been made light by legislative enactments, and every motive for violation of the grave removed. Without dissections the practice of surgery would soon degenerate with all medical science. The splendid results of military surgery, and the saving of life and limb during our late war is owing, in a great measure, to the anatomical knowledge of our army surgeons."

Lost...landmark?

Merriam-Webster gives one definition of a landmark as: *...an object (such as a stone or tree) that marks the boundary of land; a conspicuous object on land that marks a locality; ...[or] a structure (such as a building) of unusual historical and usually aesthetic*

Recycling, Part II

The Sand Lake Historical Society is not in the habit of advertising local businesses *per se*; however, when historic structures are involved, we're always interested. Given that, the following recent Facebook post caught our eye: *"When one door closes... another opens. [Messhall is] moving from our current location, just a short ways away to 8905 Rt. 66, Poestenkill. Keep an eye out for our grand re-opening date [hopefully end of October]."*



We first mentioned Messhall in the Fall 2016 issue of *Historical Highlights*, in an article called "Recycling," noting adaptive reuse of several familiar and (yes) historic structures. Now, Messhall is moving from one "recycled" structure to another! The building at 8905 Rt. 66 dates well back into the last century; it, too, has seen many and varied uses. (You may remember the building as "Outside In Fitness," or "Route 66 Southwestern Grille," or "Vic's," etc.!)



interest especially : one that is officially designated and set aside for preservation.

The above photo, by Amy Schafer, shows the former Pie Squared / Slow Jed's / Liquor Store, etc., being demolished a few weeks back. The exact age of the building is not known, but it is thought to have dated from the late 1700s, and it was almost certainly

one of the oldest extant structures in the Averill Park hamlet.

Mary Eileen O'Donnell reminisced on Facebook: *Harry J O'Donnell, our Dad, ran his liquor store there... When Mort Shulman needed an office, he opened it upstairs in this 1790s saltbox building.*

I remember when there wasn't running water there. And we used an outhouse behind Mrs. Grigg's old house to do our business. And we got water from the old water pump behind the store.

Goodbye old liquor store. Because of this store Dad put food on our table & sent 4 kids to college (then sent Mom back to SUNY Albany for her master's in library science degree so she could be the school librarian for 20 years).

This old building gave us all a life. Thank you, Averill Park, for all you gave us.

Mary Eileen's sister Maureen Hibbard added: *[Our] dad Harry opened the store in February 1947 (several weeks before our brother Pierce was born).*

Was this 200-year-old structure a "landmark"? – *Andrew Mace [Note: Any opinions expressed here are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Sand Lake Historical Society.]*

Memorial award thank-you

Hello! My name is Carley Salerno, and I'm one of the recipients of the Sand Lake Historical Society [2020] Memorial Award. I wanted to thank you for choosing me to receive this award. I'd always been intrigued in history, but my passion for history really took off this year in my AP Government and Politics class. Here I studied the history of American politics and political ideology in depth. My favorite part by far is reviewing how historical context can push and pull at government and politics.

Next year I'm pursuing a major in Poly Sci and French at SUNY Geneseo – and it really wouldn't be possible without your help! I'm a first generation college student, so the burden of paying for college is difficult for my mother and I. Your scholarship sincerely helped make the process much easier – thank you again!

Carley Salerno

SLHS member notification list

Those of you who have shared your email address with us should be familiar with our list called "[slhs-members @ googlegroups.com](mailto:slhs-members@googlegroups.com)." This is an announce-only list to notify our members regarding program reminders, updates, postponements or cancellations; it is *not* a discussion list. Postings generally run no more than 1-2 per month, and you will be offered the

opportunity to opt out. ***It's our best way to get word out to members quickly, so we'd love to add members whose email address was not on file.***

The list will supplement any notifications on the School Closing Network (local TV stations and newspaper websites) or on our Facebook page and website.

Barn Quilt Squares fundraiser

Congratulations to successful bidders Mary Anderson, Charlotte Bowser, Anja Stehr Carr, Ellen Cole, Andrew Mace, Sue Powers, Claire Robelotto, Nancy Timber, Carol Turner, Stephan & Carolyn Wilson and Ann Winnicki.

The squares may still be viewed on our website: <https://sandlakehistory.org/barn-quilt-squares/>

New historical marker

Hopefully, our newest historical marker will be installed and dedicated in spring 2021. Read more about Albert Fox and his family, and the Fox Mansion, in the Winter 2021 *Historical Highlights*. And be sure to watch our Facebook page and website, as well as *The Advertiser*, for information on date and time! A huge thank you to the William G. Pomeroy Foundation for awarding us the grant for this marker!



Hannaford shopping bags

In December 2020, look for the reusable shopping bags to benefit Sand Lake Historical Society in the Hannaford in West Sand Lake!

Officers and Trustees of the Society 2020-2021

Officers: *Jacqueline Tremont (2022)*, President; *Jane Minotti (2021)*, Vice President; *Sharon Dawes (2022)*, Recording Secretary; *Rosemarie Sniezyk (2021)*, Corresponding Secretary; *Michelle Mosher Schultz (2023)*, Treasurer.

Trustees: *Holli Boyd-White (2021)*, *Peter Finn (2022)*, *Michael Perry (2022)*, *Nancy Perry (2023)*, *Jim Powers (2023)*, *Sue Powers (2021)*, *Wayland Whitney (2023)*, *Ann Winnicki (2022)*.





Sand Lake Historical Society
Membership Application/Renewal 2020-2021

(Please print clearly)

New Member Renewal

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

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

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

Would you prefer to receive newsletter via: Email or Postal Mail *(check only one)*

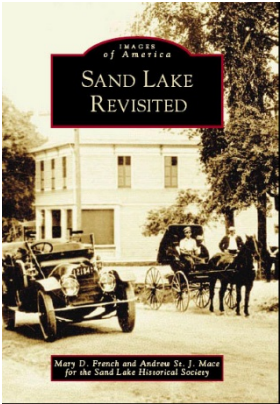
Do you have any particular historical interests or expertise? If so, please let us know:

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

Fall 2020

NOTE: Memberships run from June 1 through May 31.
Join or renew now and your membership is good through 5/31/2022!



<https://sandlakehistory.org>
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Historical Highlights
Andrew Mace, Editor/Publisher



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