

Feb. 1976

SAND LAKE HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

From The President's Desk -

I've just finished reading a book - a rare one, you can bet - published in Syracuse in 1890 and entitled How 'Tis Done. The author debunks the schemes employed in the several prior decades for peddling lightning rods, patent rights, shrubs and such. And most effective of the schemes was the canvass, sending an affable agent door-to-door and farm-to-farm to get the people to subscribe to some worthy cause or product.

Certainly canvassers must have been stumping for purposes that we would recognize as good as well as those that we would brand as bad, but, whatever the product, the author's major thesis was that the method was so effective that ordinarily frugal folk could be induced to commit money to frivolities they otherwise would have budgeted for basic necessities. Mark Twain, himself, was persuaded by a canvasser to festoon his property with lightning rods. And even I on two different occasions almost ignored my better judgement about baby furniture and encyclopedias. (I won't say, though, how many times the canvasser prevailed in his own interests rather than I in mine.)

The favorite product of the canvasser was books. And among the books peddled by subscription, we know best the county atlases and histories. The canvasser would manipulate the vanity of his potential subscriber - "Your farm boundaries and fine buildings will be shown in their exact location..." "For an extra charge we can publish a lithograph of your house...you may want the artist to make some changes in his drawing to put your holdings in a proper light and for sure we can insert you and your family into the picture for posterity." "Your ancestors deserve to have their biographies preserved with your own vital statistics...special biographical sketches are so very little extra." And so on. Finally some hack editor would package it all in the guise of an atlas or history. The subscribers would sometimes pay, their vanities puffed, but just as often they would rightfully complain about incorrect dates, misspellings and unflattering allusions.

These days, as we feed our hunger for history from these very sources that were often so badly researched, we ought to add salt by the teaspoon. On the other hand, bad as many of the county atlases and histories are, they are all that we have. So, too, let's be thankful for vain forbearers and predatory canvassers.

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Coming Events -

- February 9: "Anti-Rent Wars" presented by John Thero, principal of Algonquin Middle School.
- March 8: "Antique Dolls", display and program presented by Mrs. Agnes Sura of Hoosick Falls.
- April 12: Slide and tape program prepared by Rensselaer County Historical Society on "The History of Rensselaer County".

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Local Publications -

A PICTORIAL HISTORY OF WEST SAND LAKE
A new book by Charles H. Viens and Sanford G. Young \$4.00 per copy
Now on sale at the following places: West Sand Lake School office; Sanford Young (674-2119); Gifford's Market, Glass Lake; All meetings of the Sand Lake Historical Society.

Local Publications (cont.)

Due out in March

A PICTORIAL HISTORY OF THE TROY & NEW ENGLAND RAILWAY CO.
A 30 year segment of Sand Lake's heritage, 1895-1925.

This book is a first person account of a ride on the "trolley" from Albia to Averill Park in the early 1900's on a hot summer's day. The book will contain over 60 photographs from these bygone days and you will meet several of your Sand Lake neighbors on the trip. Several local residents have been interviewed and their first person accounts make it a real live trip. Also included will be some 30 present day scenes to match the older photographs.

It will be a limited edition of 500 copies. No reprints. Orders are being taken by Sanford Young - Averill Park - 674-2119.

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Bicentennial Notes -

Town Bicentennial Commission meets the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 8 P.M. at the Town Hall. All are welcome and encourages to attend and participate. We need your ideas and help.

Coming events:

"That's the Way it Was" - an exhibit representing country life style 1776-1876, including Sand Lake period pieces and room settings. March 20-20 at Salem United Methodist Church, West Sand Lake. Saturdays 10 A.M.-9 P.M., Sundays 1-6 P.M. Admission: 50¢ for adults, 25¢ for children. Weekdays: groups by appointment - no charge.

"Bicentennial Day" - a town bicentennial celebration including parade, family picnic and games, fireworks, block dance with LaFleur big band and a rock band, fiddler's contest, and hayrides. June 12th beginning at 10 A.M. at Miller Hill School and proceeding to the High School

"Independence Day" - a reenactment of the signing of the Declaration of Independence including ceremonial signing by all present. July 4th at Town Hall.

"Tour of Old Houses and Buildings" - Fall of 1976.

Bicentennial Projects:

Mural Project - watch for new murals at Averill Park Post Office, Gifford's Market, Nash's Store to join those at Town Hall, Lake Pharmacy and Miller's Market.

Quilt Project - all interested in helping contact Myra Wehnau at 674-3351 or Karen Wood at 674-2970.

200 Club - \$2.00 donation helps provide a fund for continuing worthy bicentennial projects after 1976 and gets your name or family name on Liberty Tree - contact Roger Young.

Commemorative Plates - can still be ordered for pre-production price of \$3.00 from Judy Rowe. Plates should be available in February.

"Bicentennial Moments" - watch for a Sand Lake spot on Channel 13.

Publications now available or anticipated from other areas:

Reprint of Arthur J. Weise's The History of the Seventeen Towns of Rensselaer County - \$3.50 - County Commission.

Tin Horns and Calico, Henry Christman's book on Anti-Rent Wars - Berne Historical Society.

City of Troy bicentennial engagement calendar - \$4.95 - City of Troy

Publications (cont.)

Town of Pittstown commemorative plates - \$3.00 - Pittstown Commission

Book of old photographs of Hoosick - Hoosick Commission

The Road Home, a pictorial history of Poestenkill - \$5.00 - Poestenkill Commiss.

Poestenkill Bicentennial Cookbook - \$2.50 - Poestenkill Commission

Print of J.H. Hidley's painting "Poestenkill from Snake Hill" - \$5.00 - Poestenkill Commission

Stephentown bicentennial calendar of old photographs - \$2.50 - Stephentown Historical Society

Ye Cohorn Caravan by William Bowne on Knox expedition - Lansingburgh Historical Society

East Albany and Beyond - \$3.50 - City of Rensselaer Commission

Reprint of Town of Berlin section of Sylvester - \$1.00 - Berlin Commission

Bicentennial coloring book - 50¢ - Berlin Commission

Berlin commemorative plate - \$3.00 - Berlin Commission

Booklet including old photographs, brief history and town map of historic sites - East Greenbush-North Greenbush Commission

Reprint of sections of Sylvester on Greenbush, East Greenbush, North Greenbush - Greenbush Historical Society

Rediscovery 76 - A Bicentennial Tour Guide of Rensselaer County, New York - County Commission

County Events/Projects

Bicentennial Barge salute - week of July 4

Theatrical program

Essay contest

Reenactment of Battle of Bennington - August, 1977

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Calendar of Bicentennial Events -

Feb. 9: Rensselaer County Historical Society will sponsor at 1:30 P.M. Jack VanDerHoof, Professor of History at Russell Sage College, who will speak on the American Revolution and the novel, at the Society's carriage house.

March - Troy City Bicentennial Commission is formulating plans for a Bicentennial Ball with an ethnic flavor in March.

March 15 - Deadline for material for the County Bicentennial Guidebook titled REDISCOVERY 76 - A BICENTENNIAL TOUR GUIDE OF RENSSELAER COUNTY, NEW YORK. Information on Bicentennial activities and noteworthy sites around the County is being collected by Paula Vielkind of the Commission. Bicentennial and historical groups interested in having any material included should write to Paula at 26 Judd Lane, Troy, N.Y. 12180 or call her at 283-2552.

April - Brunswick - a reenactment of the first Town meeting of 1807 will be held in April at the Town Hall.

Early April - Berlin - A Bicentennial fashion show and ice cream social, under the direction of Mrs. David Hayner, is planned for early April at Berlin Central High School; historical exhibits will be featured.

Calendar (cont.)

April 12 - The Nassau Bicentennial Commission is working on plans for a "Bicentennial Week" to begin April 12 at the Donald P. Sutherland School.

April 17 - Sand Lake Bicentennial Commission will be sponsoring a marathon event. More to come.

April 22-27 - Poestenkill Bicentennial Commission - A larger "Country Life at Its Best" exhibition will be held at the Poestenkill School gym. This will feature furnishings, utensils and artifacts of early Poestenkill and a variety of historic demonstrations, such as horse shoeing, butter churning, and quilting.

12196

West Sand Lake, New York

Box 234

Mrs. Mrs. Kenneth Buel



SAND LAKE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
BOX 492 WEST SAND LAKE, N. Y.