

SAND LAKE  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

July, 1976

FROM THE PRESIDENT -

I loved our Sand Lake Bicentennial Parade. Rounding up behind the schools, floats assembling, kids dashing, period costumers strolling, bands and marching units forming and warming, noise and excitement crescendoing to the moment when, the line formed and tightened, the lead patrol car moved onto Route 43.

Every parade unit honored our Bicentennial differently. Indeed, a dedicated objectivist might have been hard put to discern the Bicentennial theme in some of the entries. But then, a dedicated objectivist would have been missing the point. Which was that we were throwing a birthday party, having a marvelous time, and doing it all in homage to the founding of our nation. And for that everything was perfectly in tune.

Sometimes when people discover I'm associated with an historical society they ask me what good is being done in the name of the Bicentennial. And though for the professional cynics and detractor's the Bicentennial is as obvious a target as a country roadsign, mostly the folk are just genuinely curious. They may only be seeing the TV commercials or the supermarket hype and wondering if Bicentennial is only Buycentennial in the tackiest gift shop imaginable. Myself, I'm sometimes tempted to join in with some pot shots of my own at the all pervasive and thinly disguised promotions. But for something this big we ought to be absolutely surprised not to find hokum abundant among the hoopla.

But, still, the central theme is to pay our respects to the founding and 200 years of growth of our great nation. And we have to expect that the ways and means in which we manage the celebration have to be as varied, and some just as questionable as others are appropriate ... as the events in the history we are celebrating.

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WELCOME -

The Sand Lake Historical Society has in it's ranks many people who give freely of their time and energy to help make our organization go - and hope that many more will join in.

Programs - Joan Fuess  
Publicity - Sanford Young  
Historian - Bob (George) Dunworth  
Hospitality - Nancy Kelley  
Sunshine - Robert Harris  
Posters - Beryl Vannier  
Library - Shirley Rescott  
Photography - Charles Viens and  
Sanford Young  
Membership - Judy Rowe  
Bicentennial - Jim Miller

Membership presently consists of 3 classes:  
Individual (annual dues) \$3.00  
Junior (under age 16) 1.00

This Newsletter is published quarterly by the Sand Lake Historical Society. The Society was granted a temporary charter by the Regents of the State of New York June 27, 1975.

Chairman of the Board: Lou Leitgeb  
President: Robert Harris  
Editor: Shirley Rescott

1976-1977 dues are now past due. Our Constitution states, " - members in arrears after three regular meetings shall be removed from the rolls of the Society."

Please clip and return the following coupon to renew your past due membership so this terrible thing does not happen to you.

...please.clip.along.this.line.....

SAND LAKE HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
BOX 492  
WEST SAND LAKE, NEW YORK 12196

I would like to join/renew membership in the S.L.H.S.  
My check is enclosed, made payable to the Society.

Name.....  
Address.....  
.....  
Tel.....

Thank you.  
.....

Naturally, the Society is open to all who are interested in helping in perserving our town history for the future and in sharing in its various projects.

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CEMETERY CENSUS -  
Madolyn Carpenter

The Sand Lake Union Cemetery census is completed and is in the process of being typed. St. Henry's and the West Sand Lake Elmwood Cemeteries are being recorded. Help is needed to do the old Luthern Cemetery which has not even been started. Also, if anyone has knowledge of any small private cemeteries anyplace in our township, please let Madolyn know, even if they contain only one or two stones.

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SOCIETY FORTH-COMING EVENTS -

1. "Cruising down the river, on a tourboat '76," - Hudson River Charter cruise on the tourboat "Uncle Sam III." Will tour the riverfront downriver through the Federal Lock under the Menands Bridge. Our guide will be Don Ringwald, an authority on the Hudson River, who will describe the historic and archeological structures and sites along both sides of the Hudson. This cruise will take place on July 18, leaving from the Trojan Marina and will take approximately 2 1/2 hours, rain or shine. The Society has chartered this boat exclusively for our use and we are booked solid.

2. Coming this fall - a book sale and a plant sale, to help finance the Library. Exact dates have not been set for these events - am asking the female members of the Society if they will start plants for use at this sale. Also, all members - if you have books or magazines of any kind; cookbooks, children's books, novels, historical books, magazines or publications of any description, old or new, that you have no further use for, contact either myself at 674-5737, or Robert Harris at 674-3547, or Sanford Young at 674-2119

3. At one of our previous meetings, Bob Harris announced that he would be sending some books of his own to the binders to be redone and offered to include any books any of you members may have that you might wish to have done. Bob will show a sample of bindings and give a schedule of prices at our July 12 meeting. The deadline will be about a week after the 12th. You may bring your books to the meeting or stop at Bob's house up until approximately the 19th.

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## THE TOWNS OF RENSSELAER COUNTY: A Series

A Brief Story About Each Town in Rensselaer County, A Different Town To Be Treated In Each Newsletter.

This Issue: No. 1 - Berlin, New York.

The most outstanding incident in the history of the town of Berlin, N. Y., was the cold-blooded and cruel murder, in the winter of 1845, of Mary Ann Wyatt Green by her husband, Henry. This dreadful deed took place in the Wadsworth Hotel - now the home of Raymond Miller. Mary Ann Wyatt was an actress, a beautiful girl, who came to Berlin town with a troupe of actors performing in a temperance play. 'T'was on a New Year's night he saw her first and fell immediately in love with her. They were wed after a short courtship, on Feb. 10, 1845. One evening, shortly after the wedding, Mary Ann complained of feeling unwell. During her illness Henry went on a sleigh-riding party at Hoosic where he met a lady of his acquaintance who playfully told him she had expected to marry him. He seemed to have been possessed with an uncontrollable passion for this young lady, and soon began to take steps for the removal of the object in his way. Green first procured opium, which he gave to Mary Ann, but this was vomited up before it could do its job. He then bought arsenic at a local store and repeated the doses in her food - coffee, soup, etc. Approximately a week after the wedding, Mary Wyatt Green was dead. Henry was shortly thereafter arrested, tried, and found guilty of the murder of his wife. While waiting for his trial, he called for a minister and did confess to this crime. On the tenth of Sept., 1845, he was hung by the neck till dead. He was buried in the Reeves burying-ground at Berlin by the side of his wife. Her remains were afterwards removed by her friends to another part of the grounds and a monument erected as a tribute of respect by the community (in one version), by her brother (in another version). I have in my files at home a 52 verse tale of this event called "The Song of Henry Green"; also, a much shorter version entitled "The Ballad of Mary Wyatt Green."

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## TOWN BICENTENNIAL REPORT -

## Oct. 3 House Tour

This tour of old houses in our township (approximately 6 houses) will begin at 1:00 P. M. at the Town Hall in Sand Lake. Booklets will be available describing the houses, and a map showing where to go.

## Fall - Ben Franklin Day

Date and particulars to be announced. This event features a kite-flying contest.

## Commemorative Plates

Due to a poor shipment it was not possible for the Bicentennial

Commission to fill all the orders for our commemorative plates. A re-order has been placed and those of you who have not yet received your plate will be the first to be notified when they arrive.

For those of you who have not yet seen the plate, it is a handsome black and white historical plate that accurately depicts much of the town's history.

There are 7 early scenes, drawn by local residents, surrounding a picture of the present Town Hall.

If you havenot yet received or reserve your plate and would like to make sure you do, contact one of the following persons:

Mrs. Judy Rowe 674-5388

Mrs. Doris Gallent 674-3064

Mrs. Madolyn Carpenter 674-3147

## LIBRARY REPORT -

As Librarian, I am putting out a plea for available genealogies relating to Rensselaer County. Eventually it is hoped that a Genealogy Committee will be formed. With that thought in mind, the collecting of this type of historical information should begin now. Anyone who has any kind of genealogy, large or small, please contact me. I will have it zeroxed and return it to you with no harm done. Many genealogies have a wealth of historical information which should be in our archives. At present this will be treated as one more facet of our growing Library, which is, by the way, gaining recognition outside our own Society. Esquatak Historical Society, in the person of Mrs. Shirley Dunn, who teaches Rensselaer County history, has contacted me and I was able to furnish her with some town histories, some of which she was not aware were available. The Librarian at Hudson Valley Community College, Mr. White, has also been in touch in this connection.

The following is a list of books belonging to our Library, available for borrowing by members. A complete list will be published annually, starting with this Newsletter, with additions reported in each succeeding Newsletter. As you know, one of the services of the Library is to obtain copies of these publications if possible, for individual members when so desired. Those books below, starred, are no longer available; the rest are or will be. Their cost is also indicated for your convenience.

## Rensselaer County -

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|------|---|------|
| 1.   | "History of the Seventeen Towns of Rensselaer County"<br>by A. J. Weise - 1880  | 3.50 |
| 2.   | "A Culture History of Rensselaer County"<br>by John W. Fox - 1976   | 1.00 |
| * 3. | "Our Yesterdays, A History of Rensselaer County"<br>by Stephanie Hicks Craib and Roderick Hull Craib - ca. 1949   | -    |
| 4.   | "Architecture Worth Saving in Rensselaer County, New York"<br>by Bernd Forester M. Arch - 1965  | 3.00 |
| * 5. | "History of the City of Troy, from the Expulsion of the Mohegan Indians<br>to the Present Centennial Year of the Independence of the United<br>States of America, 1876"<br>by A. J. Weise | -    |
| * 6. | "A Visit to Old Troy in Pictures and Prose"<br>by H. Irving Moore - 1973  | -    |
| * 7. | "Troy As We Knew It"<br>by H. Irving Moore - 1974   | -    |
| 8.   | "Profiles Out of the Past of Troy, New York since 1789"<br>by Samuel Rezneck - 1970   | 5.35 |
| 9.   | "Stove Manufacturers, Troy, N. Y. (pamphlet)<br>by John G. Waite and Diana S. Waite   | .75  |



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10. "Education for a Technological Society" (A Sesquicentennial History of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute)  
by Samuel Rezneck - 1968 9.58
  11. "Lansingburgh, New York 1771 - 1971"  
(prepared for the Lansingburgh bicentennial year of 1971) 1.00
  12. "Melrose, Then and Now"  
by Patricia Crandall - 1976 2.00
  13. "The Road Home" (Poestenkill)  
by Florence Hill, Mary Cuffe and Cathy Sagerdorf - 1976 5.00
  14. "Pictorial History of West Sand Lake"  
by Sanford Young and Charles Viens - 1975 4.00
  15. "Troy and New England Railway Company 1895 - 1925"  
by Charles Viens and Sanford Young - 1976 4.50
  16. "History of Sand Lake" - reprinted from Sylvester's "History of Rensselaer County, N. Y." 1880 1.00
  17. "History of Berlin," - reprinted from Sylvester's "History of Rensselaer County, N.Y." 1880 1.00
  18. "History of Petersburg" - reprinted from Sylvester's "History of Rensselaer County, N. Y." - 1880 1.50
  19. "The Grafton (N.Y.) Hills of Home"  
by Ruth Bennett - 1974 3.95
  20. "As In Days Gone By"  
(A Pictorial history of Hoosick Township Past) 3.71
  21. "East Albany & Beyond"  
by F. T. Tompson, H.M. Wish & J.M. Fraser  
(for the City of Rensselaer Historical Society) 3.85
  22. "Bath-on-the-Hudson"  
by (same as above) 1974 3.85
  23. "Greenan Bosch" The Early Years  
by (same as above) 1975 3.85
  24. "East Greenbush, New York"  
(Bicentennial Commission publication - 1976) 1.50
  25. "Tin Horns and Calico"  
by Henry Christman 1945 6.95
  26. "Stubborn for Liberty"  
by Alice P. Kenney 10.00

27. "A Report of the Mohawk-Hudson Area Survey"  
by Robert M. Vogel - 1973 4.00
28. "Delaware & Hudson"  
by Jim Shaughnessy - 1968 17.00

## Albany County -

29. "The Waterford Flight 1915 - 1965"  
(A Report on the events leading up to the opening on 5-15-1915  
of the N.Y.S. Barge Canal, Erie Division, Waterford) -
30. "Waterford to Whitehall"  
(A pictorial journey along the Champlain Division of the N.Y.S.  
Barge Canal during its construction) 1968 -

## Columbia County -

31. "Castleton History"  
by Rev. Edward Ton (printed 1948, reprinted 1976) 4.00
32. "The Village of Kinderhook 1609 - 1976" 1.50
33. "The History of the Village of Valatie"  
by Beatrice Rogati - 1976 3.00
34. "Lebanon Valley Historical Album 1976" 5.00
35. "Things That Go Bump In the Night"  
by Louis C. Jones 3.25

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## CALENDAR OF EVENTS -

- 7-18 Hudson River Cruise 10-11 S.L.H. Society Meeting,  
Church of the Covenant
- 8-9 S.L.H. Society Meeting,  
Church of the Covenant \* \* \* \* \*

- 9-12 Uncle Sam Birthday Parade,  
Lansingburgh

## ORAL HISTORY -

- 9-13 S.L.H. Society Meeting,  
Church of the Covenant
- 9-17 Poestenkill Homecoming  
& 18 Weekend
- 10-3 House Tour  
Sand Lake Bic. Commission

The Oral History Committee, chaired by Nancy Kelley and Joan Feuss, has adjourned for the summer. This will give us a good opportunity to collect interviews and swap the girls come the first meeting this fall. Many of our senior residents are home from warmer climates for the summer, offering an excellent opportunity for just such an undertaking.

FAMOUS OR LITTLE KNOWN PEOPLE IN THE HISTORY OF  
OUR COUNTRY - A Series

This Issue: Jane McCrea, Her Role in the American Revolution

It was near Ft. Edward that the tragedy of Jane McCrea was enacted in 1777. She was a preacher's daughter and was engaged to Lt. David Jones, a loyalist militiaman camped with Burgoyne's forces. She had planned to see her fiance near Ft. Edward and had refused to escape downriver with her brother, a colonel in the American army with whom she lived, as the English advanced. As frequently happened in war-torn New York, Jane McCrea did not allow her brother's politics interfere with her love for a loyalist. "Poor Jenny McCrea" preferred to remain at the home of a Tory friend, "Aunt Sarah McNeil. The following day a Negro boy ran to the rebel garrison to report that the two women had been captured by a group of Indians and were being taken to their camp. Soldiers were detached to rescue the women and engaged the Indians not far from the Tory widow's home. In the skirmish that followed, Jane McCrea was shot and killed by accident. The savages escaped unharmed and returned to the English lines, taking with them Jane's scalp.

In another version Jane's fiance had sent Indians ahead to escort her back to camp and had promised to reward them for her safe passage. While on the trail she was met instead by members of a scouting party who treated her with civility until an argument arose among them. In the middle of this argument, one of the Indians buried his tomahawk in Jane's skull, scalped her, and returned to camp for the reward.

Still a third version - a soldier fleeing from the lost outpost above Ft. Edward shouted a warning while running past the McNeil house that Britain's Iroquois Indian allies were in hot pursuit behind him. Sarah McNeil quickly hurried Jane, her black slave woman, Eve, and Eve's baby down into the cellar. But "Aunt" Sarah McNeil was an extraordinarily heavy woman and when she tried to follow the others she was caught in the trap. The Indians dragged her out and discovered Jane, Eve, and the baby hid in the darkness. At first the Indians planned to take Jane alive. They soon encountered another war party, and, in the course of a quarrel over who should imprison her, Jane McCrea was tomahawked and scalped.

Burgoyne was furious with the Indians and restricted their movements so tightly after the McCrea incident that many deserted his force for good. Lt. Jones petitioned Burgoyne to be relieved of his military obligations, and, when he was refused, deserted to Canada.

The impact of the murder of Jane McCrea was immense. The American General Horatio Gates realized the great propaganda value in Jane's death and castigated Burgoyne for behaving cruelly and ungentlemanly in the sad case in which a preacher's daughter was "dressed to meet her promised husband but met her murderers." This accusation was not true, but it helped to enrage Americans. Many who had been neutral or even loyal to the British now joined the patriots.

The original town of Saratoga, which has been Schuylerville since 1777, has on one of the monument's ground-floor walls, a mural relief in which a bronze Indian scalps Jane McCrea.