

April, 1977

FROM THE PRESIDENT -

The Sand Lake Historical Society is greater than the sum of its parts. There's no paradox here. The idea is that a society of individuals with a common interest is comprised not only of those individuals and their interests but also of the relationships of those people and their interests with one another. Interest and power grows through the association.

The Sand Lake Historical Society, for example, has been providing to the community monthly programs highlighting the town's history and culture. The Historical Society was instrumental in our last year's Bicentennial celebrations. Our "Book Store" and library make historical publications accessible. Our newsletters maintain contacts not only throughout our own membership but also, because of their circulation to other societies, throughout memberships of other historical societies in the County.

We maintain photo and tape archives of our programs for future record, are exploring ways to encourage scholarly historical research in the town, have helped with a cemetery census, are beginning the process of listing our best architecture in the National Register, are key participants in a county wide umbrella historical association (ARCHS), and on and on and on.

Likely little of this would have happened without the Sand Lake Historical Society and that's the way the Sand Lake Historical Society is greater than the sum of its parts.

But, for the Society to continue, both your moral and financial support must continue. This is not an impassioned plea based on a fear that both may otherwise be lost, but, rather, just a gentle recollection about what our Society means at a time when dues are coming due and when a new administration will be taking office. If you have been a dues paying member and participant in Society activities I hope you will continue in both. If you are either, but not both, or neither, then I encourage you to round yourself out with the Sand Lake Historical Society.

Programs are the second Monday of every month at 8 P M at the Church of the Covenant in Averill Park. Dues are \$3 individual, \$5 family. The postal address is Box 492, West Sand Lake, 12196.

CALENDAR -

The Sand Lake Historical Society 1977 Bicentennial Calendar is still on sale and is available at the following places:

- Lake Pharmacy, W.S.L.
- Purple Parrot, Middleton's Shopping Center, W.S.L.
- Variety Store, Averill Park
- Ben Gauch, Averill Park
- Judy's Fabrics, Sand Lake
- Gifford's, Glass Lake

If you have not yet obtained your copy, please do so now, either from one of the above locations or by calling Ross French, Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee.

* * * * *

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

This Issue: Nathan Hale - the Martyr Spy

An American patriot of the Revolutionary War, school-teacher Nathan Hale, after making a pro-independence speech in New London, Conn. following the battle of Lexington, was appointed a lieutenant in the Continental Army. He became a captain under Lieut Col. Thomas Knowlton in his famous "Knowlton Rangers." It was following a period of severe sickness while attached to the "Rangers" that he volunteered to do spy work for General Washington. Disguised as a Dutch school teacher Hale went to Long Island to obtain intelligence of the enemy's motions. He did indeed obtain the necessary information but in his attempt to return he was apprehended, taken before Sir William Howe (the British commander) and the proof of his object was so clear that he acknowledged who he was. Howe ordered the provost marshal to execute him the next morning, without trial, and without the attendance of a clergyman or even a Bible, although he requested it. His last words, spoken at his hanging on Sept. 22, 1776, were, "I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country."

A week from the time he volunteered for this work he was dead and not a line from him had reached the commander in chief. His work was a magnificent failure. It was an unnecessary sacrifice that more careful planning might have prevented, but there was no time for organized effort, and for some months no better method was devised than to enlist some officer to get what was needed, either by the capture of prisoners or by sending a trusted man into the enemy's camp.

The capture and execution of Nathan Hale, and failure of the attempt to get information from within the British lines, formed a determination in the General's mind to establish a Secret Service Bureau that would be more carefully planned and consequently less liable to disappointing results. This was done in 1778 when an intelligence system called "The Culper Ring" was organized, and it operated throughout the British occupation of New York City with great success. (See the February, 1977 Newsletter for the roles some New York women played in this operation.)

* * * * *

LIBRARY REPORT -

Additions since February, 1977 are as follows:

Booklet -

1. "Long Island in the American Revolution" by Myron H. Luke and Robert W. Venables

* * * * *

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
 Out-going President: Robert Harris
 Out-going Editor: Shirley Rescott

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. 4 - Petersburg, N. Y. "An Ardent Temperance Campaigner"

Below are a couple of the exploits of Rev. Arthur Davis, one of the most ardent of the temperance campaigners, who was a Methodist pastor in Petersburg in 1896-97.

One Sunday when the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was being celebrated, when Rev. Davies lifted the cover from the Communion table, he suddenly stopped, leaned forward and sniffed the wine for the sacrament that had been sent to the church by the communion steward, Henry Dill. His verdict was that the grape juice in the cup had commenced to ferment. He picked up the chalice, held it at arm's length and walked to the nearest window. Opening the window he emptied the cup. After sending the cup to the parsonage to be washed, the communion service was continued, using water for the element.

At one time Warren Downey, saloon keeper in North Petersburg offered a contribution to the church. Rev. Davies rejected it as "blood money," which so angered Mr. Downey that he threatened to whip Rev. Davies. Rev. Davies, a large, brawny, ex-football player, drove to North Petersburg, hitched his horse in front of the saloon and went in. Finding Mr. Downey in the bar room at the time, he took off his coat, hung it on the back of a chair, and told the saloon keeper he had come to take his licking. Downey, cowed, backed down and offered all sorts of apologies for what he had said about Davies, and the preacher left without being whipped.

* * * * *

CEMETERY CENSUS -

With Spring just around the corner it's time to get going and help Madolyn finish the cemetery census. Volunteers are needed to help finish Elmwood and St. Henry's; Trinity Cemetery has not even been started. Come on people - we're one of the few towns that hasn't completed this project yet. If you can spare a few hours call Madolyn at 674-3147.

* * * * *

NATIONAL REGISTER -

We are beginning to look at our town in a new light - looking at districts, sites, buildings, structures and

objects for their significance in history, architecture, archeology and culture. We want to apply to have these properties listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

The advantage to our town is preserving its charm, the advantage to the area is that federally-financed projects such as roads and power lines can be diverted to other paths and the advantage to the individual property owner lies in matching grants-in-aid for acquisition and restoration. They can also be eligible for larger Home Improvement loans and for some tax write-offs.

We are beginning to research eligible buildings as those existing in the

Beers Atlas of 1876. Shirley Rescott is gathering information on West Sand Lake, and Joan Fuess is working on the Glass area. We are looking for someone to be the resource person for each of the Averill Park and Taborton areas.

If your home is significantly older please begin gathering together information and pictures and make the resource person for your area aware of your interest.

* * * * *

PROGRAM AND ELECTIONS -

On May 9th at our Annual meeting we will be fortunate to have with us Christina Stevens, past President of the Hoosick Township Historical Society, town historian, and Assistant County Historian.

In preparation for the celebration on August 13 and 14th on the battlefield at Walloomsac, Mrs. Stevens has prepared a talk accompanied by slides on the Battle of Walloomsac (Battle of Bennington) - the only Revolutionary battle fought in Rensselaer County.

The program will be included in our Annual meeting, May 9th, 8 P.M. at the Church of the Covenant, Averill Park, at which time election of officers for the coming year will take place.

Nominations for 1977-78

President -	Joan Fuess
Vice-President	Kitty Mace
Recording Secretary	Jane Van Praag
Corresponding Sec.	Mary Margaret Cipperly
Treasurer	Ada Miller
Custodian	Ken Brock
Trustees (3 years)	Don Carpentier
"	Judy Rowe
(2 years)	Myra Wehnau

Nominating Committee for 1978 - Robert Harris
Fran Sandles
Bob Dunworth

submitted by
Madolyn Carpenter
Myra Wehnau
Alan Fuess

(Don't forget - dues renewal coming up May 1, 1977)

April, 1977

Sand Lake Historical Society
Box 492
West Sand Lake, New York 12196

In the interest of having the Sand Lake Historical Society as representative of the community as possible, the officers invite your response to two areas of activity; suggestions for future programs and projects, and also an indication of your special interests that might be pursued within the Society. Only by knowing your wishes can the Society's activities be of greater interest to you but also reach more people within the whole community.

Although you are encouraged to become a member of the Sand Lake Historical Society by completing the form below, we also wish to hear from as many others as possible as to programs and interests. Please return this whole sheet to the above address. The more ideas and members we have, the more the Society can provide you.

My special interests are:

_____ Oral History
_____ Registry of Historic Sites
_____ Genealogy
_____ Ways and Means
_____ Hospitality
_____ Historic Tours
_____ Other (please indicate)

Suggestions for programs and projects:

Membership Form

Name _____

Address _____

State _____ Zip _____

Phone Number _____

\$3 Regular Membership _____

\$5 Family Membership _____

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



April 1977

Mr. Bob (George) Dunworth
Sheer Road, R.O. 1
Averil Park, New York 12018

4-19-77

In the interest of having the Society's programs and projects, and also in order to have your name on the list of members, please return this whole sheet to the Society's office. We will be glad to have you join the Society and help us reach more people within the whole community.

Although you are encouraged to become a member of the Sand Lake Historical Society by completing the form below, we also wish to hear from as many others as possible as to programs and interests. Please return this whole sheet to the above address. The more ideas and members we have, the more the Society can provide you.

My special interests are:

- Oral History _____
- Registry of Historic Sites _____
- Genealogy _____
- Ways and Means _____
- Historicity _____
- Historic Terms _____
- Other (please indicate) _____

Suggestions for programs and projects:

Membership Form

Name _____

Address _____

State _____ Zip _____

Phone Number _____

Regular Membership

Family Membership