



Historical Highlights

NEWSLETTER OF THE SAND LAKE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
POST OFFICE BOX 492 • WEST SAND LAKE, NEW YORK 12196

December 1991

One, Two, Three !!!

Yes, it is true -- The Fuess family really does put up three Christmas trees each year. Before you think that this is excessive, let me explain. We didn't plan it that way; it just evolved.

For a long time we only put up one tree in the living room. We searched out a tall thin balsam that would fit in front of our bay window and reach our 10-foot ceiling. On this tree went everything imaginable -- glass, wood, paper, metal, ornaments, things our son had made in school, items students had given me, gifts -- everything.

One year Joan mentioned that she would like to start a Victorian tree and put it in our red-walled library. We found an artificial 4-foot table tree at a garage sale and Joan was off and collecting. Eventually, we replaced this small tree with a 6-foot and then with an 8-foot artificial tree. We use candle lights on it and put antique toys underneath and it gives the room a special Christmas appeal.

While all of this was happening, we inherited some lovely antique Christmas ornaments so we totally changed our live living room tree from eclectic to antique. This worked out fine until we realized that all of the cute, special ornaments were left in boxes. The only thing we could do was erect tree number three. Fortunately, we still had the 6-foot artificial. We recycled this and now have added it to our family room.

Christmas is a special season for us. We enjoy decorating and welcoming people to our home. Three Christmas trees help us spread the joy of the season. Merry Christmas from Alan Fuess and Family.

PRESIDENT'S MUSINGS

A day of Thanksgiving is past; a season of Good Tidings swiftly approaches; and we ponder "What Next?"

If we review the past weeks, the Executive Committee gets my sincere thanks for their support and the membership gets a "Thank You" for the encouragement given.

My interpretation of our objective should be to educate, preserve, and protect our history. If we accept this challenge, we must do extensive research. For example:

Are there maps available (1880-1950) that locate or confirm valued sites?

Who were our early educators?

Who were medical practitioners?

Can we obtain photographs or documents to prove our research?

These are some of the questions I would ask as we ponder "WHAT'S NEXT?"

Please join our efforts as we strive for a prosperous 'New Year'.

Ross French

NETWORKING HELPS HISTORY

The Hudson-Mohawk Industrial Gateway is grateful to Barbara Mohan for obtaining a cast iron stove which was made in Troy during the heyday of this type of manufacturing. This was donated by Beverley Bardwell of the Saratoga County Historical Society.

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JANUARY MEETING - John Kacaharian will present a series of flags from some foreign countries that took part in the development of our United States.

Our participation in the Rensselaer County Bicentennial Celebration is the preparation of a map of the Town of Sand Lake, highlighting 25 special sites. The Committee, Fran Egbert, Joan Gross, John Kacharian, and Bob Lilly have arranged for its display in our Town Hall and then in the County Building. Following is a narrative which accompanies **our map**.

THE TOWN OF SAND LAKE
A RENSSELAER COUNTY COMMUNITY

THE TOWN OF SAND LAKE IS CURRENTLY MADE UP OF SEVERAL HAMLETS AND AREAS IDENTIFIED BY VARIOUS COMMONLY KNOWN NAMES. AMONG THESE ARE SAND LAKE, AVERILL PARK, TABORTON, WEST SAND LAKE, BURDEN LAKE, GLASS LAKE, AND CROOKED LAKE.

THE TOWN WAS ERECTED FROM PARTS OF THE TOWNS OF GREENBUSH AND BERLIN, JUNE 19, 1812, A PORTION BEING SUBTRACTED IN 1843 TO FORM A PART OF THE TOWN OF GREENBUSH AND AGAIN IN 1848 TO FORM A PART OF THE TOWN OF POESTENKILL. SAND LAKE IS BOUNDED ON THE NORTH BY POESTENKILL, ON THE SOUTH BY SCHODACK AND NASSAU, ON THE EAST BY BERLIN, AND ON THE WEST BY NORTH AND EAST GREENBUSH. THE TOTAL AREA IS 21,968 ACRES, THE TERRAIN BEING MOUNTAINOUS IN THE EAST AND HILLY IN THE WEST. TWO STREAMS WERE NOTED FOR THEIR WATER POWER: THE WYNANTSKILL AND THE TSATSAWASSA.

SETTLEMENT OF THE TOWN BEGAN AS EARLY AS 1767, FOR AT THAT TIME TWO FAMILIES WERE LIVING WITHIN THE PRESENT LIMITS OF SAND LAKE, BEING DUTCH AND ENGLISH PIONEERS. SOON OTHERS FOLLOWED INCLUDING A WYNANT VAN ALSTYNE. THE FIRST MILL, A GRIST MILL, WAS BUILT AT SAND LAKE IN 1768. In APRIL, 1808, \$100 HAVING BEEN SUBSCRIBED, THE SAND LAKE LIBRARY SOCIETY, THE SECOND IN THE COUNTY, WAS ORGANIZED AT THE HOUSE OF THOMAS THOMPSON - EIGHT YEARS AFTER THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A LIBRARY IN TROY.

BECAUSE THE WYNANTSKILL AND TSATSAWASSA CREEKS AFFORDED EXCELLENT SOURCES OF WATER, MANY BUSINESSES WERE ESTABLISHED ALONG THE WATERWAYS. WATER WAS THE SOURCE OF POWER TO OPERATE MANY MILLS, AMONG THEM BEING SAW MILLS, GRIST MILLS, PAPER MILLS, WOOLEN AND HOSEIERY, A TANNERY, A CLOTH DRESSING MILL, AND OTHERS. IN TABORTON, LOGGING, SAW MILLING, AND THE PRODUCTION OF CHARCOAL WERE IMPORTANT INDUSTRIES. ANOTHER MAIN INDUSTRY THROUGHOUT THE TOWN WAS FARMING. THE GLASS WORKS WAS ALSO WELL KNOWN.

IN 1867 THE WYNANTSKILL IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION COMPLETED DIKES WITH GATES TO IMPOUND AND CONTROL THE WATERS OF CROOKED, GLASS, AND BURDEN LAKES. THIS MADE POSSIBLE THE STORAGE OF LARGE QUANTITIES OF WATER AND RELEASE ONLY WHEN NEEDED. THE RESULT WAS ALSO FAR-REACHING AS HENRY BURDEN BECAME A MAJOR INDUSTRIALIST, BUILDING HIS VAST FACTORIES IN TROY; HIS HUGE WATERWHEEL WAS WORLD RENOWNED.

THE TOWN OF SAND LAKE HAS NUMEROUS LAKES WHICH ATTRACTED DAILY USERS, VACATIONERS, AND MANY FAMILIES, WHO BUILT SUMMER HOMES. TRANSPORTATION BY WAY OF THE TROY AND NEW ENGLAND RAILWAY CONTRIBUTED GREATLY TO GROWTH AND USE OF FACILITIES IN SAND LAKE. THE TOWN ALSO

Christmas Reading suggestions from Rosemary Supkis, and available from Sand Lake Town Library:

Readings About Christmases Past

Christmas Through the Years by Gladys Hasty Carroll. A variety of stories and reminiscences of Christmas.. what Christmas has meant to many kinds of people.

A Christmas Book by Elizabeth Goudge. A collection celebrating the old-fashioned holiday of the heart.

Fireside Book of Christmas Stories by Edward Wagenecht. Tales about Christmas from the birth of Christ to times in our memory.

Classics for Christmastime. Five loved, classic novels by celebrated authors, recommended for renewing the spirit of Christmas.

Holiday Happenings

- * * Now to Dec. 31: at the Atrium, Troy
- * * A first-of-its-kind exhibit of
- * * various types of wooden and resin
- * * carousel animals.
- * *
- * * Nov. 9-Dec. 21 - Shaker Heritage
- * * Society Christmas Shop 10-3 p.m
- * * Mon. - Sat.
- * *
- * * Dec. 14-15: Christmas Open House at
- * * Olana.
- * *
- * * Dec. 15: Schuyler Mansion Open
- * * House - costumed Minuet Dancers and
- * * Craft Persons
- * *
- * * Dec. 14-15: "The Nutcracker" by
- * * Berkshire Ballet at the Palace
- * * Theater
- * *
- * * Dec. 21-22: "The Nutcracker" by NYC
- * * Ballet at Proctor's
- * *
- Jan 6: Twelfth Night Open House at
- Fort Crailo, 6-8 p.m.

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