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New Exhibit for Summer 2001 "Bush Pilots in the Central Adirondacks"

In 1952, Jane Murray wrote in the Syracuse Post Standard, "An Adirondack Bush Pilot is a composite of a flyer, woodsman, mechanic, psychologist, chamber of commerce, and sportsman. In the course of a single day, he may deliver a brief lecture on the safety of flying, patiently name forty lakes and mountains, report a trail of smoke to a forest ranger, and deliver a party of fishermen and their gear to a secluded lake in the wilderness."

They have rescued lost hunters, flown doctors to injured campers and injured patients to waiting ambulances. They have likely saved thousands of dollars of timber by getting men and equipment to forest fires. They were and are a unique part of our history - but the future of Adirondack Bush Pilots in the Park today is uncertain. Come visit our new exhibit in the Carriage Barn this summer and see where and when air services began in our area and who these adventurous pilots were. My thanks to exhibit coordinator **Joan Armstrong**, the research of Board Member **Fred Ehrensbeck**, the photos on loan from the **Weedmark** family, the Harwoods, and the cooperation of the Bird and Payne Air Services — among others for all their assistance with this project.



Windhusen's Air Service in Eagle Bay
Photo by Wm. Weedmark

Winter Wonderland

Our exhibit on the history of winter sports in the Town of Webb opened December 3rd at our second Victorian Holiday Open House. More than 70 visitors came that day to share stories and enjoy delicious refreshments prepared by our Board Members.

Among the highlights of the afternoon was the presentation of a scrapbook by Director Peg Masters to Board Member **Dorothy Gifford**. As many of you know, Dorothy lost all her household goods in a fire last fall, including many momentos and photos. With the help of Trustee **Joyce Haag**, we researched our archives and filled the book with clippings and photos of Dorothy, especially of her days as Secretary at the TOW School.



Photo courtesy
of Ida Winter

We also drew the winning ticket for our Amish rocker raffle, generously donated by **Jon & Carol Hansen**. The **Labbates** of Thendara were the lucky winners and picked up the rocker that same day. Thanks to everyone who bought tickets and supported this fundraising event.

You can still enjoy the Winter Wonderland exhibit in the front room of the Historical this summer – and in case you missed it, we have had **PERFECT** weather for winter sports this season!

Inside this Issue

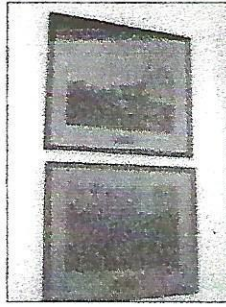
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From the Director's Desk

TOWN OF WEBB HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION
BOX 513, OLD FORGE, NY 13420
PHONE: 315 369-3888

Archival News

Over fifty individuals have donated artifacts, postcards, photos, books and ephemera to us this year. All have a special link to the people, places, and events in the Town of Webb. I have prioritized the preservation of several rare 19th century photographs and in cooperation with **Gallery North**, we are conserving these pictures with archival mattes, glass and acid free backing materials. Two of the photos were done in memory of **Ethel Foote Wilcox** with money donated by her family and friends from Bald Mt. Colony. What a special way to remember a loved one!



Board Members Update

We accepted with regret the resignations of Andy Pope and Paul Hornick from our Board of Trustees. These vacancies will be filled by our Annual Meeting in May. Thanks to the efforts of President Kathy Brombacher, our committees have been very busy this winter. Our finance committee meets regularly to review our stock investments and is busy planning our budget for the upcoming year. The building and grounds committee secured the roof on the front porch from heavy snowfall, has kept the driveway clear and thanks to Bob K., — repainted the carriage barn in the fall in preparation of our grand re-opening in July of the Bush Pilots exhibit. **SPEAKING of EXHIBITS**, our **SEARS MAIL-ORDER HOUSES** exhibit continues to grow and will be on display inside the museum this summer. Also come see a new vintage postcard exhibit on loan from Tom Gates, especially highlighting early postcard photographer Henry Beach's work. **ALSO** for next winter — the Churches in the Town of Webb. *Contact us if you have artifacts and photos to share.*

Dollars & Sense

Just six weeks away from the end of our fiscal year, we are proud to say we have achieved our goal of raising \$9,000 in our annual membership drive to balance our budget of \$30,000 this year. Included in this figure is a \$2,500 donation from the John Holmes family in memory of **Marion Holmes**. Not included are the generous donations of stock by **Marge Bonnett** and **Bob & Shirley Lindsay** to our capital investment funds which help to pay for a third of our budget, in addition to the \$9500 we receive from the Town of Webb. Most rewarding to me, are the 75 new members who have joined our Association and the significant increase this year in Memorial donations. We are truly grateful to each and everyone for your support of our Historical. With your help, we can continue to archive and share the wonderful history of our township with each other and with visitors to our region for many years to come.

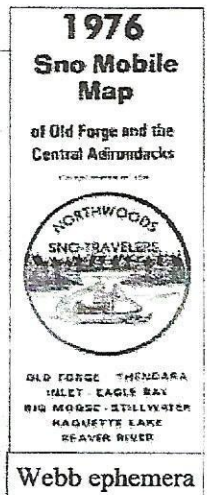
Number of Donors	339	
Average Donation		\$33.66
Donations of \$100 or more	31	
Total Dollars		\$11,482
Memorials	61	
Individual Members	60	
Avg. Individual Donation		\$14.00
\$5.00 only	40	
Family Members	165	
Avg. Family Donations		\$14.34
\$10.00 only	124	
Number of New Members	75	

Ephemera Defined – by Wes Cowan

A lot of people ask me, "What the heck is ephemera?" says Wes Cowan, whose doctorates in anthropology and archeology more than qualify him to answer the question. Wes, a regular appraiser on **ANTIQUES ROADSHOW**, says the word, a close relative to ephemeral, comes from the Greek "ephemerous," which translates as "lasting but a day."

"In the collecting world, ephemera refers to anything short-lived or transitory," says Wes, noting that much of ephemera has been produced since the Industrial Revolution. It includes anything that was produced—whether in 1720 or 1920—that was not meant to last. The fragile world of ephemera encompasses an almost bottomless catch-all of objects such as: 18th-century broadsides announcing political meetings and auctions; 19th-century Valentine's Day cards; menus and business brochures; inaugural ball tickets; even promotional rulers given away by the local hardware stores. Political campaign memorabilia, including badges, buttons and even bumper stickers, is another major area of ephemera.

Wes says ephemera is an important part of American history. "These things are the nuts and bolts of our American culture. The guy who produced Chippendale highboys also had a trade card that he used to advertise." Source: www.pbs.org.



Webb ephemera

If you have local ephemera that you would like to donate, give us a call or stop by the Historical!

Traces of the Past – Pioneer Families – The “BABY DOCTOR”

By Director Peg Masters



Stuart Nelson
Tin-photo loaned to the Association
by grandson Joe Nelson

On November 8, 1898, Dr. Stuart Nelson spent the night at Big Moose Station attending the delivery of my grandmother, Margaret Frances Merritt. She was the daughter of Albert Hamilton and Mary Carroll Merritt — a lumberman supervisor and postmaster of the community. Over the next several years, Dr. Nelson assisted Mrs. Merritt at the birth of a son John in 1902 who survived but a few days and at the birth of Albert Jr. in 1904 at the Merritt's new home in McKeever.

That same blustery November week in 1898, Dr. Nelson delivered two more children; Pierre Visonneau on November 11th, and Lucille Van Auken on November 12th. His territory was about as wide-spread as it could get in the Northwoods - extending as far south as Forestport and as far north as Long Lake. It included the remote settlements of Brandreth, Beaver River, Nehasane and the innumerable lumbercamps that fanned out in all directions deep in the forest. He used every possible means of travel to reach his patients - buggy or sleigh over rough roads, snowshoes, guideboats, horseback, the railroad, or simply by foot. Over the course of his 70-year medical practice in the Town of Webb, records indicate that he was the attending physician at over 500 births.

Stuart Nelson was born in 1871 in Taberg, NY, the son of Dr. William H. and Mary Wheelock Nelson. After graduating from Boonville High School in 1888, he headed to New York City, obtained a degree from the New York School of Pharmacology, and then a Doctorate Cum Laude from New York University College of Medicine in 1895. Two years later, on the threshold of a brilliant career as acting Superintendent of King's County Hospital, he contracted tuberculosis and headed to the Adirondacks to recover his health.

For the first several years Dr. Nelson boarded at the Doolan's Forest House on Main St. in Old Forge before building his own office and home next door - the current *Express* building. In 1901 he married Sarah Harvey, daughter of P. J. Harvey, a grocer and the first Supervisor of the Town. They had one son, Austin Nelson, who married

Evangeline Hemmer, the daughter of Bernard and Mary Hemmer. Dr. Nelson was deeply involved in community affairs as well as his practice. He was the first Master of the Northwoods Lodge F&AM, a 32nd degree Mason and active at the local and state level of Eastern Star. When Old Forge incorporated as a village in 1903, he became the first mayor and later served as a school trustee and the school physician from 1933 to 1964. For 65 years, he was the employees and passenger's physician for the Adirondack Division of the New York Central Railroad.

Dr. Nelson traveled to the Merritt home in McKeever again in February of 1914. My great-grandmother, Mary Carroll Merritt's clothing caught on fire from a tipped oil stove that was being used to thaw frozen water pipes. She was alone in the house at the time and rushed outdoors where winter winds engulfed her in flames. Dr. Nelson treated her at the scene and accompanied her severely burned body by train to Faxon Hospital in Utica. She died later that evening at the age of 42.

Among the many documents at the Historical Association, some of the most valuable are copies of Dr. Nelson's birth and death records, generously donated by his granddaughter **Mary Nelson Farmer**. If you are a "Dr. Nelson baby" or researching pioneer families, you will find the list of over 500 births on our website at www.masterpieces.com/history/. Select the history and genealogy link. Or give us a call. The list was compiled by volunteer genealogist **Lynda Kellogg** this winter.

Dr. Stuart Nelson retired in 1967 at the age of 96, was credited with being the oldest & possibly the longest practicing physician in the State at the time. He died two years later and is buried in the family cemetery plot at Boonville. His descendants live in the area today.



The Hemmer Cottage
Park Ave., Old Forge

C2000's History and Architectural Team in Old Forge is leading a effort to save the Hemmer Cottage on Park Ave. from possible demolition this summer. Look for more info on the Historical's website or call 315-369-2814 if you would like to help.

COMING EVENTS

Postcard Show & Sale

Mark your calendars for August 4th for our second Central Adirondack Postcard Show and Sale. Admission is \$2, or \$1 for members and features a special slide show at 1:00 pm by Robert Bogdan on early Adirondack Postcard Photographers. The show will be at the Park Ave. Bld. from 10:00 - 4:00 pm. Contact Ida Winter at 357-3482 if you can volunteer to help for a few hours with this major fundraising event.

- Annual Meeting – May 15th at 6:30 pm
- Board Meetings – 3rd Tues. each month, 7 pm at the Goodsell Memorial Home
- **HISTORIC THENDARA Walking Tours** every Sat. in July and August
- **CENTRAL ADIRONDACK POSTCARD SHOW and SALE, August 4th, Park Ave. Bld.**