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Open House—December 5th

You are invited to our annual open house on Sunday, December 5, 2004. Included this year will be some special events.

December 5 will mark the official ribbon cutting ceremony for our Woodshed Research Room. Senator James Seward will be among the dignitaries attending the event. Also happening that day will be the opening of our newest exhibit "Law Enforcement in the Rural North Country." A project of the Museum Committee under the leadership of Ed Girtler, retired Investigator, now residing in Okara Lakes.

Please stop in between 12:00 (noon and 3 PM. Refreshments will be served.

Woodshed Research Center Project

The trustees of the town of Webb Historical Association would like to thank their fellow trustees Roland Christy, Lee Minnie and Reed Proper of the Building and Grounds Committee for all their hard work the days, weeks and months before and during the renovation of the "woodshed". Reed Proper led the team to completion of a project talked about for several years. Reed dedicated 100+ hours to this project. We are extremely grateful that he continues to be a very active and important member of the Board of Trustees.

The much needed research room is now being used regularly. Plans for adding furniture, file cabinets and map storage space are underway.

Victorian Party on the Porch

Our first Victorian Party on the Porch was held on Wednesday, August 18, 2004. The weather cooperated and we had a wonderful day to sit on the wrap around porch of the Goodsell Memorial Museum. Bev Burnap and Grace Mendrick provided a perfectly prepared and arranged presentation of yummy appetizers and light supper. Their attention to detail, bringing vintage silver and glass serving pieces, providing table linens, candles and "lace" doilies added an extra special touch. The sandwiches from Subway and fudge brownies from Holland Farms wonderfully complemented the salads and appetizers from Trails End Restaurant and the Farm Restaurant. Katie Russell's floral centerpiece from Mt. Greenery, Marianne Christy's gorgeous gladiolas and the lovely "tussy-mussies" that Barb Proper, Betty Rannels and Marianne made created an authentic looking, and smelling atmosphere from the front steps of the porch through the entire first floor.

Helen Johnson's dulcimer music was beautiful and calming—a welcome change from the hectic pace of summer events and commitments. Martha Denio assisted with a fundraising raffle that brought additional money for our Building Fund. Mt. Theater's Alan Saban and Stephen Wick contributed as bartenders, back-up servers and 'whatever needed to be done', right through clean up and breakdown.

Betty, Joy and Ada Rannels, with Heather Caufield's assistance, were always on the job", graciously bringing additional servings of all the wonderful food and drinks to individual tables.

Several guests chose to come to the party wearing vintage clothing or accessories that added a bit of charm to the event. Plans are being made to make this an annual event. A time to relax, share history and enjoy the company of neighbors and friends.

From the Director's Desk

TOWN OF WEBB HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION
PO BOX 513, OLD FORGE, NY 13420
PHONE: 315 369-3838

Coming Events

November 13, 2004—*Holiday Bazaar* at the Arts Center/Old Forge noon—3 PM —visit our booth. Take a chance on a raffle for a large packbasket donated by Robin Finch. Drawing Date 12-5-04.

December 5, 2004—*Open House* Noon-3PM Goodsell Memorial Museum. Everyone is invited.

Refreshments Served. Ribbon Cutting Ceremony of the Woodshed Research Center. Official opening of new exhibit "Law Enforcement in the Rural North Country".

June 18, 2005—*Auction 3rd Annual Fundraiser* — Preview 9 AM bidding starts at 11 AM.

July 2005—*Victorian Party on the Porch* date to be announced

July and August—*Walking Tours* to be announced

August 6, 2005—*Postcard, Paper and Bottle Show and Sale*—183 Park Avenue, Municipal Building, Old Forge 10 am—3 pm, admission \$2

Membership Drive

Our membership year follows the calendar year. Please look for our membership renewal letter to arrive in your mailbox sometime in January of 2005. Donations to this organization are tax deductible. Early contributions will be deposited to your best tax advantage. Memberships show that the community and visitors support our mission.

GRANT NEWS



The Town of Webb Historical Association received a grant in the amount of \$25,000 from the A. Richard Cohen Family Fund, a donor advised fund of the Community Foundation of Herkimer and Oneida Counties, Inc.

This grant is for the charitable purpose of supporting two of our projects. We sincerely thank the Cohen Family for \$15,000 designated to the Hemmer Cottage to help retire an unexpected debt incurred when concrete slabs from a former foundation were found buried just under the grass surface. The remaining \$10,000 is designated to our Woodshed Research Center Project.

BY-LAW CHANGE Needs Your Vote

The Finance Committee has recommended a change in the fiscal year from May-April to the calendar year of January–December. This action needs to be a **by-law change**. Voting on this change will take place at the November 16, 2004 Trustee Meeting. All members in good standing are invited to attend this meeting to cast their vote.

Summer Youth Employment Program

The Historical Association was pleased to have an additional student added to our staff during 7 weeks of the busy summer thanks to our District 15 Herkimer County Legislator, Patrick Russell and the Herkimer County Youth Bureau Summer Youth Employment Program. Eileen Fay returned for her third year, helping with accessioning, filing, writing, helping with museum displays and data entry. New this year, we were happy to welcome Katie Kelly to our staff. Katie helped with various office duties, such as typing, data entry and updating our vertical file lists with the assistance of Mrs. Patty Harwood. We hope this program will continue for 2005 and are looking for a student who may be interested in a 7-week position with flexible hours at a maximum of 126 hours. Interested students between 16 and 21 are asked to contact Gail Murray, Director.

Auction Items Needed

Just a reminder that we continue to collect items for our 3rd Annual Auction Fundraiser scheduled to take place Father's Day weekend on Saturday, June 18, 2005.

A 15' 1970 Pleasure Boat has already been donated along with several other items including a wicker chair, motel furniture, and vintage glass luncheon plates to name a few. Please call us at 315-369-3838 for a pick up or deliver items to the Goodsell Memorial Museum.

Visit Our website: www.webbhistory.org

Traces of the Past - SHOOTOUT ON SOUTH SHORE – by Town of Webb Historian Peg Masters

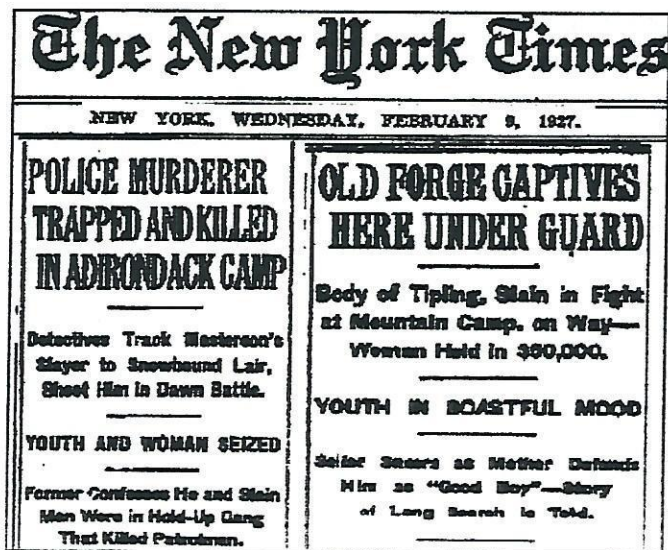
One of the few high crime dramas ever to unfold in the bucolic hamlet of Old Forge occurred in February of 1927. Two New York City detectives, known as the “aces of the homicide squad,” stepped off the train in Thendara late on the night of February 7th along with two Albany detectives and two state troopers from Troop D Oneida. They were on a manhunt for gang members who participated in a January 31st speakeasy robbery that resulted in the murder of 31 year old Patrolman James Masterson. On a tip from underworld contacts, the ace detectives Thomas J. Martin and Stephen Donahue learned that the prime suspect, Walter “Whitey” Tipping, had headed north to the Adirondacks to a place called Camp Utica.

Trainmen remembered seeing a tow-haired, pasty-faced man, plainly a city dweller, who did not seem from his appearance or luggage to have come north for winter sports. He got off at the station in Thendara a week before in the company of a younger man, later identified as Peter Seiler. Burt Bullock gave the pair a ride to a bungalow known as Camp Utica on South Shore Road owned by George and Grace A. Peterson of Forest Hills, NY. Mrs. Peterson arrived the following day with her Airdale dog “Lady.”

The detectives grabbed a couple hours sleep at Van Auken’s Hotel and woke before dawn to approach the camp under the cloak of darkness. According to Detective Martin’s police report and later trial testimony, a dog barked as the raiding party stood before the snow-bound cabin elevated on a hill above the roadside. When the officers stepped onto the porch and slammed open the door a shot rang out - wounding Detective Martin in the wrist. Martin fired back hitting Walter Tipping in the right temple. A woman screamed. At the direction of the detectives, Mrs. Peterson crossed the room in the dark and turned on a light. Walter Tipping, clad only in his underwear, lay dead on the floor. Peter Seiler, a sullen, defiant, 21 year old, surrendered without a struggle. Patrolman Masterson’s revolver, with the serial numbers partly filed off, was found in Seiler’s bedroom along with jewelry from victims of the speakeasy robbery. “Well, the jig’s up,” said Seiler, claiming in his confession statement later that day that Walter Tipping fired the fatal shot in the shooting of the New York City cop.

Leon Eldridge was called to remove Tipping’s body. The stunned Old Forge community learned the next morning that the raid made front page news in all the New York City papers. Following an arraignment, Seiler and Grace Peterson, whose bail was set at \$50,000, were taken to NYC to await trial. Despite a desperate plea by his tearful mother to spare his life, Seiler was identified by witnesses as the cop-killer at his trial in May and given the death sentence. He was electrocuted on December 15th, 1927 at Sing Sing.

George Peterson, a race horse owner and trainer, was in Florida at the time of his 30 year old wife’s arrest. In a statement he made to reporters a few days after the aid, he claimed Grace had gone to Old Forge for her “health.” Mrs. Peterson awaited Seiler’s trial as the chief prosecutor’s witness in the dilapidated Jefferson Market Prison in Greenwich Village. An amethyst and ruby taken from the robbery were found in her Forest Hills home. Seiler admitted he had met Grace Peterson several years before while on vacation in Old Forge and that she



1927 Front Page Headlines in the New York Times

was not a participant at the robbery-murder but had agreed to join them at her camp in the Adirondacks. Clayton Villiere, a young teenager in 1927, remembers Mrs. Peterson as always wearing a fur coat and “not much else.” Bill Wright’s son Joe, Villiere said, delivered a load of coal to the hideout the night before the raid. The Peterson’s deeded the property to Jacob A. Visel of Jamaica, NY in November of 1930. Visel sold it the following year to James Boylan. The South Shore bungalow’s front porch has been enclosed, but otherwise remains virtually unchanged since the sensational 1927 shootout and capture of the gangland criminals who mistakenly looked for asylum in a close-knit, snowy Adirondack hamlet.

Report from the Architectural Preservation Committee of the Town of Webb Historical Association

The committee is very happy to report that we have received a grant from The Community Foundation of Herkimer and Oneida Counties to assist with replacing the wiring, adding outlets, rewiring original fixtures, sanding and finishing the wood floors at Hemmer Cottage, and other needs to bring the cottage to current safety codes. When the work is completed, we are hoping to rent the two upstairs rooms for professional office space so that the cottage can help pay for regular expenses.

Through the generosity of other donors, last summer's major excavation work is now almost paid for. Other fundraisers held this year was a *Krispy Kreme* donut sale in July, the *Taste of the Fulton Chain* cruise in August, the continued sale of the *Hemmer Poster* as well as the sale of our first annual *Local Landmarks* ornament, the historic Strand Theater building. Be sure to get yours before they're sold out! The price is just \$10 + tax and are available at the Hemmer Cottage and the Goodsell Memorial Museum.

We were pleased to have partnered with the CAA to provide a place for registration and awards for their successful first Canoe Classic in June, and with the Arts Center/Old Forge to provide a location for the registration for their House Tour. The building was also used several times for meetings of WARDA, the Architectural Preservation Committee and the Historical Association.

In addition to the regular walking tours that met at the Hemmer Cottage on Saturdays during July, several other individual groups toured the building throughout the summer and fall.

Much appreciation goes to our steadfast volunteers who have helped keep the cottage open on weekends and special events: Lani & Jim Ulrich, Linda Cohen, Al Stripp, Marie Adams, Peg & Doug Masters and Bill Ransom and to all who continue to support architectural preservation in the Town of Webb.

We would also like to recognize and thank a group of 14 counselors in training from Camp Gorham who worked hard to clean, paste wax and buff the original linoleum floors to bring out the interesting stone and medallion pattern.

Documenting Change

Documenting history is what we do. Change is History. Our Town Historian, Peg Masters and Gail Murray, the Director of the Town of Webb Historical Association need your help to collect the 'story.' Here are a few examples:

The Starving Moose was in business only a few short weeks. We were able to get a copy of their menu and save a sample of their ad from the local newspaper.

Front Porch Gifts went out of business this year after over 10 successful years located between the Arts Center and Holly Woodworking only because the landlord decided to sell the property. We are in the process of collecting samples of Bridget Burke's brochures, advertising, photos and the 10-year history of her store.

The Farm Restaurant has also closed its doors as a restaurant. Our files already contain many items relating to the Farm Restaurant. We are now working closely with Frank Burnap and plans are being made to transfer items significant to the Town of Webb from his collection of 'treasures' to the Historical Association for preservation.

"Tex" the longhorn steer originally located at Teich's Trading Post in Eagle Bay was on loan from the Historical Association to the Farm Restaurant since 1976. He has already been relocated to the chalet at McCauley Mountain because he is too big for any of our walls in the museum. Claude has also moved to his new location at the Goodsell Museum; stop by to see him.

Donations of artifacts, books and ephemera (paper) of items from this area are welcome at any time. If the history of the connection to the Town of Webb is known, our staff will be happy to take notes of the stories and history of each item. We will do our very best to preserve your donations and have them available for visitors to see or use as research material. Please help us collect and document history.

FYI—For Your Information

- The Trustees of the Historical Association have been working with consultant, Anne Ackerson, developing a vision for the future, revisiting our mission, developing procedures and responding to input from stakeholders as we make plans to grow the organization. The funds for this assistance were made possible by support from the New York State Council on the Arts and are administered by the Upstate History Alliance.
- The position of Director has been increased to fulltime as of May 1, 2004. Hours of operation open to the public were also extended and the museum has been open Tuesday-Saturday 10 AM—3 PM when possible.
- In response to stakeholder suggestions, the organization has increased its outreach program. As in the past, this summer Town Historian Peg Masters held several walking tours of the waterfront and busy corner area starting at Hemmer Cottage. Additional walking tours and a slide show were held in Eagle Bay. New this year, the staff partnered with the Arts Center/Old Forge and created a multi-week free exhibit located in the Art Center's Rosenau Gallery in conjunction with their photography competition. Additional exhibits were taken to McCauley Mountain during the Storytelling Festival, the lakefront at the dedication of the Kiosk for the Northern Forest Canoe Trail and the Antique Show held at the Hildebrant Pavilion on North Street.
- Several tour groups visited the Goodsell Museum and Hemmer Cottage. New exhibits at the Hemmer Cottage include a condensed guide exhibit including female guide Edie Morcy, who passed away recently at the age of 101.
- Increased attendance at the museum has been documented as well as increased requests for research assistance.
- Additionally, Sharon Evans has been added to the staff as bookkeeper. Sharon is working closely with the Finance Committee and the Director developing new procedures.
- The Historical Association was the recipient of funds from the Adirondack Bank Charity Golf Classic for the second year in a row. This year proceeds went to purchase five shelving units for use in our Artifact and Archive rooms. Additional shelving units are still needed to store collections already in the Museum.

- A pleasant surprise for our organization was the announcement that the Town of Webb Historical Association was a beneficiary of the Enchanted Forest Water Safari Calyspo Cove Charities Go Cart Race. Perfect timing due to our need for additional monies to pay the costs of the Woodshed Research Center Project. We are grateful to those businesses who supported race teams and the patrons who paid admission to watch the contest. A good time was had by all including volunteers from the Town of Webb Historical Association that helped cook burgers and hot dogs and serve salads and potato chips.

Postcard, Paper and Bottle Show and Sale

Our 5th annual Postcard, Paper and Bottle Show and Sale was held on August 7, 2004. We had a total of 15 dealers that set up tables with items to sell. Tables were filled with boxed postcards sorted by category, state and area, as well as books, pamphlets, magazines, maps and other ephemera (paper). Other tables had displays of bottles, jugs, canning jars, etc.

By special invitation, Frank Clement a resident of Orchard Park, New York, exhibited his interesting collection of bricks. Most of the bricks dated from the mid to late 1800's and early 1900's. This exhibit added interest to the show.

Many thanks go to Bob Kennerknect, for all his help and suggestions, and also thanks to all the other volunteers who helped make this fundraiser very successful.

Building Fund

Many donations to the Building Fund for the Woodshed Research Center have been received. We are grateful for each and every contribution. We invite you to stop by and see the project. Work is still needed to move file cabinets, shelving, and records to the new room.

On going, a Building Fund will be maintained to be used for capital improvements proposed for the Ice House, Carriage Barn and other projects as needed. We appreciate the continued support of our efforts to preserve historic photos, artifacts and ephemera (paper) and sharing the history of the Town of Webb with visitors and residents alike.

Volunteers are an important part of our success. If you have time to help—please call 315-369-3838