

Avon Preservation & Historical Society Newsletter

VOLUME 18, No. 1

www.avonhistorical.org

FEBRUARY 2006

A Message from President Barbara Freese

This past year APHS has been busy serving our members and the community.

Four programs were presented during the year. These programs were open to the public. Our first program for 2006 will be presented on Sunday, February 19th at 2:00pm at the Village Hall.

The museum received many photographs from Lois Miller this past year for which we are truly grateful.

APHS has been involved with the planning of the restoration of the Parrot rifles at the Civil War Monument. Dan Welch was our representative to this committee and gave many hours of his time serving us well.

Two Board members were able to attend the Annual Regional Preservation Conference in Seneca Falls, NY in April.

APHS was involved in Avon Market Days throughout the summer and fall. You probably saw Mary Liz selling our wares - coverlets, tapes, calendars, booklets and CDs. We still have a supply in the museum. Contact any Board member and they will be able to help you.

Dr. Collins gave the museum a tape of the opening of the Park Theater.

We were able to assist the First Presbyterian Church and the United Methodist Church obtain their listing in the National Registry of Historic Sites.

The sign at Driving Park is being replaced by Dwight Brown and Al Estabrook.

The Bylaws were updated this year.

During the year we have received many requests for information concerning former Avon residents. The information needed was date of death, place of burial, name of family members. Our Board of Trustees and community members were able to find this information and forward it to the person requesting it.

APHS is a member of the Genesee Valley Council of the Arts as well as The Landmark Society of Western New York and the Livingston Federation of Historical Societies.

We have one Trustee fulfilling his 3 year term - Bill LeBine. We thank Bill for his work on our committees and

willingness to share his ideas with us.

Alyson Kluth will be our newest Trustee. We welcome Alyson and know she will be an asset to the Board.

I would like to thank the entire Board for their ideas, hard work, and faithfulness this past year and wish them well this coming year.

Annual Meeting

The annual meeting was held on Monday, January 23, 2006 at 7:30pm at the Central Presbyterian Church. President Barbara Freese presided. The secretary's report of the 2005 annual meeting by Joan Reid, along with the treasurer's report prepared by Lori Gunther, were approved.

Various committee chairmen reported on the year's accomplishments.

This was followed on January 27, 2006 with a dinner at the Avon Inn. Twenty-three people attended the dinner where new trustee Alyson Kluth was introduced. Bill LeBine, an outgoing trustee, was acknowledged for his contribution to the Society and appreciation was extended to Barbara Freese for her service as President of APHS.

APHS Board of Trustees for Year 2006

Jean Batzing	Ginny House	James Brewer
Alyson Kluth	Richard Burke	Roberta Lippincott
Sally Campo	Mary Ann Margiotta	Dana Collins
Mary Lou Miller	Dr. Richard Collins	Joan Reid
Beverly Dziekonski	George Sullivan	Barbara Freese
Jackie Tickner	Robert French	Dan Welch

Website Report

by Bob French

The website (www.avonhistorical.org) continues to have a large number of visits. We now have a list of sale items on the web and also post the last three newsletters after each newsletter is sent. They are posted approximately two weeks later...

There is a link now to the Chamber's web as well as the town's site.

Civil War Monument

by Dan Welch

The restoration of the cannons in our Village Park was completed this year. The restoration process included new security, a complete reconditioning of each cannon, the installation of an historical marker on each cannon, and the installation of an historical plaque on the west side of the monument. The APHS donated \$1500 towards the project work.

On Friday, November 11, 2005 (Veterans Day), a dedication of the restored cannons was held in the Village Circle Park.

The American Legion and VFW participated in the ceremony. After recognition for a job well done, and a 21 gun salute, certificates were presented to the various members and others who served on the committee which initiated and carried out the details for accomplishing the task of restoring the cannons.

Kiosk at Avon Downs

In 2006, work will be undertaken to construct a kiosk at the Avon Driving Park. Maps depicting Avon's points of interest as well as pictures will be included. Protective coverings for maps are being considered to prevent water, weather and sun damage.



Five Arch Bridge Report

The Town of Avon, together with the Parks Dept., is keeping the area around the 5-Arch Bridge looking very nice. It has been noticed that there are a few areas on the back side (away from the road) that have lost the mortar between some of the blocks. The piece of oak at the top of the arch on that same side, the first arch, has deteriorated considerably. We need to keep an eye on this and plan for a replacement as well as replace the mortar.

Collection at Avon Free Library

Check out the display case at the Avon Library. Jim Brewer's collection of metal and glass banks from the 1900's can be viewed at this site for the next couple of months.

Membership

Support your APHS, become a member. To become a member, renew your membership, or donate to the APHS, please make your check payable to Avon Preservation and Historical Society. Mail to: Mary E. Stanton, 41 Oak Street, Avon, NY 14414. Membership fees are: Individual \$5.00; Family \$10.00; Friend of APHS \$_____.

Memorial Report

by Richard Burke

The committee was formed in 2005 with the purpose of allocating funds given to APHS in memory of Mary Ellen Burke. The APHS has kept an accounting of all funds received, and reported same in the monthly treasurer's report. The committee was composed of: Richard Burke, Ginny House, Jackie Tickner, Robert French and Dr. Richard Collins.

The committee asked the Burke family if there were specific ideas or projects they thought the money should be used for, but the family indicated to APHS that it should go to regular programs that need support. It was determined to the agreement of all committee members that some of the funds should be used to purchase a computer to track and store records for the APHS. The PC will be purchased through a local proprietor and software will also be acquired. The APHS Memorial Committee sees this as providing great benefit to the organization in its mission to promote and preserve the historical archives of our Avon community. The community also hopes that this memorial will encourage others in our community to remember their loved ones through a memorial to our society.

Programs

On Sunday, February 19, 2006 at 2pm, Tom Kalcevic presented a program entitled "If Knives Can Talk," the story of the Robeson Cutlery Company.

Tom Kalcevic is a Robeson cutlery researcher, collector and author. He presented a show and tell of the company's products. Robeson was a local firm that manufactured staple ware and appliances in Rochester and pocket knives in Perry, NY from 1880 to 1977.

Looking ahead, Lynn Belluscio will present a program on the "Evolution of the Ag Fair" on September 17, 2006. Details will be forthcoming closer to the September date. Other programs are being considered.

2006 Avon Corn Festival August 12, 2006

The APHS committee (Maureen Kingston, Jean Batzing and Mary Lou Miller) are making preparations for the summer Corn Festival. They are currently developing a theme to be carried out for this event.



217 Genesee Street

by Mary Ann Margiotta

John G. Carpenter, a local attorney, owned the Fisk estate property. About 1913 the property was subdivided into building lots. The lot at 217 Genesee Street was a part of the estate. In 1914 Augustin Miller built the center entrance Colonial house with cedar-shake siding located at 217 Genesee Street for James D. Carson, Senior.

Mr. Carson had lived in Avon at a young age. In about 1903 he moved to Florida to operate a fruit farm. Upon his retirement, however, he moved back to Avon and built his family home at 217 Genesee Street.

Beautiful formal gardens became part of the landscape at Mr. Carson's home; gardening was his hobby.

The third floor of the home was converted to a billiard/pool room after the days of live-in servants. The Westfall boys gathered there with their friends for recreation. Mrs. Carson Senior was quite adept at billiards until her late 70's, failing eyesight forced her to hang up her cue.

Avon's first radio and electric refrigerator were housed at the 217 Genesee Street home. The radio was an early, battery-operated RCA with a horn-type speaker. The refrigerator was a Kelvinator conversion unit in the old ice box with the compressor being in the fruit cellar below the pantry.

Originally, the cooking was done on an elaborate coal stove which also heated water for the copper boiler which was in the kitchen.

The house had many innovations for its time. Plate glass windows and patented half screens (that could be removed from inside) were among them.

The upper floors are connected to the village sewer system, but the basement drains into a dry well in the terrace, just behind the present family room.

The house remained in the Carson family until Mrs. Carson's death in 1941; it was then passed on to Mrs. Carson's daughter, Mrs. John Westfall. For about ten years, the house was rented to Mr. and Mrs. Henry Blewer. In the

1950's it was rented to Mr. and Mrs. John Hilliard who eventually purchased it from the Westfall estate in 1951.

During the Hilliards' ownership, the garage was added on the north side of the house. The pantry was eliminated and a breakfast nook was added in the west end of the kitchen. The house was painted white. Another "improvement" was the removal of the living room and dining room light fixtures and the installation of a "God awful" hanging ceiling in the living room (since removed).

The Hilliards sold the house to Dr. and Mrs. Richard Schillinger in 1972. Dr. Schillinger is a dentist in Avon. The Schillingers put in a new water line and heating system. They began renovation of the yard and removed all the partitions in the basement.

Mr. and Mrs. Richard Harrington purchased the home in 1973 from Dr. and Mrs. Schillinger. Mr. Harrington was employed by Birds Eye Div. of General Foods in Avon. They added the family room, deck and finished the cellar in barnwood. They remodeled the closets and bathroom, built a dog run and board fence, and also added a stone wall and blacktop driveway.

Mr. and Mrs. Richard Harrington sold the house to Mr. and Mrs. Mark Mitschow in 1995. Mark and his wife, Gabrielle, moved to Avon from Rockville, Maryland with their young son. (Mark Mitschow was originally from Buffalo, NY.) Mark is currently a Professor of Accounting at SUNY, Genesee; his wife, Gabrielle, is Vice President and a partner in the Sigma Marketing Group in Rochester.

History: The house was built for James Carson in 1914.
- 1941 - left to Mr. Carson's daughter, Mrs. John Westfall
- 1941-1950 - Rented to Mr. and Mrs. Henry Blewer
- 1950 - Rented to Mr. and Mrs. John Hilliard
- 1951 - Purchased by Mr. and Mrs. John Hilliard from Mrs. Westfall's estate.
- 1972 - Sold to Dr. and Mrs. Richard Schillinger.
- 1973 - Sold to Mr. and Mrs. Richard Harrington.
- 1995 - Sold to Mr. and Mrs. Mark Mitschow.

A short biographical sketch of James D. Carson:

Mr. Carson had come to Avon in 1872 at the age of 22. He was associated with Dr. Cyrus Allen in conducting the "Avon Cure." In the early 1890's they purchased property on East Main Street and started the Allen and Carson Sanitarium (now the Avon Inn). They also established Avon's first bank on the premises.

In 1897 Mr. Carson left Avon to become Secretary and Treasurer of McFarlin Clothing Company in Rochester. Six years later he acquired "Avondale," a fruit farm in St. Petersburg, Florida. Upon retirement, he moved back to Avon and built his family home at 217 Genesee Street.

NOTE: Excerpts for this article were taken from articles by: Lockwood Doty's "The Genesee Country;" Duane Westfall, grandson of James D. Carson; Richard F. Harrington.



Avon Preservation and Historical Society

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Town Historian Report

by Maureen Kingston

The Society deserves a huge "Thank You!" for aiding this office through the Flood of 2004, and the displacement of the office operations to the Museum part of the Town Hall lower level. By December of that year, Brandy Alden, who was hired in a part-time position to work with the records inventory project, was able to locate and work in the office. The project was completed in June 2005, with many records organized, entered into a data base and made accessible for research.

Countless hours were spent on our cooperative project for Rotary Corn Fest. What started as a simple concept grew into *Tribute to Downtown*, a brief, but researched history of the business buildings along Genesee Street.

There is considerable interest in having buildings placed on the State and National Lists of Historic Places. First Presbyterian Church, East Avon, and United Methodist Church, Genesee Street are newly named. They join the previously nominated properties, the Kellogg/Martin House, Genesee Street; Avon Inn, East Main Street; the Barber/Mulligan Farm, Barber Road. Currently being researched are Avon Free Library and the Opera Block. Other properties were suggested and some visited by Robert Englert, Amie Alden and me in April.

Site histories have taken a turn upward in popularity during the year as prospective owners, investors, researchers and the curious wish to learn more about various

properties.

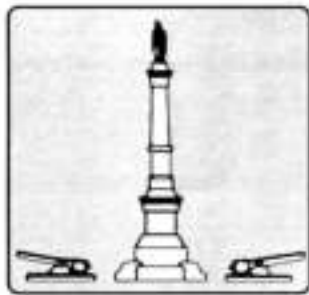
Family histories, always a popular research topic, have included: Firman, Hamersley (an early builder of mills), Albert, Mather, Cookingham, Hague, Macy, Jones, Kennedy, among others.

Committee work has included that of a Routes 5 and 20 Initiative, citing people, places, events along the popular routes through town (a display will be planned for Tom Wahl's). The design for the throws was corrected and the items were ordered to be sold by APHS.

Plans for the Opera Block, purchased by the Town of Avon, offer new office and museum space. Renovation work is underway for preservation of a special Avon building and expanded service to the community.

It is an exciting time in Avon. Who doesn't believe that history is still alive and well and living in all of us?





Avon Preservation & Historical Society Newsletter

VOLUME 18, No. 2

www.avonhistorical.org

MAY 2006

Corn Festival News

by Jean Batzing

The Avon Preservation & Historical Society's tent for the Corn Festival will be located in the street in front of the Barber Memorial Library. There will be artifacts and collectibles; the White Horse Tavern, the Monument in the Park, the Barber Memorial Library and the Avon Inn. Throws depicting scenes of Avon will be sold for \$39.95 and are in several colors. There will be historic CDs, one on post cards of Avon.

The booklets that have been published over the years give expanded history of Avon on various topics, "Spa Days," "A Tribute to Downtown Avon" and others, all reasonably priced. A new booklet this year will feature

Avon's hamlets, cemeteries, bridges, mills, schools, churches and parks. These topics give Avon a "Sense of Place." A new format will be introduced for the booklet.

Support your AP&HS by becoming a member; single memberships are \$5.00, family memberships are \$10.00. Send a check to Mary Liz Stanton, 41 Oak St., Avon, NY 14414 or obtain one at the Corn Festival. Checks should be made payable to the Avon Preservation and Historical Society.

Avon's history is important to the newcomer to Avon, the young and the old timers. Be sure to visit the tent at the Avon Corn Festival on August 12, 2006.

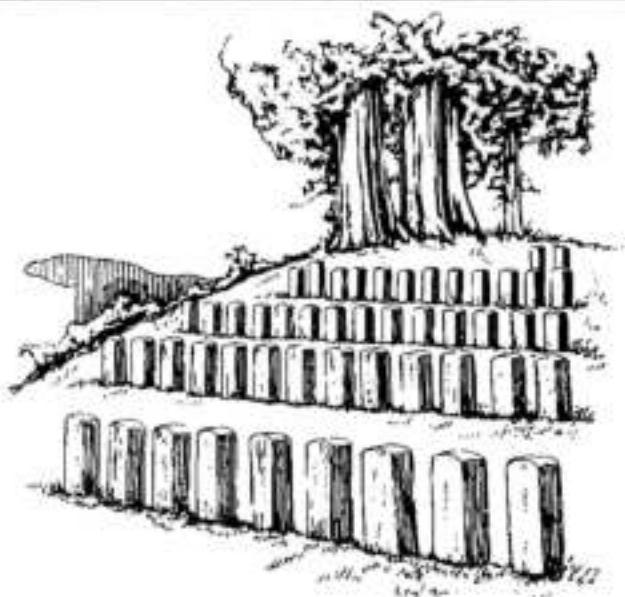
Avon Cemetery Tour

"Picnic in Granite Park" is the title of the program that took place on May 21, 2006 at 2p.m. at the Avon Cemetery.

Visitors parked at the North Avenue entrance to the cemetery. APHS members and others from the community presented short biographical sketches on the various people who are buried in this cemetery. Each burial site on the tour was flagged to make it more visible for participants and visitors. Those people/families buried in this cemetery who had a role in the history of Avon were acknowledged and are as follows:

1. Timothy Hosmer
2. Maria Wemple Berry
3. Julia Wilbur
4. Orange Sackett
5. Chadwick Family
6. Isham Family
7. Gad Wadsworth
8. Aaron Barber

As we all know, many people have had a significant influence in the history of Avon.



2006 APHS Officers

President.....	Beverly Dziekonski
1st Vice-President.....	Joan Reid
2nd Vice-President	Mary Liz Stanton
3rd Vice-President	Mary Ann Margiotta
Secretary.....	Joan Reid
Treasurer	Dolores Gunther

APHS Future Programs

Historian Lynn Belluscio of LeRoy will present a program on "Evolution of the Ag Fair" in September.

On October 22, 2006 Craig Braack, Allegany County Historian, will present a program on Gettysburg.

More details on the above programs will be available at a later date.

Cemetery Update

by Joan Reid

A couple of stones need to be adjusted/reset at the South Avon Cemetery. This will be accomplished when weather permits and will complete the restoration work at this site.

The Littleville Cemetery located on Cemetery Road will be the next project for the APHS volunteers. This is a very old cemetery which is in need of much work.

Landmark Society Conference

The Landmark Society of Western New York's Twentieth Annual Regional Preservation Conference was held at the Brighton Town Hall on April 29, 2006. The theme of this year's conference was "Maintaining Hometown Character in the 21st Century."

The following tracks were available for those attending:

Track A: Pittsford's Award-Winning Canal Revitalization;

Track B: Twentieth-Century Resources, Twenty-First Century Challenges;

Track C: Historic Houses and Buildings;

Track D: How to Write a National Register Landmark Nomination;

Track E: Preservation Board Training.

Joan Reid and Roberta Lippincott attended the conference and found it very worthwhile. They would encourage others to attend future conferences.

Next year the conference will be held in LeRoy, NY.

Business Advances in Avon

- **Hurricane Technologies, Inc.** moved to their new building at 53 Genesee Street on May 1, 2006. The very attractive facility also houses the following businesses:

- **Carl Lutz of Protection Savings & Growth;**
- **Frank Gendreau of Community Hearing Service**

- **Colleen Murphy of Online Gavel Co., (e-Bay Auction Specialists)**

In addition, there are rental apartments located on the second floor.

- **Lima Carpet and Design Center** has moved from the Avon Town Square Plaza where it had 4500 square feet of showroom and a small warehouse space to 2474 Lakeville Road (Route 15). The newly built facility has 10,000 square feet which includes a 7,000 square foot showroom. The new site will allow for more products and displays in stock.

- **Barilla America**, the largest pasta manufacturer in the world, will soon be constructing a new plant in Avon. Next door to this facility will be an \$8.5 million distribution center which will be owned by Jacobson Warehouse Company.

APHS extends their best wishes to all these endeavors.

Pvt. Denis Buckley

by John Dubois

John Dubois started research on Pvt. Denis Buckley about a year ago. Pvt. Buckley, who was from Caledonia, NY, served in the Civil War. He was shot and killed at Peachtree Creek, Georgia on July 20, 1864.

It was known that Pvt. Buckley was buried on the Collins' farm on Marietta-Atlanta Road, Marietta, Georgia. Through John's efforts, the body was disinterred and moved to the Marietta National Cemetery where 10,942 Union soldiers were buried. Pvt. Buckley was the only soldier buried there who had been presented with a Medal of Honor posthumously. This honor was awarded because he had captured the flag of the 31st Mississippi. Pvt. Buckley served with the 136th NY Volunteers Regiment, Company G (Orange Sackett from Avon was the Commanding Officer).

Through John's research he found Pvt. Buckley's name had been misspelled; it was listed as Burkley and had been that way for 142 years.

The Sons of Union Veterans, Elijah Moon Post #2 performed a ceremony in Pvt. Buckley's honor and a new headstone with the correct spelling of his name was placed.

It should be noted that Pvt. Buckley's name is correctly spelled on the Civil War Monument in the Circle Park in Avon.



A. D'ANGELO & SON MACARONI MANUFACTURERS

Our Macaroni is made from PURE No. 1 SEMOLINA

AVON — — NEW YORK

by Mary Ann Margiotta

Arriving in the United States around 1898 from Cerda, in the Province of Palermo, Sicily, Antonio D'Angelo was one of the first Italians to come to Avon.

With the influx of Italian families to the Avon area, many of whom could not speak or understand English, Mr. D'Angelo became a mentor. He strived to understand and determine the needs of these immigrants. He established a retail grocery business in Avon and Mt. Morris to meet their dietary needs. Because he sold so much macaroni, which was a staple in the Italian diet, he decided to become a manufacturer of the product.

In 1903, Antonio started the business known as A. D'Angelo & Son Macaroni Manufacturers at 234 Rochester Street, Avon, NY. This became the only product manufacturing business in Avon at this time. Because there were others who arrived in the area with the same name of Antonio D'Angelo, the founder of the macaroni company became known as "Tony Number One" to distinguish him from the others.

Many of the men in the Italian families who settled in Avon were members of the railroad section gangs. Avon was a "railroad" town. During the winter months, however, many were laid off. At this time some of the workers sought employment at the macaroni factory where they worked in exchange for food. They were also able to acquire olive oil, which every Italian family required, from Mr. D'Angelo, who imported the product as part of his grocery business. This helped, along with the produce from their summer gardens that they canned and preserved, to carry them through the winter. This was the time before Unemployment Insurance Benefits and Welfare.



The macaroni plant sold its product to a large market in New York and Pennsylvania and to the U.S. Army in World War I and II and the Korean War, as well as for the Marshall Plan. Forty-three different kinds of pasta were produced at the old plant.

Over the years the pasta has been known by different names. From the 1930s through 1941 the pasta was called "Rising Sun Brand." That name was quickly changed when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, since Japan was called the Land of the Rising Sun. Later, it was called the Park brand and still later it was called the Avon Macaroni brand.

Antonio had married Vincenza Campo in 1920. His first wife had died and left him with six children. Vincenza had come to this country from Sicily. Tony and Vincenza had four children.

Antonio died in 1940. The business was continued by the family; Mrs. D'Angelo was boss and did much of the physical labor in continuing the operation after her husband's death. When Mrs. D'Angelo's son Jerry returned from serving in the Navy in 1946, he and his brother, Sam, bought out the interests of the other members of the family. Their brother, Joe, moved to Arizona for health reasons; Joe had been a partner in the business.

Much of the original machinery in the factory had been imported from Italy. Many years later, it was replaced and was all automated.

In 1971 the macaroni manufacturing business was sold to Prince Macaroni Company. The automated machinery was shipped to various Prince plants located throughout the United States and Canada. Sam and Jerry D'Angelo retained ownership of the factory building on Rochester Street where it was subsequently used for headquarters for D'Angelo Enterprises as well as rental space.

White Horse

The White Horse landmark in East Avon at the corner of Rte. 15 and Rtes. 5 and 20 stands in good repair as Jim Brewer tends to its maintenance.

Sue Rothrock will plant flowers in the planters that are there to enhance the appearance of the site.



Avon Preservation and Historical Society

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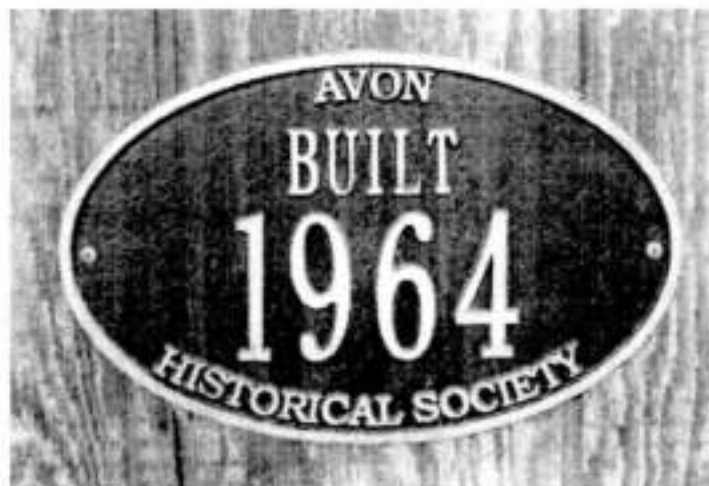


Passport

Pick up your "Passport" at Avon Free Library, Tom Wahl's, Village Office, Town Office, or Town Historian's Office. This is a passport to "135 Miles of History on Routes 5 and 20." A map with stops on the route is included along with a brief description of the historical sites indicated. Get your passport stamped at each site you visit. When you have visited seven or more sites, you can enter a contest with a chance to win a prize valued at over \$700. A display is set up at Tom Wahl's in Avon for your perusal. For more information: www.routes5and20.com.

Citizen of the Year

Congratulations to Anthony Cappello on being selected as Citizen of the Year by the Chamber of Commerce.



House Plaques

A nice addition to your house, also the plaque makes a nice gift. For new or older homes the plaque indicates the year the house was built. For more information contact James Brewer, 14 Nune Park, Avon, NY 14414 (phone 226-2729). The plaques are available for \$60.



Avon Preservation Newsletter

VOLUME 18, No. 3

www.avonhistorical.org

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2006

The AP&HS 2006 Corn Festival Report

by Jean Batzing

The AP&HS has shared in the Annual Corn Festival for a number of years. Visitors to the tent viewed some of Avon's history, saw displays, sale items, etc. and purchased memberships. A membership entitles one to the Newsletters that give information on activities, programs and items that make excellent gifts. This year two new items were available; a DVD Video of Avon done by Robert Rowe and a booklet, "A Sense of Place."

Both portray Avon's history in pictorial form. Collectibles from other years were presented and are still available: The Avon Inn, the White Horse Tavern, Park Monument and the Barber Memorial Library. Some booklets are still available, "Equus," "Tribute to Genesee St.," "Farming, Then and Now," and the "Genesee River." The AP&HS

also contributed numerous anecdotes about Avon's history to the Rotary Corn Festival Booklet that included a Quiz. Henry Mead was the winner of the Quiz, receiving a Rotary T-Shirt. The Society thanks all who visited the tent and to the many volunteers who set up the tent and provided for the displays inside.

Artifacts - Several people have contributed significant artifacts to the Museum. As space is still at a premium, the following is incomplete but will alert you that artifacts are important in Avon's history; Avon Grange items from Bill Korth, a small medicine bottle labeled "Dr. W. Nisbet, Pharmacist" from Spencer Heeler and a rubber stamp used by the Avon Macaroni Co. from Mark Evans, a photograph of hockey players on Light's Mill Pond from Bill Credit and a glass showcase from the Avon Central School. Artifacts are now being entered into a computer by Virginia House. The AP&HS is looking forward to more display and storage space.



Moved - the funeral coach on sleighs. The Sonnenberg Museum in Canandaigua gave the AP&HS the coach in 1988. Larry Witherow, Dewey Batzing and Bill Korth were the volunteers who moved it from Canandaigua to Corrin Strong's horse barn on River Rd. It was moved from there in 2002 to a Jim Jerris' barn on Rte 5. Interested people kept track of it and June 23, 2006, the coach was moved from the barn now owned by Tom Price on Route 5 to Joe Tuchrello's barn at Charlton Bed & Breakfast. Again, Bill Korth provided the crew and transportation for the move. It is good having it back in Avon. Research is presently underway as to the vintage, restoration and other details that would prompt us to keep it.

AP&HS Programs

Historian Lynn Belluscio of LeRoy presented a program entitled "The Evolution of the Agricultural Fair" on Sunday, September 17, 2006 at the Avon Village Hall. Approximately 13 people attended the program and refreshments were served.

The next program will be held on October 22, 2006 at the Avon Village Hall at 2pm. John DuBois, a Civil War history buff, will present a program on "Gettysburg." Save the date, plan to attend.

September 11, 2006 AP&HS Meeting

Richard and Heather Burke hosted the September 11, 2006 meeting at their newly renovated home located at 128 Clinton Street. Twelve AP&HS trustees were given a tour of the home and refreshments were served. Thanks Richard and Heather.

Opera Block Update

Through Congressman Reynolds' efforts, \$475,000 in state funding was secured through Governor Pataki's discretionary spending account to aid in the restoration of the Opera Block. Another \$5,000 was contributed by Assemblyman Dan Burling. Paperwork for other grant applications is in various stages of preparation.

We look forward to seeing restoration of this historical site.

Cemetery Information

St. Agnes Cemetery is owned by the Diocese of Rochester. Cemetery records are maintained at Nazareth College. Lynn Siragusa of St. Agnes Parish Office is the Cemetery Manager.



House Plaques

What a great Christmas gift idea! Order your house plaque now; cost is \$60. Contact James Brewer, 14 Nune Park, Avon, NY 14414. Phone 585-226-2729 for further information.

AP&HS Membership

Support your AP&HS; become a member. To become a member, renew your membership, or donate to the AP&HS, please make your check payable to Avon Preservation and Historical Society. Mail to Mary E. Stanton, 41 Oak Street, Avon, NY 14414. Membership fees are: Individual \$5; Family \$10; Friend of AP&HS \$ ____.

Installation of Pastoral Administrator of St. Agnes

With a capacity crowd at St. Agnes Church on Saturday, September 23, 2006, Bishop Matthew Clark presided over the installation of Sister Karen Dietz as Pastoral Administrator of St. Agnes Church.

Following the evening's liturgy, a dinner reception was held in the tent in back of church.

First Horse Show of Ashantee

by Mary Ann Margiotta

At the old Wadsworth riding hall on the Ashantee estate of Mr. and Mrs. Michael Moukhanoff, the Junior Horse Show was held on Sunday, November 26, 1950. In 20 degree weather about 200 spectators watched the show in the new glass enclosed balcony which was heated by a big wood stove. This was the first event of the winter season staged by the newly organized Ashantee Riding Club. Mrs. C.F. Kelley, known as "Mike," was manager of the show.

Seven events were included in the first horse show with 69 entries. For the next show, which was to be held December 31, 1950, the balance of the balcony would be enclosed and heated.

Frank Laimbeer, a member of the Cornell University Polo Team, organized a team in the valley. The facility was used for polo in subsequent years.

The building still stands, but horse shows have not been held in the facility for many years.

Reference: The Avon Herald News, November 30, 1950.



Doomed Landmark - Shown here is the Taintor Homestead which has stood for 143 years at the four corners at East Avon.

Taintor House

by Mary Ann Margiotta

Built in 1812, the Taintor Homestead located on the northwest corner of Rte. 15 and 5 and 20 four corners in East Avon was torn down to make room for a gas station. This perfect example of early American architecture stood at this location for 143 years.

The Taintor house was built by Joseph Pearson who came to Hartford (now known as Avon) with his four brothers from Duaneburg. The brothers also built the former White Horse Tavern which was destroyed by fire in the summer of 1955 and the First Presbyterian Church on the northeast corner of Rte. 15 and 5 and 20 which remains standing.

About 1860 Solomon Taintor gained ownership of the property through marriage. The late Miss Sarah Augusta Taintor and her sister, the late Mrs. William J. Sly, were the last descendants of the Pearson Family to live in the house.

The house was constructed of rough-hewn logs for framing with clapboard exterior, stone foundation walls and brick chimneys. The farm of the pioneer was the source for the timbers, the stone was from the field and cellar excavation and the brick from a kiln on the banks of Little Conesus Creek. One-story extensions at

the rear of the house consisted of kitchen, tool room, woodshed and carriage room.

Fine architecture was visible in the fireplaces, mantels and stairs. A large sitting room was supposed to be a public room in the house used for the entertainment of travelers as were most of the houses of that period.



Our House

(Half a House)

We commence our story about our house at 38 Lacy Street; however, we request that you engage your imagination to fully understand its present existence.

Year - 1905. Let us apply some geography and a mix of imagination. The east side of Lacy Street, bounded on North East Main, bounded by Pole Bridge Road, bounded by an imaginary line that extended from Clinton to Pole Bridge was farmland. Charlie Cook's residence was/is on the corner of Lacy Street and East Main Street. Beyond this point, there were no structures on the south side of East Main (Rts 5&20). Route 5&20 was a gravel surface roadway. Clinton Street did not extend beyond Lacy Street. At this point, farmland extended to Lake Road; therefore the Avon School facility did not exist. Students attended several country schools and attended the Avon Academy for high school located on Temple Street south of the Avon Inn.

Enough Geography. Charles D. Moran, Senior, lived in the present home of his granddaughter, Martha L. Moran Graham at 55 Lacy Street. The present two car garage was a horse stable where grandfather had a livery business, a busy enterprise where he met the incoming Erie Railroad trains bringing people to Avon Springs for cure.

Plans of the entire house were made in the 1930s and the blueprints are preserved in the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.

During their history, the White Horse Tavern as well as the Taintor House became known as "safe houses" for slaves traveling the Underground Railroad to freedom.

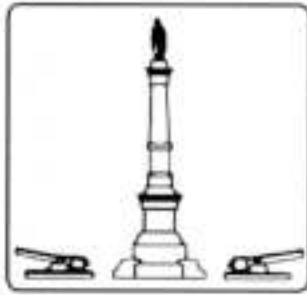
Fall of 1904, my grandfather purchased a large wooden house on the present land of the Tuchellos on the north side of East Main. The house was on the promontory section of land across from the present Dantonio's Pizza.

Grandpa cut the house into two sections; one is 38 Lacy, one is 48 Lacy. Each structure was jacked up and placed on several large logs. In the winter 1905 when the ground was covered with snow, teams of horses dragged each structure from the site to Lacy Street and placed on random mortared fieldstone foundations; each had a hand-dug basement.

For the curious, our house at 38 Lacy Street has a large long bolt that was installed so the house would remain intact while being moved. If you look at the mid-section on the north side, you will see the large washer and large nut exposed.

Each residence had to be fitted with separate plumbing, electrical and a central heating system that was adapted to either wood or coal burning furnaces.

*George and Martha Cullinan
Owners and Tenants Since 1959*



Avon Preservation & Historical Society

Newsletter

VOLUME 19, No. 1

www.avonhistorical.org

FEBRUARY 2007

APHS Annual Meeting

The APHS Annual Meeting was held January 22, 2007 at the Central Presbyterian Church; Bev Dziekonski presided at the meeting. Eighteen people attended.

Committee reports for 2006 were presented and discussed. Five people were nominated and approved as trustees for the term beginning January 2007 through December 31, 2009. New trustees are: Al Estabrook; Dr. Robert Hayes; Melissa Rowe; Carolyn Swanton; Robert Westfall. Those trustees retiring are: Bev Dziekonski; Bob French; Mary Ann Margiotta.

The APHS annual trustees' dinner followed the annual meeting on Friday, January 26, 2007. Twenty six trustees/spouses attended the dinner. Retiring trustees were recognized for their service. A delicious dinner was enjoyed by all at the Avon Inn.

Need a Gift?

Bob Rowe's DVD "A Sentimental Journey" of Avon with music accompaniment pictures some memorable scenes. It is a half hour, family entertainment for \$15.00. Collectibles include: The Avon Inn; The Barber Memorial Library; The Monument; The White Horse Tavern. They are available at \$15.00 each. An Avon Post Card Collection on tape by James Brewer is available for \$5.00. The Throws, with pictures of Avon, are available in several colors; they will add warmth in the winter months, are decorative, and cost \$39.95.

Memorial Plaque Updated

The Museum has a Memorial Plaque giving names and dates in whose memory a donation was made. Brass plaques with three names were added in 2006. Memorials may be designated or undesignated and the Historical Society would discuss this with the deceased family. Following are those in whose memory donations were made to the AP&HS. 1987 - Duane Westfall; 1987 - Mamie Van Overbake; 1987- Genevieve Morgan; 1995 - Genevieve Harper; 1996 - Gertrude "Bessie" Miller; 2000 - Estate of Kate Anderson; 2005 - Mary Ellen and Al Burke; 2005 - Don and Marjorie Utz; and 2006 - John Dooley.



House Plaques

Order your house plaque now; cost is \$60. Contact James Brewer, 14 Nune Park, Avon, NY 14414. Phone 585-226-2729 for further information.

A plaque can be ordered for a home regardless of age. Note: Four house plaques are for sale at \$30 each as follows: Built 1843, 1845, 1876, 1880.

Updating Files

The AP&HS for twenty years, has received from Avon folks and others very valuable archival items. Each in some way portrays a bit of Avon's history. It might be a Wiard Washing Machine or a Van Allen "Avon Herald News." Each is given a numerical number and recorded for our files. The AP&HS has purchased a laptop computer and some twenty-six pages are now being put on the computer. Several very lovely photographs of individuals have been donated without any information. The members of the Board of Trustees are very glad to receive any donations pertaining to Avon. There should be a note attached to each telling WHO, WHAT, WHERE and WHEN. We are living in a fabulous age of technology. Paper clips and staples rust and thus spoil a photo. Information could be attached to the back of a photo carefully with tape or a note with string attached to an archival piece.

Market Days

The Market Days in October were slow due to the weather. The November one was very good with tours of the Opera Building. APHS set up at each Market Day and sold booklets, videos, collectibles and memberships.

APHS Programs

Four programs were presented for the public in 2006:

1. "If Knives Can Talk" by Tom Kalcevic (the story of the Robeson Cutlery Company)
2. "Picnic in Granite Park" was a cooperative effort with Maureen Kingston, Town Historian. Historic background information about some of Avon's early pioneers who are buried in Avon Cemetery was presented at the various grave sites.
3. "The Evolution of the Agricultural Fair" by Historian Lynn Belluscio of LeRoy.
4. "Gettysburg" by John DuBois

As of this date two programs have been tentatively scheduled for the 2007 calendar year:

1. A presentation on Stained Glass by Valerie O'Hara
2. Glass Bottles of Avon by James Bartholomew

APHS Membership

Membership for 2006 is 194; for 2007 is 107; and for 2008 is 9. To become a member, renew your membership, or donate to the APHS, please make your check payable to Avon Preservation and Historical Society.

Membership fees are: Individual \$5; Family \$10; Friend of APHS \$ _____. Mail to Mary E. Stanton, 41 Oak Street, Avon, NY 14414.

York Historical Society

We wish to offer congratulations to the York Historical Society on their acquisition of the William Orwen House and property on Dow Road.

This 1830's home was originally owned by Samuel Warren who was believed to be the first commercial winemaker in Livingston County. Wines were produced from his vineyard.

Warren also discovered the salt that laid below the Town of York. Pictures from the former Retsof Salt Mine are on display at the house.

Cemetery Update

Joan Reid

The Cemetery Committee was inactive during 2006 due to weather and lack of volunteers. Flowers were planted at the South Avon Cemetery in May. There remains a few memorials that need attention. As mentioned previously, the next project will be the cemetery in Littleville.

Veterans Day Observance

The Avon Wesleyan Church recognized Veterans at their 8:30am service on Sunday, October 12, 2006. The American Legion/VFW Veterans provided the Color Guard. Each Veteran was presented with a pin indicating his particular branch of service. Patriotic songs were sung and a reception was held after the service in their Fellowship Hall. An 11am service followed with a Livingston County Color Guard.



Opera Block Informational Meeting

The Village Hall was the site of an informational meeting on the Opera Block on Sunday, November 12th at 1pm. With 50+ people in attendance, the meeting was chaired by Kelly Cole.

Jane Oakes, who is an expert on opera houses, gave a short overview on Avon's Opera Block. This was followed by video of the structure at the time of purchase in March 2005 and later pictures showing the interior of the building after cleanup.

Kelly Cole narrated as he showed diagrams of the proposed layout of the basement, first, second and third floors along with possible use of space in the current Town Office building which would be connected to the Opera Block.

The Opera Block was originally built in 1876 by Long and Watkins; William E. Hall owned the property. People such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Josh Billings (political satirist) presented programs in the early days of the building's existence.

The Opera Block is on the State Historic Register as of September 24, 2006. This historic designation makes the building eligible for grant money which is needed for the restoration project.

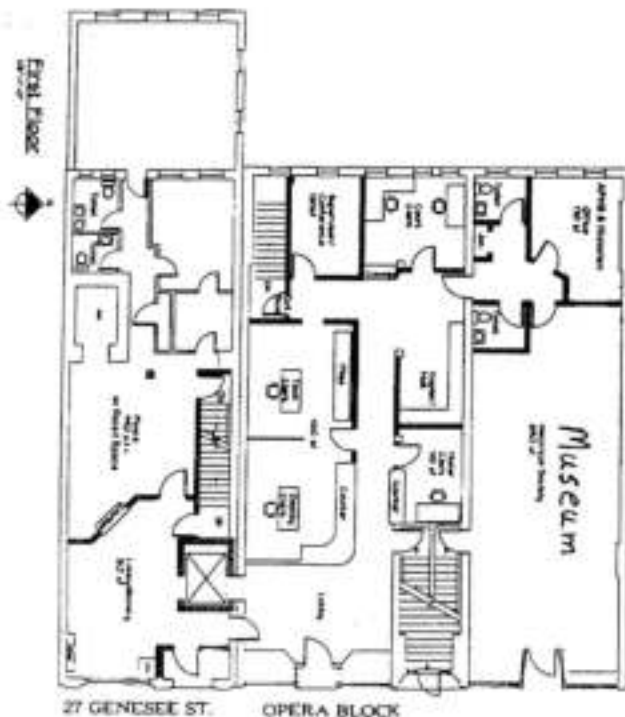
Bero Architecture has been working with the Town Board members in the design, reconstruction and layout of the building as well as coming up with cost estimates for the project. A question and answer session followed the presentation.

February 1, 2007 Referendum

Avon residents voted on the Opera Block bond on February 1, 2007 at the Village Hall from noon - 9pm.

The 2.2 million bond vote came in at a tie vote (624 Yes, 624 No). A tie vote is a "No" vote. Three affidavit ballots could not be counted since the voters were not registered. The Town cannot schedule another vote for at least 30 days from the February 1 date. Another option would be for the town to do it on their own. They have received some grants and since the building is on the national and state registries of historic places, they are eligible to apply for additional grants. Most likely, however, there will be another referendum.

With the proposed renovation, the APHS/Museum would be located on the first floor, on the northeast side of the building. The APHS/Town Historian's office would be located in back of the museum. This museum area would allow needed visibility from the street and easy access for the public. See diagram of first floor below.



Sign at Avon Central School

A flashing electronic sign has been installed near the entrance of the Avon Primary School.

Students in the graduating classes of 1944, 1945 and 1946 had set a plaque in stone in memory of their fellow students who gave their lives for their country in World War II. The new electronic sign has been installed only five feet from this Veterans Memorial.

Despite the visibility of the sign, some felt the sign would desecrate the monument. There was no input on the installation of the sign from the VFW, American Legion or Village of Avon prior to the installation. A law to protect memorials of this nature had been carefully written previously.

A review of the sign situation is being held as the illuminated sign overshadows the memorial.

An Italian Tradition

Italian residents of Avon celebrate the Feast of St. Joseph on March 19 each year. This annual custom is held by the people who are thanking St. Joseph for a great favor received.

Tables are set up at a home with lots of food including vegetables, fish, macaroni and rice. Meat is never served. An altar is erected in honor of St. Joseph and placed at the head of the table. The food is blessed by a priest before the meal is started. Three to four days are required to prepare the food for this feast.

A man sits at the head of the table representing St. Joseph. The Blessed Mother and Baby Jesus are represented by younger people.

Three children are invited the first year; this number is increased by three each of the following years until 33 children are invited. This is to commemorate the life of our Lord.

RE: The Avon Herald News, March 22, 1940



United States Hotel. See next page.

Homecoming Edition

by Jean Batzing

The United States Hotel, a famous hostelry in Avon, was destroyed by fire Saturday, February 22, 1874. Avon people for years would refer to an incident as "before the big fire" or "after the big fire." Mr. Alison Church Van Allen, editor of The Avon Herald, invited former Avon residents to write letters of their memories of Avon in celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the fire. The February 21st, 1923 Avon Herald, 5 cents, featured about thirty of those letters in a special "Homecoming Edition." The headline on the front page read, "Letters from Former Residents Breathe Spirit of the Old Home Town." Also on the front page were pictures of several "Prominent 'Old Timers' Who Helped Make Avon What It Is Today." Named and pictured were Henry E. Van Zandt, Alva Carpenter, Edwin A. Nash, Aaron Barber, John S. Tighe, Joseph A. Dana, Dr. Cyrus Allen, and George D. Doer.

Excerpts have been taken from the seventy-four year old fragile and crumbling newspaper with some quotes. The site where the Hotel had been in 1874, was in 1923 occupied by the Gilbert (Whiting) blocks, the Carpenter Block, the Opera House block, the State Bank of Avon block, the Boden Block and the Macy Building.

At the time of the fire, the Simmons Brothers of Canawaugus were running the place. The fire occurred in the dead of winter, seven or eight inches of mud and no fire fighting facilities. The fire began at the south end of the building in a Tailor shop and it was said if water had been available, a couple of pails could have put the fire out. It was at once realized that the whole line of buildings must go. A crowd collected, moving furniture from the hotel. Barrels of whiskey and beer, tens and tens of them, were rolled out and as promptly broken into, and dippers and pails and cups that would hold anything were used. They say that, "Men who never drank before (or since) took copious drinks of numerous beverages and that very few went to church the next day." The article concluded, "And that reminds me that the sulphur water is still here, and we are confident that some day Avon will enjoy a period of as great renown as it did that fifty years ago." Yes, the sulphur is still here in 2007 and would surely be in competition with the multitude of drugs available today.

The "old Avon" was gone and "former glory as the best known health resort on the American continent." The individuals responding with letters to Mr. Van Allen's request appeared in that 1923 Homecoming Edition. Each letter is precious, fascinating, gives history, interesting anecdotes and shows a sense of pride to have been part of the Homecoming 50th Anniversary of the United States Hotel fire.

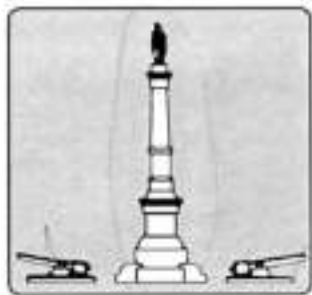
"The past actually happened but history is only what someone wrote down." A.W. Brown



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Avon Preservation & Historical Society Newsletter

VOLUME 19, No. 2

www.avonhistorical.org

SPRING 2007

Do You Have a Photo of Your Historic Avon House from Years ago?

86 East Main Street has been inhabited by many Avon residents. A part of the W. E. Hall tract, it was originally built in the late 1800's for Miss W. Sabin. The "gingerbread" style house has since been owned by the J. Leo Light family, the Walter Swantons, Emersons, the Swantons buying it back from them four years later, then Nancy Browne Pachuta, Jim Jerris, and currently Mr. and Mrs. Turner.

Over the years it has been added onto in the back. It has had screening added and then taken off the side porch and weathered a major fire, which ripped through the fireplace one night when the Light family lived there. Asbestos siding covers the original clapboard, but it remains like most Avon homes in fairly original condition and retains its double wide lot.

Do you have a photo of an historic Avon-area house from years ago? We can furnish the newer one, but would welcome any older photo and/or history of any older structure in town. Contact any member on the AP&HS Board.



86 East Main Street, Avon (Turner Home)

To Record Italian Heritage in Avon

To begin a study on the positive influences that Italian-Americans had on the development of Avon, there will be an exploratory meeting Tuesday, May 8th at 1pm in the Recreation Hall at Community Manor at 164 Sackett Rd. to discuss ideas. All interested people are welcomed. We will be taping conversations and are especially interested in the horticulture (grape and apple harvesting) of local families.

Let your relatives and friends know about this meeting if they might be interested or can offer some insights into life as an Italian-American in Avon, the history of the Macaroni Factory, etc. If you have any questions about this, call Carolyn Swanton, 226-9424.

Opera House Update

Dr. Richard Collins announced that a grant for \$350 was given to the AP&HS to make a video about the historic structure. Recognized by most who visit Avon as our most important architectural monument remaining intact, it is extremely important that we record its significance to our town and not let it slip away as so many already have.

Programs

A slide show and short lecture of Claude F. Bragdon's work in Livingston County will be shown on April 22 at 2pm at the Avon Methodist Church. Many of you might remember when Jean France introduced Bragdon at a program some twenty years ago. As he contributed to many of the historical buildings in Livingston County, we thought it might be worth repeating with a different viewpoint from Carolyn Swanton, who has spent many years researching the life of Bragdon.

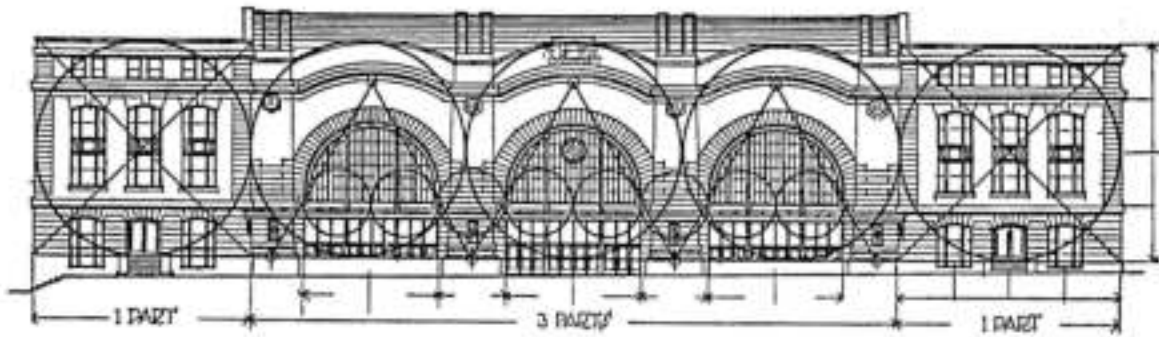
Claude Bragdon was undoubtedly Rochester's most famous architect achieving national recognition particularly due to his numerous articles on the subject. He was considered Frank

Lloyd Wright's rival in the pursuit of modern American Architecture. He also became known later in life as one of the three men credited with the Renaissance of the American Theater after the advent of rival motion pictures. After a notorious dispute with George Eastman, (Eastman going back on his word with Bragdon) he left Rochester for New York City. A noted author of the occult and a mystic, Bragdon was, in addition, a celebrity of intrigue, and an early translator of the Kaballah. He was the first person in the western hemisphere to write a book on Yoga. Bragdon introduced Kahlil Gibran to America (Bragdon's quote is still used on every copy of The Prophet, Gibran's most famous book) and persuaded his friend, Alfred A. Knopf, to begin a publishing company starting with Gibran's book as his first publication. Bragdon was a confidant of Elbert Hubbard of the Roycrofters, Mabel Dodge Luhan, the socialite, Alfred Steiglitz, the photographer, and even had a private meeting with Albert Einstein at Princeton University. Bragdon's color-light shows once held the record for the largest crowd in New York's Central Park.

A self-educated architect, Bragdon was left-handed but learned to use his right hand equally well, in fact he could use both his hands simultaneously. His major work, the New York Central Passenger Station at Rochester was sadly demolished in the 1980's. That loss took Rochester very much by surprise and revitalized the Landmark Society of Western New York, which had formed in 1935 to save the Campbell-Whittlesey House. Rochester's Chamber of Commerce Building and The First Universalist Church on Washington Square in downtown Rochester remain as tangible testimony to his talent.



LIVINGSTON COUNTY COURT HOUSE



Notable Livingston County structures include County Court House in Geneseo, and the home for the president of SUNY Geneseo on Main Street in that town.

The very first house Bragdon designed was in Dansville (where he had lived as a child) and he later handled the remodeling of the Noyes House in Dansville known as the Clara Barton Red Cross Chapter House. Houses in Caledonia and Avon will be shown, as well as the Leroy Town Hall and the Wood Historical Library in Canandaigua.

Work in Avon by Bragdon included 225 Genesee Street built for J. Francis Kellogg, the Charles Hayden home "High Acre", the second pump house for the Avon Springs Park, alterations and additions to the Miss Jane Brewster House at 104 East Main St., the Macy homestead known as "Fairview", and the Herbert Wadsworth home at Ashantee. And just outside Avon, an estate for Mrs. Henry Wray, Jr. was built (not visible from the road) on the way to West Rush on the East River Road.



Bookplates Designed by Claude Bragdon

Passing of an Avon Patron

William E. Browne (1919-2007), Friend of the Avon Preservation Society died in Fort Myers, FL on Valentine's Day. During WWII he served with the Army Corps of Engineers in Africa and Europe. After the war he began a career with Marine Midland Bank in the commercial finance department, later opening a real estate office he operated for 27 years. He is survived by his wife, Dorothy Denton Browne, and a sister, Mary Jean Shumaker; several nieces and nephews.

Membership

While the newsletter has expanded to four issues a year, the cost of membership has remained at \$5 for single and \$10 for family. Send checks to Mary Liz Stanton, 41 Oak Street, Avon, NY 14414 (Checks payable to Avon Preservation & Historical Society.)

2007 Leadership

Jean Batzing-President Pro-Temp, Delores
Gunther-Treasurer, Joan Reid-Secretary,
Programs-Beverly Dziekonski and Joan Reid,
Newsletter-Carolyn Swanton, Historical Properties-
Melissa Rowe, Corn Festival-Jean Batzing,
Historical Plaques-James Brewer, Membership-
Mary Liz Stanton



Spring House at Lower Spring

Price List

Avon Preservation & Historical Society

Corn Festival - Aug. 11, 2007

Booklets:

New "A Sense of Place" \$10.00
"A Tribute to Downtown Avon" \$10.00
"Trails to Tomorrow" \$5.00
Others @ \$2.00 each

Throws - \$39.95

Collectibles - \$15.00 each

Avon Inc., White Horse Tavern,
Barber Library, Park Monument

Tapes

New "A Sentimental Journey" DVD -
Music & Avon Scenes by Robert Rowe \$15.00
Avon Post Card Collection - James Brewer \$5.00

Avon On Maps @ 50 cents

Visit the Museum by Appointment

226-8290



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Avon Preservation & Historical Society *Newsletter*

VOLUME 19, No. 3

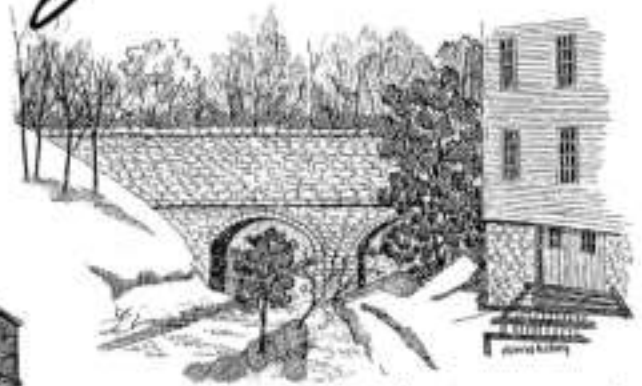
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SUMMER 2007

Our Bicentennial Year - 2008



5 Arch Bridge



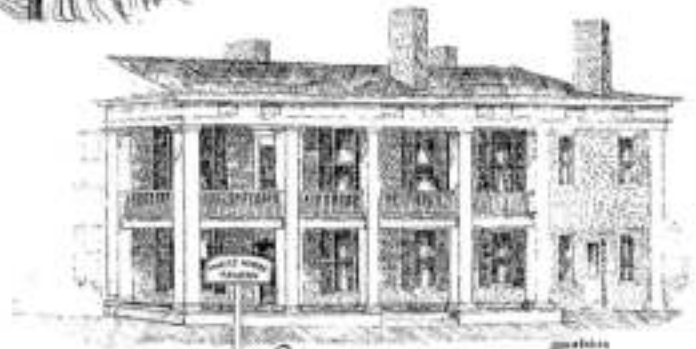
Littleville Stone Bridge



Glen Avon Mills



Gilbert Mill



White Horse Tavern

Although our actual village is older than its present name, it is a milestone that Avon has officially been on the map for 200 years as of next year. From Gilbert R. Berry's humble log cabin trading post, which offered a crossing of the Genesee River by rope ferry, to a busy village with a rich history, thriving national businesses, with its own symphony, Avon has been a great place to live for many generations.

Those of us who recall the Sesquicentennial of 1958 know what a celebration they put on for us. Civic leaders

outdid each other in growing beards to replicate the appearances of our founders. Having a father who let his whiskers grow made a real impression and brought a personal awareness to "our sense of place".

I am sure there are many new ideas that we can use to make this eventful for Avon. After all, it will be a long time until the next date of significance. We should do all that we can, so that 50 years from now, our tribute will be remembered, and that newcomers to our community will have a happy memory like we were given.



Opera House Update

It is hoped that someone will see to it that the wooden letters on the Opera Block are painted before the Bicentennial. Every year that they are left to the elements of nature endangers their existence. It would be a shame if we had to resort to plastic letters when the originals still exist. (The editor of this newsletter agrees to pay for the can of paint it would take to do this, if someone would be willing to climb the ladder to do the work!) Being one of the last communities to still have and use an Opera House, we should treat it better. Before TV, movies and even radio, opera houses were people's main source of entertainment and socializing. One would be hard pressed to name a more significant structure to Avon. We hope to have a video about the Opera Block available soon.

2007 Corn Festival Events

By Jean Batzing

The Avon Preservation and Historical Society is looking forward to the Annual Rotary Corn Festival, August 11. It gives the Society an opportunity to help Avonites, old and new, yes, even visitors appreciate this community's heritage. Available at the tent will be Collectibles for \$15.00 each, of the Monument in the Park, Barber Memorial Library, the Avon Inn and the White Horse Tavern.

Booklets from former years will be available along with a DVD, "Sentimental Journey" and a CD of postcards depicting Avon sites (priced from \$2 - \$15). The throw (\$39.95) that shows Avon themes continues to be a popular item for graduations, birthdays, etc. Memberships, single \$5 and family \$10, will be available. **Coming Home** will be the new book this year. Also, look for some artifacts. How can we help you learn more and appreciate Avon? Hope to see you at the tent, 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM.

Programs

Sept. 16 - Stained Glass - Valerie O'Hara from the Pike Stained Glass Studio (to be held at Zion Episcopal Church) - Pike Stained Glass has a long history in the Rochester area and is respected for the age-old meticulous work of creating real stained glass using lead. Anyone who hasn't had the opportunity to see the completed east window of the Zion Church Sanctuary should welcome this opportunity. Begun in 1938, this window was completed by Pike Studios and dedicated in 2003.

Oct. 28 - Collecting Bottles - James Bartholomew - Jim has been collecting bottles from the Avon area for many years. He wrote: "You would be surprised as to the number of bottles that are attributed to our town. In fact, there were several bottling works located in the village between 1892 to the 1920s and most of them were related. I am currently researching the history of these bottling works.

"Of the bottles that I have found, there are many categories represented, including, but not limited to milk, druggist, bitters, cures, medicines, beer, soda, and Saratoga-type bottles. The Saratoga-type bottles are from

the famous Avon Springs circa 1860 to 1880 and are very popular and highly sought after among bottle collectors. Much has been written just about these bottles. My goal is to document all bottles that are attributed to Avon.

"I am always looking to acquire bottles and related items from our village. If anyone has any bottles or information regarding bottles from the village or town of Avon, NY, please e-mail me at barthology@frontiernet.net. Please do not hesitate to contact me even if it is just for information. Maybe you have a relative or know of someone who was involved in the bottling business here in Avon. I am particularly interested in any information for the time frame between 1915 to 1930 as it relates to the bottling works that were located here in the village. Any information will help me accurately document the history and in the future, I hope to be writing a more detailed article about Avon and its bottles.

"If you plan on attending the talk on bottles I am giving on October 28th and have a bottle with Avon, NY embossed, painted (pyroglazed) or on a paper label, please bring it to the talk. I would love to see it."



POST CARD HISTORY

Can anyone identify this road rally at the Avon Inn?



Italian Heritage in Avon

The overwhelming adjective that can be said about Avon's first generation of Italian-Americans is "hard-working". They would do anything to support their families with honest wages. Most of them held several jobs and did farming on the side. There were no "English as a second language" classes given, and with little encouragement other than from church and family, these immigrants proved their willingness to work long hours and take jobs few people wanted to do, for little pay (often just 50 cents an hour). This would eventually earn them respect in the community. Indeed, many of these 19th century pioneers became civic leaders for the village.

Some Italian immigrants to Avon came from Cerda, in the Palermo province in Sicily around the late 1880s. Dominick D'Angelo's father followed his brother, Anthony D'Angelo (Tony #1) here from Sicily, and Dom was born in the American Hotel across from the Railroad depot. Oral histories for Amos Ippolitto and Dom D'Angelo, among many others, are available for borrowing or listening at the Avon Free Library and are a great resource for those who wish to learn more about the development of this town. Amacord is the Italian word for "I remember" and I'm glad these Avonites took the time to remember their memories. The AP&HS is currently recording new oral histories which will continue to be a source of valuable reference for future generations. There is nothing like a first person accounting for accuracy and rationale.



FUSCO
Paul and Mary (Emmi) Francis on their wedding day.
Notice the tender extension of Paul's little finger.

(Photo courtesy of their daughter, Rose Fusco.)

Did You Know?

That at one time we were under the rule of the French? From 1721 until 1759 western New York was a part of the French empire, until French forces were defeated in Quebec by the British. My, how different our life would be, had the French been the victors. Sacre Bleu!

Membership

Remaining a real bargain - \$5 for single and \$10 for family. Checks may be sent to Mary Liz Stanton, 41 Oak Street, Avon 14414. (Checks payable to AP&HS.) Know what's coming up for the next eventful year by keeping informed through the newsletter. Read it with your family and talk about your own memories. Your kids will appreciate it *someday!* Memberships make great stocking stuffers, special thank you gifts and good therapy for our elders who may have gone to live at assisted living homes.

Town Circle News

John DuBois is tending to the Civil War Monument in the park circle to straighten the coping which is broken and out of kilter. As ever, the Garden Club is maintaining our downtown with beautiful flowers, which is no simple task given the current weather conditions. Anyone wishing to help can call Joan Brown at 226-3260.

"Those who come after us will.. fill up the canvas we begin."
- Thomas Jefferson

2007 Leadership

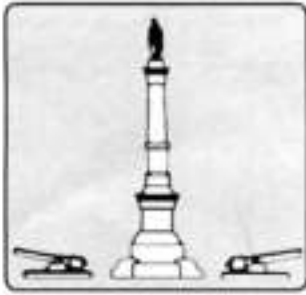
Jean Batzing - President Pro-Temp, Delores Gunther - Treasurer, Joan Reid - Secretary, Programs - Beverly Dziekonski and Joan Reid, Newsletter - Carolyn Swanton, Historical Properties - Melissa Rowe, Corn Festival - Jean Batzing and Robert Westfall, Plaques - James Brewer, Membership - Mary Liz Stanton, Website - Bob French, Hospitality - Sally Campo (Many behind the scenes volunteers).



Avon Preservation and Historical Society

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Avon Preservation & Historical Society

Newsletter

VOLUME 19, No. 4

www.avonhistorical.org

FALL 2007

The Hosmer - Brewster - Pierpont - Browne - Annis - Rose House



"Fair Acres"

Few houses in Avon hold more significance than the imposing classical residence at 104 East Main Street at the NW corner of High Street. Recently, researchers came to the grand home, known as "Fair Acres" to verify the contributions of Claude F. Bragdon, Rochester's leading architect of the early 20th century. The house, originally built around the Civil War, was first owned by Stephen Hosmer, one of Avon's pioneers.

The Colonial Revival style house we see today was a typical design of the late 1890's when Bragdon was establishing his architectural profession. The biggest change besides the addition of an extra story on the east side, was in the front entrance. Bragdon included a slight curve which he thought softened the rigid straight lines of traditional porches. Interested parties in Bragdon research came at the invitation of Vicki (Annis) Rose. They included Dr. Eugenia V. Ellis of Drexel University and Cynthia Howk, of the Western NYS Landmark Society, in Rochester. Ms. Howk has long been interested in that house and mentioned that it is among many in that area that would contribute to making a historic district in Avon. Currently there are members of the AP & HS that are pursuing that goal.



*Cynthia Howk, Stephen Rose,
Vicki Rose and Eugenia V. Ellis
(photo by C. Swanton)*

The "Rochester" wood floors were noted as well as the newer fireplaces that Bragdon designed along with abundance of windows, leaded and inside, and other details that only come when a real professional is employed. An album with photos of the elaborate landscaping project attributed to Alling Stephen Deforest including a pavilion, sun house, trellises and gates was also shown. During the fifties when The Ira Browne family owned the house, it was a bed & breakfast home for tourists.



Landscaping from Brewster House

Photos by Avon Photographer, E.C. Pemberton

Bicentennial Reminisce

In 1958 when Avon approached its Sesquicentennial, Allison Van Allen wrote about the owner of several historic "firsts" in our village. It was on August 30, 1808 that settlers of this township changed its name from Hartford to Avon.

The first white man, a French explorer named Etienne Brule, passed through Avon in 1615. A century and a half later, William Markham came to Avon in 1764. The following year the first Protestant minister came into the Valley; the Rev. Samuel Kirtland reported that he had seen a herd of bison on the Avon flats. In 1788 Col. Markham assisted Oliver Phelps in surveying the route along the Iroquois Trail from Canandaigua to Avon, with the turnpike being constructed soon after.

In 1789 Gilbert Berry opened a ferry across the river and became the town's first permanent settler when he built a log cabin. The first town meeting occurred in 1791 and the clerk's books are still on file here. In 1792 the first log schoolhouse west of Canandaigua was built with Pedie Joiner as the teacher. In 1804 the first bridge over the Genesee River was erected.

In 1834, Herbert Wadsworth of Ashantee (a pun on the word a-shanty) built the first silo in America. The first harness race track with National Circuit races in Western New York was built in the 1840's. Avon had the first organization of the breeders of

Thoroughbred horses in all this country or Canada, and the only show of breeding classes. It had the first "stallion station" in operation (Lookover). Outside of Kentucky, this area had the largest thoroughbred horse breeding operation in North America.

Soldiers Monument in the Circle

The Soldiers Monument in our Village Circle has been repaired well advanced of winter weather, Trustee, John DuBois reports. While Derrick Monument was calking the gaps and breaks in the molding around the base of the monument, it was noticed that several cracks had developed in the soldier's cloak and chin some fifty feet above. During those repairs, Trustee, James Brewer, took some close-ups on the ladder. The statue is marble atop a granite base that makes it shift and wear, so it is important to maintain it closely.



Photo by James Brewer



Programs

Our next speaker is James Bartholomew, from Avon. Most people know Jim from the CVS Pharmacy, but few know what a bottle buff he has become. He has many interesting bottles from this area and from them can relate the history of many professions that used bottles; from dairy farming to doctors.

An example of a rare Avon bottle is one that came from "Doc" William H. Sutterby, who was the vet for Wadsworth Farms during the 1930's and 40's. He specialized in large animals, such as cattle and horses. Father to John

William "Bill", Betty (Wilcox), Francis "Red or Frank" and Jeanne (Coynne), "Doc" was the son of a vet, Dr. Frank Sutterby of Bath, NY. There were 7 Sutterbys' practicing as veterinarians (DVM) all at the same time in the 1900's. Avon's "Doc" Sutterby produced a number of medicines used for the treatment of illness and injury to large animals. One of his patent medicines is pictured with this article.

The program is being held October 28th at 2pm at the Town Hall. There is quite a history of Avon being displayed by the many bottles.

Bottle in the collection of Mrs. Richard (Jeanne Sutterby) Coynne.



The last program given by Valerie O'Hara of Pike Glass Co. was well attended at the Zion Episcopal Church.

Corn Festival Report 2007- Jean Batzing

The AP & HS participated in the Avon Rotary Corn Festival held August 11th. Bob Westfall had his crew setting up the tent at 6:00 AM in front of the Central Presbyterian Church. Other volunteers arrived soon to set up the three display tables and were there giving information and selling items. Journals, such as Will Leighton's were there for viewing and also encouraging others to keep them. "The past actually happened, but history is only what someone wrote down."

Mary Liz Stanton reported that 30 persons took out or renewed memberships. Three panels were displayed, one featuring the Opera Block. The new book, "Coming Home" is a compilation of Avon's history incorporating several earlier booklets. There was also a display on the House Plaques. Do you have one for your house? Contact Jim Brewer if you need one.

On December 6th from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM there will be an Open House at the Museum Headquarters in the Town Clerk's Office for the convenience of those of you who wish to give unusual holiday gifts from Avon; reading materials, throws, plaques, and other nice items will be available.

Recent Acquisitions - Ginny House

A 15" x 20" painting of the White Horse Tavern by Mrs. Monica Mairs was donated by Mrs. Mary Ann Cullinan. Mrs. Jean Downing Batzing contributed an antique popcorn toaster, and Mrs. Sharon Knight located a bridge scorer manufactured by a Glens Falls, NY company which featured advertising by W. W. Hogmire of 4 Genesee St. Avon. (Editor's note: "We accept many types of donations as long as they feature

a mention of Avon, people from Avon or could have been used by someone living in Avon, and that covers a pretty broad range!)

Cemeteries - Carolyn Swanton

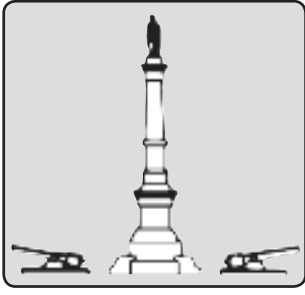
I have recently begun a photo essay of our local cemeteries and found so many of them in serious shape. Many gravestones have been toppled and are too expensive to repair. Some are now completely covered by grass and can no longer be seen. These may be ruined by lawn mowers that come over the markers. The oldest ones are the most vulnerable. As I approach the age when half of my friends are already in cemeteries, I begin to worry about the upkeep of these outdoor museums more and more.

Good citizens should teach their children to respect these places, not just because it is the patriotic thing to do, but for the wealth of serenity, nostalgia and history that is provided in these often isolated places. In today's times, these cemeteries are quickly becoming relics in themselves. It is a loathsome act to desecrate the resting spots of our ancestors and children should be taught so at an early age.



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Avon Preservation & Historical Society

Newsletter

VOLUME 20, No. 1

www.avonhistorical.org

WINTER 2008

*Happy Bicentennial Year
for Avon!*

*Sleigh scene on West
Main Street Hill? Back
of the Livingston Hotel?
Man in sleigh?*

Help identify for a prize!



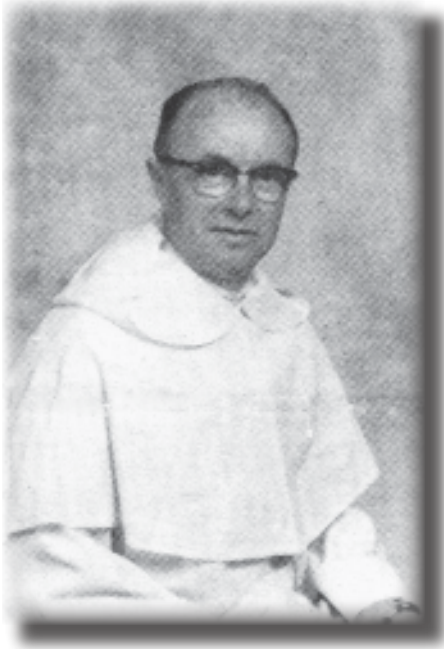
***"Carry into the new year only the choicest thoughts and inspirations.
Welcome and all hail to the future!"***

~ Newell Dwight Hillis

2008 Annual Meeting - Will be held at the Village Hall on **Sunday, January 27th**. Social Reception at 1:30pm, French's Speech at 2:00pm and Business Meeting at 3:30pm. Agenda includes a review of the new bylaws, the renting of temporary headquarters for the Museum and to meet the new nominees for the AP&HS Board. As a special treat we will hear Robert French's personal experiences from Tanzania, Africa. Our own "Mr. Website" has been just about everywhere and knows how to get the most out of an exotic location. All are welcome!

Bicentennial Committee Meeting - Tuesday, January 22nd, 7:15pm, Community Room of the Avon Memorial Library - The first meeting is for ideas and thoughts on how to involve the town for this special anniversary. Call 226-9424 for more information.

A World Famous Composer, a Photographer and an Avon Priest



Father Henry A. Atwell

an incurable heart disease and accepted it by saying "my bags are packed."

Father Atwell died quietly on March 24, 1980. Among his many credits, besides being a good priest, was a successful editorship of the Catholic Courier Journal (western New York state's major Catholic newspaper), being the first president of GEM (Genesee Ecumenical Ministry) and aiding in the establishment of the Senior Citizen Nutrition Program in Livingston County. Father Atwell also established the Parish Council for St. Agnes in 1972.

He was not one to refrain from expressing his views. For years he was a leader of a group of priests who discussed contemporary theology. One of his controversial topics related to the "mystery of the 43 missing Catholic men in Avon" (men who were often seen in the local pubs on Saturday night, but were always missing from Mass on Sunday). It seems to have been a smart compromise to hold Mass on Saturday afternoon. Times have changed since the first Catholics in Avon had to walk to Scottsville to attend Mass.

A simple service for Father Atwell was held at Avon's peaceful Catholic cemetery and was ended with a touch of whimsy when his friend, Louis Ouzer, blew soap bubbles over his friend's grave. Father Atwell is buried in St. Agnes Cemetery next to his mother, who also died in 1980. In his honor, Avon's Interfaith Council, Inc. began a Memorial of Human Unity - an annual symposium on human unity to be held in the Rochester area under the leadership of Doris Ryan Gillard.

Father Atwell, within his chosen profession, wished to make the public aware of certain situations that affected the humanity in this area. His annual friendship with a well-known

Jewish photographer, Louis Ouzer, and the famous composer, Alec Wilder, an agnostic, was formed out of their mutual concern for this area's morality.

Encouraged by the same tolerant environment that had nurtured the suffragette and Underground Railroad movements that made this area famous, they were each stuck by the similar injustices. Both knew Louis Ouzer, the local award-winning photographer, who knew a Who's Who of New York State personally. Ouzer pushed for Wilder to meet Atwell to complete the threesome of these common minded men.

Alec Wilder had attended the Eastman School of Music where he was strongly supported and influenced by Rochester's great Dr. James Sibley Watson, a generous patron of the arts and an early pioneer in filmmaking, among many other things. Dr. Watson introduced Wilder to the process of musical scoring for movies.

Father Atwell never was ambitious for himself within the church. All of his searching was made within the framework of Church law. He was simply a good man who would not remain silent when he saw a problem. Thus, Atwell developed a "strained relationship with Bishop Fulton J. Sheen, the handsome, charismatic and best-known evangelist within the Catholic Church," an international celebrity and quite far removed from Atwell's world and those whom he hoped to help.

After a Rochester radio station banned the Council of Churches for taking part in inviting the controversial Saul Alinsky to Rochester, Father Atwell halted his very popular Sunday morning address program, until the radio station withdrew the ban. Called an able interviewer, Father Atwell could often get his guest to reveal much more of their opinions than they had wished to be known.

When Sheen sent him to Avon in 1967, it was in a sense of being "farmed out" for Atwell's frank editorials in the Catholic Courier. Alec Wilder wrote, "Henry is one of the new renegade breed as well as being a very bright, warm, witty, civilized man. His editorials were so daring and off limits that he was removed and shipped off to what I suppose his bishop presumed to be the boondocks. It happened to be a lovely little village south of Rochester." (p. 143 Desmond Stone [Alec Wilder in Spite of Himself](#)) Perhaps it was Avon that Wilder had in mind when he wrote "It's so Peaceful in the Country."

The following year Alec Wilder, "who was disturbed by Atwell's new assignment," decided to bring a little fame to the parish of St. Agnes by composing a choral work, "A Children's



Alec Wilder

Plea for Peace," written especially for the children of St. Agnes School. This work came as a direct result from a meeting at the 1850's Avon Rectory. Atwell had handed the musician several quotes regarding peace from famous men and Wilder thought about them and felt he would like to "hear the uncomplicated statements of children."

Father Atwell had the St. Agnes children begin writing essays about peace. One that particularly touched the men was "Peace is a horse with a nose of velvet." It opened in Avon on May 3, 1969 and was repeated at the Eastman School of Music.

Alec Wilder's music is a unique blend of traditional American jazz and basic classical styles, defying any preordained stereotypes. Born in Rochester in 1907, he moved to NYC and was encouraged by Frank Sinatra and Mitch Miller, himself a graduate of the Eastman School of Music. Wilder composed for Sarah Caldwell, Eileen Farrell, Cab Calloway and Kenny Burrell, among many others. One of Wilder's most famous songs is "I'll Be Around."

Unable to attend Father Atwell's service, Wilder had begun to fail in health himself. He died December 1980 in Gainesville, FL. According to his wishes, he was buried in St. Agnes Cemetery, as close as he could get to his dear friend, Henry Atwell. He is undoubtedly the most famous burial in Avon (outside of Avon). (All quotes from Desmond Stone's [Alec Wilder in Spite of Himself](#).)

Additional Grant Given to Help Restore the Opera House!

\$500,000 became available for Avon earlier this month and an additional \$750,000 is pending through a Save America's Treasures grant from the National Park Service. Bero Architecture is currently working on designs for the renovation with Larsen Engineering suggestions on how to make use of "green technology."

Almost a Landmark

It is a structure that became near and dear to all of Avon's children and the young at heart. Completely modern when it was built, you weren't encouraged to stay for hours like at "Woody's," but on a hot day, nothing beat Annis Dairy ice cream! The line formed all down the counter and out the door. I remember being delighted at being told by Mr. Annis, when I started working there, to be sure to try all the varieties of ice cream. I did!



Annis Dairy (Dec. 2007) Photo by Carolyn Swanton.

Past News Events

*The *Avon News* began publishing about 100 years ago, established by Howard R. Gibson.

What Made the Journal kept by Will Leighton

- Jan. 11 The trolley wires are strung from Avon to Rochester.
- 16 The first new trolley for the Erie (Railroad) arrived today.
- 22 The new trolley made her first trip to Rochester and back.
- 23 10 (degrees) below zero.
- Feb. 5 They commenced Ice Harvest today - Wadsworth Pond.
- 6 H. Jos. Clark died this AM and his mother died last midnight.
- 7 From 50-60 teams at Wadsworth Pond harvesting ice.
- 11 9th annual Banquet of Chem. Co. Congressman-elect Peter Porter was guest.
- 17 Bill Clark and gang sank 1,300 feet of 12" iron pipe in the lake for the Avon Water Works, but was broken apart in 2 places in the process.
- 19 The men came to do the vault work in the new bank today.
- 22 The water system is out of order today. Flora Albert fell from the baggage car at Mt. Morris and was injured so badly that he died (just after returning to Avon to see his wife who had been called down to the depot.)
- 23 John. L. Westfall was nominated for collector at Republican Town Caucus.
- 25 The vault was completed today.
- Mar. 4 Harry Lacy was run over by the Van Zandt Hose cart at a fire at the High School and was cut about the face.
- 17 William Archibald has a new house.
- 19 The (Champion) Drill Works caught fire and burned down by 11:30pm.

Veteran to be Remembered

John Alexander

On the way to Caledonia one passes one of the earliest recorded crime scenes in western New York. The equivalent of our CSI investigators had a case to figure out when they arrived at Sylvester Hosmer's Tavern in 1814 on Route 20. Mrs. Hosmer had heard a shot early in the morning and sent her husband out to check on it. He found a soldier with no identification on him. As it turned out, one soldier had killed another, over the pay they had received that day. For awhile, they did not know who had been the killer and who had been the victim, as they both had missed their roll call the next day, but they found the big spender and identified him as the man AWOL from his unit. They were soldiers in the War of 1812 and on their way to Sackett's Harbor.

"The soldier's murder might have soon been forgotten as another sordid, melancholy incident of war but for a strange happening the next summer. Just as wheat was beginning to ripen in the river valley, the settlers noticed a strange flower raising its purple head above the soldier's grave. It had a single stalk which bore a wax-like blossom, the like of which had never been seen before - or since - in the region.

The next year there were two blossoms near the first. For nearly one hundred years, the flowers were an annual wonder of the countryside. They never spread beyond the area of the grave. Then one summer the flowers did not appear. They never bloomed again. They had gone as mysteriously as they had come." (Arch Merrill, *Democrat & Chronicle* 7-10-55)

**"My brave lad, he sleeps
In his faded coat of blue
In his lonely grave unknown
Lies the heart that
beats so true."**



Photo of John Alexander's monument on the road to Caledonia

Membership

Membership in the AP&HS is still only \$5 for an Individual/Senior, \$10 for Family membership. Know someone who has moved away from Avon, but still asks what's going on? Know someone who has gone into a nursing home who would like to be a supporting member? Have any last minute Thank Yous to send? Where else can you remind someone 4 times a year, you are thinking of them, for the price of a card? Call Mary Liz Stanton at 226-3443 to join up or grant someone else membership.

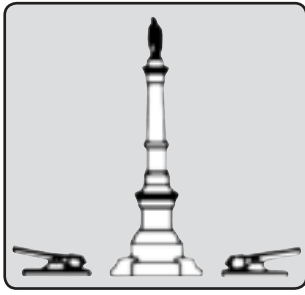
We are always looking for new members and trustees for the AP&HS. It is an exciting time to not just read or hear about Avon history, but also be a part of it. The future does depend upon what is done now.



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SPRING 2008

Annual Meeting Report

By Jean Batzing

The AP&HS Annual Meeting was held at the Avon Village Hall, Sunday afternoon, January 27. Forty two people attended participating in a new format. Refreshments were served first at which time they could renew Memberships, peruse AP&HS sale items and chat with one another. At 2PM Bruce Burritt presented a very colorful and interesting "Tanzania Safari." Bruce had been on the Safari with Bob French who was ill and could not make the presentation. The business meeting was held at 3PM. Agenda included the adoption of the Secretary's Minutes for the 2007 Annual Meeting, the 2007 President's Report (see page 5) and the voting in of members for the Board of Trustees, term expiring 12/31/10; Richard Burke, Thomas Ippolito, Mary Liz Stanton, John DuBois, J. Michael Rink, and Joan Reid. Filling in for one year terms are Mary Ann Margiotta and Beverly Dziekonski. The new By-Laws, Treasurer's Report and other information was also available.

New 2008 Officers:

Elected at the February 4, 2008 meeting were Richard Burke, President; Robert Westfall, Vice President; Treasurer, Lori Gunther and Joan Reid, Secretary.

2008 Programs

By Joan Reid

Free Lecture on March 9th at 2pm at the Avon Village Hall. Lenora Brown talking about William Pryor Letchworth.

Also... look for *Rails to Trails* in April.

The AP&HS is as its title indicates -
to Preserve Avon's History.

The Board of Directors would like to hear your thoughts and suggestions. You can do this by writing
Membership Chairman AP&HS,
27 Genesee St. Avon, NY 14414



*From the T & C Hardware to the Livingston Hotel:
Genesee St. Avon c. 1950*

PAST NEWS EVENTS

Exactly One Hundred Years Ago - What Made the Journal kept by Will Leighton In 1908

- April 13 - Henry Chase died this evening.
- 15 - The Sanitarium was sold at foreclosure sale this A.M. Mrs. Allen bid is in.
- May 22 - De Rue Bros. Minstrel Co. is in town.
- 30 - Some canoeists (sic) found a body in the river this afternoon.
- June 16 - Ken McVean left for Alaska.
- 18 - They are constructing a macadam road between Avon and Mt. Morris - Mr. Weed and Frank Kellogg went to Rochester and brought back Frank's new Stoddard-Dayton touring car.
- 20 - They are laying the foundation for a new building down at Ishams (J. D. Pasqualie grocery when I was young- gone now) (sic).
- 25 - Alumni Banquet held in new school.

Correction from last issue; *Avon's Library* is the Avon Free Library and the editor (of all people) is deeply chagrined to having called it incorrectly. (Sorry, Mother)

North Avon Railroad Stops

By Carolyn Swanton



*“Main Street” West Rush (inset the old Post Office)
Photos by Delos H. Wray Sr.*

“Golah”

Before cars were parked in most people’s driveways, the popular mode of public transportation was railroad. “Autos” were not reliable at first, and trains offered comfortable and dependable travel. While that still may be true, most people want their own vehicle once they have reached their destination. We have grown accustomed to our conveniences. At the turn of the last century, however, the Erie Railroad provided Avon with many stops to accommodate daily traveling to and from Rochester. Avon was an important center for the railroads.

The first road south of West Rush on the East River Road is Golah Road, heading west towards the railroad tracks to what was once Stull Family farm lands. It was there that Avon’s electrical power source was built. From this road south, even though technically in Monroe County, property has always been a part of Avon Township for telephone and mail services. Schools have been a matter of choice.

Several former tenant farms were built on Golah Road, but the bustle of train travel has long since subsided and the stop was removed. The train track lines run parallel to the Genesee River into Avon.

“Meadow-wood”

The next railroad stop coming south along the Erie Line was built for an estate of three houses designed by Claude Bragdon of Rochester for the Henry Wray Jr. Family. It was primarily used by the servants and visitors who came out from the city, and the Wray children who went to private schools in Rochester.



Family. It was primarily used by the servants and visitors who came out from the city, and the Wray children who went to private schools in Rochester.

The two main houses at Meadow-wood were a part of the Avon AFS House Tour in 1977 courtesy of the owners; Mr. & Mrs. Vincent Mayoue (main house) and the former owners, Mr. & Mrs. Walter Swanton (house on the right). Irene Wray Swanton was the great-granddaughter of the original owner of the property and is in the photo as a little girl in the summer photo of the station, looking towards the camera.)



The Erie Passenger Station at Meadow-wood in Winter (with Mr. & Mrs. William Pitkin (of Chase-Pitkin landscaping) and Mr. and Mrs. John Stull **and in upper right corner - in Summer** from left: Ernie Knopf, and members of the Wray family. Photos by Delos H. Wray Sr.

“Elm Place”

The Erie’s next stop was the 18th century style farmhouse known as Elm Place. “In 1764 William Markham, father of Colonel William Markham, early settler of Avon, was a member of the party sent by General Braddock from Oswego to Irondequoit Bay, then overland to Genesee Castle to effect the release of two white captives. In 1790 Col. William Markham came to Avon and built ‘Elm Place’ on the East River Road.” (From the Chronology of “Avon, Heart of the Genesee Country” by Marie C. Preston)

Elm Place was named for a very large elm tree. The Markham Elm’s branches spread over an entire acre of land. “In 1922, a reproduction of the original home was constructed on the exact site. The pioneer cabin is complete to the last detail.” (p 292 Rochester and Monroe County; a History and Guide) The log cabin was one of the first structures to be obtained in the formation of The Genesee Country Museum.

Living over 100 years, Miss Linda Dana Puffer, a graduate of Wellesley, bridged the gap between several generations and earned great admiration in this area. After college Miss Puffer (her mother was Susan Emma Markham) worked with Melvin Dewey, inventor of the Dewey Decimal Classification. (11/10/1969 Ruth B. Chamberlain “About the Town” Times-Union) She was a great patron of the arts working with the Herdle sisters to save the Memorial Art Gallery in lean years.

Besides the large dairy farm they lived on, the family also had major positions in various Rochester industries including the founding of the Pfaudler Co. which later became Sybron Corp. Pfaudler was engaged in many activities with their glass-lined steel tanks, one of their largest clients being Budweiser beer. The family was also active in the support of the arts and Avon and Livingston County Historical Society.

After her father, Charles C. Puffer, was lost in the Titanic disaster in 1912, she continued running the dairy where Markham and Puffer certified milk was produced. It was then in operation as a Black Angus Farm after the transfer to the Selden Family.

*Stopper from an old milk bottle
from M & P Dairy*



Miss Puffer was such a fan of live classical music, she tried in vain to get Strong Memorial Hospital to lend her an ambulance to take her to and from the Eastman Theater while she was hospitalized for pneumonia. She had promised she would come right back, but they didn't approve. Everyone who knew her had a story to tell about her courage and practicality.

On August 19, 1915 Elm Place was the setting for the annual meeting of the Livingston County Historical society presided over by Mr. Herman W. DeLong of Dansville. Those elected to office from Avon at that meeting were Miss Jane Brewster, Miss Anne Pierpont, Mr. & Mrs. James D. Carson, Mr. & Mrs. Herman A. Doer, Mr. & Mrs. Alexander Russell, Mr. Frank E. Hovey, Mr. & Mrs. James D. Sheldon. The Recording Secretary described Elm Place in the annual report as:

“In all the beautiful valley of the Genesee, there is no fairer spot, no place so appropriate, as Elm Place, in which to bring together an organization of historians. While the Livingston County Historical Society are collecting and writing the present history of Livingston County, yet their purpose is to gather more completely the earlier history of the valley-history that is hard

to obtain, because there were not the numerous opportunities of writing it in those history making days, as there is today. Perhaps never before in the history of the Livingston County Historical Society has a meeting been held at a place more closely connected with the early history of Livingston County, than that section of territory which surrounds Elm Place. It is historical ground. Underneath the spreading branches of the “Markham Elm” famed in prose and song, the Indian chiefs of seven nations of the Iroquois gathered to discuss “affairs of state” and as they decided, so the early history of the Genesee country went. Rich, indeed, in Indian lore, is the country around Elm Place, and one has only to turn the pages, back, back, back, to see the influence that Elm Place had upon the Western New York civilization and history.”

(1916 Livingston County Historical Society Report)

President's Annual Report - 2007

By Jean Batzing

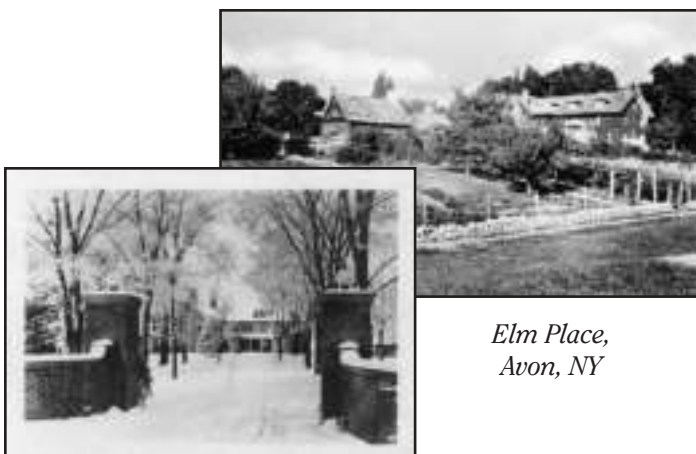
The Board of Trustees held the January Annual Meeting and nine monthly meeting in 2007. A severe snowstorm necessitated canceling the February 5th Meeting.

The AP&HS actively participated in community events. At the 11th Rotary Corn Festival the tent was set up on Genesee St. with a new book “Coming Home,” and other sale items and artifacts on display. A committee promoted a “yes” vote through a variety of advertising media to “Save the Opera Block.” Members set up a display at Avon Market Days. Following the May 28th Memorial Services in the Park, an Open House was held in the AP&HS facility in the basement of the present Town Hall. Sixty adults and children visited, most unaware of our being there. How important visibility is!

Three programs were done during the year: Carolyn Swanton gave a talk with slides on **Claude Bragdon in Livingston County, Stained Glass Windows** was a lecture/slide presentation by Valerie O'Hara and James Bartholomew had a display and talk on **Glass Bottles in Avon.**

Four Newsletters included topics as the Part Monument, the White Horse, Memberships and various committee activities.

Two other notes of interest: Another file has been added to the archives with the coming of Barilla to Avon; Trustees were among those attending the Open House in October. The AP&HS was also given a house from this



*Elm Place,
Avon, NY*

venture. Land is needed on which to locate it and this is being researched. Most towns in Livingston County have their own building from which to operate, giving them room to set up vintage displays, etc. This would be in addition to the space which will be provided in the Opera House when completed.

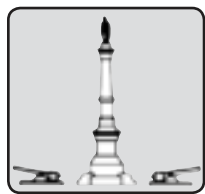
Avon lost two very prominent women in 2007, both having made valuable contributions to the AP&HS. Jean Weinrich served on the Board of Trustees specializing in accessioning artifacts. Jo Ann Streb created artworks from various scenes in Avon and donating them to the AP&HS. Their interest and help in the Society will always be remembered.

Committee reports for the year are on file and available on request. Meetings are held at 7PM the first Monday of each month (except July) and are open, visitors welcomed.

It was a successful year and I would like to thank all members of the Board of Trustees for their interest in Avon, the Society and doing things many times above and beyond the call of duty.

Bicentennial Reminder

Avon does not have an emblem or flag with personalized representation. From the Five Arch Bridge to the White Horse by way of our beautiful Circle Park, there are many choices. Either Cornplanter or Handsome Lake would also make appropriate symbols for our past. It might be something to think about during this special year.



Avon Preservation and Historical Society

Avon Town Hall • 27 Genesee Street
Avon, New York 14414

“Voices From the Past” - Jean Batzing

Fifty tapes of Oral History interviews have been made. Each individual has made a contribution to Avon through giving a history of what it was like to live in Avon during their time. Several have died and not only is their story interesting but also is now valuable history. The first tape was made in 1983. There have been other people from the past who added to Avon’s history before taping was done; such as Minnie Mehlenbacher, Dr. Timothy Hosmer, Sam Harmon, and Marie Preston. Several people from the “past” will be included in the 2008 publication done by the AP&HS with the Town Historian. Look for the booklet this summer.

Memberships continue to exceed 200. Thank you from California to New Hampshire and in between. How is your money used? The Treasurer has a monthly report that includes receipts and expenditures as rent, newsletter, postage, purchase of items for sale as collectibles and publications.

Moving: Restoration on the Opera Block will begin this Spring. The AP&HS has rented space in the basement of the former Ernie Wiard building on Genesee St. All objects in the Museum have been carefully accounted for in the Accession Book, packed and moved along with furniture, etc. that can’t be packed.

*Cushing’s Gas Station on West Main Street (wonder how much to fill up?)
Photo courtesy of Mrs. Vicki Rose.*



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Avon Preservation & Historical Society

Newletter

VOLUME 20, No. 2

www.avonhistorical.org

SPRING 2008

AVON'S ANNUAL CORN FESTIVAL



*Cornplanter, a Chief of the Senecas, Mighty
on the Warpath, Sage at the Council Fire.*

CORNPLANTER, a Seneca Chief of Canawaugus

*"Our clustering cities and villages are on the sites
Of their ancient castles, forts and places of burial."*

from Turner's History of the Phelps and Gorham Purchase.

Corn Festival - August 8, 2008

The AP & HS Tent will be placed at the usual site in front of the Central Presbyterian Church during the Festival. Items for sale will include the new publication, "**Voices from the Past,**" arranged by **Jean Batzing** and **Wanda Rowe**, along with other new souvenir items made especially for this special bicentennial year. Arrange to extend your membership or give one as a present as this is an important year to keep in touch.

Avon's Bicentennial Update -

A fun-filled weekend is being planned for the Fourth of July 2008 to celebrate two hundred years of being on the map as Avon. On the Fourth at 6PM there will be a parade under the direction of **Jerry Sutfin**, Commander of the Avon chapter of the VFW, down Genesee Street to Spring Street, for awards and presentations later at the Downs. In the evening, we will have a bonfire with sing-along music provided by former Avon resident, **Christian J. Haller, Jr.** an accomplished musician.

On Saturday we will mark the days when Genesee Street was the main shopping center for Avon. There will be entertainment for all ages, street dancing and reenactments around town. School House #3 in East Avon (courtesy of **Mike and Roxanne Carroll**) will host a reception for the entries of the Art Contest. The U.S. Pony Club will be having their Regional Games Rally at the Avon Driving Park.

Sunday we will relive our heritage from the Avon Springs era with special recognition of the role of our churches. Activities are still being added. The members of the Bicentennial Committee hope to give the children of Avon something to remember all their lives! There is much to get ready and help is needed. To volunteer, please call Richard Burke, (226-2650) General Chairman, Jerry Sutfin, (226-8795) Parade Director, or Carolyn Swanton, (226-9424) Art Contest Chairman.

The AP & HS will be issuing certificates (for a nominal fee) to people who can trace their ancestry back to 1900. Any document that proves your ancestor's address as living in Avon at that time will do. Call Carolyn Swanton at 226-9424 for information.

HANDSOME LAKE

By Carolyn Swanton



There were few travelers on this land before the Senecas. Evidence of nomadic groups in various stages of discoveries are scattered across New York State. The Senecas were farmers in addition to being hunters and fishermen, so they established a settlement in the fertile riverbed region of the Genesee River, which they called their "Pleasant Valley." Livingston County was their heartland, and their existence is an important part of our heritage in Avon. The Senecas were known as the "Keepers of the Western Door." They guarded the western side of the Iroquois Confederacy of Peace.

The highly revered "Three Sisters" in Seneca folklore were corn, beans and squash which they preserved through the winter in deep pits lined with bark along with venison and other game. Senecas made good use of corn; they made corn soup, corn bread, corn pudding, gruel, hominy, and mixed corn with other foods. Succotash was a Seneca creation. Each spring males would clear and burn off the planting fields and then the females would plant, cultivate and harvest crops.

The Senecas extracted oil from sunflowers and used it as butter (a healthy practice it would take Europeans centuries more to learn). "They drove no wells but relied on plentiful natural sources for their water supply. All products of the field and the chase were shared in common by the tribe. There was no hunger, no destitution, no orphanages or homes for the elderly." (pg 31 *Land of the Senecas*, Arch Merrill) They took care of all in their village. Their identifying longhouses housed many families, so no one was ever alone or cold. And there was no waste - imagine, no trash; everything was assigned a use, even the smallest bone would

become a needle or pin. Their life was balanced and good here.

"On the west side of the Genesee, nearly opposite the Avon sulfur springs whose healing waters were venerated by the Senecas of old; And on the Great Central and the Genesee Trails was the important community of **Canawaugus**. Once it was home to a thousand Senecas. There the chief, **Cornplanter**, and his half-brother, **Handsome Lake**, the reformer, were born." (ibid)

Cornplanter was second only to **Red Jacket** in importance among the Senecas, despite his father being a white man. "He was a power at the council fires and his wisdom and moderation often saved his people from too hasty action. Cornplanter was somewhat jealous of the younger Red Jacket, and once when Red Jacket was boasting about his speeches, the older chief said curtly; 'Yes, but we told you what to say.'" (ibid p 113)

"Canawaugus on the Genesee had another distinguished native son. His Indian name was Ga-ne-o-di-yo but to this day he is revered in Seneca hearts as **Handsome Lake, the Peace Prophet**." He was half-brother of Cornplanter, but was a full-blooded Seneca. Handsome Lake was destined to affect the lives of his people far more than any orator or statesman. He was the founder of a new religion which augmented their ancient wisdom with a crusade for temperance. Born in 1735 Handsome Lake was a sachem of the highest rank in the **Turtle Clan**. He fought in the American Revolutionary War with the British, but later in Pontiac's Rebellion against the British. After the war he took part in the treaty negotiations at Canandaigua in 1794.

Handsome Lake became a shiftless idler and a drunkard. He had a near-fatal illness in 1799. Then around 1800, as he lay on a hillside near Avon, sleeping off a night of drinking, four young angels came to him in series of visions. They commanded him to go out among his people, to preach the evils of intemperance and exhorting them to return to the faith and ways of their fathers, for the Great Spirit was angry with them for their excesses. He was given a Code called Gaiwio or 'The Good Message.'

From that day forth Handsome Lake was dedicated to his mission. He spent the rest of his days spreading the new gospel, whose keynote was abstinence from liquor, although he taught other moral virtues. He encouraged Christian-style confessions of sin, but saw how the white man's firewater was debasing his people. Astutely he played on their religious traditions and superstitions as he traveled from village to village, winning many converts. In 1802 Handsome Lake traveled to Washington D.C.

with a delegation of Iroquois to speak with President Thomas Jefferson about land matters. President Jefferson's approval of Handsome Lake's teachings was an important early endorsement of the prophet's religious movement.

He was modest and quiet in his demeanor and his religious zeal was tempered with tolerance and kindness. Often he was called upon to heal the sick. He saved many a tribesman from a drunkard's grave. And this Peace Prophet, more than any other, arrested the spread of Christianity among the Senecas, which would have meant a loss of their identity and ceremonies. Handsome Lake was on a preaching mission at Onondaga when he died in 1815. The preservation of the ancient religious rites on reservations today are due largely to the crusade of this gentle, utter less selfless man, who went out among his people, seeking only to save them from evil ways." (p 116, *ibid*)

Note: Handsome lake is also on the map as the name of a large spring filled pond south of where Rt. 5&20 split on the way to Caledonia. In 2000, it was owned by three companies (p 13 "Time Present & Time Past" 2000 AP&HS publication).



Postcard of the C. Levin residence on Pole Bridge Rd. (currently for sale). The former Dr. P.G. Bradley estate was the home of "Bud" Bradley who received the Silver Star with the second cavalry advanced unit of General Patton's Third Army.

The White Horse Tavern Fire of 1955

By Carolyn Swanton



Stationery letterhead for the White Horse Tavern

Built about 25 years after the First Presbyterian Church across the corner, it was the other important brick building in early East Avon. Built in 1808 by **John Pierson**, who had built an earlier tavern (now the **Richard Coyne** Family Homestead); the White Horse Inn's long history included involvement in the Underground Railroad. A meeting house of the old horse and carriage era, water troughs were available instead of gas pumps. One might have stopped and asked directions and had a brewed drink, or catch up on the local news for over a century. To say it was a landmark would be an understatement. It was also where one of the worst fires our brave local firefighters ever battled.

Recently purchased by the Wemett Corporation in 1955, a restoration had begun, sans a tap room. One August night fire started in the kitchen, a later addition, but still quite outdated. The cause was undetermined, but it was thought to be an automatic oil-burning water heater or a refrigerator.

Gene O'Neil of East Avon was across the street when the first wave of smoke came from the inn and called in an alarm. Soon calls began coming in from all over East Avon. Fifteen fire companies responded, but the principal problem was a lack of water. Several neighbors allowed drainage of their pools or ponds. (I remember my father, **Walter Swanton** coming home to change clothes on rotation that night, because the hosemen were getting drenched from the spray.)

For over five hours East Avon Fire Chief, **Russell Barber**, directed the battle of the flames with **Gilbert Jenkins** from -Caledonia, as mutual aid coordinator. Avon Fire Chief, **Stephen Browne**, who had a keen sense about fires, anticipating a shift in the winds, ordered the hosing of adjacent buildings which many felt saved many East Avon businesses near the old inn. With today's knowledge, the inn would probably have been restored, but architecture is one of America's most disposable art forms. Too quickly, opportunities have been missed and grand buildings end up only on collectable postcards.



A Special Thank You to Trustee, **James Brewer**, for keeping our beloved White Horse monument in such tasteful and caring condition all year. Standing majestically at the East Avon intersection for 78 years, the White Horse is a perfect symbol for the gateway to the Genesee Valley.

PAST NEWS EVENTS

One Hundred Years Ago - What Made the Journal kept by Will Leighton, (Avon's Post Master in 1908)

May

6 - Business was transacted for the first time in the new bank today.

13 - Ed Brayton is motorman and Thos. Dockery, conductor of a new trolley.

25 - Sib. Cullen was hurt quite badly when a work train ran into a motor car.

26 - John Eggleston funeral today

28 - Auction of the contents of Congress Hall. June

June

4 - A. S. Locke died at 5 pm

7 - Chas. Stapley had his left arm amputated below the elbow due to blood poisoning.

8 - A young man tried to pass a forged check for \$5.75 at the bank on John Westfall, but was discovered and given a good lecture and made to return the money - no arrest. Prize speaking contest at the Opera House at 8PM Matt Herron and Percy Locke won for the boys and Phebe Wing and Minnie Sackett won the ladies.

27 - Alumni Banquet at the Livingston House - 200 present.

July

4 - The Chemical Co. (fire dept.) went to Mt. Morris as guests of the Active Hose Co. They took the Butler Drum Corp. of Leroy with them and paraded etc.

10 - Geo. Upson Jr. was killed when run over by the cars near the depot. He was a switchman in the R. R. Yards.

12 - Frank Kellogg went to Rochester today to see Buffalo Bill's 'Wild West' Show.

13 - The work on the new water system was completed today and the water turned into the new pipes.

14 - E. J. Brown, the express man, died of blood poisoning this evening. He leaves a wife and little child. He was a member of the Chemical Co.

15 Fred Westfall & Blanche Fraley married at 6PM at her home.

27 - A young farmhand was shot (but still alive) over at D'Angelo's shoe store. The (shooter) was caught in the evening.

August

13 - They are making the blocks for the J. L. Westfalls house on the lot.

PRESENT NEWS

Avon News - An informative kiosk has been created for use at the Avon Downs. Former Trustee, **Dwight Brown**, brought the illustrated reference board to the March meeting to explain the process of making it weatherproof and to let us see what will soon be on display.

We congratulate Avon's new mayor, **Thomas Freeman**. Mayor Freeman has been supportive of the Bicentennial Committee and took the time to attend a planning meeting. **Jean Batzing** remarked that Avon's first mayor was **Ebenezer Merry**. "Mayor Merry"

Plaques for houses are available. Historic or not, the plaque tells everyone you are proud to acknowledge the age of your house. Call James Brewer at 226-2729.

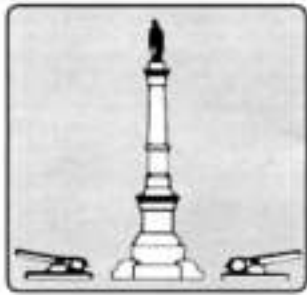
James D. Anderson, long time supporter and good friend of the Avon Preservation & Historical Society passed away recently. His contributions will forever be appreciated by the Society and its members.



Avon Preservation and Historical Society

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Avon Preservation & Historical Society

Newstetter

VOLUME 20, No. 3

www.avonhistorical.org

FALL 2008

Our Bicentennial Celebration

By Carolyn Swanton

Two hundred years of thanks go out to many people for their part in commemorating Avon's Bicentennial. We honored those who came before us, for leaving us our beautiful town. Those who work in our village daily and carry on the values of our forefathers deserve the most credit, whether it be by farming, fire protection, or as village workers, but the 2008 celebratory committee consisted of:

Richard Burke, president of AP&HS, who upon hearing the idea called all the right people to get things done, giving Avon a weekend that will forever be a tribute to his time.

It was the good fortune of the committee that **Jerry Sutfin**, past commander of our local VFW, volunteered to be Parade Director (also providing us with our oldest citizen, his mother at age 106 and in his spare time designed a village logo that captures four important local landmarks.)



Jerry Sutfin, Past Commander of the VFW and friend

Bob Reynolds devoted his entire holiday weekend to videotaping the many events. He may be the only person besides the **James Brewers** to have done so! Everyone else is waiting to see what we missed! **Joan Reid**, Correspondence Secretary for the AP & HS, produced a booklet about Avon's churches in record time which was snapped up before the AP&HS could get their own copy!

Bob Westfall, Geri and James Brewer, and Carolyn Swanton made up the rest of the committee who coordinated efforts with the Town Board, DPW, other departments and entertainment groups to present a weekend of activities.

We were greatly honored to have one of St. Agnes's most distinguished alumni, **Christian J. Haller II** (a member of the Rochester Oratorical Society) perform for us at the Springs Park. A small group of lucky listeners delighted in his reminiscences of 1950's Avon, the age of hobos, and life as the son of a rural veterinarian. Chris was also granted permission by fellow New York folksinger, **George Ward**, to sing his new - yet unpublished song about the Erie Canal, which should become a familiar tune in time. We were also very grateful for the use of Chris's PA system during the parade to hear **Dickie Driscoll's** amusing antidotes about our neighbors and friends.

Local business owners: **Mike Carroll** (School House #3); **Jean Schoenthal** (Avon Floral World); **Tom Moran** of Duffy's, **Woody's II** and the **Avon Inn** also supported our efforts throughout the weekend.

Livingston County News reporters, **Howard Appell** and **Maureen Kingston** contributed articles to a fine supplement which helped spread the word about our weekend. Thanks also to **Dave Futter** at Genuine Printers, **Dr. Richard Collins** for his insightful words at Dr. Timothy Hosmer's grave, **Mary Lynn Stanton** and all other AP&HS members who helped.

The good news is, that if you feel you missed an opportunity, you still have a chance. We are continuing the Bicentennial Program thru September with the hope that schools will reenforce the spirit of local history in their programs.

The re-enactment of the rope ferry did not take place, but plans are being made for fall. As this area's first business, it would be relevant for children to understand why it was important and the difficulty of providing this trailblazing service. To set it up by hand would be a learning experience that would last a lifetime.

Avon is a perfect example of pioneer living, accepting of advancing technology and able to weather the economic changes of society. By understanding life in Avon, one gets a better understanding of the development of this country. With our connection with train travel and advanced farming methods (from the first silo in the United States to the greenhouse gas-controlled Coyne Farms), we are a perfect example from which to study history.

According to past President, **Jean Batzing**, "Avon is the only town in Livingston County without their own museum." It is certainly not for lack of acquisitions or importance. Internationally known for our Springs, we should have a central repository for visitors and locals to share information. One of the best opportunities available is the old Creamery at Ashantee. The fact that it is on site and would not have to be moved makes it even more important. The old adage if wishes were horses... Avon would have its museum right there. A very generous benefactor could solve our problem, but to be realistic, we are entertaining all possibilities of fundraising for this project. Stay tuned.

West Main Street Grocery Stores

By Carolyn Swanton

Those of you who remember the wealth of grocery stores on Genesee and West Main Streets, (not to mention the wonderful prices and personal service) know that competition is good for consumers. Avon had many choices of where to shop and knew who we were buying from, mostly local dairies and produce growers. Now we pay extra for "organic" items we feel better about eating because they are better for you.

One of the best known stores from our golden age of downtown markets was the Dioguardi Meat Market at 171 West Main Street. Recently Mrs. Thomas (Sydney) Dioguardi had several reprints made from old family photos and shared them with the Historical Society. They will become a part of our family folder files. Anyone from Avon can begin a family folder and add to it as family members pass away.

Mr. Dioguardi was encouraged to move to Avon from Palermo, Sicily by their Avon friends, the D'Angelo's, who had lived in Avon since 1903.



Residential West Main Street in wintertime, postcard about 1910



*Artist's rendering of the Dioguardi Family Store in Avon.
(photographs and illustrations courtesy of Sydney Dioguardi)*



Inside the store



*Marriage of
Thomas Dioguardi
and
Angelina D'Angelo*

*1935 photo of the sons and
daughters of
Domenico (Jim) D'Angelo
(then deceased) on the
occasion of Samuel's
wedding.*

*Back row - Joseph, Pearl,
Salvatore (Sally), Angeline
(Dioguardi), and Samuel.
Front row - Josephine
(nee Prinzi) and Frances.*



Some Well Known Trees in Avon

By Carolyn Swanton

If you love trees, to grow up in the Genesee Valley is like Heaven on Earth. Our beautiful valley, carved out from the last Ice Age, can be viewed from hundreds of hill tops where one can see scores of different trees in various stages of their life cycle. Some trees look like they have been here for centuries, yet in many areas of Livingston County, people are reforesting on once idle land.

“The Markham Elm”

By W. H. C. Hosmer

Like an old warrior with his helm,
Decked grandly with a crest of green,
A thousand years has stood yon Elm
Chief glory of the scene!

(first stanza of his twelve stanza tribute to Avon's first landmark)

A Tour in the Genesee Valley Marie C. Preston,
Livingston County Historian
Pages 21 - 23

Some trees earned fame for being the tallest or the rarest and some for just being in the right spot. The “**Markham Elm**” was known long before white men came to the Genesee region as a meeting place. Before permanent housing was available on that property, a large tree giving plenty of shade was a good convention site. For over a century the majestic tree let people know from the north that they had reached Avon.

William C. Hosmer (Avon's Shakespeare and grandson of founder Dr. Timothy Hosmer) wrote about the Markham Elm, *“It was forty feet in circumference and before it was shorn, by time, of its old protecting boughs, it shadowed an acre of ground. Some wretch, who little regards what is venerable and historic, kindled a fire in it hollow boll. May the curse of the poet and the malediction of God rest on him forevermore.”* Poem and note from “Later Lays and Lyrics” pp. 23-25 by W. H. C. Hosmer (Note: “When the tree was finally cut down, (date not known)... there remained a single branch fifty feet long. In 1893 it revealed some 375 annual growth rings on a broken section placing the age at not less than 600 years.

Paul Strassenburgh, one of Avon's most beloved Justice of the Peace whitewashed the stump of an old tree that had been struck by lightning in front of his house at 277 Genesee Street, (the former **Gad Wadsworth** Home, now **Barbara Harman's** Bed & Breakfast) to let his clients know which house was his. It had inadvertently become

such a landmark that there was fear that people might not find his residence without the tree. Now preserved in white, it is a definite eye catcher one remembers.



277 Genesee Street, Avon

When New York State began its search in 1972 for the largest tree of each variety in the state, **Marion Oldershaw** and **Irene Swanton** of the newly formed Environmental Council in Avon submitted the record eastern cottonwood tree in Ashantee on the Wadsworth Farm. This tree measured around at twenty five feet and one half inches and eighty two feet high. Wonder what it measures now?



Eastern cottonwood tree in Ashantee on the Wadsworth Farm

1972 Newspaper clipping of State forester, Robert Windsor and Mrs. Irene Swanton of the Avon Environmental Council measuring the cottonwood at Ashantee.

The Umbrella Tree of East Avon was a rare type of magnolia which seldom grew outside of the deep south. When farmers first discovered the beauty of the blossoms, they plowed around it. It eventually died, but lives on as one of the favorite collectible postcards from Avon,

having been sent all over the world to represent the area. One wonders with global warming, would it be easier to grow another?

Jean Batzing points out that most of the trees in our Circle Park are identified so that a short tour around our town monument might reveal some surprises for those who haven't taken that walk recently. Jean also suggested I end this article with the Joyce Kilmer (yes, he was a man) quote that "Only God can make a tree."



*Postcard of
Umbrella tree*

PAST NEWS EVENTS

One Hundred Years Ago - What Made the Journal kept by Will Leighton, (Avon's Postmaster in 1908):

September

- 3 - Fire Co. inspection and field day today
- 12 - The air is full of smoke from the forest fires from Michigan
- 15 - At 6PM a special trolley carrying Governor Hughes stopped at the station. Many Avonites shook his hand.
- 17 - Upson and son commenced digging a cellar for a house to be built for Ed Sackett Sr. on the lot north (sic) of J. L. Westfalls new house on Genesee St.
- 20 - Sunday - Dedication exercises at the new Catholic school were held at 4PM. Bishop Hickey gave a fine talk from the convent porch (house at left in photo)
- 30 - Mr. & Mrs. Weed and Mr. & Mrs. Farnum left tonite for Detroit to get a new Cadillac touring 30 auto.

October

- 3 - Mrs. E. C. Hayes dies this afternoon
- 4 - Last night about 12:00 the Weeds and the Farnums ran into a man about a mile west of Caledonia and he died about 3 hours later.
- 7 - About 3:30 a man was found down on the back hill naked. He was rescued by fellow Masons, taken to the Livingston House to recover from a drunk.

*Postcard of the
new 1908
St. Agnes School*



- 10 - A mausoleum is being constructed in the cemetery for the Allens.
- 22 - Frank Kellogg spent 2 hrs. this AM with a man from the McIntyre factory, working on Henry Chapel's auto.

November

- 2 - 275 votes were polled - Olp had a majority of 1 over Wadsworth for member of the assembly.
- 3 - Frank Kellogg went to Rochester on the 3rd trolley to get an auto for Pete Finnegan.
- 22 - Mr. Weed went to Rochester on the 1st trolley to get a new auto for Robert Hanna.

December

- 29 - Frank Kellogg shipped the 3 McIntyre's autos back to the factory today.

Items for Sale

A must-have for Avon residents is the latest publication Voices From the Past. Edited by **Jean Batzing, Mary Lou Miller, Wanda Rowe and Maureen Kingston**, it is full of memories of recent and pioneering families of Avon. George Cullinan bought three copies!

A reminder, that as a member, you get a discount on most every item we offer. While membership for one year is roughly the cost of a gallon of gas, you might consider

receiving your own issue of the newsletter if you are reading someone else's.

Ruth (Hungerford) Weden has helped in identifying the man in an old photograph going down the West Main Street Hill in the sleigh as a Mr. Anderson, Mr. Hardy or Mr. Bill Smith - as they were the milkmen/icemen that she remembered as a little girl.



Barbara Harman

*Some highlights from
Avon's Bicentennial
Celebration*



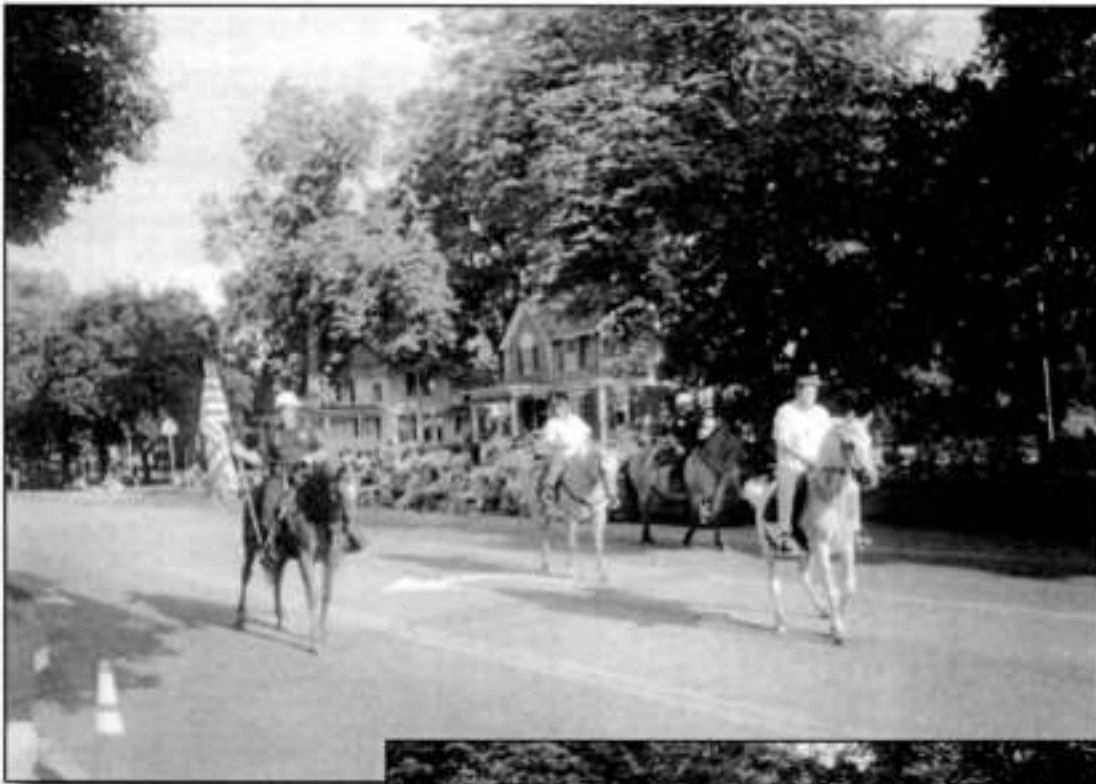
Christian Haller II



**C. Swanton, S. Marschke, O. Bowers
and M. Carroll**



**J. Batzing
R. Burke
B. Bruckel**



**Mayor
Tom Freeman
on right**

*Some
highlights
from Avon's
Bicentennial
Celebration*



Patty Ayers

Corn Festival Report - 2008

By Jean Batzing

Six AM may be early, but Bob Westfall and his crew were assembling the AP&HS Tent at that hour for the Rotary Corn Festival. Special "thank you" for those who were there to help Bob.

Displays, book sales and memberships were available during the day. New memberships were added making the present total 230. Virginia House did an 8' x 4' panel of "Voices From the Past." The booklet contains 36 Avon people who made contributions to Avon's history. Booklets are available at the Town or Village offices or by calling 226-8290.

There was a very nice display by the Railroad Museum in Rush made available by Kurt Zobel.

The AP&HS will continue to operate with the expectation of again being housed in the renovated Opera Block. Check on future programs, Market Days and the Genesee Valley Penny Saver for meeting schedules under their section, "News You Can Use."

East Main Street Under Construction

Residents are again facing Main Street construction for the laying of a new sewer line for the Opera House, and in the process, workers have found some old timbers. Main Street will take on a different look by next year and with the increase of land available for front lawns, there should be an increase in the Garden Club Membership.



Christmas tree design by Joanne Streb; drawing by Mike Streb



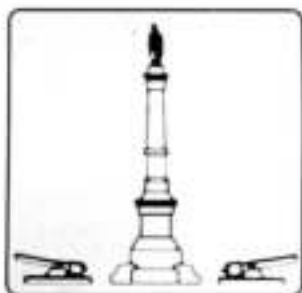
East Main Street under construction in the late 1940's
Photo by Delos H. Wray Sr.



Avon Preservation and Historical Society

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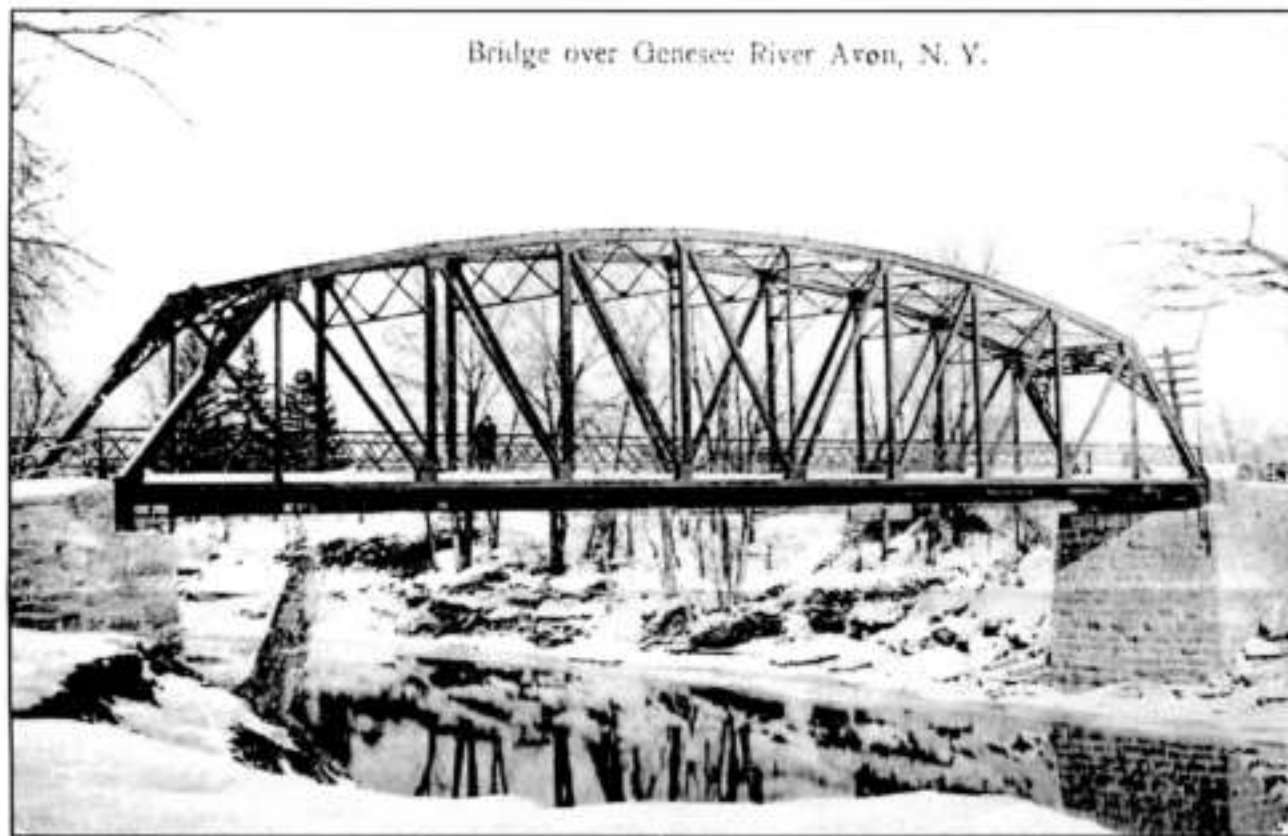
Avon Preservation & Historical Society

Newsletter

VOLUME 20, No. 5

www.avonhistorical.org

HOLIDAY MEMORIAL ISSUE 2008



Bridge over Genesee River Avon, N. Y.

*Old Metal Frame Bridge over the Genesee River at Avon
in winter*

2008 in Brief Review

By Carolyn Swanton

In this bicentennial year of our town's name, the AP&HS, under President **Richard Burke's** leadership, paid tribute with interesting programs and a Grand Parade under the direction of **Jerry Sutfin**, Retired Commander of our VFW and led by our Mayor **Tom Freeman**. **Mr. and Mrs. Richard Coyne** were honored as the Parade King and Queen. **Owen Bowers** won the Artist Award for the Art Show.

It was also the centennial year of celebration for St. Agnes Catholic School for their main school building and sixty years of the Genesee Valley Penny Saver. **Barbara Herman** of 277 Genesee Street was Rotarian Citizen of

the Year and **Frankie (the barber) Antinore**, was recognized as the longest running current business owner in Avon. **Susan Pratt**, daughter of Nan Sook and Michael Pratt, was Avon Central School's valedictorian.

Much work was accomplished in the town laying a new sewer line to the Opera House and making Main Street, both above and below the hill, more of a boulevard than a highway. The Corn Festival was a great **success**. The December meeting will be held at **Doug and Mary Liz Stanton's** gracious Oak Street home. The January 5th meeting will be held at the Avon Inn.

AP & HS Memberships

Call Mary Liz Stanton 226-3443 to renew your membership or give a gift for 2009. Members in good standing receive notices of programs offered by the AP&HS, discounts on merchandise and our quarterly newsletters on historical and current topics. **Types of Memberships are: Individual- \$5, Family - \$10, Business - \$15.**

Hope for the Future

By Carolyn Swanton

The names listed below were people who passed away this year from Avon, who worked for the good of the town, including the AP&HS. We shall miss them and find them hard to replace. The hope of every generation is that there will be younger people who will step up and fill the vacancies left by those who cared about their community. This year left big shoes to fill and this list is surely incomplete. Our apologies if anyone has been left from this list that should have been remembered.

Dr. James D. Andrews - Lt. Col. U. S. Army - WWII

Mrs. Vickie Bell (Joseph) Callahan

Mrs. Edna Clements-Browne

Mrs. Geraldine (Les) Cole

Mrs. Harmon Close

Mrs. Shelia (Robert) French

Lt. John and Mary Kay Gott, son of Howard and Mabel Gott of 94 E. Main St.

Mrs. Evelyn (Tom) Greer

Jess and Elsa Furlan

Merle and Ruby Hatch

David Kingston

Miss Mary Mairs

Mrs. Faith McNinch

Mrs. Ella Mae (Carpenter) Nevin

Neal and Genevieve Shaw

Paul Stephenson

Mrs. Jennie (William) VanEssen

Clarence 'Stub' Webb

Robert Webster



Photo of William Harmon Clark (Supervisor of the Avon Water Works Dept. and father of Relly S. Clark) with big willow root - 24 feet long, taken out of 10" wood water main at Lakeville, 1919. Photo by Pemberton, courtesy AP & HS archives.

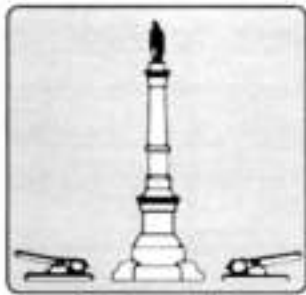


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Avon Preservation & Historical Society

Newsletter

VOLUME 21, No. 1

www.avonhistorical.org

WINTER ISSUE 2009

Avon's Count Moukhanoff

by Carolyn Swanton

The lofty new subdivision laid out from Ashantee Lane (across from Fowlerville Road) by **Helge Heen** was reported by **Mark Gillespie**, of the **Livingston County News**, as moving forward in 2008. Heen has sold ten lots and has forty-five more set aside on the seventy-seven acre property that was once owned by **Herbert Wadsworth Esq.** Wadsworth, who also had a residence in Washington D. C. built his impressive stucco estate house to command the magnificent view across the Genesee Valley. Located a mile south of the village of Avon, just past the Five Arch Bridge Park, the name for the area came from a pun on the term 'a-shanty' that amused the Wadsworth family of Genesee in teasing their Avon cousins.

Like many of the fine estate houses in this area, this grand home received alterations and additions by **Claude Bragdon**, Rochester's best architect of the time specializing in historic remodeling. The old house burned down in the 1970's taking the ornate grilles which were representative of Bragdon's ironwork. Gone also were the tangible memories of Avon's own Russian

Count who was the craftsman of some of the wooden railing in the Zion Episcopal Church.

In 1934 Ashantee became the home for **Count Michael "Max" Moukhanoff** and his wife, "**Nelka.**" **Helen deSmirnoff "Nelka"** (1878-1963) was a granddaughter of **Henry and Minerva Blow** of Virginia. Mr. Blow, a friend of both Presidents Lincoln and Grant, served as U. S.

Ambassador to Brazil. While in that capacity, his daughter met and married **Theodore Smirnoff**, secretary to the Russian Embassy and a relative of the Vodka giant. They were close friends with **Czar Nicholas II** and his family. **Nelka**, born in Paris, lived with her family and was educated there.

Mrs.

Smirnoff's aunt was **Martha Blow Wadsworth** of Ashantee. The youngest daughter of **Henry T. Blow**, **Martha** married **Herbert Wadsworth** and became an accomplished horsewoman. She was influential in thoroughbred breeding in America. A part of their estate became a riding academy where



A Meet at Ashantee—Fox Hunting Scene in Genesee Valley.

Avon area children were encouraged to learn equestrian skills and sportsmanship. "The stables (which had mahogany wainscoting) were leased in the late 1940s through the early 50s to Mrs. C. F. 'Mike' Kelley and subsequently to Ken Merle (assisted for a time by Jerry Rowe) through the sixties providing nearly eighty years of boarding, training and riding instruction, including horse shows for area equestrians." (Mary Lou [Rowe] Miller)



*The former Riding Academy of Ashantee
Photo by James Brewer*

During World War I, Nelka became concerned over the harsh life of Russian peasants and volunteered to help in the Russian Red Cross. A beautiful woman, she had over twenty-five serious marriage proposals when she was young, but felt her role in helping the suffering peasants was more important. Not content with a life of privilege, she was a Russian citizen, born in Paris and half American, but considered herself a citizen of the world with an obligation to those less fortunate. Another such Good Samaritan was Nelka's assistant, the Baron Wrede from Finland.

For the next three years she served on battlefields treating the wounded. Often she recuperated from exhaustion at the home of her friends, the Moukhanoffs. There she met their young son who would later become her husband, "Max."

When the Kaiser's army bore down on her hospital, Nelka quickly ordered all brass doorknobs and hardware to be thrown into the river before they fled so that the Germans could not use the metal for ammunition against those left behind. The Russian Revolution brought many changes to the huge country as Bolsheviks began to murder anyone from the old nobility class along with the entire Romanoff family, dog included. When Nelka's identity was disclosed, she was forced to escape with Wrede in a crowded troop train pretending that he was sick and that she was his nurse. When Max became twenty one, he and Nelka, married in spite of her then being forty.

She and Max hid under bales of hay for over a hundred miles in the back of a bumpy wagon until they reached neutral territory in Finland. From there they went to Turkey to stay with Count Moukhanoff's aunt, Princess Gorchakoff, a Theosophist, then living in Constantinople. This philosophy which was founded in 1875 by an American Civil War Colonel and a woman of Russian nobility was quickly adopted by Nelka, who identified with its creed of tolerance for all religions, respect for all living beings and their practice of spiritual meditation for world peace. Theosophy has only one rule, "There is no religion higher than truth." The architect, Claude Bragdon, was not only a member of that same society, but founded the first Theosophical chapter in Rochester, NY in 1890, which still has members.

In 1934 the Moukhanoffs moved to Ashantee to care for Martha Blow Wadsworth. They eventually inherited her property. The Moukhanoffs cared for many injured dogs during the thirty years they lived here. In the 1950's they were tending to at least thirty old or disabled dogs on the estate. Count Moukhanoff outlived his wife by many years, penning the loving tribute "Nelka" from which most of this is taken. He played tennis and chess with Avon friends and continued the protection of all animals on his property. According to Mary Lou Miller who visited frequently, people would be severely admonished by Max for even swatting flies. Horses were cared for long past their time of employment, making an impression on all the young animal lovers who were drawn to the estate.



Nelka and Max Moukhanoff's Wedding Picture

Greg Johnson, Furniture Restorer & Contributor to AP&HS

by Carolyn Swanton

Have you ever said to yourself, "I could make something really great if I only had the right place to work?" Well, it's closer than you think. At least, that's what I thought when I first walked into the open house at 184 Spring Street. This former knitting mill has great rooms for artists and craftsmen mainly because of the great windows and open space. Designed for a small enterprise, this building was well constructed and the atmosphere would be the envy of a Greenwich Village artist - right in town.



*The restored knitting mill at 184 Spring Street
Photo by James Brewer*

One thing can quickly lead to another. When furniture restorer, **Greg Johnson**, learned I was with the **AP&HS**, he told me about a letter he had found in the wall of his own house on Wadsworth Ave. and gave the Historical Society a copy of it. The neatly typed letter from a former classmate to another is dated August 18, 1898 and is from the Big Rapids, Michigan School where she was then enrolled. Remember, at the time when this was written women did not have the right to vote or own property in this country.

My Dear Mamie,

Nearly one year has passed since I have seen you, nor have I heard from you. Although we are many hundred miles apart, I have not forgotten you nor the many pleasant times we have had together, stealing pie, cake, pudding and so forth... Tell me all the news about everyone I used to know, also tell me about your own dear self-- Are you riding a wheel? Who is your sweetheart?

I am still Nora McGuire and always will be. I think there is a higher aim in life than getting married- at least such is my opinion. I have now developed into a schoolgirl, a student once more as you perceive... I am very happy. My books are my companions and my sweetheart. I am getting along nicely in my studies- am taking college preparatory course. I am not a good stenographer yet, but shall be bye and bye."

Trusting that you will favor me with an early reply, I remain, as ever,

*Your sincere friend,
Nora McGuire*

One Hundred Years Ago

What Made the Journal kept by Will Leighton, Avon's Postmaster:

January

19 - The J. L. Westfall's moved into their new house today (Genesee St.).

29 - Mrs. George Cole died today at 83.

30 - Thad Gerry dropped dead early this evening.

February

9 - Mrs. H. E. Van Zandt dies at 5PM.

20 - At the largest Republican Caucus ever held (311) Matthew Wiard defeated F. E. Hovey for Supervisor and H. M. Chapel for Highway Supt.

25 - Agnes Curran returned to work after a week in N.Y.

26 - Dr. William Nisbet dies this afternoon.

March

1 - Frank Kellogg brought E. H. Jennings new auto from Rochester today.

9 - At a town meeting the "no license proposition" were all defeated. Never was a larger vote pulled (816).

10 - The Kellogg's are in their new house (255 Genesee St.) today.

11 - Mrs. Cuyler Lyday died today.

20 - Willie Hogmire has a new house.

21 - The Sacketts are in their new house on Genesee St.

OTHER NEWS

The AP&HS ANNUAL MEETING was held on January 25, 2009 with over fifty gathering to hear the latest about the Opera Block restoration from retired Avon Building Officer, **James Biondolillo**, who is clerk of the works for the reconstruction. The removal of asbestos is almost complete and construction for the elevator has begun. Drilling for the geothermal well will soon commence. Most of the work will take place in 2009 with hopes of occupying the building within a year. His talk before the annual meeting gave citizens the opportunity to ask a variety of questions.



Beverly Dziekonski was presented with a certificate of merit for her tenure with the AP&HS by President Richard Burke at the Annual Meeting January 25, 2009. Photo by Jean Batzing.

Robert French has upgraded the society's web site. Communication was received via this media from Switzerland regarding the Miller family from England who were brought to Avon by the Markam and Puffers to spare them from the London Blitz of WWII. The family lived at the corner of Lacy and East Main St. **Bev Dziekonski**, who was a classmate of the young son, Charles, received a letter from him last month.

The Avon Farming Industry was recognized January 29th by the Avon Chamber of Commerce and the AP&HS. **Cathy Young**, daughter of **James and Joan Orman**, from the State Assembly in Albany, represented the US government. Thirty-four Avon farmers received framed certificates in appreciation for their often difficult work in today's economy upon which we are all so dependent.

2009 Board of Trustees

President - **Richard Burke**, Vice-President - **Robert Westfall**, Treasurer - **Delores Gunther**, Corresponding Secretary - **Joan Reid**, Membership - **Mary Liz Stanton**, Newsletter - **Carolyn Swanton** and **Mary Ann Margiotta**, Plaques and Photography **James Brewer**, Web Site - **Bob French**, with **Dr. Robert Hayes**, **Dana Collins**, **Ginny House**, **Roberta Lippincott**, **John DuBois**, **J. Michael Rink**, **Jean Batzing**, **Nancy Browne-Pachuta**, **Charles Puls**, **Maureen Kingston**.

As of this writing we have 145 paid members for 2009.



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Newsletter

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SPRING ISSUE 2009

Arthur H. Cole of East Avon - Master Craftsman

By Carolyn Swanton

Chances are that if you grew up near Avon, and are over forty, you received during your lifetime the familiar copper gift box with the copper foil emblem of the Avon Coppersmith Shop. It was a welcome sight for anyone receiving it. It was Avon's version of it after receiving Tiffany's, particularly in quality. Few people really knew how unusual it was to have such a master craftsman working in our town.

Arthur Harold Cole of East Avon was educated at the famed Roycroft School of East Aurora, NY. Born in 1898 at Colden, NY in Erie County, Cole began his trade in 1914 when he was just 16 years old. An offshoot of the blacksmithing trade, the Copper Shop at Roycroft was built in 1902 and was the best coppersmith production factory in the country. At its height from 1915-1918, thirty-five skilled workers were employed. Early on, Cole established a close friendship with Karl Kipp whose Tookay Shop in East Aurora first employed Art Cole and Walter U. Jennings. It was noted that Mr. Cole preferred the highly polished look of copper but was fully capable of creating the vintage patina look that the newer styles used.

When Art graduated from school he was asked to design the class rings for his classmates and a publication described him as the most famous copperworker in America. Mr. Cole left to serve for the U. S. Marines during WWI as did many other Roycrofters. Two years later (after the war) Cole enrolled in Pratt Institute to learn the skills of casting and setting stones. The next year after his money for tuition had run out, he returned to Roycroft and helped to usher in the "golden age" of copper productivity which lasted until the economic recession of 1928 when most of the workers were laid off per Bert Hubbard's orders.

Roycroft changed considerably after the death of Fra Elbert Hubbard in 1915 at which time his son, Bert, took over the empire and had different goals. Cole's letter of resignation dated June 1, 1929 was printed in the publication, *Style 1900*, under the caption "The Best of the Rest" by Dr. Michael Clark and Ms. Jill Thomas-Clark, who credit Cole's efforts as extending "the life of the artistry of the Arts & Crafts Movement" by creating the Coppersmith Shop in East Avon.



Copy of original artwork done by Rixford Jennings for the Avon Coppersmith Shop

In 1930 Cole purchased an empty lot on Route 5 & 20 near Route 15. By 1933 the shop had a name and logo. While laying the foundation, Art and his son, Don, unearthed a large boulder; Mr. Cole decided the sensible thing was to let it stay. It made an appropriate monument for past veterans when the VFW bought the property.

Originally the shop was run by both Cole and Jennings in an area which they thought would be good to catch the tourist trade. Jennings preferred to live in East Aurora and soon tired from the commute, while Cole moved his family to Avon. Cole operated it until 1970 when his health and eyesight began to fail and it was sold to Donald and Joyce Parker. (Information, photos and artwork from Tom Cole, Art's son)

*"Initiative is doing the Right Thing
without being told" — Elbert Hubbard*

Roycroft furniture, metalwork, ceramics and paintings are among the highest prized pieces of the Arts and Crafts Movement of the early 1900's and that includes pieces made by Cole. Many went on to World Fairs and won prizes. Collectors have even used the Avon Coppersmith seal on their own business cards to instantly identify their search *and* because the shop logo is a work of art through calligraphy in itself and is instantly recognizable across the world.



Arthur H. Cole, Master Craftsman; at age 13 and at work in his East Avon shop

Elbert Hubbard

The Roycroft School was the mission of Elbert Hubbard, or "Fra," as he was called by his students because of his wise sayings and unusual manner of dressing. A highly literate man, Hubbard sought to improve the minds and lives of Americans by making them accept only the highest standards in workmanship. He followed the ideals of **William Morris** of England, who spared no expense in creating the finest books, using quality materials and craftsmanship that had not been employed since the Renaissance.

In addition, Hubbard strove to create the desire within the person to be the best that he could be, and to set no limits on what they were capable of creating. Hubbard said, *"Genius is only the power of making continuous efforts. The line between failure and success is so fine that we scarcely know when we pass it... there is no failure except in no longer trying."*

Hubbard became famous for his publication of the irreverent literary digest, "The Philistine." His good friend, **Claude Bragdon**, said "It immediately divided America into two distinct classes, those who 'took' The Philistine and those who didn't know how to take it." When Hubbard's inspirational and romanticized "Message to Garcia" was published, it was memorized by school kids across the country as being the epitome of patriotism. It was through this type of publication that Hubbard included advertisements and his use of these ads made him known as the father of modern advertising.

Unfortunately, Hubbard's life was cut short. He hated war and wrote that *"As long as men gain a living by creating the machinery for war and training for war, there would be war."* "Hubbard castigated the German Kaiser with both tongue and pen" (page 549 Felix Shay, Elbert Hubbard of East Aurora). Hubbard and his wife set out to interview the Kaiser in 1915 leaving New York City with some fanfare. They left on the British liner Luisitania on May 7, 1915. When a German U-boat torpedoed the ship in the Irish Sea, Hubbard along with his wife and the other 1,198 passengers were sent to a watery grave. It was reported that knowing they were doomed, the Hubbards retired to their stateroom to die in each other's arms. Acts of aggression finally prompted the United States to declare war on the German Kaiser's government.

"One great soul in each community would actually redeem the world"
— Elbert Hubbard



AVON COPPERSMITH, Avon, New York

The Avon Coppersmith



Workers at the Copper Shop- Art Cole standing



Entries to the Chicago Fair - 1955

One Hundred Years Ago

What Made the Journal kept by Will Leighton, Avon Postmaster.

April, 1909

- 8 - Mrs. Allen sold the Sanitarium (Avon Inn) to Walter Clark today.
- 21 - Mr. Weed and Frank Kellogg went to Rochester on the 3:18 trolley to get Dr. Preston's new auto.

May

- 14 - There is an epidemic of scarlet fever in town (23).
- 15 - J. L. Westfall won a Kurtzman square piano for writing a sentence 235 times on a card 3 1/2" by 4". (Whereabouts of the piano, unknown today.)

June

- 5 - Mrs. Gilbert Brady died at 5AM.
- 9 - Win Crosby and Ruby Van Zandt were married at 6PM.
- 16 - Mr. and Mrs. Fred Westfall have a boy born this afternoon.
- 24 - 163 were present at the Alumni Assoc. Banquet.
- 25 - Bill Clark ran a rusty nail in his foot and is laid up.
- 26 - Katherine Kellogg was christened at 4PM.

Programs

By Joan Reid

Thank you to Rev. Mark Steiger who spoke about Early Church on the Frontier on Sunday, April 26. Programs are held at the Avon Village Hall behind the Fire Department on Sundays at 2PM.

May 17, "Memories from the Time Capsule" Donovan Shilling

September 20, "The One Room School House" John Babbitt

October 18, "Century of the Park with Emphasis on the CCC" Thomas Cook



Girl Scout Leaders from Avon at Camp Sam Wood include Betty Annis, Rita French, Mrs. Rowell, Irene Swanton, Jane Bruckle, Isabelle Whipple, Lois Cook, among others (September 1959)



Post card of the Corner of Prospect Street looking north to St. Agnes Church



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“Our Miss Pierpont”

By Carolyn Swanton

Miss Annie E. Pierpont came to our village, perhaps because of Avon's founding family, the Hosmers. They were both from Hartford, CT, but there is no evidence of marriage between the two families, just two of the leading families from that State Capital. To be continued on that aspect.

Miss Pierpont's father was Evelyn Pierpont and her brother was Rev. John Edwards Pierpont, former president of Princeton University. Her uncle was J. Pierpont Morgan, the man credited with single handedly saving the U. S. economy in the 1907 recession by being the most powerful financier in the world. With the creation of U. S. Steel, his company boosted our economy just enough to stop the downhill problem.

The Pierponts rise to power began in 1066 when Robert de Pierpont arrived with William the Conqueror from Normandy to overtake the British on their own soil. It was for conduct during the Battle of Hastings that her ancestor received a royal commission being rewarded with a Dukedom.

From this family also came presidents of Harvard and Yale, and Vice-President Aaron Burr. Miss Pierpont was a reserved woman who began her life in Avon by living with Miss Jane Brewster at 104 E. Main St. (a former Hosmer

house) and then living in the apartment of the large house when the Ira Browne family purchased the large home. She was a delight to Nancy Browne Pachuta, one of our newest Board members, who remembers her fondly like a grandmother.

One of the original members of the Board of Directors for the Avon Free Library started in 1914, Miss Pierpont laid the cornerstone for the present library in 1927 and served until 1951 as a Trustee. Miss Pierpont voluntarily assisted as librarian refusing any salary for its first years. In 1933 she donated the nets for the grass tennis courts laid out behind the Library, so that it could be used year round. (It had been used for a toboggan run during the winter.) She also donated the beautiful cloisonne planter next to the fireplace in the library. It was one of two identical planters, the other one remaining in the Browne family. She died in 1958 having served Avon graciously.



*Photo of Miss Pierpont
in her youth.*



Avon Preservation & Historical Society

Newsletter

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SUMMER ISSUE 2009

New Sunday Afternoon Programs

Joan Reid has an exciting new program lined up for **September 20th** on the "One Room School House" presented by John Babbitt. A necessity at one time, there are many striking advantages to the concept even in today's world that support this method of education. The structures made for schools are an interesting study in themselves for the use of indigenous materials and practicality.

On **October 18th** Thomas Cook will present "Century of the Park with Emphasis on the CCC" which promises to be a lovely way to spend a Sunday afternoon. As always the programs are held at the Avon Village Hall at 2 PM where there is ample parking. Light refreshments and conversation are also available. It is a good way to stay current with your membership and start receiving the newsletter if you are reading someone else's. Mark your calendars for these programs.

The W.C.T.U. in Avon

By Carolyn Swanton

The mission of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union or the W.C.T.U. was to combat the influence of alcohol on families which was not understood as a disease or addiction. Thus, the drinking fountain was to "quench the thirst." Their creed was temperance; that is moderation in all things healthy, and total abstinence from all things unhealthy. This philosophy was attributed to the Grecian, Xenophon - c.400BCE.

Members met in churches to pray for those who drank and then would march into saloons waving their banners to request that owners close their establishments. Carrie Nation, one of the more famous of these marchers carried an axe and didn't feel sorry for any vandalism she might inflict. Because they tended to be the wives of the bar patrons who did the loudest complaining, their marches became known as "woman's crusades."

Well represented in Avon during the Rutherford B. Hayes administration, Lucy Webb Hayes led the national march by following her husband's order to banish wines

and liquors from the White House. (I would wager that helped curb our nation's budget!) Frances Willard was the national leader of the W.C.T.U. and came to Livingston County to visit the Genesee Wesleyan Seminary in Lima. Several young students from Avon attended the upper middle class Christian prep school including the Westfalls and Markhams. Teachers from Avon included Charles Z. Case and Alvah Carpenter.

Although our park fountain does not operate now, it remains as a tangible monument to show that our community becomes involved through every trend and trial set before us.



Photo of fifth generation Avon resident Nancy (Broune) Pachuta taken by her mother, Mary (Westfall) Broune - 1949

One Hundred Years Ago

What Made the Journal kept by Will Leighton, Avon Postmaster

July, 1909:

Henry Miller, the jeweler, was badly injured by colliding with an auto while riding his motorcycle near Bloomfield about 4 PM. He tried to go in between the headlights of what he thought were two motorcycles but what turned out to be a Pierce Arrow auto.

17. **Bud Wheeler** and his wife left today for the Seattle Exposition.

August:

14. **Jamie Carson** quit his position at Eastwood's today.

16. A **Mr. Hawkins** was thrown from a buggy on the R.R. Tracks and died this evening.

30. **N. O. Brown** is taking inventory before selling to James Carson.

31. **Jamie Carson** took possession of the store today.

September:

28. The three **MacIntyre** cars which **Frank Kellogg** and **Mr. Weed** have for the agency (sic) arrived this AM.

President's Report

by Richard Burke

The Avon Preservation and Historical Society has been busy with meetings, programs and setting plans for the upcoming grand opening of the Historical Society Museum in the newly renovated Opera Block. It is with great anticipation that we await the museum's opening, and showcase our many treasures of Avon's past. Perhaps there is something (Picture?) in your family that you would like to display in the museum? You could loan it to the Society for a short period of time so that it could be prominently displayed for all to enjoy. Give it some thought and don't hesitate to give me a call (226-2650), or by e-mail at rburke3@rochester.rr.com.

My sincere appreciation goes to those dedicated members of the current Board of Directors. They are unselfish of their time and talent, and we all benefit from their diligence and hard work in our many events/programs. The Board is always looking for a few good men and women to serve, with meetings just once a month. If you think you may be interested, just contact me or any current Board member for more information. I'm reminded of my mother's favorite saying when there was work to be done around the house... "This isn't a spectator sport, get up and let's get moving." Preserving history doesn't just happen, but requires the

participation of many to make it a part of our lives. With the participation of many, we can do tremendous work.

The Society is blessed with a tremendous archive of photos, books, signs, historic documents, and various artifacts, all of which are properly recorded and documented. As you can imagine, this is no small task. We continue to welcome new items into our collection, and please keep us in mind when cleaning out an old attic or garage. You can be assured that your gift will not only be safe and secure, but will be shared with all to see and enjoy. Finally, the cost of preservation is not inexpensive. Any monetary gift to the Society, or memorials (at death) directed to the Society are gratefully accepted.

Please stop by our booth at the Avon Corn Festival. We love seeing current members, and signing-up new members and out-of-town guests as members. With dues at \$5/year, it's the best deal in town. We have some wonderful Sunday afternoon programs scheduled for this Fall. Please stay tuned for our posters announcing dates/times. The Museum opening is tentatively set for early December. It will be a grand affair with many dignitaries and prominent citizenry in attendance. We look forward to providing more details as the big day draws near.

A final word about our Avon Historical Society. We are the custodians of our noble past. We have a covenant with our Ancestors to "tell it as it was." We are the documentarians of our time, and our obligations are not diminished with the passage of time. I encourage you to consider taking up the cause of preserving Avon's past. For each of us, Avon's history incorporates some cherished memories that are too important to let wither and fade over time. Let's preserve for future generations those historic photos, letters, and documents from the former sons and daughters of Avon. It is a cause in which we all can participate, and a common history we all can call our very own.



Amber Dean, Avon Author

by Carolyn Swanton

The most delightful "shirttail" relative I ever had was **Amber Dean Getzin**, the mother-in-law of my uncle, **Charles F. Wray**, the Seneca archaeologist, and part of our very close Meadow-wood family. Amber and her husband "Dutch" built their own house in the North Avon estate where Charles had lived all his life. When I first met Amber, she was the perfect hostess for large dinners, while her husband, **Norman "Dutch" Getzin** wore the apron and chef's hat in charge of the grill delights for all of us. Amber would gather the children and convince us to play some game together and we were soon making lifelong friends, not realizing how skillfully she had maneuvered us away from clinging to our parents.

She arranged to have me on her good friend's (Louise Wilson) TV show when I was age three, but said I kept wandering off stage to find my mother. (So much for that career.) Amber was unusual that she could make conversation with anyone or any age. She told me there were some very tough times during the Depression and she had to be creative with saving money. While living in Brighton she cut hair at home to supplement Dutch's earnings as a cabinetmaker. Through this endeavor she heard a great many human tales which she would later use in her books, often after adding a *murder*.

Her greatest sales came from her mysteries, but she also wrote children's stories, one called *The Boy Who Was Afraid of Bears* written with her daughter, **Alice Getzin Wray**, born in Depew, NY in 1902 of Canadian parentage. Amber began her memoirs in 1979, called *Ten Miles East of Buffalo*.

From the time she moved to Avon, she was active with the **Avon Free Library**, serving as a Trustee from 1960 - 1974. She was a strong force behind **Operation Morale** with her daughter, Alice and **Mrs. Relly (Kay) Clark**. They promoted a massive letter campaign to soldiers in Vietnam to let them know they had support back home. In college at the time, I wrote countless letters to many for this cause.

Amber created attractive and useful projects with her daughter, Alice, and best friend, **Vi Thompson**, from Rochester. Their designs were known as **AVA Creations**. They did almost every type of craft one could do at home. Christmas decorations were a favorite, but most all current ideas were tried from copper enameling to designer jewelry.



Mrs. Amber Dean Getzin - Photo courtesy of Amber Wray Corbin

The forests surrounding them provided their basic "found" materials. The carolers brought out for Winter Decorations at the Avon Free Library were made by Amber.

Interested in gardening and taking several horticulture classes, Mrs. Getzin was called upon to be a judge for the Garden Clubs of New York State. This also made her an experimental cook with many of the fruits and fungi that grow in the forest. She also knew how to sew so well; one year, she made down jackets for everyone in her family. Mrs. Getzin even served as a judge for the 1963 ACS class's Junior Prom when **Virginia (Rumfol) Tondryk** was named queen. I remember her telling me it was because Virginia had such a great personality and showed real sense of style in her dress.

Her beloved "Dutch" passed away in 1976 and she dedicated her book, *The Dower Chest*, to all woodworkers. Each time she was working on a book, her family waited with her for the publisher's decision. If approved, the excitement would then grow through the book design to the signings. It was never easy when she received a rejection. Like any art, it is too personal to not be emotional. She often spoke about a mystery involving the Genesee Hunt Club, but was told by publishers that no one would be interested in that topic. Her granddaughter, Amber Wray Corbin, has that manuscript.

She asked me once when I was much younger, what I would do if I woke up in the back seat of a car being driven by two strangers. It was then very exciting to read the book and watch it on television after **Alfred Hitchcock** produced it for his weekly mystery show. Most of her papers are at the **University of Rochester's Rare Book Room**. Amber Getzin passed away in 1985 shortly after the tragic loss of her only daughter to cancer and son-in-law to heart failure. It was the end of an era for my family.

Books by Amber Dean: *Call Me Pandora*, *Deadly Contact*, *The Dower Chest*, *August Incident*, *Home Before Dark*, *No Traveler Returns*, (about the **White Horse Tavern** which is illustrated on the rare dust jacket) *Something for the Birds* (about a bank robbery in Rochester, but the loot being brought to Livingston County, dedicated to **Mrs. Christian [Jean] Haller**), *Wrap it Up*, *Snipe Hunt*, and *Encounter with Evil*, the latter being purchased by **Alfred Hitchcock** and used in his TV show.

Memberships

Contact Mary Liz Stanton at 226-3443 to renew or start your membership. Help support us as we make the move into our new lodgings. To arrange a memorial in your will for the AP & HS contact Richard Burke at 226-2650.



Avon Preservation and Historical Society

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House Plaques

An asset to your home.

- Forms and information
- Contact James Brewer
226-2729



President's Corner

By Richard Burke



INTERIOR VIEW OF STATE BANK.

Photo of the old bank (Bank of Avon and Marine Midland banks) interior. From the 1912 Board of Trade Yearbook

Notice: It was announced by the **Ontario Historical Society** that they were going to include Aaron Barber as one of their listed "Self-Made" men in their upcoming exhibit on important people in this area during the Lincoln Administration. It is an honor for Avon to be represented in this collection. It is with deep regret that we must inform you that a major part of the **Barber-Mulligan** complex of barns which are listed on the National Register of Historic Places was struck by lightning and was lost to fire. The house was fortunately spared.



Photo of Aaron Barber

"To Suppose that newspapers only serve to protect freedom would be to diminish their importance: they maintain civilization." - Alexis de Tocqueville



Avon Preservation & Historical Society

Newsletter

VOLUME 21, No. 4

www.avonhistorical.org

FALL ISSUE 2009



*The 2009 Avon Corn Festival and the AP&HS Tent with School House Display.
Photos by James Brewer.*



2009 Corn Festival Report

By Jean Batzing

The weatherman was most cooperative on Saturday, August 8, for the 23rd Annual Rotary Corn Festival. **Richard Burke, James Brewer** and **Charles Puls** were putting up the tent in front of the Central Presbyterian Church at 6 AM.

Displays were soon arranged by Treasurer **Joan Reid** and Membership Chairman **Mary Liz Stanton**. A table included the new book, "Guideposts of the Past"; other tables presented House Plaques and collectables. Key chains were given away. Photographic displays of the Opera Block construction were of interest. The panel of Avon's rural schools attracted many in view of the September 20th program. "The One Room Schoolhouse" by **John Babbitt**.

Several people signed their names on a poster indicating that they had attended a one room school.

In addition to talking with visitors about Avon's history, thirty memberships were renewed or new ones added as reported by **Mary Liz Stanton**.

Displays were repacked and stored at 4 PM until the Avon Preservation & Historical Society is open in the renovated Opera Block. Watch for the Grand Opening of our museum later this year. (Docents will be needed; you may volunteer by calling **Richard Burke** at 226-2650).

A special thanks to all who helped in any way to make the AP&HS presentation on the 8th a success!

"Of Haunting We Will Go"

by Carolyn Swanton

Jim Jerris is getting into the spirit of the season by fixing up the former **William W. Wadsworth** estate at 1211 West River Road (www.wadsworthhaunting.com) especially for October. The lovely grounds of his estate that was for so long neglected has been lovingly restored by Jerris. The Federal style house is made of stucco like many of the other Wadsworth homes in both Avon and Geneseo.

Jim has generously been housing the unusual Victorian era hearse that the **AP&HS**, acquired from the **Wood Historic Library** in Canandaigua. As it complements the décor for the upcoming event, Jim was granted the use of the hearse as long as it was covered in bad weather and overnight.

Upon first glance the vehicle looks like something from Boot Hill, but it is authentic to this region. Although it is in rough shape, the hearse explains the way our ancestors must have viewed life and, ultimately death. Our hearse was

equipped to take both sled runners and wheels depending upon the season. These vehicles were heavy and slow moving on the way, but return trips without the contents, this type of conveyance was notoriously light and would flip over easily if going over a tree stump or small headstone covered with snow.

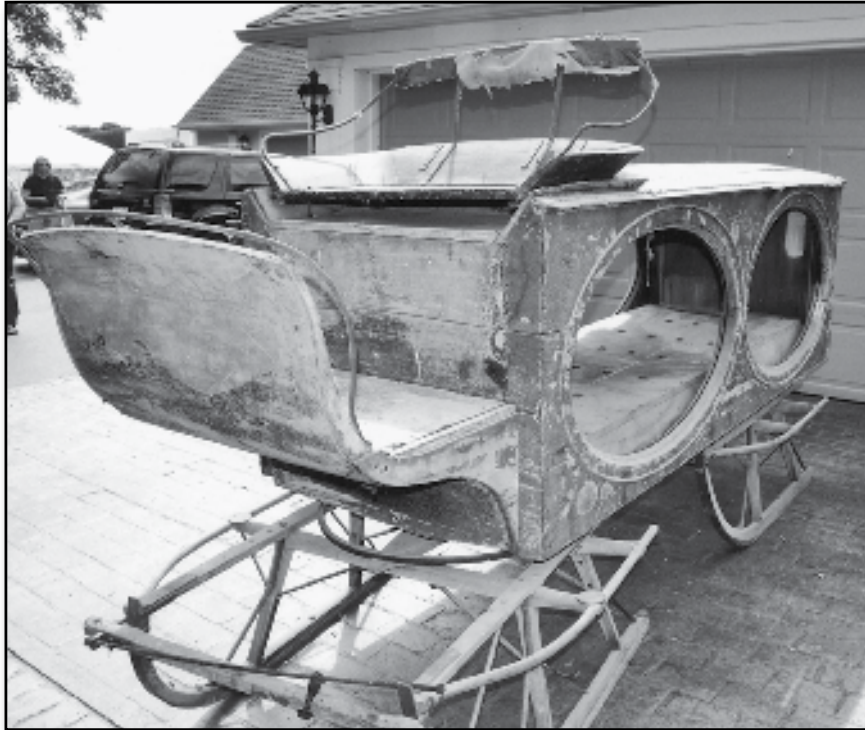


Photo of AP&HS hearse at Jim Jerris' home by Sydney Dioguardi

Every weekend, *after dark*, in October there will be hayrides and a "haunted" house and barns to experience at The Haunting. The main house has 5,000 square feet which is receiving special attention from Jerris and his aide, **Andrew Stuart** (a former Disney employee). Remember, we won't be able to hear you

scream in Avon. Food and refreshments will be available with a final closing on Halloween Night. Look for the scarecrows!

To learn more about this event call **Cheri** 585-507-1868.



Programs

On September 20th, **John Babbitt** with his wife, **Mary**, presented the interesting program of The One Room Schoolhouse with an emphasis on those schoolhouses in upstate New York. Front and center was the cobblestone school house in Geneseo, a marvelous example because of early historical preservation. He was glad to learn of others in our township.

Mark your calendar for our next speaker on October 18th. **Thomas Cook** will present "Century of the Park" with an

emphasis on the CCC. Programs are held at the Avon Village Hall at 2:00 PM where there is ample parking on Sundays. Tasty refreshments are available as well as displays.

Upcoming newsletter articles for 2010 will include the Jolly Farmer, the Silo Barn, and High Acres. If anyone has anything to contribute to these stories, please call Carolyn at 226-9424 or email cswanton2003@yahoo.com. If you would like to write or suggest a topic that would interest the membership, we would love to know your opinion.

Mansard Roofs of Avon

By Carolyn Swanton

The mansard roof was developed by architect Francois Mansart (1598-1666) of the Beaux Arts French Renaissance style. During the time of our Civil War, Napoleon III was rebuilding Paris and the revised style used became referred to as the French Second Empire style. The Louvre (1852-57) was one of the most influential buildings of the Second Empire. It was very popular because the new mansard roof could be added to existing buildings to instantly make them look modern. It was at this time that Avon's mansard roofs were constructed.



*Corner of Spring & Genesee: Wadsworth House
Photo by Jim Brewer*



Old postcard of Parkside Manor

A four-sided hipped roof was also considered practical because it allowed usable space to be planned for attics. This was an ideal style to accommodate more people in our early large hotels. "Any house with a mansard roof can safely be termed Second Empire regardless of what decorative elements may ornament its facade." p. 23 What Style Is It? (National Trust for Historic Preservation) Other examples of mansard roofs in Avon include the former St. George Hotel, **Barb Herman's** grand home (and bed and breakfast) at 277 Genesee St.

Dr. Edward Cornelius Perry came to Avon in 1893 as a young graduate of Columbia University to fill our town's need for a doctor. Avon has been very blessed to have had such fine doctors come to our town to find work. They always seem to do so much more than just heal us. Dr. Perry soon became an active member of the Republican Party, the Fire Board and was a coroner of Livingston County. For fifty-two years he was a surgeon for the Erie Railroad. He was the first county doctor to have an x-ray machine in his office.

He added a third floor to his residence on Park Place in the new mansard style to house a hospital which became



*Photo of the Livingston House with the Avon Central School band playing in Circle Park. c. 1961 (incl. the backs of Drew Moran and Mark Collins on their bikes).
Photo by Walter F. Swanton.*



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**New logo designed by
Jerry Sutfin, Retired
Commander of the
VFW in Avon*



Mastodons of the Genesee Valley

By Carolyn Swanton

It has long been known that this was the home for many mastodons, but it is suddenly so real when you actually hold a piece of their remains. They lived freely for over a million years on this earth, but have been gone for thousands of years. Their demise attributed to the emergence of man.

In 1974 Town Highway Superintendent, **William McKeown**, discovered a "chip off old tusk" as **Bob Bickel, Democrat & Chronicle reporter**, worded it on March 13th. **McKeown** noticed the odd object in the gravel that was being hauled away from the Garden Street project off Dutch Hollow Road and brought it to **Irene Swanton**, chair of the Avon Environmental Commission. She confirmed his suspicion that it was tusk material and thought it was either mastodon or mammoth. It was verified to be a mastodon by **Ward's Scientific** research lab.

The bones most recently found on the FarView Golf Course range are 11,600 years old and are the subject of one of the topics included in "Guideposts of the Past", the new book for this year.



*Photo of Irene W. Swanton with William McKeown.
From the Democrat & Chronicle, March 13, 1974.*

One Hundred Years Ago

What made the journal kept by Will Leighton, Avon's Postmaster.

October, 1909

- 7. **Oscar Fuller** was buried today
- 31. **Ken McVean** returned from Alaska after 5 months

November

- 7. Avon Hi 5 Gregsville 0
Avon Town Team 0 Caledonia 11
- 10. Minstrel Show at the Opera House (local talent)
- 13. **Charles Chase** was badly hurt by falling with a broken pole about 20 feet.
Larry Skelly fell from the top of a Railroad car and was nearly killed this AM.
- 21. LeRoy Hi 17 Avon Hi 0
- 24. **Mrs. Alva Carpenter** died this afternoon, aged 83
- 25. **Fred Rowe** married **Maggie Finity** today.

December

- 2. The **J. L. Westfalls** have a new son, eight pounds, Jack
- 13. **Miss Rebecca Robb** died this afternoon.
- 18. A daughter born to **Kate and Frank Kellogg** at 8:00 PM



Avon Preservation & Historical Society

Newsletter

VOLUME 21, No. 5

www.avonhistorical.org

Memorial Issue 2009

We Remember...

The names listed below are Avonites who passed away in 2009. We will miss them and much appreciate their time here. Every generation hopes that there will be younger people who step up and fill those vacancies. This year is no exception and it is with deep regret if anyone has been left from this list that should have been included. Memorials to the **AP&HS**, can be arranged through **Richard Burke, Chairman**.

In Memoriam

Frances C. Bailey - longest standing member of the First Presbyterian Church

Wilson J. Davidson - 57 years with the East Avon Fire Dept. and a past president;
Avon Lions Club member, Avon Springs Masonic Lodge#570 for 49 years.

Berenice Freiburger, Librarian for nineteen years at the Avon Free Library

James Fusco, lifelong resident, local farmer, patron of St. Agnes Church.

Joseph "Jesse" Gelsomino, caring citizen and patron of St Agnes Church

Dr. Christian J. Haller, D.V.M., Avon veterinarian from his residence at 83 E. Main Street from
the 1950's to the construction of the hospital on Rochester St. Member of the 4 D's jazz combo.
Rotarian Person of the Year.

Williard "Bill" Hess - Avon Pharmacist, Rexall Drug Store, Avon Rotary Club

Louis N. Mairs, US Coast Guard in WWII, regional sales manager for Kraft Foods.

Arthur J. Marschke - age 99, former Avon mayor

Walter Nelson - Veteran, member of Avon VFW

Mrs. Betty J. Neubeck (nee Snyder) - Town of Avon employee and patron of St. Agnes

Mrs. Joyce Parker, first president and co-founder of Avon Lioness

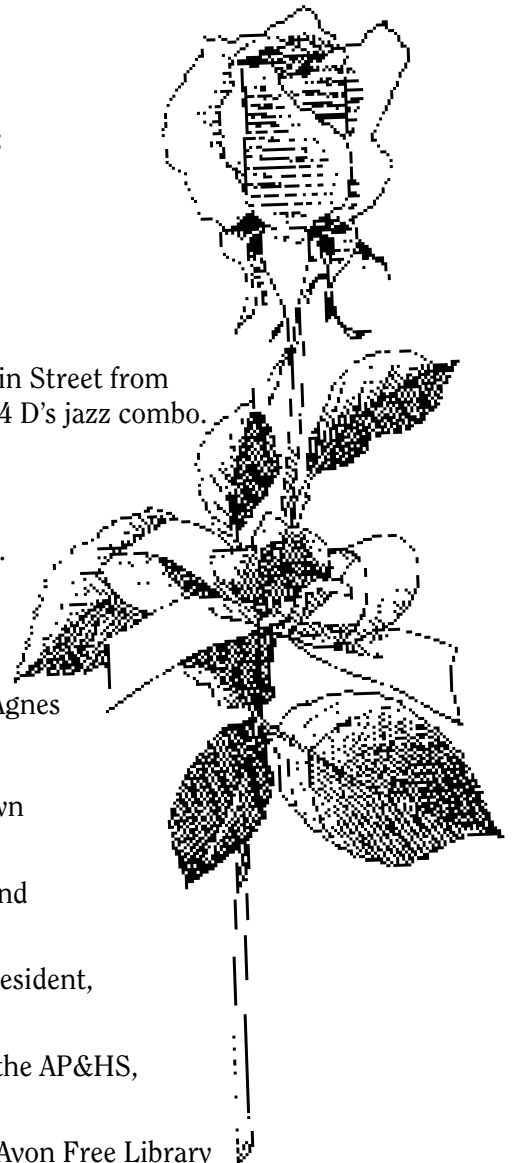
Melissa Rowe - landscape architect, member of AP&HS focusing on our downtown
restoration project.

Mrs. Marguerite "Peggy" Slight - Rotarian Person of the Year, church worker and
Avon Lioness, past president

Mrs. Pearl Sutfin, Honored at the Bicentennial Parade of 2008 as Avon's Oldest resident,
died age 104

Wilford T. Trewer - Conductor on the (Conrail) Erie RR and Charter member of the AP&HS,
Veteran of the Army Air Corp, an inspector of the B-26, the Martin Marauder.

Mrs. Barb Vanderbuilt - Avon Lioness, past president and Board Member for the Avon Free Library



President's Report

January 2010

“Looking Both Ways”

By Richard Burke

As a proud parent of a 4 year old, I always remind her to look both ways when crossing the street. In my message I'm reminded to look both ways, first looking back on the year that was, and again looking forward at the great opportunities which lie ahead in 2010. Last year was a solid year for the Avon Historical Society. We began the year collaborating with the Chamber of Commerce in a tribute to Avon's agriculture, both current and historic. A well attended reception was held, and much was learned and confirmed by those attending. Our Speaker Programs continued to provide an informative treat to any and all. Our booth at last year's Corn Festival once again allowed us to inform and educate on Avon's History, by distributing "Guideposts," a booklet offering a wonderful timeline of the seminal events in Avon since the time of the Senecas. This is an absolute must for any Avon household (and can still be purchased at a criminally low price). Finally, much planning was undertaken to layout the design and function of our new Exhibit space. We can't technically call it a museum (if you see me on the street, ask me and I can further explain).

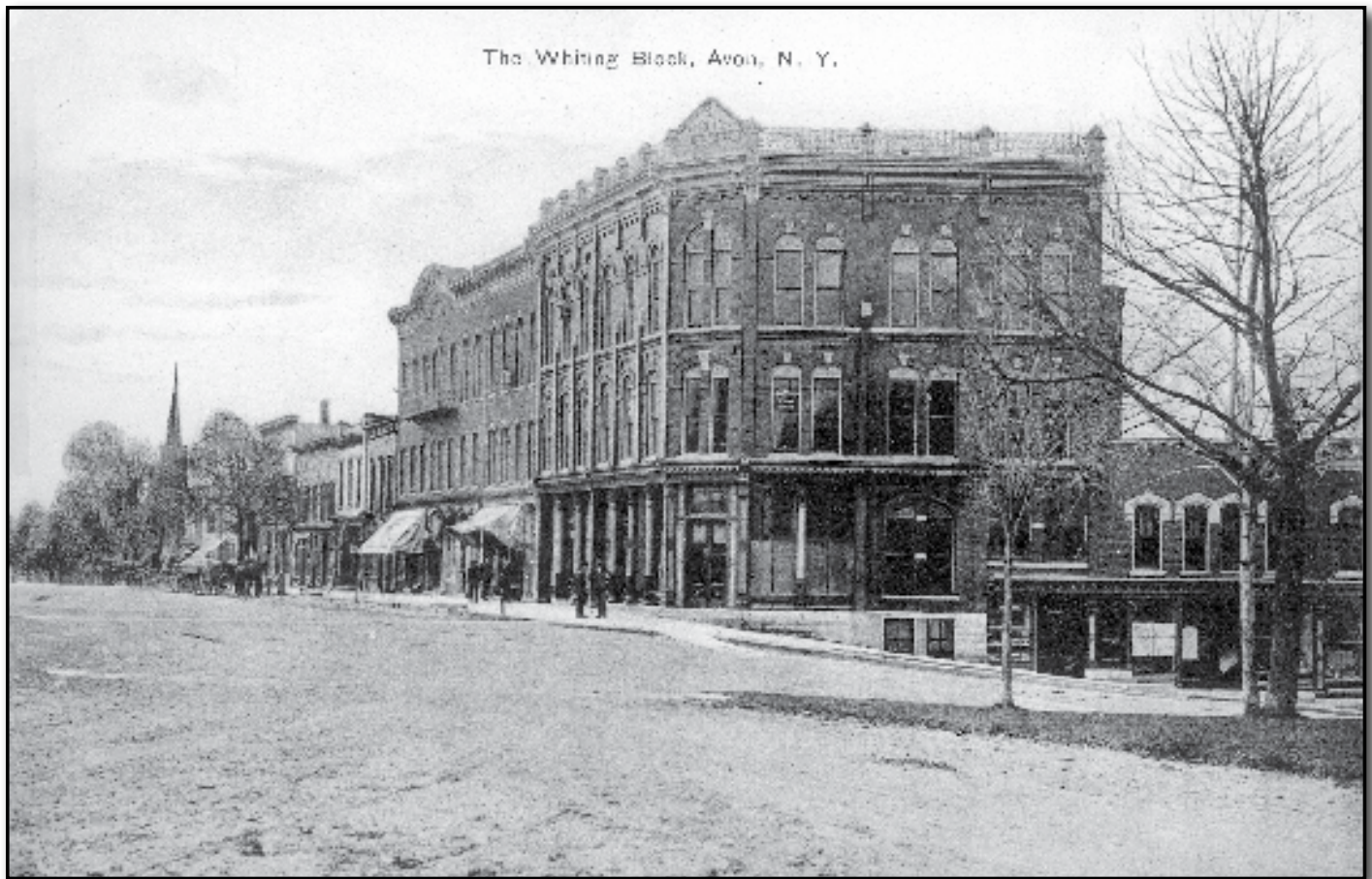
For 2010, the curtain has come up on our new stage, in the historic Opera Block. We look forward to using this space to display Avon's history, and create interactive exhibits for schoolchildren to learn and enjoy the fruits of our community's ancestry. Our Society and its Members are eternally grateful to the Avon Town Board. Their foresight

and perseverance in making the Opera Block a treasured landmark, will endure as a crown jewel situated in the very heart of our town, for all to see and marvel. It is, perhaps, the most productive use of public space since Gilbert Berry tossed a rope across the Genesee River and opened his much needed and admired rope ferry. As the project was first presented, skeptics were plentiful. With the planned renovation now complete (and significantly under budget), many taxpayers can see for themselves how their money was spent, and they can appreciate the craftsmanship of the work performed on this uniquely Avon landmark.

As I've said before, we are the documentarians of our time, and our obligations are not diminished with the passage of time. We now have a high profile space that can exhibit those historic photos, letters, and documents from the former Sons and Daughters of Avon. We need you to help us in this endeavor. Please consider giving or lending to us your photos, documents, or other pieces of Avon's history so that it may be properly displayed for all to see and enjoy. If you are so inclined, please contact any member of our Society, and we will ensure your treasure will receive the utmost care and preservation. We all have items that are far too important to remain in a desk or closet. These precious relics have a story to tell, and we now have a glorious stage in which it can be told to an ever expanding audience.



Iler Motors



Old Postcard of the Whiting Block

Editorial: What's in a Name?

By Carolyn Swanton

One of the most devastating fires in Avon was that of the United States Hotel, depicted so vividly in John Lyth's large oil painting displayed at the Avon **Bank of Castile** located at 263 East Main St. The hotel was at the southern crest of the West Main Street hill, commanding a view for sunsets across the flatlands, of the Genesee until 1874 when fire destroyed much of downtown wiping out the most vital business spot in town. Those who remember the Star Market fire or the more recent Hurricane Technologies fire understand the feeling of dread to see our downtown in flames.

City fathers must have worried about the future of Avon perhaps more than they might have in today's world. Enter Eugene M. Whiting from Caledonia who undertook the bold construction of a large brick (thus more fireproof - more expensive) building which quickly replaced the lost hub. Eugene's brother, Charles Foster Whiting (1853 - 1935) moved to Avon the next year becoming president of the Avon Hook & Ladder and proprietor of the Whiting Building. For over a century this majestic edifice has been known as the Whiting Block honoring the two brothers who stepped in to ensure our town's future.

Every new owner continues to ensure this future, there is no doubt in that, but is it right for a new owner to give an old structure another name? Legally perhaps, but has anyone else equaled the years and effort that the Whiting family put in? Should history remember this Victorian structure as our ancestors did, or give it a new name each time it transfers hands, as it has in the Gilbert Building, D'Angelo Building and now the Schultz Block? Let us know what do you think?

Don't Forget The
ANNUAL MEETING
January 24th
1:30PM
at the Village Hall



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Or Current Resident

