

# FLY CREEKER



NEWSLETTER OF THE

FLY CREEK AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
P.O. Box 124, Fly Creek, NY 13337

VOLUME 3, ISSUE 3 \* SUMMER, 1991

Editor: Bill Deane. Associates: Carol Mezger, Paula Schaeffer.

WE'RE TWO YEARS OLD

July 26 marks the second anniversary of the official formation of the Fly Creek Area Historical Society (FCAHS). Let's take a look back at what we have accomplished over those two years:

- \* Increased from an informal gathering of 13 people, to a paid membership approaching 150, including a complete slate of officers and committee chairpersons.
- \* Acquired and restored the 1898 "Friendship Quilt", representing the cornerstone of the Society's formation.
- \* Earned a \$400 grant from the Upper Catskill Community Council of the Arts toward our first publication.
- \* Conceived and co-sponsored the highly-successful Fly Creek Area Bicentennial Celebration, held August 18-19, 1990 with various souvenirs and activities.
- \* Published Fly Creek Area Yesteryear, an attractive collection of historic post cards and photographs of our region.
- \* Held 24 public meetings, with an excellent variety of programs.
- \* Published nine issues of the Fly Creeker, a newsletter covering Society activities, area news and history.

We're off to a good start, but, as historical societies go, we're still just toddlers. Let's all strive for continued participation and support in these important growth years.

## MEETINGS

Three FCAHS meetings have been held since publication of the last Fly Creeker: on April 24, May 22, and June 26, 1991. Upcoming meetings are slated for July 24, August 28, and September 25, 1991. Meetings begin at 7 P.M. and are held in the basement of the Fly Creek church.

More than 40 people attended the April meeting, during which Russell Oechsle spoke about "Otsego County Area Clocks and Clockmakers of the 1800s". Slides and props were provided. The May gathering featured a slide show, presented by Katherine Hanor and Edward Reilly, on the old Southern New York Railway. All attendance records were broken at the June meeting-- 128, by one person's count-- forcing the group upstairs to the church proper. Attendees were treated to excellent Slovenian food and music, with John Trinkaus and Joe Zigon at the accordions. Also during this meeting, Mr. Louis Grippe of Fly Creek spoke about his voluntary restoration work on the cemetery across from the old Grange Hall. Mr. Grippe, who has a background in archeology, has unearthed tombstones buried as much as a foot below ground level. He would greatly appreciate the help and support of other local people interested in this project.

The July meeting's program will be on the Fly Creek Fireman's Museum, with speaker James Durkee. The Annual Meeting (preceded by a covered-dish dinner) will be held in August, with reports by officers, and elections for President, Vice-President, Secretary, and one Director. In September, Dr. Edward Farmer will present "Early Aviation in the Fly Creek Area", discussing famous aeronaut A. Leo Stevens, and the old Cooperstown Airport located on Fly Creek Hill.

# Fly Paper

by Tom Heitz

Here's a look at Fly Creek news from 75 years ago, as reported in the August 16, 1916 edition of the Cooperstown Freeman's Journal. The first-page headline reads "Grange Picnic and Carnival at Fly Creek", with the sub-head "VanWagenen and Getman will Speak at Outing on September 4th". The article follows:

"On Labor Day, Monday, September 4th, 1916, the Grangers of Otsego and Herkimer counties will hold a basket picnic at Fly Creek to which all Grangers, their families and friends are cordially invited. While it is planned to make the day a profitable one for those interested in the farm, the home and the rural school the grangers hope not to disappoint the young people and their friends who come for a good time only.

"Prizes which include four Farmers-week Courses at Cornell as announced earlier in the year will be offered as follows:

- Best essay on Alfalfa Growing, trip to Cornell.
- Best essay on 'How I Made a Dress,' trip to Cornell.
- Best essay on 'The Requirements of a Good Farmer's Wife,' trip to Cornell.
- Best essay on 'The Care of Swine,' one O.I.C. pig.
- Best one-half bushel of corn from one-eighth acre project, trip to Cornell.
- Best 100-hill potato project, one O.I.C. pig.
- Best judgment shown in scoring dairy cow, registered calf.
- Best three chickens from single brood, chicken brooder.
- Best Maypole dance, school flag.

"School children of Otsego and Herkimer counties are eligible to enter these contests.

"Program of events: 10 a.m., reading of essays and judging contests; 11 a.m., address, 'Rural Citizenship,' Mr. Jarred VanWagenen; 11:45, address, 'Agricultural Education,' Mr. A. T. Getman; 12:30 p.m., dinner (Hot coffee will be served by local grange.); 2 p.m., demonstrations by Farm Bureau Managers Barlow and Taylor; 3 p.m., field sports, tug-of-war, 100 yard dash, sack races, etc.

"Miss Freer of the home economics department, Mr. Boutelle of the department of animal husbandry and others active in various departments of home-making and agriculture will be present which assures the intelligent discussion of any problem of the home, the farm or the school.

"President, George H. Ritter, Edmeston, N.Y.; Vice-president, Lester Young, Warren, N.Y.; Secretary, John B. McManus, Cooperstown, N.Y."

## NEWS BRIEFS



\* Who has the oldest rhubarb patch in the Fly Creek region? Pete and Dot Martin date theirs to 1952, while Sally Rezen's goes back at least to 1947. Can you top this?

\* Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Knapp were inadvertently omitted from the membership list printed in the Spring 1991 issue. Mr. and Mrs. Rolan Mumford recently joined the Society, and there were several belated renewals.

\* 1991-92 MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE DUE BY AUGUST 1, 1991. Please bring your payment to the July meeting, or mail it within the next two weeks. An application appears opposite this page. Do it now, before you forget-- and, thanks for your continued interest and support.

OBITUARIES

The FCAHS extends its sympathy to the families and friends of two members lost in recent months.

Mrs. Elmore Winfield (Mac) Preston, a charter member of the FCAHS, died at her Cooperstown home on May 18, 1991. She was 87.

Born February 11, 1904 in Anniston, Alabama, she graduated from Crouse-Irving Hospital School of Nursing at Syracuse. She went on to serve as staff nurse at Bassett Hospital from 1927 until her retirement in 1969, after which she served as desk clerk in the hospital's emergency department.

On June 19, 1929, she married Robert E. Preston at Niagara Falls. Robert died in 1968. The couple had two sons, William D. and Douglas M. Preston, who survive. Also surviving are Mrs. Preston's sister, Frances McIntyre; four grandsons, and several nephews, nieces and cousins.

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Frederich H. von Mecklenburg died at his Fly Creek home on June 13, 1991, aged 86.

Born October-6, 1904 in Mecklenburg, Germany, in 1921 he began a business career that took him all over the world. Mr. Mecklenburg dealt with commodities and exports in Europe, South and Central America, Asia and Africa, among other places, before finally settling in the United States. He served in the U.S. Army during World War II, and later served as U.S. trade advisor in India, Pakistan, Hong Kong, Burma and Japan in the 1960s.

Mr. Mecklenburg founded the Otsego County Conservation Association, served as president of the Cooperstown Rotary Club, and was active in several other organizations. In 1962 he married Elizabeth Lambert Baker, who predeceased him. The two rebuilt the "Old Stone Hurst", a 250-year-old building on Stone House Road, Fly Creek, which had been destroyed by fire. Mr. Mecklenburg is survived by a brother, George, a step-grandson, and nieces and nephews.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION\*\*\*\*1991-92

FLY CREEK AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
P.O. Box 124, Fly Creek, NY 13337

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Renewal       New Membership

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Check applicable box(es):

- Please register me as a member of the FCAHS. Enclosed is a check for \$5.00.
- Please register my spouse and me to a family membership. Enclosed is a check for \$8.00.
- Please accept my enclosed donation, in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (minimum \$10), and enrol (me/us) as a contributing/sustaining member(s).

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



The Fly Creeker will print letters of general interest about the Society or the newsletter itself. Please address all correspondence to the Editor, Bill Deane, at P.O. Box 47, Fly Creek, NY 13337.

"The Fly Creek station is hardly 'the last remaining station from the old Southern New York Railway' (as claimed in the last Fly Creeker). Stations still stand at West Oneonta, Hartwick, Cooperstown, Schuyler Lake, Jordanville, and Henderson, and possibly other places... My father, Bob Preston, was born (in 1896) and brought up in Fly Creek and told us many stories about the trolley. My mother (the late Mrs. Elmore Preston-- see obituary elsewhere in this issue) recalled it as 'a rattley-bang old trolley that was as rough-riding as a lumber wagon'... Keep up the good work."

Doug Preston  
New Hartford, NY

(Editor's note: Mr. Preston is Director of the Oneida County Historical Society.)

"The (Winter 1991) Fly Creeker brought back memories. I still have the silver that Dr. Byard gave me when I was born. Dr. Horle would don his raccoon coat and hat, wrap me in a raccoon rug and take me for sleigh rides into the country."

Elizabeth "Betty" Aufmuth Smale  
Falls Church, VA

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