

Fly Creeker

NEWSLETTER of the FLY CREEK AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY (FCAHS)

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HOME AT LAST

[Editor's note: this is the unabridged version of an article that was written for the June 10, 1999 edition of the *CoopersTown Crier*.]

On June 2, 1999, the Fly Creek Area Historical Society (FCAHS) officially became a homeowner. Some 65 people were in attendance at the Fly Creek Grange hall that evening, as Otsego County Pomona Grange officials formally transferred the deed of the building to the FCAHS.

Since 1989, the FCAHS had met in the Fellowship Hall of the Fly Creek United Methodist Church, while the Society's artifacts were stored at the Schoolhouse Furniture Gallery. Meanwhile, the Otsego County Pomona Grange had all but abandoned the large, century-old building located on the east side of Cemetery Road, one-tenth of a mile south of Fly Creek's blinker light. FCAHS President Dr. James Atwell finally approached Dale All, Chairman of the Pomona Grange Executive Committee, with a proposal for the Society to purchase the building. After negotiations and months of legal machinations, the deal was done.

The evening began with two meetings in the Grange Hall, in what amounted to a passing of the torch. Upstairs, 18 Grange members met in the building for the final time, while downstairs, more than 40 members of the FCAHS met there for the first time. Shortly before 8:00, the Grangers invited the Historians upstairs for the joint gathering they had orchestrated.

The solemn program began with an opening ceremony and a Grange emblem ceremony. FCAHS members were impressed with the nineteenth-century pageantry of the affair. The Pomona Grange Chorus performed a couple of classic songs, and Grange members recited the history of Fly Creek Grange #844. Following prayers and another song came the highlight of the evening.

Atwell, All, and Grange Master Richard Ballard, Sr., participated on the deed-passing portion of the program. Each offered words about the shared goals of the two organizations, with the common theme being the "stewardship" of the building. Promising that the FCAHS would be faithful stewards, Atwell accepted the deed at 8:38 PM. Thus, ten years and two days after the first public meeting of the FCAHS, the Society finally had its own home.

The evening concluded with a pertinent song, "Pass it On," and a closing ceremony. Attendees then shared refreshments, and toured the building. Finally, the Grangers bade farewell to their old home, as Historians celebrated their new one.



NEWS BRIEFS

- **Hitting the Big One-Oh ...** The Fly Creek Area Historical Society marks its tenth anniversary this month. The Society was formally chartered on July 26, 1989. Happy Birthday to us!
- **Music to Our Ears ...** Mark your calendars for Sunday, August 15: our annual Community Music Day. This year's event will be held, rain or shine, at our new home -- the Grange Hall on Cemetery Road -- beginning at 1 PM. There will be live music, door prizes and a raffle, and food for sale (including a "make your own sundae" section). And, in commemoration of our Society's tenth anniversary, and its new home, a special postal cancellation will be issued on that day. Bring lawn chairs, and come join us for our chief fund-raising event and Fly Creek's "social event of the season!"
- **John Deere & Aunt Jemima ...** The second annual Antique Tractor Festival will be held on the weekend of September 11-12, 1999. It will be kicked off on Saturday from 7-10 AM with a pancake breakfast at the Grange Building. The cost is \$3.50 per person, with proceeds benefiting the FCAHS.
- **We Love a Parade ...** On June 12, the FCAHS participated in a historic parade. Cooperstown, celebrating the 60th anniversary of the Baseball Hall of Fame's founding, had been selected as headquarters of this year's "I♥NY" festival. A parade was held there to kick off the festival, and included floats representing the FCAHS, the Fly Creek Cider Mill (which won an award), and the Fly Creek Fire Department.
- **Tragic Death Recalled ...** This summer marks the 70th anniversary of the tragic death of a noted Fly Creeker: Howard E. Jones, founder of Fly Creek's hardware store. Jones was born in Milford January 5, 1858, and learned the trade of tinner. After two years of business in Phoenix Mills, he established the Howard E. Jones Tin & Hardware Store in 1882. The store stayed in the family for a century, before being bought by Ed Kukenberger, and finally closed in 1996. Jones met his demise at the hands of the trolley system that ran through our area. He was pinned between the train and some trees in Cooperstown on August 7, 1929, and crushed to death.
- **Breaking Our Own Record ...** Welcome to our five newest members: Marion Brophy (new Historian for the Town of Otsego); Richard H. & Ann Carr; and Harry "Skip" & Lola Lyons. This brings our record 1999 membership total to 169.

MEETINGS

Join us in our NEW HOME for the monthly meetings of the FCAHS! The next three meetings are scheduled for July 28, August 25, and September 22, 1999. In July, Betty Smith of Toddsville will present a program on Roy Rogers. The Society's Annual Meeting -- featuring annual elections and committee reports -- will be held in August, preceded by a covered-dish supper at 6 PM. In September, Liz Parslow will present a demonstration on shoeing horses. Gatherings begin at 7 PM at the Grange Hall on Cemetery Road, and are open to the public.

The most recent FCAHS meetings were held on April 28, June 2, and June 23, 1999. In April, Dale All -- Chairman of the Otsego County Pomona Grange -- presented a "History of the Grange" at both the local and national levels. Mr. All, who was instrumental in our acquisition of the Grange building, also gave information about the history of the Otsego County Fair. The May 26 meeting was postponed, and replaced by a historic gathering a week later (see article on page 1). Later in June, Angelo Carreras of Scotch Hill fascinated the audience with a display of his beautiful wood-carvings, mostly of fish and other marine life. Mr. Carreras stated that he didn't know he could carve until he tried it out of boredom while watching TV after work. He encouraged us to try new things so that we could discover our own hidden talents. [Submitted by Carolyn McLean]

THE SNOWDEN SCHOOL HOUSE

The Snowden School House, pictured below, was dedicated in 1883. The *Fly Creek Pastoral Visitor* carried a feature article about the opening shortly after. Following are excerpts from that article:

"The project of building was not only for the sake of having better school accommodations, but that the house might also serve the purpose of a place of worship; and so, beyond the taxation to meet expenses, a sum of money was subscribed by the religious people of the community to defray cost of certain additions that would not otherwise have been contemplated, which give the building quite a churchly appearance.

"The building is made of wood, 24x30 feet in size, with a wood-house, 12x16, attached to the rear and east side, after the shape of an L, under same roof and having same kind of siding. In front there is a vestibule 8x8, upon which is framed a belfry and cupola. The structure stands upon an excellent foundation, and the site is exceedingly pleasant and commanding. The grounds about have been carefully graded, and when a sod is raised upon them will be ample and beautiful.

"The dedicatory services were held Saturday, Nov. 3, under the direction of Rev. C. D. Mead... Bro. Mead offered some excellent preliminary remarks, and introduced ... the Rev. H. G. Harned, of Hartwick, who ... followed up the address with some very pertinent and pleasant remarks.

"Snowden is four miles from all the neighboring villages, and crowns one of Otsego's most healthful hills. It is connected with the outside world by telephone and daily mail, and its inhabitants are intelligent and thrifty farmers. They are justly proud of the new school house, and are exceedingly gratified over its harmonious and interesting consecration."

The building still stands in the northwest corner of the Town of Otsego. It is used as a house on the northeast corner of Route 80 and Vic Bresses Road, about a half-mile west of Route 205. [Submitted by Sally Rezen]



Miss Lena M. Owen

Snowden

Otsego Co.

N. Y.

THE LONG HOUSE LIVES ON

Part of a historic home in Fly Creek known as the "Long House" lives on. Its roof now sits atop Mayhew Motors on Route 28.

The building was originally situated on the farm of the late William Eldridge. The farm was located on County Route 26, south of the village, across the road from the present Town Barn. The building was used as a hop pickers' kitchen, serving meals to about 100 pickers from surrounding farms.

After hop growing ceased in the area, c. 1900, the building was put on log skids and moved by six teams of horses to the south side of Route 28, just west of the four-corners. It was owned at that time by a lady from Richfield Springs, we believe. At first it was used as a school room and a prayer meeting room for the Presbyterian Church. Later, it was made into the two-family home known as the Long House. One of its first occupants was Louisa Savage, described as "bedridden" in notes left by her neighbor to the west, John B. Hooker, Sr. In 1949, the building was torn down by Leon Fritts. Fritts left the roof, but took the rest of the building material to Index, where he constructed a house from it. The house was located on the south side of County Route 11, the first building on the left as one turns from Route 28.

The remaining roof was used by brothers Ernie and Harry Winnie for their business, the Winnie Implement Company & Garage, built on roughly the same spot the house had stood. The building is now occupied by Mayhew Motors. The photos below show the Long House, as it looked c. 1903 (to the right of Jones's hardware store), and its roof, as it looks now on Mayhew Motors. [Submitted by Dorothy Martin, with information provided by Ernie Winnie]



GRANGE PROJECT BENEFACTORS

The Fly Creeker will regularly list the generous individuals who have supported and are supporting our acquisition and renovation of the Society's new home, the Fly Creek Grange Hall. If we have omitted anyone, please bring it to our attention and accept our apologies; our gratitude is more enduring than our memory.

BUILDING PURCHASE

James and Bunny Wolff
Carl Roemer

MAJOR CASH CONTRIBUTIONS

Albert Yourno Family
Bill Deane Family
James Atwell and Anne Geddes-Atwell

GOODS and SERVICES

- | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Lester Sittler, Esq. | Legal Services |
| Hans deWaal, P.E. | Structural Survey |
| Wayne Clinton | Accounting Services |
| George Cade | Appraisal |
| Andy Baugnet | Building Photographs |
| Otsego American Construction | Well-Digging Services and Materials |
| American Homes | Portable Steps |
| Jim Fish | Grounds and Building Maintenance |
| Richie Carr | Archives Shelving |
| Craig Faurot | Window Repair |
| Irv Lyons | Shutter Repair and Painting |

DONATIONS TO MUSEUM

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| Pomona Grange | Fly Creek Grange #844 Artifacts |
| Skip Lyons | Horse-drawn Road Scraper Manufactured at Fly Creek Foundry |

1999 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION
FLY CREEK AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P.O. Box 87, Fly Creek, NY 13337

Name(s): _____ Renewal ___ New Membership ___

Address: _____ Telephone: _____

Check applicable box(es):

- Please register me as a member of the FCAHS. Enclosed is a check for \$10.
- Please register us to a family FCAHS membership. Enclosed is a check for \$15.
- Please accept the enclosed donation, in the amount of \$ _____ (minimum \$20), and enroll me/us as a contributing/sustaining member(s).

SPECIAL MESSAGE FROM THE SOCIETY PRESIDENT...

July 10, 1999

Dear Society Members:

August will bring our Annual Meeting and election of next year's officers. I'm writing to tell you I won't be a candidate for re-election to another term as Society president.

For several years I've been at work on a book related to life in Leatherstocking Country. The book has reached a critical stage, and I must commit a great deal of time to it over the next year. This commitment prevents my serving again as president.

In keeping with our Constitution, a search committee is working to set a slate of candidates for vacancies among the officers and other Board members. It consists of George Badgley, Cynthia Ekeland, Pat Yourno, and Freida Snyder. This committee will present its nominations at the August meeting.

I've been honored to serve as president, and I will leave office with special satisfaction in three of the Society's accomplishments: First, we are officially recognized by the federal government as a non-profit, tax-exempt organization. Second, New York State has granted us exemption from all sales taxes. And finally, the Society has acquired a home of its own, the Fly Creek Grange Hall.

I look forward to supporting the new president in every way I can, and I know you will do the same.

Sincerely,
James S. Atwell

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