

# *Fly Creeker*

NEWSLETTER of the FLY CREEK AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY (FCAHS)

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## NEWS BRIEFS

- **New for '02 ...** Welcome to our newest members, Ann B. Geiger, Maryann Hartmann, and Ronald & Eleanor Vibbard. They are listed on page 2, along with 48 people who renewed their memberships since the last issue. Our 2002 membership total is now 161.
- **Well-Rounded ...** The FCAHS will resume its monthly schedule of square and round dances next month. They will again be held at the FCAHS Building/Grange Hall on Cemetery Road on the first Saturday of each month, May through November, from 7-10 PM. Admission is free, and refreshments are available for purchase. The next three dances are scheduled for May 4, June 1, and July 6.
- **Fly Creek in the Olympics ...** The February 15 edition of NBC-TV's *Today* show – broadcast from Salt Lake City, Utah during the Winter Olympics – showed a “Fly Creek, NY” sign during a pan of the audience. Rumor has it that Barb and Charlie Michaels had something to do with this.
- **Community Service ...** Fly Creek will host a Community Day on August 24 this year. Look for details in the next issue.
- **Museum-Quality History ...** The Farmer's Museum has on display a hop stove made in our village. “The Otsego No. 20” was patented in 1883, and manufactured by Niles & Babcock, Fly Creek, NY.
- **Happy Big Eight-Oh ...** The January 31 edition of the Oneonta *Daily Star* had a nice half-page feature article on Rev. Kenneth Baldwin, a charter member of the FCAHS. Rev. Baldwin turns 80 in June, and has been in the Christian ministry for 50 years, including his stint at the Fly Creek United Methodist Church from 1988-90. The article details his military and community service record, family, and leisure activities, among other things. Congratulations, Ken, on eighty years well-lived!
- **Fourscore and Ten ...** Rev. Baldwin is a youngster compared to another of our charter members, now living in New Jersey, and marking a milestone of her own in May. Happy 90<sup>th</sup> birthday, Maxine Potts!
- **Westward, ho ...** *Bon voyage* to Vera Ainslie, who recently made the big move to Springfield Center after a lifetime in Fly Creek. We hope she will come back to visit us often.
- **Open to the Public ...** MerriLynn Fish and Pete Martin are making arrangements for the FCAHS building and archives to be open every Saturday morning through the summer.
- **Coming and going ...** The next step in our building's renovation process will be the installation of entry- and exit-ways to the lavatory building, which will be attached to the meeting hall. Engineer Hans deWaal is preparing plans for the Board's review.



## MEETINGS

Society meetings are held at the FCAHS Building/Grange Hall on Cemetery Road beginning at 7 PM, and everyone is welcome. The next three meetings will be on April 24, May 22, June 26, 2002. In April, David Rickard of the Fenimore Art Museum will speak on "Native American Culture" in this area. In May, Homer Martin (former printer for the Farmers' Museum) will discuss "Antique Printing Techniques." And, in June, Marion Brophy, Town Historian, will talk about "Researching Local History."

On January 23, 2002, our first meeting of the new year featured a "show-and-tell" presentation by Society members. Elaine Harvey opened the meeting by listing some of Fly Creek's past businesses and people. Then she invited members to describe the bits of the past they'd brought with them. Jim Fish showed an old drill; and Louise Allen, a picture of the old Toddsville School. Sally Rezen showed photos of hop-pickers in the early 1900s, of Fly Creek Valley School students, and of the Fly Creek Valley Grange in 1935. Peter Martin brought a newspaper article on the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Fly Creek Methodist Church, and Wes Ciampo shared a 1914 teacher's contract for the Fly Creek Valley School. Ron Bouton had along a ball of tin-foil patriotically collected during World War II. During this meeting, Vera Ainslie donated the framed burial flag and photo of her brother, service-man Edward G. Goodspeed (1930-55).

Our February 27 program was "Poetry They Used to Make us Memorize." Jim Atwell opened it by commenting on how memorization once enriched local education: "I'll bet," he said, "many aging farmers, driving tractors through crisp fall air, still recite snatches of 'October's Bright Blue Weather.'" At Jim's invitation, about a dozen members recited poetry from their past, starting with Homer Martin's leading us in "the first poem we memorized," the "ABC Song." Special pleasures that evening were George Badgley's eloquent recitation of the King Arthur's farewell from "Idylls of the King," Carl Roemer's Schiller verses recited beautifully from memory in German, and Debbie Dickinson's dramatic rendition of Alfred Noyes' "The Highwayman." The program closed, aptly, with "October's Bright Blue Weather."

The March 27 meeting featured Wendy Weeks, who runs the block-print wallpaper shop at the Farmers' Museum, on "Making Old-Fashioned Wallpaper." Wendy explained the painstaking steps involved in producing pre-machine-made wallpaper. Illustrating her talk with slides, she described the kind of paper that must be glued into 18-foot lengths and the various paints that must be ground and mixed. Wendy showed us printing blocks, each about 16 inches square and having only one element of a pattern carved into its face. Since an individual printed square might contain three or four colors, that many separate blocks and careful impressions are required to produce a single 16-inch square. A large room, then, might require 18,000 separate impressions. Wendy explained how to identify the age of wallpaper and how to distinguish hand-blocked paper from the later, machine-printed kinds. She ended her excellent presentation by analyzing wallpaper samples brought in by members. [Submitted by Jim Atwell]

### FCAHS 2002 Roll of Membership (Addendum to List in Winter *Fly Creeker*)

AINSLIE, Vera  
 \*ATWELL, Dr. James & Anne Geddes-Atwell  
 CAMPBELL, Grant T.  
 CHASE, Sandra L.  
 CHENEY, Harold & Waltraut  
 CHRISTIANSEN, Hartwick & Gerda  
 CIAMPO, Wesley & Evette  
 \*CURLIS, Irwin  
 FARMER, Mary  
 FOUTCH, Maud C.  
 GEIGER, Ann B.  
 GOODSPEED, Charles H. & Annie L.  
 HARTMANN, Maryann  
 JONES, Robert L.  
 KNAPP, Jean T.  
 LEVINE, Harry & Ellen  
 LYONS, Irving & Joan  
 MacDOUGALL, Hugh & Eleanore  
 MIHALKO, Carole L.  
 MURRAY, Barbara

NEFF, Jean  
 OLSEN, Ed  
 OPDERDECK, Carl & Cynthia  
 PIERRO, Robert & Kay  
 \*POTTS, Maxine M.  
 POULOS, Paul & Rochelle Semel  
 ROEMER, Carl & Inga  
 SMALE, Capt. Gordon F.  
 SNYDER, Ben & Juliana  
 STACK, Edward W. & Christina H.  
 STAFFIN, Mike & Betty  
 VIBBARD, Ronald & Eleanor  
 \*WINNIE, Ernest & Gerda  
 \*WYCKOFF, George & Jean

\* = Charter Member.

**Bold = Contributing/Sustaining Member.**

## FLY CREEK MEMORIES, 1940-44

[Editor's note: the following memories were recorded by Larry Gardner, and a copy given to Carolyn McLean, with permission to use for the *Fly Creeker*.]

Fred and May Dulin and their children, Marilyn, Jean, Jerry, and later, Christie, occupied the living quarters of the "Dulin Block," located on the northeast corner of Fly Creek's four-corners. In the rear of the building was an apartment rented by James Quaif and his wife, Hattie, and their youngest child, Peggy. The other children had moved out, married, and had children of their own: Harry Quaif lived in Cooperstown, and Beatrice Quaif Olin lived nearby with her husband Frank Olin. Jim Quaif was a plumber and was known to drink on occasion.

Glenn and Florence Foster ran the grocery store on the east end of the building. They were a kindly middle-aged couple who lived just across the highway opposite the "Badger House" on the road leading to the cemetery. Above the store was a large hall where the Golden Light Rebecca Lodge and the Odd Fellows conducted their meetings. My mother belonged to the first organization, my father to the second. The room was heated by a pot-bellied stove fueled by wood chunks.

If I remember correctly, the store beneath was heated by a furnace in the basement where Fred Dulin ran a garage. Fred sold gas from pumps right there on the corner. The corner room was used as a salesroom for the garage and gas station. Later it was used for a barber shop by Howard Callahan. Mr. Callahan, incidentally, spent his final years at the "County Farm," which was replaced by what is now known as "The Meadows." He ended his own life by walking into a pond near the railroad track just northwest of the old County Farm buildings, which were built in the first half of the nineteenth century.

Sam Hunter's store was the location for the Fly Creek Post Office at that time, and Sam was the Postmaster. He and his wife, Clara, ran a small grocery store located just south of the corner on the west side, the second building from the corner. Don Davis later had a shop there. The Hunters later moved their store to a small shop on their own property next to the Grange Hall. Mrs. Hunter baked bread and rolls, and sold them in the store or from the house by special order.

A third grocery store, operated by Howard and Beulah Aufmuth, stood on the northwest corner; it still stands as the Fly Creek General Store. The Aufmuths had four children: Elizabeth, Howard Jr., Marie, and Jack, the youngest. Elizabeth was a nurse in the military, stationed at one time in Hawaii. Mary was also a nurse, but was around home some of the time. Howard Jr. was in the Air Force and always wanted to be a pilot, but did not succeed and eventually returned to Fly Creek to run his father's store, which he did until he died in November, 1984. Jack took over the store at this time, operating it until his death in January, 1993.

Aufmuth's was a larger store, well-known for its meat department. Patrons came from all around the area to buy the good meat from Aufmuth's store. It was also a hangout for us kids, since it had booths to sit in while eating ice cream. However, we were mainly there to shoot the breeze. Outside was a Pepsi Cola machine, and every night one had to have at least one bottle. I remember the jingle of that time:

*Pepsi Cola hits the spot  
Twelve full ounces, that's a lot!  
Twice as much for a nickel, too,  
Pepsi Cola is the drink for you!*

Speaking of hangouts, the corner by the Dulin Block was a favorite meeting place. From there we made our plans for the evening, whether to hitch-hike to Cooperstown to go to the movies, or perhaps to remain in Fly Creek and play the game of "Hare and Hound." Hitching rides is seldom seen any more, but in those days there was hardly any time of the day that there wasn't someone out there hitch-hiking. We

went to just about every movie at Smalley's Theater in Cooperstown. Saturday night often featured a cowboy movie.

Hare and Hound was a game in which we chose sides, and one group took off. The others followed about ten minutes later, following signs left by the first group, such as a chalk-drawn arrow on the road or on a building. Sometimes sticks or stones were used to form the arrow. It continued until the first group was found. It could take the entire evening, ending a loud yells of "Hurrah!"

We lived in what was known as the "Badger Place." It was located in the "V" between County Route 26 and Cemetery Road. My parents were Maurice and Marie Burton Gardner. Dad worked for New York State as a highway foreman. Mother was later appointed Postmaster, serving for about 28 years until she retired in June, 1972. I had two brothers: Charles, who now lives in Sidney, NY; and Maurice, who died in July, 1957. My sister Jean is the oldest and she lives on a farm near Nassau, NY.

We were told that our house was built by Ezra Badger, and that he operated a store on the west side of the building and lived on the east side. The 1868 Atlas says that E. W. Badger was a dealer in merchandise and a manufacturer of all kinds of agricultural implements. We were told that the Badger Manufactory was located in what we knew as a large barn-like building just to the rear of the house and near Route 26; the building has since been torn down.

Leonard W. Jones ran the hardware store on the south side of Route 28 for 60 years, prior to which it was owned and operated by his father, Howard E. Jones. Leonard's children were Robert L. and Priscilla Jones. Leonard had an automobile, and he always gave us a ride if he saw us hitch-hiking to Cooperstown. On one occasion I was riding in the rumble seat when he went over a bump - it may have been at the railroad tracks in Cooperstown. I bounced up and then down, chipping a front tooth on the metal frame in front of the seat. I still have the barely-noticeable chip as a memento of that ride!

Just west of Jones's Hardware Store, at the current site of Mayhew Motors on the south side of Route 28, stood a very old, weather-beaten dwelling, a long, 1½-story, two-family structure. It was covered with a dark green shingle, really old and beaten up. It was a curiosity to me as to when and why it was built. A family named Southworth lived in the end nearest the hardware store.

Across the county highway from our house was the home of Lee Welch and his family. It was the old "Byard Place," the showplace of Fly Creek in its day. The Welches had five children: Robert, Alma, Alberta, Arnold, and Douglas. Robert was out of school and worked at Bruce Hall. The others were regulars on the school bus headed for Cooperstown Central five days a week.

Mr. Welch worked at Bassett Hospital as a custodian. Every night when he returned from work, his truck would be filled with cardboard, newspapers, magazines, and other Bassett refuse (in the days before recycling). The barn was packed high with the accumulated cast-away. A little odd, I thought, but then, one man's junk is another man's treasure.

One day I was in my bedroom and caught sight of one of the girls just outside the kitchen door. I took aim with my pellet gun and let go a shot. Well, I heard a scream and some yelling. Alberta ran over to tell my parents: it seems my pellet missed her but broke the kitchen window! My punishment, besides a good scolding, was to pay for the window and repair it. I must have apologized, for the family stood around and watched while I fixed the window.

The trolley was still seen occasionally passing through Fly Creek in 1939 and '40, but about that time it was discontinued and the tracks taken up. Just west of the trolley station was an old, empty, two-story frame building. I believe it was an old creamery. It had electricity and a drilled well inside the building. I got some permission to raise chickens there from Howard Aufmuth, Sr., one of the former owners. I sold fresh eggs and dressed chickens around Fly Creek and Cooperstown for a couple of years while I was in high school. I saved my money and bought my first car: a Ford with no extras, for \$1,000!

Other jobs I had in those years included doing chores for Laura Doubleday and for A. Leo Stevens, the famous aviator. Laura was a spinster who lived two houses from the bridge on the south side of Route 28. She had coal stoves in the kitchen and in the living room, from which I emptied ashes and for which I brought in buckets of coal. Also, I carried in pails of drinking water from a well located near the property line east of the house. The cool, fresh water was drawn up with a hand pump. Across the road lived Leo, for whom I mowed the lawn. I remember seeing, in his barn, equipment left over from his earlier days of hot air ballooning.

Dancing was popular then, perhaps more so than now. My friends and I attended square dances, round dances, and polkas. Dances were held in the Grange Hall, at the Fly Creek Hotel, or in homes. Jerry Dulin and I put on a couple of dances at the Grange Hall, hiring Ernie Russ and his band to play. Neither time was the attendance very good, so we gave up on that enterprise.

John and Sophie Krisch owned and operated the Fly Creek Hotel. They had three children: Jeannette, my age; John Jr., perhaps a year younger; and Eddie, several years younger. All three were musically-inclined, often playing musical instruments for dances. The Krisches lived upstairs, and had a bar and dance hall on the first floor. There was also a small kitchen and den on the east side of the first floor where we young people hung out. We could order a sandwich from the kitchen, thereby making it "legal" to be there.

There was a home near the edge of the village where a family named Piece lived. They had weekly square dances in their living room and parlor for a while. We hung around there, too, just to be where the action was and enjoy the music. Doug and Alyson Burleigh now own this home.

The three-room school on School House Road, then called Hooker Avenue, was in operation in 1940. Florence Michaels, Charlotte McDonald, and Adelia Kiley were teaching there. My brother, Charles, was still in grade school, and attended this school for several years until he was old enough to ride the bus to Cooperstown to finish school with the rest of us. Cooperstown High School at that time was located on the corner of Glen Avenue and Chestnut Street (now the site of Cooper Lane Apartments). I graduated in 1944. After the Fly Creek school was closed in 1954, grade school children were bused to Cooperstown like the others.

Riding the bus was a fun time for all but the driver. Joe Skubitz got along well with the children and knew how to handle them. Lee Winnie took his turn as driver, but the kids pestered him something awful. The kids were even worse to a driver named Smith. One has to wonder whether the abuse he took on the bus contributed to his tragic suicide.

Gerald "Jerry" Dulin was a pal of mine, though he was a few years younger. Jerry had a "doodlebug" that he had made out of old car parts: a Ford Model "A" motor, a steering wheel, a seat, four wheels and tires, and a board or two behind the driver's seat to ride on. We rode all over the back roads with it, even visiting Gilbert Lake State Park a couple of times. We entered after dark, camped out, and left before sun-up to travel the roads back home. Eventually, I bought the old jalopy and used it for my own pleasure until I finally sold it too. I guess I learned to drive on that old thing.

The bicycle was our more usual mode of travel. I used my bike on my newspaper route around Fly Creek. Just about anyplace in the village a youngster had to go, he rode a bike. One common destination during summer afternoons and evenings was our swimming hole in Forkshop, about a mile south of the village. I lost my first ring in that swimming hole. It just slipped off my finger and I never found it.

About a half-mile north of the village is another four-corners called Pail Shop Corner. The shop that gave it its name was reportedly located just east of the creek, near the Cider Mill. I am fortunate to own a pail manufactured there. Embossed in the pail's tin cover, inside a circle, it says "PAIL WORKS 10 FLY CREEK, N.Y."

**LETTER TO THE EDITOR**

The *Fly Creeker* will print letters of general interest about area history, the Society, or the newsletter itself. The Editor reserves the right to edit letters for grammar, space, etc. Address correspondence to Bill Deane, at P.O. Box 47, Fly Creek, NY 13337; or e-mail to DizDeane@USAdatanet.net.

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A correspondent from Canada, who shares with us a common interest in the Welch family of Otsego County c. 1790-1820, has identified at least three families (Welch, Dibble, and Babbitt) who appear in the U.S. Census for Otsego County in 1800 and who then appear in church records of Oxford, Ontario, Canada by 1822. Their placement on the rolls of the 1800 Census indicates that they were close neighbors.

Our records indicate, in the case of the Welch family, this removal possibly resulted in the breakup of family groups. My great-great-great-grandmother, Anna Welch (1795-1872), married Alva Cheney (1789-1851) in the Presbyterian Church of Cooperstown, on 26 February 1812. She died 1 May 1872 in Fly Creek, and is buried in the cemetery across from the old Grange Hall. It would appear that the presumed father of Anna, Vine Welch, removed to Canada before 1822 with at least one child (Allen Hiram Welch (1803/4-?). Another possible son of Vine's, Rensselear Welch (c. 1792-1865+), appears in Otsego County in the New York Census of 1865.

We realize that many people who were loyal to the King removed from the newly independent United States to Canada immediately following the Revolutionary War. Does anyone in the FCAHS have information about such removals from about the time of the War of 1812 – especially from Otsego County?

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