

Fly Creeker

NEWSLETTER of the FLY CREEK AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY (FCAHS)

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NEWS BRIEFS

- **Happy Renew Year ...** Final reminder: dues for 2003 were payable by the first of this year, but about half of our 2002 members are remiss. If your name is not among the 89 on the "Roll of Membership" on page 3, please use the application on page 5 (copies are fine) to renew your membership, or buy a gift membership for someone special. Also, note the new Tribute Program. And welcome to our newest members, Harold & Annegrete Barnum, Elizabeth Caulkins, Melissa Krok & Andy Marietta.
- **Refresher Course ...** Reminder: those in charge of refreshments for the upcoming meetings are Freida Snyder and Elaine Harvey (January), and Leila Martin and Dorothy Martin (March). Because of the covered-dish dinner, no refreshments are necessary for February. And, thanks to those who took care of refreshments during the last nine months of 2002: Anita Graham, Cynthia Ekland, Deb Dickinson, George Badgley, Barbara Lyon, Louise Allen, Freida Snyder, Elaine Harvey, Dorothy Martin, Leila Martin, Judy Thorne, Joan Smith, Ann Carr, and Genevieve Licci.
- **Sticking with the Program ...** Last issue, we saluted Elaine Harvey and Freida Snyder for their 13 years of service with the Program Committee. We are reminded that a few others – including Pete and Dot Martin, and Ron Bouton – assisted with this committee during the Society's early years.
- **Neat Tricks ...** Elaine Harvey shares with us a clipping dated August 13, 1975, written by Ed Monroe (who died this past fall). It is a retrospective piece about Otsego School District No. 11, whose building is now used by the Fly Creek Valley Grange. The article depicts students performing remarkable stunts, done during recess and noon hour as a precursor to physical education class. One photo shows a boy laying across two chairs, only his head and feet touching the chairs, supporting a second boy doing a handstand on his stomach. According to Monroe, "one student could do a hand stand using only one hand while drinking a glass of water held in his other hand."
- **Hi-ho, Silver!...** Art Andrews shares with us an undated clipping from the early 1970s. It reports the awarding of scouting's highest honors, the Silver Beaver (for men) and Silver Fawn (for women). Five Otschodela area (comprising Otsego, Schoharie, and Delaware Counties) people were honored in this particular year, including Art and his wife. According to the clipping, "The occasion marked the premiere, simultaneous presentation of scouting's top awards, Beaver and Fawn, to a husband and wife, Arthur and Margaret Andrews, in the Otschodela Council."
- **Whitest Christmas ...** The Christmas snowstorm we experienced was historic in proportion. According to Cooperstown's National Weather service records, dating back to 1869, the 30-inch accumulation broke the local records for most snow in one day (27.3") and in one storm (28.3"), both set during the blizzard of March, 1993. As of the end of 2002, we had already had 54.8 inches of snow this season, exactly double the normal amount, and more than the 42.3" we had all last winter! And the first week of 2003 saw another major snowfall.
- **It Was in the Mail ...** The FCAHS has received a \$20,000 check from New York State, the culmination of our approved grant reported in the Summer, 2002 issue. Building renovations are already underway. Thanks again, Senator Seward!

SEVENTY-FIVE YEARS IN PIERSTOWN

FCAHS member Katherine Byrnes Hanor spent her first 75 years in a place called Fairview Farm, in the area known as Pierstown. Going from Cooperstown, just over two miles up the lake along State Highway 80, one would take a left on County Highway 28, and find Fairview Farm on the top of the hill, the first place on the left. The house was in Katharine's family for 147 years, until she and Edward Reilly sold it to Edward and Diane Gozigian in May, 1987. On January 24, 2001, Sue Drake and the late Ed Reilly presented to the FCAHS a slide show that Katharine had put together, "Pierstown in Years Past."

Over the past decade, Katharine has spent a lot of time putting her memories onto paper. The result is three booklets, published by Barton-Butler Graphics: *Growing Up at Fairview Farm*; *The In-Between Years: a Life Shared*; and *My Swan Song*. A fourth book, *The Hills of Home*, was compiled for the occasion of Katharine's 90th birthday on February 5, 2002. These charming booklets total about 50 lavishly-illustrated pages each, and give a real flavor of simpler times – and of the life of an honest, devoted, positive-thinking woman. Among the contents is the essay that earned Katharine the Ruggles Memorial Prize in 1928, and the story of a girl who survived a fall over Leatherstocking Falls, just across the road from Fairview Farm.

Katharine recently donated copies of the four books to the FCAHS, where they will be available to researchers. Following are two excerpts from *Growing Up at Fairview Farm*, and one from *The In-Between Years*:

The doctor was always very much a part of a family. They made house calls and at first they used horse and buggy but as soon as they were available they purchased cars.

The first one always had two remedies – both pills. One he called No. 1 and the other he called No. 2. If he gave you No. 1 and it didn't help you then he gave you No. 2. If that didn't help, you were on your own. You usually recovered.

The second one was a sweetheart. He loved kids, had two daughters of his own. He never walked into your house, he always "swung" in with his big black bag, a smile on his face and the greeting "The Doctor has arrived." You felt better right away.

Airplanes began to appear around Cooperstown around the end of World War I. I probably had heard about them but at five to six years of age had no idea about them. One day I was outside playing and I saw this "thing" in the sky. It startled me – I ran into the house and cried out "Come quick – there's a fish with two boards nailed to it in the sky."

A very important memory was that of the rural mail carrier. He was almost family. You knew all about him and he knew all about you. If you were out he would stop and chat with you. He passed along any local news that he knew.

If you knew of someone ailing in the community you made a pot of soup or a loaf of bread and sent it along with the mailman who delivered it. No mandates then. Once in a while in the wintertime you would hitch your sled on the back of his sleigh and ride up to the top of the next big hill; by taking a running jump on our sleds we could ride almost home.

When they finally went to cars we couldn't do that anymore, but they would still deliver the soup and the bread! Great people, those rural mailmen!

A CASE OF THE HICOCKS

The March 14, 1846 edition of the *Freeman's Journal* contained a death notice for Dr. Samuel Hicock, stating that he was a Revolutionary War soldier and an early area settler who died at age 96 years, six months on March 6. It is evident that this is the same man as Doct. Samuel Hecox, buried at the Old Chapel Burying Ground in Fly Creek, who died on the same date and at the same age, though his tombstone does not mention his military service. In 1997 Florence Michaels compiled a listing ("a composite of several sources") of those interred at OCBG, calling Hecox a Private in the Revolution. There were a DAR marker and an American flag on the grave until three years ago, when they were inexplicably removed.

Apparently, Hicock/Hecox had origins in or ties to Connecticut. The Pension List of 1818 lists one Samuel Hicock, a Lieutenant who served in the Connecticut troops and was a resident of New York state. The *Record of Service of Connecticut Men in the War of the Revolution* lists three men with similar names: Lt. Samuel Hickock (p. 158), Sgt. Samuel Hickox (p. 159), and Corp. Samuel Hecoeks (p. 382).

More documentation can be found in the records of the Otsego County Court of Common Pleas, February term, 1834. This volume is located in the office of the Otsego County Surrogate, on the second floor of the County Office Building. The pertinent passage reads "In the matter of Samuel Hicock a Soldier, Application for a Pension. The Applicants sworn to his written declaration, and Interrogatories, and, the Affidavits of 3 Witness taken in open Court. The Court certified the [illegible] to be satisfactory." Unfortunately, the supporting papers cannot be located.

Samuel's name does not appear in the 152 volumes of the *DAR Lineage Books*. The Centennial Edition of the *DAR Patriot Index* lists two similarly-named men who served with the Connecticut troops, but it does not appear that either is the man in question. Town Historian Marion Brophy contacted the Cooperstown chapter of the DAR, but they can find no listing for Samuel as a Revolutionary War soldier.

It seems each attempt to verify the military service and correct surname of Dr. Samuel Hecox produces more questions than answers. Can anyone shed any light on the Hecox mystery? [Submitted by Peter Martin]

FLY CREEK AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY: 2003 Roll of Membership

AINSLIE, Vera
 ALLEN, Louise
 BARNUM, Harold & Annegrete
 *BERTINO, Dr. Joseph & Dr. Anne Nafziger
 *BRESEE, Philip & Ruth
 BROPHY, Marion
 CARR, Richard D.
 CARR, Richard H. & Ann M.
 CAULKINS, Elizabeth
 CHENEY, Harold & Waltraut
 CIAMPO, Wesley & Evette
 *CURLIS, Irwin
 *DAY, Irving III & Kathleen
 *DEANE, Bill, Pam. & Sarah
 EKELAND, Cynthia G. & Anita Graham
 ELLSWORTH, Catherine Lake
 FAUROT, Craig & Patricia
 *FINCH, John & Jean
 FISH, Jim & Merri Lynn
 GLAZER, Steven & Christine
 HANOR, Katharine
 HARRINGTON, Angela E.
 HARTMANN, Maryann
 *HARVEY, Merritt & Elaine
 HELFAND, Elliot & Martha
 JANET LeROY INTERIORS, Inc.
 *JENSEN, Margaret K.
 KEATING, William & Evelyn
 LARSEN, Doris M.
 *LAVRINOS, Nicholas & Alice

LYON, Barbara
 LYONS, Irving & Joan
 MacDOUGALL, Hugh & Eleanore
 MARIETTA, Andy & Melissa Krok
 *MARTIN, Peter L. & Dorothy J.
 McLEAN, Carolyn S.
 MOSHIER, Robin
 ORILIO, Nancy
 PALMER, Peter
 RANDALL, Charlotte
 REZEN, Paul & Sally
 ROBERTS, Susan
 SAMMIS, Terriann
 SHARPE, Stuart & Bonnie
 SMITH, Joan S.
 SMITH, Zoe & Sue-Ellen Spence
 *SNYDER, Art & Freida
 SNYDER, Ben & Juliana
 STAFFIN, Mike & Betty
 STREETT, Lois S.
 VAN HORN, Jim
 VIBBARD, Ronald & Eleanor
 WEIGEL, Fred & Wilma
 WOLFF, James & Margaret
 *WYCKOFF, George
 YOURNO, Albert, Ann & James

* = Charter Member.

Bold = Contributing/Sustaining Member.

WHEN SANTA LIVED IN FLY CREEK

Lavern "Beanie" Ainslie was born October 19, 1919, the son of Charles and Lilah (Light) Ainslie. He married Vera Goodspeed on January 19, 1949, and they had three boys and three girls. The family moved from Fly Creek Valley to Goose Street, Fly Creek, in 1956. Beanie became somewhat of a legend for his dedication to Cooperstown Youth Baseball, umpiring their games for many years. He also helped in many community activities, and over the years he gave at least 17 pints of blood. Beanie won various awards for his devotion to area youth and community, including ones from the Fly Creek Fire Department, the Cooperstown Lion's Club (1982), and Cooperstown Youth Baseball (1987). In 1993 he received the first Patrick Fetterman Memorial Award from the Clark Sports Center, and in 1995 the youth baseball field was named in his honor. Beanie was a community servant to the end: he died June 24, 1995 while he was mowing grass at the Fly Creek Valley Grange.

In the early 1980s, Beanie was asked to serve as Santa Claus for Fly Creek. During the Christmas season, the Fly Creek Fire Department selected several places for Santa to visit just before Christmas. He was taken to them in their firetruck. Later they furnished a sleigh, complete with reindeer flying overhead, which was pulled by a truck. In 1983 the 4 C's Committee asked Beanie to share his services with the Cooperstown area. Mrs. Guyot of Fly Creek designed a special Santa house which they set in the little park on the corner of Main and Pioneer Streets. From the day after Thanksgiving until Christmas, Beanie was there. His wife Vera often joined him as "Mrs. Santa," which delighted the children even more. Pictured below is FCAHS member Sarah Deane visiting Santa in 1986.

Shortly after Christmas in 1993 "Mrs. Santa" became seriously ill, and was hospitalized for several months. Teachers suggested that children write cards for her and she was flooded with their drawings, get-well wishes etc. -- "Please hurry and get well so you can go back to the North Pole with Santa." Vera recovered nicely and is still a FCAHS member.

Beanie always did more than required. He was always available for Christmas parties in schools and even private homes. He visited Woodside Hall, and in 1992 was Santa at the Hog Bake at the Cherry Valley Fish and Game Club. He loved people and showed it, even growing his own beard so "the children could see him smile." And people responded, giving him little gifts of candy, cookies, etc. Caring and sharing -- isn't that what the Christmas spirit should be about? [Submitted by Carolyn McLean]



**MEETINGS FOR 2003 SLATED;
"CHRONIC CARE FINANCIAL PLANNING" IN JANUARY**

FCAHS meetings are held on the fourth Wednesday of each month, except November (third Wednesday) and December (no meeting). Also, this March's gathering will be held a week early due to a Church schedule conflict. Thus, the meeting dates for the new year are scheduled for January 22, February 26, March 19, April 23, May 28, June 25, July 23, August 27, September 24, October 22, and November 19, 2003. Society get-togethers are held at the FCAHS Building/Grange Hall on Cemetery Road beginning at 7 PM, and everyone is welcome. However, due to anticipated winter weather, the first three meetings of 2003 will be held in the basement of the Fly Creek Church. The February and August meetings will be preceded by covered-dish suppers at 6 PM.

At the January 22 meeting, Bill Deane will speak about his new Fly Creek-based business, "Chronic Care Financial Planning." Discussed will be such things as nursing homes, Medicare, Medicaid, long-term care insurance, and asset protection for families with chronic care needs. In February, Sherlee Rathbone and local seniors will present "Once Upon a Time in Fly Creek." And, in March, the slated program is "What's Under Fly Creek?," about the area's geological history and its fossil record, with speaker yet to be determined.

The final gatherings of 2002 were held on October 23 and November 20. In October, Town Supervisor Bill Gates presented "What's Up in Fly Creek and the Town of Otsego." Approximately 70 people attended what turned out to be a 1½-hour, spirited session devoted to Town issues. In November, Neil Hershberger led a fascinating question-answer session about Springfield's Amish community, where he lives. Bill Deane also read two columns Jim Atwell wrote about a trip he and the late Arrie Hecox made to an Amish community in Ohio.

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