



TOWN OF NEWFANE HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S

Apple Blossom Times

Since 1975

Winter 2016

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Minute History

Many men from Newfane served in the civil war, including Will McCrory who enlisted in the summer of 1862. He sent home letters to his family, and his first said, "It hardly seems as though it is Christmas as the weather is so good. Jake, Derek and I had a good dinner at our eating house of ham and eggs, sausages and everything good. We knew that it was Christmas but did not know where we would be next Christmas."

McCrory and the men of the 19th Battery had an eventful 1863, including seeing combat, losing friends to injuries and illness, and meeting President Lincoln. The following December while in Virginia, he wrote, "It is Christmas Eve and as I write you, Charlie Halstead, Louis Halstead, Cole McKee and Jackie Branker are playing euchre by my side."

Sadly McCrory died in 1864 during the Battle of Spotsylvania Court House, alongside close friend Branker. The two were buried together under an apple tree by the men of their Battery.

Giving Thanks

From the desk of our President

Our Historical Society has much to be thankful for. We have had excellent weather for our Harvest Festival and Candlelight Tours. Many have come out and supported these events, and were happy with what they experienced. As President, I am very thankful and impressed by our Trustees and volunteer members that work very hard to make these events successful. Also thanks to the many local farms, groups, businesses and vendors who've supported us, including as

always the Town of Newfane. As a result of this support, we are in better financial shape at this time, although our old buildings and artifacts are continually in need of maintenance and care to help preserve our town history. The good people of Newfane have many things to be thankful for, as we go into our Holiday Season. Have a great Thanksgiving and Happy Holidays!

Bill Neidlinger

Restoration News

Our hard working volunteers are proud to have completed another restoration this past September. The Country Village team revealed our restored 1918 Aermotor Water Pumping Windmill, which sits on the west side of the village. The society received the windmill in 1984, and unfortunately fell into disrepair after 1990. Now it once again proudly stands three stories in the air, and society members are very grateful!

Leading the project was society President Bill Neidlinger and Sam Clogston, and others on the team include Bruce Genewich, Steve Anderasik, Stephen Goodman and Nick Waite. This complex project involved

hunting or building specific parts, including the correct motor and 17 galvanized steel petals. The team hopes it will be pumping water in time for this spring's Apple Blossom Festival. We'd also like to thank Jeff Watkins for the new paint design, and Clark Rigging for raising it back up.

A recent addition to the restoration project list is a large Bovaird & Seyfang Gas Engine. It's a 50 hp engine that came out of the hills of PA and they are currently searching for a 2hp electric motor to help "turn" it over. Please contact us if you can help or want to join the team; our phone & email are on the back of this newsletter.



above, a view of the broken windmill in 2014; center, the windmill being raised; right, back on display- be sure to drive by the Country Village to see it yourself!



Final chance to win our raffle!

You can win a beautifully forged lattice platter, handcrafted by society member and blacksmith Bill Ott. Special thanks go out to Bill for this wonderful donation and the time taken to build this one-of-a-kind piece of art. Tickets are \$1.00 each/ \$5 for 6; proceeds go to the Newfane Historical Society.



Where to Purchase:

@ Sunday Tours at the Van Horn Mansion

@ The Carol Sing at the Van Horn Mansion on Dec. 4th

Or through a society member or trustee

The winner will be drawn at the Christmas Carol Sing on December 4th. Need not be present to win. Good Luck!

Join the Historical Society's Annual Old Fashioned Carol Sing

Sunday, December 4th from 1-4pm

at the Van Horn Mansion

2165 Lockport-Olcott Rd. Burt, NY 14028



Bring the whole family and join us for a wonderful holiday tradition. The afternoon features carol singing in the parlor, a performance by the Methodist Bell choir, and holiday treats in the dining room. The mansion is all decorated for the holidays and we want to share it with you!

This event is open to the public, and we ask visitors to please bring a canned good donation for the local food bank.

Baked goods needed for Dec. 4th!

We are seeking donations for our annual Carol Sing (*see page 2 for details*). Consider donating a batch of your favorite Christmas cookies, brownies or other desserts.

Make sure they are pre-wrapped and in disposable containers. Please deliver your donation to the Van Horn Mansion on Dec. 4th between 12noon and 1pm or contact Rose to arrange an earlier delivery (716-727-9816).

Thanks ahead of time!



Newfane Historical Society's Member Meeting & Christmas Dinner at the Van Horn Mansion

Fri. Dec. 16th

6pm dinner | 7pm meeting

Bring a dish to pass

Society members welcome. Looking forward to celebrating with everyone!



Gathering Together

America's annual celebration of family and giving to others has a rich history with ever-changing traditions

Origins of Thanksgiving

In September of 1620, 102 people gathered in the Netherlands with plans for a voyage to "the New World", a journey few others had ever taken. Many were religious separatists who wanted freedom to practice their faith, and all hoped to achieve a better life through land ownership and the prosperity rumored to be across the ocean. They boarded their small merchant ship, the Mayflower. A smaller vessel, the Speedwell, accompanied them with supplies and travelers, but it proved unseaworthy and everything was transferred to the already cramped Mayflower. Their uncomfortable journey turned treacherous once they reached the high seas, fighting high waves and terrible weather.

The seemingly unending 66 days of rough ocean travel led them to anchor in mid-November at the first land they saw. It was along Cape Cod, not their intended destination along the Hudson River (Manhattan), which they believed to be part of the Virginia colony. Their scouting parties saw the most potential on the west end of the bay (Massachusetts Bay) located directly north of their landing point. One month after landfall they sailed north, settling at their new home which they called Plymouth.

Some of the most notable settlers of the Plymouth Colony included Myles Standish, a professional soldier who became the colony's military leader, and William

Community Holiday Events

Town of Newfane Holiday Light Up & Parade

Dec. 2nd | 5:30pm-8pm

Main St. in Newfane

Parade, cookies, hot chocolate, and a visit with Santa and carriage rides following the parade. Candy Cane Craft Show at the Newfane United Methodist Church. Sponsored by Newfane Business Assoc., Newfane Lions Club, and First Niagara Bank.

The Living Nativity

Dec. 2nd-4th | 5:30pm-8:30pm

Grace Bible Church | 6023 Dutton Place, Newfane

Experience a guided walk through the Christmas story and beyond. Tours take place outside, so please dress warm. Free admission; 30 min. tours depart every half hour.

The Sounds of Christmas Concert

Dec. 3rd & 4th | 7pm

Hess Road Wesleyan Church | 2514 Hess Rd. Appleton

An evening filled with wonderful Christmas songs performed by amazing local musicians.



Bradford, a leader of the Separatist congregation who wrote the classic account of the Mayflower voyage and the founding of their colony. While still on board the ship, a group of 41

men signed the so-called Mayflower Compact, in which they agreed to join together in a "civil body politic." This document would become the foundation of the new colony's government.

The settlers tried establishing a village in the midst of a brutal winter. They lived on the ship and ferried supplies and people back and forth from shore to build storage and living quarters. Unfortunately they battled fierce winter storms, long lasting cold temperatures and limited supplies, leading to poor nutrition, scurvy and outbreaks of contagious disease. Over half of the settlers died within months of reaching land. Leaders such as Bradford, Standish, John Carver, William Brewster and Edward Winslow played important roles in keeping the remaining settlers together.

The remaining colonists moved to shore permanently in late March of 1621, where they received an astonishing visit from an Abenaki tribesmen who greeted them in English. Several days later he returned with another English speaking native, Squanto, a member of the...(continued on page 4)

(continued from page 3)...Pawtuxet tribe who had been kidnapped by an English sea captain, sold into slavery, and learned the English language before escaping and returning to his homeland. Squanto taught the Pilgrims, weakened by malnutrition and illness, how to cultivate maize (corn) and other indigenous plants, extract sap from maple trees, catch fish, hunt animals such as beavers, and avoid poisonous plants. He also helped the settlers forge an alliance with the Wampanoag Nation and their local headship tribe, the



Pokanokets, which would endure for more than 50 years and tragically remains one of the sole examples of harmony between European colonists and Native Americans.

Thanks to the help of natives from the New World, the settlers were graced with a bountiful first harvest in the autumn of 1621. The colony's new Governor, William Bradford, invited their allies to a celebratory feast. This is now remembered as the "First Thanksgiving", which lasted for three days. No record exists of the historic banquet's exact menu, but settler Edward Winslow wrote in his journal that Governor Bradford sent four men on a "fowling" mission, and the Wampanoag guests brought five deer. Historians believe many dishes were likely prepared using traditional Native American spices and cooking methods, and the meal may have included their harvested vegetables, duck, goose, seal, eels and swans. Because the Pilgrims had no oven and the Mayflower's sugar supply had dwindled by the fall of 1621, the meal could not have featured any sweet desserts.

The celebration was repeated in 1623, as the colonists celebrated the end of a long drought. This new informal tradition spread to the ever growing number of colonies in New England which held similar events occasionally based on the success of the harvest. Over time the original settlers became known as the "old comers" of Plymouth.

Becoming a National Holiday

100 years later the harvest celebrations continued in various forms throughout the colonies. By the start of the American Revolution, the Continental Congress was seeking ways to unite the colonists and distinguish themselves from England. In 1775 they officially announced a celebration of thanksgiving to be held each year at all the colonies. In 1789 President George Washington issued the first Thanksgiving proclamation

by the new national government of the United States. He called upon Americans to express their gratitude for the happy conclusion to the country's war of independence and the successful ratification of the U.S. Constitution.

In 1817, New York became the first of several states to officially adopt a specific Thanksgiving date, but each state chose a different day. In 1820 the country celebrated the Bicentennial of the famous voyage of the Mayflower. During one event the orator Daniel Webster referred to the "old comers" from the Plymouth Colony as "Pilgrim Fathers", and ever since they have been known as Pilgrims.

In 1827, noted magazine editor and prolific writer Sarah Josepha Hale—author, among countless other things, of the nursery rhyme "Mary Had a Little Lamb"—launched a campaign to establish Thanksgiving as a national holiday. For 36 years, she published numerous editorials and sent scores of letters to governors, senators, presidents and other politicians. Abraham Lincoln finally heeded her request in 1863. He scheduled Thanksgiving for the final Thursday in November, and it was celebrated on that day every year until 1939, when Franklin D. Roosevelt moved the holiday up a week in an attempt to spur retail sales during the Great Depression. This idea was not popular, and so in 1941 the president reluctantly signed a bill making Thanksgiving the fourth Thursday in November.

A nearly forgotten tradition from about 1870's-1920's involved adults and children who dressed up in elaborate masks and costumes, then walked around their neighborhoods asking strangers "anything for Thanksgiving?". It was commonplace to give the maskers gifts of coins, fruit or candy. Thanksgiving maskers also threw confetti and flour on people, which was considered an allowable pastime. Masquerade balls were



also popular events held on and around Thanksgiving. These traditions eventually faded, in part from the emergence of holiday parades.

Parades remain an integral part of the holiday in cities and towns across the United States. This annual tradition originated in 1920 by Gimbel's department store in Philadelphia remains the longest running Thanksgiving Parade. Macy's department store...(continued on page 5)

(continued from page 4)...in New York hosted its first Christmas season parade in 1924. Employees dressed as knights, clowns and jugglers, and the 6-mile parade attracted a crowd of 250,000 viewers, deeming it a success worth repeating. In 1927 their famous giant balloons were created to replace live animals who were not usually cooperative. The first balloon was Felix the Cat, and like all the early balloons it was filled with oxygen and held upright like a puppet. Today the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade attracts 2-3 million spectators along its 2.5-mile route and draws an enormous television audience.



Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade, 1930

Though turkey farmers sent presidents the choicest birds since the 1800s, President John F. Kennedy was the first one on record to spare one's life. In 1963, he sent back a turkey mailed by the National Turkey Federation, saying, "We'll just let this one grow." President Richard Nixon sent turkeys to a Washington, D.C., petting farm but didn't officially pardon them. President George Bush gave the first official pardon to a turkey in 1989. The tradition of pardoning one turkey each Thanksgiving continues today, followed by their retirement on a farm. A number of U.S. governors also perform turkey pardonings.

Thanksgiving football has its roots in the Great Depression. After the Portsmouth Spartans moved to Detroit in 1930, the team's owner knew he had to do something to draw football fans to the new team. In 1934, he arranged a match between the Spartans (renamed the Lions) and the world champions, the Chicago Bears. Though the Spartans lost, the game sold out two weeks in advance and was more popular the following year; thus a Thanksgiving tradition was born.

Modern Thanksgivings still include football, parades, amazing foods, napping, and making wonderful memories with friends and family. Newer traditions include watching various television specials and the craze of holiday shopping for special deals. Volunteering is also a popular Thanksgiving Day activity, with communities holding food drives and free dinners for the less fortunate. It is possibly the tradition most closely associated to the truest ideals of Thanksgiving. Yet no matter how you celebrate, Thanksgiving remains a vital part of American history and identity. ♦

Membership Application

For new members and renewals. Membership includes our quarterly newsletter



**Membership Makes a Great Gift
+ Supports a Local Non-Profit!**

Today's Date: _____

Name (Please Print) _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

Zip _____

Select One:

Renewal New Member

Would you be interested in learning about or becoming a volunteer? Yes No

Our membership year begins on January 1st and ends on December 31st.

Annual Membership Dues (Check one):

- Family Membership \$10.00
- Individual Membership \$10.00
- Life Member \$100.00

Tear off this portion and mail with a check to: Newfane Historical Society c/o Rosemary M. Miller 3531 Ewings Rd. Lockport, NY 14094

Please make all checks payable to (or to the order of):
Newfane Historical Society

Or visit our website and join online: www.NewfaneHistoricalSociety.com

Calendar

For more details, please visit our website.

- Nov. 24th- Thanksgiving Day
- Nov. 27th- Advent Begins
- Dec. 4th- Old Fashioned Carol Sing at the Van Horn Mansion
- Dec. 6th St. Nicholas Day
- Dec. 16th- Trustees Christmas Meeting (details inside this newsletter)
- Dec. 24th- Christmas Eve & Hanukkah Begins
- Dec. 25th- Christmas Day
- Dec. 31st & Jan. 1st- New Year's Eve & Day
- Jan. 16th- Martin Luther King Day
- Jan. 17th- Trustees Meeting
- Feb. 14th- Valentine's Day

2016 Officers & Trustees

President: Bill Neidlinger
Vice President: Kevin Luckman
Recording Secretary: Janet Capen
Corresponding Secretary: Melissa Schaeffer
Financial Secretary: Rosemary Miller
Treasurer: David Steggles

Trustees:

Vicki Banks	Chuck Manhardt	Craig Schaeffer
Bill Clark	Terry Manhardt	Mindi Schaeffer
Steve Goodman	Bill Ott	Rose Schaeffer
Jill Heck	Pat Ryan	George Updegraph

Contact Information

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www.NewfaneHistoricalSociety.com

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Celebrate the Season



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