



Apple Blossom Times

Since 1975

Winter 2021

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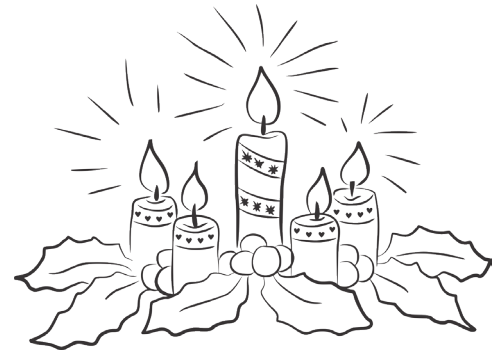
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Season's Greetings

From the desk of our President

As the trees finish changing color and shed their last leaves, we are heading into the holiday season. Time has been flying by way too quickly; I almost feel like we just finished summer and now we are rapidly approaching Thanksgiving. I'll let you in on a little secret, as much as I love Halloween, Thanksgiving and Christmas always have had a special place in my heart. The warmth, love and joy from gathering together with friends and family this time of year, truly cannot be replicated in any other season. Whether it's getting together for a feast, making seasonal cookies together, or throwing some tinsel around there is a particular magic this time of year brings.

With that, I would like to announce that we are hosting events this Christmas, including our Carol Sing Open House on December 5th! Please review this newsletter or our website for details.



I guess I'll wrap it up now, it is the season lol. This is my last letter as president, and I would like to thank all of the members of the Newfane Historical Society for all that you do and have done. Thank you for letting me ramble on a bit every few months. I hope all have a joyful and safe holiday season. And just remember, if you're low on spoons or feel overwhelmed, holiday is in the heart. See ya around!

Melissa Schaeffer

Minute History

Around 1610 in Nuremberg, Germany, wealthy locals began hanging thin strands of real silver in their trees alongside candles. They enhanced the candlelight, adding a wonderful glow! They were called 'tinsel', which comes from "estincele," an old French word that means sparkle. Silver was expensive and would tarnish, so copper and tin were also used, which were cheaper but not as shiny.

So tinsel remained a rare tradition among Bavarian families. By the 1900s in America, German Christmas traditions were all the rage, including tinsel. Copper was being funneled to war efforts, so aluminum was used – causing fires because it's extremely flammable. Crafters began using lead, allowing tinsel to be mass produced and become a top decoration in the 1950s & 1960s.

However lead is poisonous, leading to the downfall of tinsel's popularity. Today's tinsel is made from industrial machines shredding shiny ribbons of PVC plastic to make wispy strands. It isn't as elegant as metal, but it still succeeds in bringing vintage bling to the holidays.

Tours at the Van Horn Mansion return...with a twist!

Celebrate the return of public tours during the Christmas Season

We have re-opened the Van Horn Mansion to the public this month!

Although the mansion has been open occasionally for some private events and tours, it has largely been closed since November 2019. Many volunteers have been working very hard for weeks to refresh the estate: cleaning, making repairs, organizing rooms and more. We thank everyone for their hard work with every aspect of effort needed to keep the Van Horn Mansion alive and well for the community to share.

We invite everyone to visit us this November and December as we show off our Christmas decorations. We feature a growing collection of beautiful antique and old-style displays. Please join us on Sundays when we are open for public tours of the mansion. Tours include local and estate history, and for the first time will include a look back at Christmas traditions of the past, including some featured decorations we have on display! We look forward to seeing you this Christmas at the Van Horn Mansion.

Christmas Tours of the Van Horn Mansion

Address: 2165 Lockport-Olcott Rd. Newfane, NY 14108

Days: Sundays, Nov. 14, 21, 28, Dec. 12, 19

Time: 1-4pm; 60-90 minute tours

Cost: \$5 per person

Open to the public. Reservations not necessary, we start tours as groups arrive. ♦



We ♥ our MEMBERS!

This section is an ongoing record of our amazing members.

Special thanks to the following
for their continued support:

Akron Bugle

Daniel Cushman

We welcome our newest member!

Tom Beilein

Snow Fun Facts!

We may think of snow as being pristinely white, but technically it's completely colorless. Tiny particles of dust, algae, etc. can make snow appear to be a range of colors including yellow, orange, green, blue, and purple.

Watermelon snow is the name given to snow with a pink shade, which also smells sweet. But never eat it! The rosy hue is often from an algae that will make you sick if you ingest it.

Every winter, more than a septillion snowflakes fall down to Earth, according to the Library of Congress.

To put it another way, that's 1,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 snowflakes or a trillion trillion.

There are five different types of snow, characterized by the amount of water in their consistency. There is **dry snow** (0% water), **moist snow** (less than 3%), **wet snow** (3-8%), **very wet snow** (8-15%), and **slush** (15% water).

Our Printing Press and more...

A brief look at the equipment housed inside our Print Shop

In the summer of 2011, Steve Goodman and Bill Neidlinger found a 1926 Chandler & Price printing press hidden in a dark corner of one of the barns at the Country Village. In June of 1982 the "Mack" McClew family had donated the large platen press to the Society. The gentleman worked hard to clean and oil the antique printing press, and they purchased new ink rollers. We then had a restored machine that can print tickets, flyers and wedding invitations as it was done for hundreds of years prior to the typewriter (and more recently computers).

To work the machine, each letter is hand "set" and then put into a lockup and laid in the large press. Ink is applied to a platen, transferred to rollers, then on to the metal hand set type. Paper is hand fed and pressed by the machine into the wet ink, leaving the desired information. The machine prints fast, so operators must be skilled to

keep their hands out of danger. Hundreds or thousands of copies can be quickly made. Graphics or "cuts" are made out of wood or metal. Today we get our metal artwork from a company in Batavia, NY. When supplies and equipment are needed, there is an antique print supplier in Toronto that we have fun traveling to.

Our Chandler & Price Press is operating at our annual apple festivals, and available for the public to watch! We have also had other donations over the years, one being a Dog Tag machine that was from Star Graphics, which used to make metal address labels for the Town of Newfane and newspaper. A favorite activity is finding your name in wood letters and printing those on to paper using our antique proof press. We also have two small hand presses that festival attendees can print a two-color coaster with our Society logo on it. Today, this type of printing can be found in art galleries and specialty shops as an art form. ♦





Book your upcoming event at the Van Horn Mansion

The Van Horn Mansion has been the backdrop for countless parties, celebrations and more! This tradition continues today, as the mansion is available to rent year-round at very affordable rates.

We are also grateful for rentals, as the funds are used to maintain, upgrade, and preserve the entire estate and all artifacts on display.

**Gift Included!* Private rentals include a 1-year membership to the Newfane Historical Society, helping to keep you up to date on all our latest activities, projects and upcoming events.

Please visit NewfaneHistoricalSociety.com to view further details and available dates on our calendar. You can also speak to our current event coordinator, Vicki, for information, to schedule a tour, or to book your upcoming event. Vicki: (716) 417-6791 (please leave a message) or vicki@newfanehistoricalsociety.com. ♦



Christmas Season Rentals

Decorated for the Christmas Season: Nov. 10 - Jan. 10

The Van Horn Mansion is lovingly decorated with a unique display honoring Christmas using Victorian and vintage styles. This makes for a beautiful and unique backdrop for your private event or party. We look forward to helping host your holiday party this season!

A Tale of Snow and Roads

Western New Yorkers are no stranger to icy and snowy winters. How Americans have dealt with snow on roads has greatly varied over the centuries. Here is a look back, and ahead, at the practice of keeping roadways clear.

Early Winter Travel

For a good stretch of American history, getting rid of snow on roads was no great concern. In fact, people actually wanted it around. To improve travel in winter conditions, horse carts and coaches swapped their wheels for ski-like runners. With those things on, the more packed snow on the roads, the better! (continued on page 4...)



SUNDAY 5 DECEMBER 2021

1-4pm. Enjoy listening to carols while perusing rooms with various hands-on activities, light shopping and refreshments. Special performances by the McClure Handbell Choir of the Newfane United Methodist Church.

ALL WELCOME | FREE ENTRY

PLEASE BRING DONATION FOR THE FOOD PANTRY



NewfaneHistoricalSociety.com

Accepting donations to our Christmas Collection

The Newfane Historical Society welcomes donations of antique/ vintage decorations for our Christmas displays. *Items must be in good condition and created prior to 1950.* We also greatly appreciate financial contributions to help us grow our and preserve our collection. Please contact vicki@newfanehistoricalsociety.com to inquire.

(...continued from page 3) To keep roads in optimal snowy condition, many municipalities employed a "snow warden" to pack and flatten the snow with a crude vehicle called a snow roller; essentially a giant, wide wheel weighed down with rocks and pulled by oxen or horses. Their work was similar to maintaining a ski slope or smoothing out an ice rink. Snow wardens even added snow on bare pathways and bridges so that travel would not be interrupted.

By the mid-1800s, several different inventors had patented their own versions of a horse-drawn snow plow meant for clearing alleys and residential streets that saw more foot traffic than carriages. In 1862, Milwaukee became the first major municipality to try one out, to great success. Over the next few years, plows hit the streets in northern cities.

But horse-drawn plows didn't stand a chance against the Blizzard of 1888, which bludgeoned the East Coast from the Chesapeake Bay up to Maine. After three days, some places were buried in up to 50 inches of snow, and high winds caused drifts up to 40 feet tall to form. Everyone had no choice but to stay inside and wait for the snow to melt. The following year many American cities implemented measures such as hiring more plows and giving them assigned routes, and sending plows out to start clearing the roads in the early stages of a storm.

Innovative Technology

Around the same time, the rotary snowplow (snow blower) was getting its start. In the Canadian West, railroad men were having a hard time keeping their tracks clear of snow. Railroad snowplows pushed snow to the sides of the track, and so didn't work in deep, heavy snow of the western mountains. J.W. Elliott, a Toronto dentist, had been tinkering with a plow design he thought might work well on a train. His plow had a rotary engine that drove a wheel rimmed with flat blades. As the plow went down the track, snow collected in the housing and funneled up to the blades, which tossed the snow out through an opening at the top. The railroads passed on it, but Elliott persisted. He hooked up with inventor Orange Jull to improve the design and commission a full-scale working model. The next winter, they convinced the Canadian Pacific Railroad to road-test the new plow on its line near Toronto. The plow cleared the track easily, tossing snow as far as 200 feet out of the way. The railroad managers were impressed and purchased 8 plows. Over the years, snowblowers became cheaper, smaller, and easier to use, with truck-mounted models and, eventually, human-powered ones for home use.

A New Era

As automobiles replaced horses and carriages, the snow problem got flipped on its head. It wouldn't be enough to pack down the snow anymore as cars required dry, safe streets. In the early 20th century, it was generally accepted that roads weren't passable for cars in winter conditions. Local governments did their best to plow roads, and spread sand or cinders to improve traction slightly. Although it was known salt could prevent freezing, large amounts were difficult to come by. Motorized salt spreaders were invented in the late 19th century, but did not prove useful as they couldn't spread much salt, and the horse-drawn plows could not work fast enough to continuously keep roads clear.



Horse-Drawn Snow Roller. [U. of Vermont Libraries Center for Digital Initiatives]

As America's roads and highways expanded and became more crucial to the economy, truckers and commuters needed more dependable roadways in the winter. Around 1919, some help came from Norwegian brothers Hans and Even Overaasen, and New Yorker Carl Frink, who independently created designs for car-mounted snow plows. Greater change began in Detroit, Michigan, in the winter of 1940, when the city began applying salt in great amounts to its roads. They had plenty of rock salt thanks to a nearby salt mine, discovered in 1895. In the early years it was hard to reach and collect salt from the deep mines. By 1914 enough equipment had been lowered and established to produce over 8,000 tons monthly. This sadly included donkeys for hauling; they were lowered into the mine for use, and never brought back up. The Detroit salt mine is still used now, and is a massive complex of more than 100 miles of tunnels located about 1,200 feet below the city.

After the successful use of salt on roads in Detroit, in 1941 New Hampshire became the first state to use rock salt on nearly all their major roads. The practice spread across other northern states as the interstate highway system grew. It became popular not only for ease of travel, but because it greatly reduced crashes, injuries and accidents - over 85% - compared to nothing added to the roads. The systems developed to distribute rock salt in the U.S. were adapted all over the world. Today, the U.S. applies over 17 million tons of salt to roads, which is 10 times as much salt as we use in food processing.

With Solutions, Come New Problems

For decades, the use of salt on roads has made a massive difference in easing the lives of so many. De-icing the roads has kept traffic moving, and safer, a benefit worth billions of dollars. And yet...

The damage from salting highways alone now costs the U.S. approx. \$19 billion per year. Salt is corrosive, and so it chews through vehicles, concrete, and steel bridges. This means continuous repairs and rebuilding. Salt on roads also attracts animals, greatly increasing the risk of car crashes. Ultimately, costs savings that may have once existed are no longer.



A snow plow truck with a blower in the 1920s [Chicago History Museum]

Worse, as the salt dissolves, it washes away into local water supplies, changing the composition of fresh water. In December 2014, a study by the US Geological Survey found that chloride levels were on the rise in 84% of urban streams studied, with 29% of those exceeding federal safety limits of 230mg per liter (for at least part of the year). Accumulating salt makes drinking water saltier and less safe, and kills off huge numbers of fish, amphibians and plants, including trees. (continued on page 5...)

(...continued from page 4) There have also been salt shortages in recent years, as often more is ordered than can be mined annually. As mines also shrink in size, with no ideal alternative available, the hunt is on to find sustainable solutions.

Finding Ways Forward

In regions where salt is necessary but the damage costs more than the salt itself, communities are seeking different materials or tactics. Some use tricks like pre-salting roads before storms hit to cut down use. Adding beet or tomato juice to de-icing mix can also help salt stick in place to lessen the amount needed. Sand is still used, along with calcium chloride, beer waste and even pickle brine. A county in Wisconsin, a state famous for its dairy, uses cheese brine to prep roads before snowstorms!

Engineers have also been working on futuristic technologies, such as "smart" snowplows that are thriftier with salt. There are also proto-types underway of pavement that can remain ice-free, and solar-powered roads that could heat up and melt ice.

While some of these are eco-friendly and safer to use, they are currently not available in quantities anywhere needed to replace rock salt usage. Salt is also far cheaper than any other option. So for now, rock salt will continue to be the mainstay way to de-ice roadways. Yet with all the complications attached to road salt, it will be interesting to see what may change or develop in our lifetimes. ♦

What is Road Salt?

Road salt is rock salt, which has coarser grains than table (edible) salt. It's the same molecule, sodium chloride, but table and sea salt are ground, purified, and often have additives like anti-clumping agents and iodine – which decreases the occurrence of goiters.

Rock salt comes from mining seams of crystal salt deposits underground, leftover after prehistoric oceans evaporated. This salt is collected by breaking off giant slabs, using dynamite or powered shoveling machines. Trucks or conveyors haul the salt to crushing machines, which break down the salt for easier use. Rock salt can be found all over the world. In the U.S. notable mines are near Cleveland, under Detroit, and in New York State, Kansas, and Louisiana.

Menu for New England Thanksgiving Dinner

- | | | |
|----------------------|------------------------------|-----------------|
| Oyster Soup | | Crisp Crackers |
| Celery | | Salted Almonds |
| Roast Stuffed Turkey | Giblet Gravy | Cranberry Jelly |
| Mashed Potatoes | Onions in Cream | Turnips |
| | Chicken Pie | |
| Thanksgiving Pudding | | Sterling Sauce |
| | Mince, Apple, and Squash Pie | |
| Vanilla Ice Cream | | Fancy Cakes |
| Fruit | Nuts and Raisins | Bonbons |
| Crackers | Cheese | Café Noir |

The Boston Cooking School Cookbook, 1922

Recipe Rewind

This menu comes from *The Boston Cooking School Cookbook of 1922*, and highlights common holiday recipes of the day. Sterling Sauce is a caramel type sauce that would be great on vanilla ice cream or one of the noted "Fancy Cakes".

Sterling Sauce

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1/2 cup butter | 1 tsp. vanilla or 2 T. wine |
| 1 cup brown sugar | 4 T. cream or milk |

Cream the butter, add sugar gradually, and milk and flavoring drop by drop to prevent separation. ♦

Membership Application

For new members and renewals. Membership includes our quarterly printed newsletters.

**ALSO RENEW OR JOIN ONLINE AT
NEWFANEHISTORICALSOCIETY.COM**

Today's Date: _____

Name (Please Print) _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

Zip _____

Select: Renewal New Member

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

Our membership year runs January 1st through December 31st.

Annual Membership Dues (Check one):

- Individual Membership \$10.00
- Family Membership \$10.00
- Life Member \$100.00 (per person)



Please make all checks payable to (or to the order of): 'Newfane Historical Society'. Tear off this form and mail with payment to: Newfane Historical Society, P.O. Box 115 Newfane, NY 14108

Calendar

For details on our events, visit our website.

Nov. 10 to Jan. 10- Christmas Season at the Van Horn Mansion

November 11- Veterans Day

November 16- Trustees Meeting

November 25- Thanksgiving Day

November 26- Native American Heritage Day

November 28- Hanukkah & Advent Begin

December 5- Annual Carol Sing Open House

December 6- St. Nicholas' Day

Dec. 24 & 25- Christmas Eve & Day

Dec. 31 & Jan. 1- New Year's Eve & Day

January 17- Martin Luther King Jr. Day

January 18- Trustees Meeting

2021 Officers & Trustees

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Financial Secretary: Rosemary Miller

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Victoria Banks

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Contact Information

Town of Newfane

Historical Society

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Newfane, NY 14108

Country Village

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Newfane, NY 14108

Van Horn Mansion

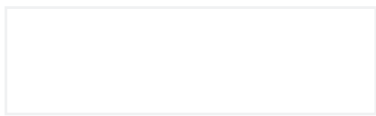
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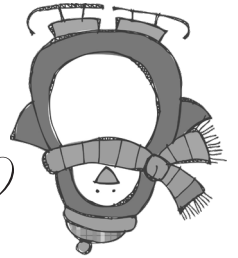
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