



Illustration by Elsie Hartmann

The purpose of the West Sparta Historical Society is to collect, preserve, interpret, and make accessible to the public the history of the town and the people of West Sparta

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A Light On The Past

The West Sparta Historical Society Newsletter

Volume I, Issue I

Who we are and what we're doing

Hello West Sparta and fellow history buffs. Thanks to the development of a Comprehensive Plan for West Sparta there are new stirrings of activity around town. West Sparta Historical Society (aka WSHS) is part of what is happening. On November 1, 2006 there was no WSHS. Two months later we were officially underway. Not since West Sparta's Sesquicentennial Celebration in 1996 have there been so many interesting and educational programs presented locally in such a short period of time (see the History of WSHS in this newsletter for a complete list). If you missed these look for information about what is next in the Schedule of Events inside.

At the moment the West Sparta Historical Society does not have a permanent facility. Thanks to the Town Board we temporarily store most of the collection and hold our meetings at the Town Hall. In addition the West Sparta Methodist Church has hosted some of our programs and we are indebted to members Howard and Pam Perry for their frequent assistance. I am grate-

ful for the service of our Trustees Alice Burdick, Sue Erdle (Treasurer), Jeanie Hallock (Secretary), and welcome new trustees Barb Nagle (also our new Vice President), Cinda Beckwith and Bob Hallock, and thank Carol Weitzel, retiring trustee, for her service.

In just nine months we have already made significant progress. Reconnaissance teams involving almost every active member are surveying our Town. Armed with a digital camera each team drives its assigned roads and takes pictures of sites and structures over 50 years old. About eight teams are covering fifty-one roads including 1 Federal Highway, 1 State Highway, 6 County Roads, 33 Town Roads and 10 Private Roads. When done we will have fifty-one folders with photos of each historic structure and site, along with notes about probable age, type and history of ownership and a digital copy of each photo.

Professional consultants typically undertake writing an Historic Preservation Report, but West Sparta Historical Society's capable volunteers, with instruction from knowledgeable advisors, are undertaking this work without cost to the community. The Reconnaissance Survey results will be analyzed and compiled into a West Sparta Preservation Report and given to the Town

Planning Board with recommendations for the future.

The Preservation Report will also include a history of West Sparta. This will be a brief but more complete history than has been published since James Smith's History of Livingston County in 1874. To help in writing this narrative most of the 2007 /2008 programs are focused on some aspect of local Town history. To illustrate our story we ask anyone and everyone to lend us any photos or memorabilia of old West Sparta so we can make copies for our collection.

Making an inventory and expanding the collection of images, documents, and memorabilia has also been started. All items in storage have been briefly reviewed and listed in the initial Collections List. As time, technology and money allow there will be a formal process to digitally image and record these items. Each will receive a unique number so all the important information about it can be permanently recorded along with location of the item to facilitate research projects. Our hope is to have a permanent facility where our collection can be interpreted and displayed.

Last but not least Bob Hallock and Dave Palmer have launched a digital video oral

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Advertisement for Ameriprise Financial, featuring Scott T. Vegder, CFP®, CLU® and Ward, Wyand & Associates. Includes contact information for both advisors.

A Light On The Past

2007 MEMBERS

Individual Members

Alice Burdick
Marjorie Cansdale
Evelyn F. Kemp
Barbara Kurtz
Doris G. McMaster

Family Members

Doug & Sandy Morgan

David & Barbara Nagle
Howard & Pamela Perry
Jane Schryver
& Paul Hoffman
Jeff Swanson
William & Ruth Slaight
Richard & Bettie
Whitenack

Supporters

Cinda M. Beckwith

Jeanie & Robert Hallock
Austin & Elsie Hartmann
David & Shirley Palmer
Carol & Rebecca Weitzel

Sustainers

Susan Erdle & Marvin
Yamonaco, Sr.
Heidi Keller
Kim & Charles Swink

Patrons

Angels

Robert & Sarah Booher
Carmen & Scott Vegder
with a matching gift from
**Ameriprise Financial
Services Inc.**

Honorary Members

Harold Hartman
John Rowe *
*Deceased

Who we are and how we began... Continued from front page

history project to interview long time residents of West Sparta. An initial target list of about 30 families has been compiled with four histories already taken. The DVD recordings of these interviews will be given to the family to keep and a copy kept in the WSHS's permanent collection.

It goes without saying that the kindness of friends and strangers has been necessary for our accomplishments. Cinda Beckwith, trustee, has provided us with two complete Dell Computer systems from her Rochester employer, Public Abstract Corporation. To this point all of the supplies, post-

age, computer power, man and woman power, transportation, electricity, heating and cooling, digital imaging equipment and supplies, food, beverages, paper goods, tables, chairs, copying, large map copying and much more have all been given for free. All of our special program presenters Joan Schumaker, Bob Englert, Cynthia Howk, Douglas Morgan, Jane Schryver, Ginny Roby and Rich Nicastle, have donated their services. It is hard to estimate what all this is actually worth.

Our only expenses since Nov. 1, 2006 have been for advertising our programs to

the public and one facility rental. As such we are indebted to every single active member and many non-members who have come forward to help. Our treasury, built only through leftover Sesquicentennial funds and about 20 membership fees is miniscule. We operate daily in absolute gratitude for all you do to make the Society possible. I have included a membership list for reference. Thank you to everyone. Forgive any errors of omission or commission in the thank you's or the membership list and just let me know so I can improve.

Cheers, Sarah

Exploring West Sparta's Native American Heritage

Presented by Tom Cook for the West Sparta Historical Society, October 16, 2007, 7:00 PM at the West Sparta Town Hall, 8302 Kysorville Byersville Road, West Sparta.

We were not here first! Was the road you live on once an "Indian" Trail? On October 16, 2007 West Sparta Historical Society members and guests will be exploring the Native American history in the West Sparta area with the presenter, Tom Cook. The presentation will include an overview of several periods

of Native occupation of the area, stretching from the "Old Ones" to the Seneca people. There will also be a discussion of the Big Tree Treaty and Reservation period, and the significance of the Mary Jemison story to the area. Tom will explain ways in which we can research and document West Sparta's Native heritage. Bring your own stories, knowledge and questions to this fascinating presentation! Tom Cook is a teacher at Keshequa Central School and a local historian. He has been writing and speaking

on our Native History and other local topics for over twenty-five years.

**Did Native Americans visit your family's home-
stead?**

**Have you found Native
American artifacts, or
camp sites here?**

**On Oct. 16 share this in-
formation or hear these
stories.**

All who are interested are invited

**No charge; voluntary
donations appreciated.
Light refreshments.**

For more information, contact Sarah Booher, 335-5094 or gefbooher@stny.rr.com

West Sparta Historical Society Purpose and History

PURPOSE: To collect, preserve, interpret and make accessible to the public the history of West Sparta.

HISTORY: Sept. 2006, approval by Town Board to use Town Hall for ad hoc history committee meetings.

Nov. 14, 2006 First meeting of ad hoc committee held

Dec. 12, 2006 Five trustees elected Sarah Booher (President), Alice Burdick, Sue Erdle (Treasurer), Jean Hallock (Secretary), and Carol Weitzel. Resolution passed to write a Constitution and Bylaws and adopt the name West Sparta Historical Society.

Jan. 9, 2007 'Creating an Historic Preservation Report for West Sparta' with Guests Bob Englert, NYS Preservation Field Office, Cynthia Howk, The Landmark Society, Amy Alden, Livingston County Historian, Dave Palmer, Town Historian, Alice Burdick the Dansville Area Historical Preservation Association.

Feb. 13, 2007 Presentation, The History of the Nunda Historical Society by Joan Schumaker.

March 19, 2007 West Sparta Historical Society Employer Identification Number Received, Membership program and Oral History interviews started. Fire Department asked to notify WSHS before burning any buildings.

April 17, 2007 Historic Preservation Reconnaissance Survey launched with teams assigned to photograph any structure or historic site over 50 years old.

May 15, 2007 Constitution and Bylaws adopted. Premier Presentation of The Cemeteries of West Sparta by Doug Morgan. Video documentation of Presentations started by Bob Hallock.

May 2007 The West Sparta Collection of images, documents, books and memorabilia inventory is reviewed,

photographed and listed.

June 19, 2007 First Road Reconnaissance Survey photos reviewed.

August 14, 2007 Petition of Charter submitted to NYS Education Dept.

August 21, 2007 Presentation, History of Stonybrook Park Area by Jane Schryver and Paul Hoffman.

August 2007 Office of Vice President created and Board of Trustees expanded adding Barbara Nagle (Vice President) and Cinda Beckwith. Carol Weitzel retires and Bob Hallock is elected to fill out her unfinished term.

September 18, 2007 Premier Presentation, The Waterfalls of West Sparta by Rich Nicastle and Ginny Roby with technical assistance of Douglas Morgan

Watch for information on our activities on the West Sparta web page www.frontiernet.net/~ebdoug/wsparta.html

Historic Homes

On Tuesday May 13, 2008 during the Dogwood Festival Weekend, the WSHS will present a program on the Historic Houses of West Sparta at 7:00 p.m. at the West Sparta Methodist Church.

Cynthia Howk of the Landmark Society of Rochester and Western new York State will discuss the older homes that you see every day in town, their architectural style, and some of the family history and town history connected to them.

Remember, 'historic' doesn't mean that 'George Washington slept here'. A historic home is a home that has a connection to the history of the town. Some examples are; the small homes in Woodville and Kysorville that were built when those hamlets were canal ports, the Kysor homestead on Rock Spring Hill Road, the McNair homes - built in the 1820s- along Rt 36 (homes of some of our earliest settlers). Other historic homes in town are the many farmhouses, the house in Byersville that included a doctors office, and another house in Byersville that was a general store. If you have a home that has an interesting tale to tell, please contact Sarah Booher.

Upcoming Events and Meetings

Watch the Pennysaver, Shopper and local bulletin boards for locations of upcoming events as schedule may change.

All our meetings and programs are open to the public.

Donations appreciated.

October 16, 2007 (Tues)
Exploring West Sparta's Native American Heritage

7 :00 p.m. WS Town Hall

October 22, 2007(Mon)
Board of Trustees meeting
7:00 p.m. 8253 Green Road

November 20, 2007(Tues)
Working Meeting
7:00 p.m. WS Town Hall

December 17, 2007(Mon)
Board of Trustees
7:00 p.m. 8253 Green Road

January 22, 2007(Tues)
Working Meeting
7:00 p.m WS Town Hall

February TBD 2008
Special Program At West Sparta Methodist Church and annual Meeting of Members, Trustees, and Guests

West Sparta Historical Society C/O Sarah L. Booher
8253 Green Road, Dansville, NY 14437
Telephone: 585 335 5094 email: gefbooher@stny.rr.com

President - Sarah Booher

Vice President - Barbara Nagle

Secretary - Jean Hallock

Treasurer - Susan Erdle

Trustees - Alice Burdick, Cinda Beckwith, Robert Hallock

Advisor - David Palmer, Town Historian

FEEL LIKE YOU'RE MISSING OUT?

Join the West Sparta Historical Society now. We'll be sure to let you know what is happening and send you our newsletter by email or regular mail. If you have a working email system please include your email address as that is how we do most of our communication. Here is how to become a member:

Fill in and return this form with your payment made out to: West Sparta Historical Society.

Mail to West Sparta Historical Society c/o Sarah Booher, President, 8253 Green Road, Dansville, NY 14437.

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Tel: Home _____ Work _____ Cell _____

Email Address: _____

I prefer to be contacted by: Regular Mail _____ Email _____ Other _____

Choose from one category below. You may choose either an **Annual Membership** or a **Contributing Membership**. We welcome Contributing Members who give support over and above annual dues. Membership runs from January 1 to December 31st each year.

Please specify year: 07 ____ 08 ____.

Annual Membership Categories:

Individual \$10.00 _____ Family \$15.00 _____ Business or Organization: \$20.00 _____

Contributing Membership Categories:

Supporter \$25.00 _____ Sustainer \$50.00 _____ Patron \$75.00 _____ Angel \$100.00 _____

Lifetime Membership \$500.00 _____

Dues and special support are not tax deductible as a charitable contribution at this time and until WSHS receives a ruling letter approving WSHS' tax exempt status under section 501(c) 3 of the Internal Revenue Code.