
ECHOS OF ELMA

ELMA HISTORICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

VOLUME XIII ISSUE 4

SUMMER 2013

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MUSEUM COMPLEX:

HURD HOUSE, EST. 1846 (655-0046; 652-9458)
BARN MUSEUM, EST. 2005
HURD & BRIGGS SAWMILL, EST. 2009
3011 BOWEN ROAD, P.O. BOX 84, ELMA, NY 14059-0084

MUSEUM HOURS:

OPEN 1:00 – 4:00 PM MOST THURSDAYS
1ST & 3RD SUNDAYS 1:00 – 4:00PM MAY THRU SEPTEMBER
BY APPOINTMENT CALL 652-9458
DONATIONS ACCEPTED

E-MAIL ADDRESS: elmahistory@aol.com

MONTHLY MEETINGS:

2ND MONDAY OF THE MONTH AT 7:00 PM AT THE SENIOR CENTER
UNLESS NOTED OTHERWISE

OFFICERS:

MARLENE BAUMGARTNER, PRESIDENT (652-9458)
ROSE SPERBER, VICE PRESIDENT (652-6959)
LEITA REED, SECRETARY (655-4448)
JEAN NEWTON, TREASURER (652-9274)

TRUSTEES:

FRANK MACIEJEWSKI, BUILDINGS & GROUNDS (652-6256)
FRED STREIF, MILL OPERATIONS (675-6320)
PATTY BURDETTE, FUND RAISING (655-0695)
EILEEN HOLDEN: HOSTESS (652-0648)
BETTY BRAUN, MEMBERSHIP (683-5258)
MARGARET MACIEJEWSKI, SUNSHINE (652-6256)
KENNY SCHAFF, PUBLICITY (652-9458)

CURATORS:

HAROLD BONIFACE, ASSISTANT CURATOR (655-4400)

HONORARY TRUSTEE: DENNIS POWERS, TOWN SUPERVISOR
(652-3260)

TOWN HISTORIAN: ROBERT NEWTON (652-9274)

WEBMASTER: KENNY SCHAFF (KENNYSCHF@AOL.COM)

WEB ADDRESS: www.elmanyhistory.com

SAWMILL WEB: WWW.ELMANYSAWMILL.COM

HURD HOUSE MUSEUM GIFT SHOP

Gold elm tree charm - \$50 – available at the Town Hall

Silver elm tree charm - \$25 – available at the Town Hall

History of East Elma by Henry Laughton Allen, 1942, \$5.00.

History of Elma NY from 1620 to 1901 by Jackman, 1902, \$20.00.

"It Is For Your Country" re Allen Hurd letters by Jackson, 2010, \$30.00

History of Elma NY for Children by Caitlin Edwards, 2009, \$4.00.

Add \$5 postage cost for shipping any item.

NOTE: Veterans, service men and women get 15% discount on all items except the charms in our gift shop.

SOCIETY CALENDAR

May 4th 2013 Sanborn Historical Society will tour our Complex. We will need help in all three buildings.

May 13, 2013 at the Senior Center Kenny Schaff will present a program on the moving of the Hurd House from where it stood on the grounds of the Elma United Methodist Church to its present site.

May 18, 2013 will be our Annual Tea. Reservations are required and a flyer is enclosed.

May 27, 2013 9:00 at the Elma Library – Memorial Day Parade. Please come and be in the parade – even if you can't walk the distance please come and ride in one of the cars.

June 9, 2013 is Elma Day with a **Car Show**. We will have a chicken BBQ fund raiser from 11am until sold out. Patty will need help and we will need volunteers in the barn, sawmill and house which will be open from noon until 4pm for the visitors. There will also be a **Flag Disposal Ceremony** at the barn at 2PM.

June 10, 2013 we are planning on a boat ride through the Lockport locks and dinner at Canalside. Reservations are required and a reservation sheet will be passed around at our May 13th membership meeting.

July 10th 2013 will be the first concert of the season and we will have a chicken BBQ from 4pm until sold out as a fund raiser. Terry Buchwald (Elvis) will provide the music and entertainment which is sponsored by the Town.

Sawmill Museum

Designed, built and installed a secondary bearing for the drive train. This will reduce some of the flexing of the main drive shaft during the sawing operation

Frank Maciejewski

Fred Streif

Building & Grounds

Eagle Scout Project – Ricky Gorczyca of Troop 290 has made his bid to accept building the split rail fence adjacent to the mill. Completion is tentatively scheduled for completion in late summer or early fall. Ricky still needs the approval of the scout leadership board before he can start work.

Looking for volunteers to perform maintenance work on the Hurd House Museum.

- Repaint side porch stairs
- Mortar in gaps in the sill joint
- Touch-up a few bare spots on the clap boards
- Investigate the feasibility and cost to manufacture and install shutters to the upstairs windows of the Hurd House

Frank Maciejewski

Barn Museum

Many items in the barn need repair. Can anyone volunteer to help?

Frank Maciejewski

Fred Streif

The Hurd House Museum

We have been busy sprucing up the museum for our annual tea and it is a constant labor of love taking care of the many articles of clothing. A new rod has been installed in one of the storerooms for the men's clothing which is helping to give us more space. All 16 rooms need TLC to provide a showcase for our community.

Docents are truly needed for the upcoming summer season. Please sign up for just three hours to act as a guide through the house. We begin our summer hours on May 4th. A guide sheet and short training session will be provided for you. It's a lot of fun meeting the visitors so please sign up to help.

The Thursday Crew

ERIE COUNTY FAIR

The theme this year is "Erie County Fair – Experience it" and will run from August 7th through August 18th. The Thursday Crew is working hard on the display and we really hope to be a winner this year.

In addition to our display we are extremely pleased to have two of our members taking part in book

signing at the Fair in the Historical Building. Bill Jackson will have the book he co-wrote: "It Is For Your Country" and Norm Sigrist will have his book "Two Quiet Heroes and One Grateful Son." This is a great opportunity for both authors and a real plus for our Society.

The Thursday Crew

MEMBERSHIP

10 years ago when the barn museum and the saw mill museum were just a dream we had 91 members. We are happy to announce that today we have 201 members. We have members in eleven states that not only pay dues but support us with records for our research library. This increase in membership has allowed us to be more visible in the community and could not have been accomplished without the hard work and support of each and every member.

Our dues renew June 30th. We wish to thank those annual paying members in advance for sending in your renewal dues. If a dot appears on your mailing label we did not receive your 2012 – 2013 dues and ask that you send in your renewal for two years to bring your membership current.

Membership is the backbone of any organization and your membership will help us continue to serve Elma as a productive and entertaining repository of Elma's past.

An application is included in this mailing and is also available on our website www.elmanyhistory.com.

Betty Braun, Membership

SUNSHINE REPORT

Sadly we lost members since our last newsletter. Leland Briggs passed away on October 29, 2012 and Mae Charlotte Yacobush passed away on January 19, 2013. Mae Charlotte served as president of our Society and then became Elma's Town Historian until 2002. Lee was active with the mill.

Betty McCormick was a life member and Christine Zawisky, who served as our president at one time, will also be remembered.

The flu season kept us busy with get well cards. Please call me at 652-6256 with any request for a "sunshine" card.

Margaret Maciejewski, Sunshine

SOCIETY SPECIAL REPORT

A meeting was held at the museum on March 19th with members of the Town Board, Conservation Board and Society present. We also welcomed guests from the Marilla Historical Society. The topic was the Comprehensive Local Government Program, CLGP, and our speaker was Tom Yots, Director of Preservation for Erie and Niagara Counties.

Our next meeting will be on May 2nd at 6:30 PM at the museum. A representative of the Preservation Department from Albany will come and we will learn more about how to save our historic properties and historic districts. The more members that attend this meeting will show the Town and NYS that we are serious about our Mission Statement. I am asking for your support at this meeting so please save the date.

The Elma Town Board is very supportive in this matter and we look forward to working with them and New York State to prevent the loss of another historic property.

Marlene Baumgartner

LIBRARY REPORT

We have had several genealogical requests that have been sent to us via e-mail. The Town Historian and the library try to find information for these requests or at the very least give the requester some other avenues to pursue. We are still looking for someone to index our scrapbooks. This would be a wonderful contribution to the research library and could then be put on the computer which would make people and events much easier to locate. Our current project is to sort and organize our many centennial 1957, 1976 national bi-centennial, quas-que centennial 1983 and sesquicentennial 2007 events.

Assistant Karin Brady will be out for several weeks due to surgery and we welcome Pat Evans who is helping with our current events and snapshot organization.

Leita W. Reed, Secretary

NEWTON'S TALES

When I was no more than 4 or 5 years old, the first thing I remember about the making of maple syrup was when my Grandfather Hopper would tap a few trees along the woods bank that led to Buffalo Creek. He had an old wagon that had wooden spokes in the wheels and it held two milk cans. He pulled it by hand to the bank along which he had tapped the trees. He then emptied the sap buckets into a pail and then carried it to where he poured it into the milk cans. He would then pull the wagon with the milk cans full of sap up to the house to boil down the sap. Our old farm house had an old wood stove in the laundry room and that's what he used to boil the sap into syrup. We didn't get a lot of syrup, but it was good anyway! He was in his 70's at the time.

My experience with the sugar bush (a woods in which sugar maples predominate) came when I lived in an apartment on Liberia Road in the early 1960s. In the spring my landlord would ask me if I wanted to go back in the woods and get ready to tap the trees. We would cut down some dead trees to get firewood to boil the sap. Dead trees were dry and cured so they would burn very well. Then we would be ready to tap the trees. We had a power drill to tap with and it went a lot faster than tapping by hand. We had a two wheel cart pulled by his tractor and it held a fifty gallon tank to collect the sap from the buckets which hung on the trees. We took it to the sugar shanty. In a day or so we collected enough sap to start boiling it. Wow! A lot of steam came out of the sugar shanty all day long and into the night. There was an old neighbor who helped with the syrup making and he would stay and keep the sap boiling all night long if it was necessary. There was a jug of Mayer Bros. Hard cider in the shanty and it kept him going. It would last him about a week! We made enough syrup to sell to neighbors, relatives and customers that wanted it. It was nice to get out and about in the spring and hear the geese flying north. I enjoyed the sounds of the spring birds as they arrived and would sing their songs.

If you would like to see how maple syrup is done today, there are many places that have open houses during maple weekend around the area.

Your Town Historian remembering, *Bob Newton*

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

During these past seven years as your president we have really grown to be a Society that the community is proud of. I want to share some of these accomplishments with you. Our volunteers and your Board have had a wonderful working relationship as evidenced by the following:

With the help of volunteers and at no cost to the Town we have built the barn that was Harry Carlson's dream and houses a Jerge carriage, a Jerge farm wagon, farm implements, and many items from Bleek's Post Office, Briggs Dairy equipment and farm equipment outside as well. Plans are under way to enlarge the barn.

With the help of volunteers and again at no cost to the town we have built a sawmill that was Edie Boller's dream. This building houses a water wheel and a working sash saw which is only one of four east of the Mississippi River. This summer we will build a shelter near the saw mill to showcase a 1830s wheel from the Northrup Mill.

Thanks to our Thursday Crew, when visitors walk into the Hurd House it looks like a home in the 1800s. The appearance is that you step back in time and our museum never looked better. Our Native American display has Elma's Iroquois artifacts that date back 4000 years. The Thursday Crew has performed an excellent job of organizing our artifacts.

Our volunteers have spent many months categorizing the artifacts in the storerooms and today if we want or need a specific item we know exactly where it is.

Upstairs in the house is a ca mid 1800s bedroom display with a rope bed and many items from the 1800s. Another room features military artifacts from the Civil War through Viet Nam.

Downstairs we have a research library that includes all the deeds, court papers, photos and important documents that were previously stored in cabinets and boxes. Visitors come from all over the country, both in person and via e-mail, to get information on properties and genealogy records of their families. We are extremely proud of our library.

We now have a historical marker for our museum site listing the many names Elma has had since the Indians had their village there.

We find that the community is very happy to make worthwhile donations of artifacts and have also been generous with monetary donations. Our list of artifacts, which includes books, valuable papers,

etc. in the three buildings number well over 15,000. And, let's not forget the Garden Club that tends the herb garden next to the house.

We now have a computer program, Past Perfect, that is designed specifically for museums and 75% of the artifacts and documents etc are now recorded on the computer. The data that is available to a person doing research is amazing. Using the computer to record a deed allows the researcher to also get information on the property and the people that lived there. Each person has their own file with as much genealogical history and as many photographs on the system as we have and in some cases a person doing research may not need to go to the paper file. Each artifact, together with a photograph of the artifact, has its own file on the computer as well and the artifact may be linked to a specific location or event for more information.

We have two websites, one dedicated only to the saw mill. Over 30,000 "hits" have come in from all over the world.

As you can read in the Membership Report, our membership has grown and the visitors have increased due to the events in the park and the fact our museum complex is interesting to see. As a result of all this support we are pleased to announce that we had 3,337 visitors to our museum complex during 2012. Without the strong leadership of your officers and trustees, together with our volunteers, none of this would have happened, and we would not have the wonderful museum complex that showcases Elma's history.

Marlene Baumgartner

