



Half-Shire Historical Society Newsletter

The Towns of Half-Shire:

Albion...Amboy...Boylston...Camden...Florence...Mexico...Montague...
New Haven...Orwell...Osceola...Parish...Redfield...Richland...Sandy Creek...Williamstown

September 2020

Preserving History in the Eastern Lake Ontario Region of NY since 1972

Vol. XLVI No. 3

Tracking Down the Sweet but Sad Legacy of Union Private Willet J. Rathbun of Parish By Daniel Lee

My fondness of the North Country is rooted in boyhood memories of my grandparents, Chester and Doris (Rathbun) Lee. They ran a dairy farm and later had a shorefront home on Pillar Point, Jefferson County. My grandparents have long ago passed on, but I still visit Pillar Point every year with my family from our home in Indiana.

My grandmother was our family's historian, writing her memoir and a history of Pillar Point. As a boy, I remember her showing me copies of letters by and about my great-great-great-uncle, Willet Job Rathbun (1844-1864), a farm boy from Parish who died in the Civil War. He'd leave home in 1862 at the age of 17 as part of the 110th Regiment New York State Volunteers. He'd die in 1864 in Key West, Florida. As a boy, I made copies of some of the letters and kept them for decades tucked inside a Civil War history book.

This year, I started to read and reread the letters. First, I gave a message at my church about them, since many of the letters are religious and eloquent in discussing suffering and death. In March, when I started spending more time at home because of the pandemic, my research intensified. I realized this was a coming-of-age journey within the conflict that defined America. Young Willet squared his sense of duty with the cruelties of war and suffering of disease. Willet was one of eight children of Job Rathbun (1807-1900) and the former Electa Hallady (1818-1890), both are buried in Mexico, N.Y.

I decided Willet's story had the makings of a compelling book. My working title is "Noble Son: The Life and Death of Willet J. Rathbun."

On December 1, 1862, days after his 18th birthday, he'd write these words to his parents from Fortress Monroe in Virginia: "When I left home to go off, alone as you might say, without anyone to look after me or care for me, I left with a strong determination... to stand right up in all cases and do my duty and do the best I could, not only for my country but for you and myself too, and to shun all bad habits. I have kept up that determination-so that when I come home I can hold my head up and not be ashamed of what I have done." Days later, he'd depart for disease-stricken Louisiana, eventually ending up in Key West.

Noble is not a word used much today. Yet it seems fitting here, for it is how Willet's commanding officer described him in the letter informing Willet's parents of their son's death. His brief life still speaks, not as a hero but as a teenager trying to be the person he believed he should be amid a fallen and tragic world.

Telling a story that happened 156 years ago takes a great deal of work. My research has led me to the Half-Shire Historical Society, of which I'm now a member. Local historians Shawn Doyle, Florence Gardner, Natalie Joy Woodall, and Bridget Swartz have been helpful. I've made two trips in recent months from Indiana to Parish for research, even finding the Rathbun's possible homestead site on Sparhawk Road. I've also tracked down the only known photograph of Willet. It was taken in 1862 when he was at Camp Patterson Park in Baltimore. His youthful determination. His neatly combed hair. I felt a sweet sadness upon seeing his photograph for the first time.



Willet mailed 18 known letters home between September 7, 1862, about two weeks after leaving home, and May 11, 1864, a little more than a month before he died. Of those, 17 are in my planned book. One envelope was preserved with no letter inside. *Cont'd on p.3*

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Half-Shire Membership: Annual Dues are \$15 per year, \$50 for supporting membership, \$400 life membership payable to Half-Shire c/o P.O. 73 Richland, New York 13144-0073.

The Half-Shire Historical Society

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Phone: 315-298-2986; halfshire@hotmail.com <http://www.halfshire.com>, Facebook: "Half Shire"

Founded on November 15, 1972; NYSED charter: Provisional-Dec. 1973; Permanent-Feb. 1978

Officers (2018-2020) with terms of office expiration

President (2020)	Shawn P. Doyle, 85 Lake St, Pulaski, NY 13142	315-298-3620	spdinpul@hotmail.com
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Treasurer (2020)	Betty Warren, 2785 Co. Rte. 2, Richland, NY 13144	315-298-2975	Bettybjwarren@aol.com
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Board of Trustees (2019-2020) with terms of office expiration

Albion (2020)	Florence Gardner, P.O. Box 394, 312 Bridge St, Altmar, NY 13302	315-298-5723	(no email)
Amboy (2020)	Lori E. Monette, 1847 Co. Rte. 6, Fulton, NY 13069	315-657-3579	gratefullyadopted@yahoo.com
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Osceola/Montague (2021)	Leona Chereshnoski, 1075 Comins Rd., Redfield, NY 13475	315-599-8836	lchere@hughes.net
Parish (2021)	Venita Ackley, 422 Kipp Rd. Parish, NY 13131	315-382-6529	ackleyv@gmail.com
Redfield (2022)	(Vacant)		
Richland (2022)	Robin Philips, 102 Ivans Rd., Pulaski, NY 13142	315-298-7279	designsofelegance@netzero.net
Sandy Creek (2022)	Margaret Kastler, 1695 Co. Rte. 15, Lacona, NY 13083	315-387-5209	kastlerm@hotmail.com
Williamstown (2022)	Glenna Gorski, P.O. Box 54, Co. Rte. 17N. Williamstown, NY 13493	315-964-2393	lgorski@frontiernet.net
Trustee-at-Large (2020)	Barb Monette, 75 East Seneca St., Oswego, NY 13126-1123	315-343-2470	bmone14159@aol.com
Trustees Emeritus	Julie Robst, 1100 Druid Rd. East, Apt. 511, Clearwater, FL 33756	727-276-4375	keeperofthetree@aol.com
	Liz Grant, 722 Co. Rte. 47, Redfield, NY 13437	315-599-7735	(no email)

President's Report, Shawn Doyle—

We are alive and well here at Half-Shire. We hope also our readers and members are all in good health as the Pandemic continues to spike across the nation. While some areas of the nation see unrest, there certainly are advantages to living in a rural area. I will take the snow here and cold over the rest of the country.

Our forefathers and mothers who "stuck it out" in the Tug Hill/Eastern Lake Ontario region were a hardy lot. I am reminded of their sacrifice and determination to carry on and grow their communities as we continue to research the rich histories of the Williamstown women for the upcoming book. Women's histories have always been difficult due to the relative lack of records and reliance on oral history. Williamstown Historian Glenna Gorski, Anne LaDuke and Becky Kennedy have seemed to bridge this gap by uncovering so much more than was earlier known and available. The book has been delayed, but not due to working on it (which is a daily task for the four core researchers, myself included) but due to our "raising the bar" to dig deeper into our stories and to add more ladies than we had first planned. We are excited for our work, and anxious to get volume one out to the public soon.

Meanwhile, other work has continued here at Half-Shire and outside of our building. Julie Litts Robst is winding down her work on the Orwell Cemetery book which is now going to be a two-volume set; Venita Ackley has finished her inventory of our family files and books which will soon be available online. Angela

Moonan our new webmaster has been finishing up the new website which we hope to launch soon. Vice President Greg Monette has updated his inventories of our SW classroom, Regnar-Balcom Library and the Southwell community Research room.

Librarian Sharon Turo has settled into the new Pomeroy Family History Research room and has been making adjustments to shelves and working Tuesdays from there along with Venita.

Security system contractor Shane Thompson was awarded the bid for work with our new upgrades following two successful grant awards totaling \$4,500 that will allow us to completely enable wifi in the building and out on to the front lawn and parking area to further assist the local schools and families in the immediate area with uploads/downloads of homework when working from home. The upgrades began on September 6th and went live on the 7th. Also included are new security cameras for the back and north sides of the building and two new PCs and software upgrades, and some electrical work. We have truly settled into a twenty-first century existence here now!

All of the officers are grateful to the Greater Pulaski Community Fund, The William Pomeroy Foundation and the Museum Association of New York for their confidence in us with these grants. We have enjoyed a great working relationship with Pulaski School District Superintendent Tom Jennings and Mike Davis from the IT department.

Special thanks also go out to all of our members and supporters who rose to the summer 2020 fundraising challenge and assisted us in our "match" for the MANY/Pomeroy grant. This now has surpassed \$3,000.

Thanks to the Village of Pulaski and PROP (Preservation, Revitalization of Pulaski) we will be soon be receiving the old wood kiosk that has sat on the NE corner of Pulaski South park and housed the community message board and places for public notices. PROP has acquired monies to construct a new kiosk in south park, and as part of the Pulaski/Richland Comprehensive plan a structure like this was envisioned for Richland hamlet.

The Town of Richland crew has graciously agreed to help move the wooden kiosk and set it in place. Our plan is to manage the message board, place an area map on the side for bicyclists, and some information about Half-Shire and the region for passing tourists. Further into 2021, we hope to run power to this kiosk for lighting. With our new WIFI, it will be a great shelter for passersby to be able to connect to the net.

The Central Air system on our first floor was completed this summer after a two-year HVAC project. The environment is so much better for our volunteers and eliminates the dampness we confronted on the first floor for so long. Air flow on this floor is now very good. Thank you again to the Greater Pulaski Community Fund for providing the bulk of the funding for this project.

As 2020 moves into autumn despite the hardships of the year, your Historical Society and its workers have persevered and really accomplished quite a lot. What we miss most is our guests that normally fill our rooms in the summertime. Operating a small Farmers' Market in Richland from June through the fall has brought in a few additional guests, but by and large our visitor numbers are down due to understandable health concerns.

We wish all of our members and friends a safe and healthy autumn, and hope everyone in the north can get out and drive to enjoy nature's handiwork in the changing leaves and foliage.

Private Willet J. Rathbun *cont'd. from p.1*

He wrote on varying types of paper in pencil and ink. After Willet's death, the bundle of small envelopes was tied with a strip of ribbon by his mother for safekeeping.

What's more, there are several other letters about Willet sent to his parents, Job and Electa. One is by Joseph Kern of Parish, who also died while serving in the 110th Regiment. Four others are letters by a friend of Willet's from Key West, Joseph W. Roberts, sent after Willet's death. My ancestor, Fred Wright, carefully organized and typed the collection of letters along with additional information about them in 1943. His work has been invaluable to my efforts.

Willet's story is poignant and important. It deals with suffering and disease, the top killer of Union soldiers,

and soldiers whose principal duty was not battle but acting as an often resented occupational force in the South. My book will include the experiences of other men from Oswego County who served with Willet in the 110th Regiment.



Visit Daniel Lee at Daniellandinlee.com for more information. Please contact him at dleehoss@yahoo.com if you have any information about the 110th Regiment NYSV.

REMEMBERING FRIENDS

(Half-Shire volunteers clip from the Pulaski, Camden and Watertown newspapers weekly and scan the internet for death notices of significance to the area. We have a comprehensive index available online under our website. From this large quantity we select significant deaths that touched our organization, officers, members or communities. We endeavor to try to represent our twelve towns and its people in all we do and this small selection is just a sample of our weekly additions.)

Edith Stevens Caster (Sep 26 1942-May 31 2020) Born the daughter of the late Leland "Steve" & Minnie (Vrooman) Stevens, Edie was a member of the Sandy Creek class of 1960. She married Jack Caster and together they operated Caster's sawmill north of Sandy Creek. She is survived by 2 children Yogie and Lori, 6 grandchildren, 3 great-grandchildren and siblings Nancy and Robert. Edie and Jack have been members of our organization, and great supporters of the Oswego County Fair.

Reatha Halsey Spedding (Nov 17 1925-Jun 5 2020) Born in Richland daughter of Earl & Marion (Stowell) Halsey, she was married to the Clifford Spedding (1923-2010). Survivors include daughter Joan LaVeck, H-S member, two grandsons, 5 great grands and 2 great, great-grands.

Dorothy Barker LeClair (Dec 20 1922-Jun 23 2020) Born in Boylston the daughter of Oren & Edith (Burt) Barker, Dorothy was a graduate of Adams Free Academy in 1939. She married Harold LeClair in 1946, and he passed away in 1966. Dorothy worked alongside her husband and three children on the family farm in Mannsville and later was a clerk in Wheeler's Drug Store in Lacona.

Lewis Ewart Sr. (Dec 15 1941-Jun 24 2020) Born in Pulaski the son of Robert & Leola (Keeney) Ewart, Robert was a member of the Pulaski Class of 1959. He worked at Camden Wire for 39 years and was on the company softball team until age 65. Lew was proud of his Tug Hill roots and enjoyed many years at his camp on Keeney family lands until poor health brought him permanently to the "flat lands" as he called them. He is survived by four daughters and two sons, with a third son having died last year. Lewis was a longtime member and supporter of Half-Shire.



Linda Smith Hutton (Nov 18 1949-Jul 1 2020) Born in Lowville the daughter of Leslie & Elizabeth (Barber) Smith, Linda was educated in Gouverneur where she graduated in 1968. She married Jack Hutton that year and they raised a family of three children who survive. Jack passed away in 2012. Linda is also survived by brothers Ben Jones and Herb Smith and sisters Nancy Dingman (H-S member) and Cheryl Washburn.



Marilyn Cone Marks (Mar 28 1934-Jul 2 2020) Born in Toledo, Ohio to Robert & Lydia Cone, Marilyn moved to Mexico in her youth, and won the title "Miss Mexico" in a 1951 pageant. She was predeceased by her husband of many years, Rev. Charles Marks, with whom she had four children. Marilyn was active in historical preservation and research. She served as Vice President of the Mexico Historical Society. Marilyn was a tireless promoter of our area and was an original hostess for the "Welcome Wagon" of years past. She will long be remembered for her singing voice, featured in the choirs of various Methodist churches as well as chorus and opera groups across the region.

David Lee Wilson (Jan 29 1951-Jul 3 2020) Born the son of John & Emma (Grier) Wilson, David was raised in the hamlet of Richland where his family conducted a store. Dave was married to the former Carol Brown. They moved to North Carolina a few years ago. His death was a sad surprise to his many friends in the area. His widow sent a generous donation, and we will have a memorial brick in his memory.

Audrey Koster Hathway (Jul 17 1925-Jul 4 2020) Born in Theresa, NY the daughter of William & Ethel (Allen) Koster, Audrey graduated from West Carthage Schools. She married Richard Hathway and had four children. Audrey worked for NYS DOT many years, and following retirement was an active volunteer for the Nature Conservancy. Among her survivors and close friends are several Half-Shire members.

Kenneth House (May 12 1926-July 5 2020) Born in Mallory to Harold & Keitha (Hoyt) House, Ken was a 1943 graduate of Central Square High School. He was the eighth generation of the House family on his farmland. Ken operated a store in Caughdenoy many years, and later went to work as a meat cutter in the Mexico Big M and other Oswego County groceries. Among his survivors are three sons and two daughters and many people with great memories of a life well lived.

Selma Cramer Rowland (Nov 27, 1922-Jul 6 2020) Born in Little Falls to William & Leila (Dinehart) Cramer. Selma was educated at SUNY Oswego and earned her master's in Education at Syracuse University. A long-time teacher in Phoenix Schools, Selma was an active historian and served as Parish Historian for St. Stephen's Catholic Church in Phoenix. She was a strong advocate for libraries and annually petitioned on behalf of the Oswego County Libraries for public funding. Selma leaves a rich legacy of volunteerism.

Sheila Zufelt Frazier (Aug 12 1959-Jul 7 2020) Born the daughter of William & Rosalie (Walters) Zufelt, Sheila graduated in 1978 from Pulaski. She was married in 1989 to Paul Frazier of Pulaski by whom she has one daughter Melissa.

Barbara McConnell Harvey (Aug 14 1937-Jul 7 2020) Born in Fort Myers, Florida the daughter of Cleveland & Betty (Anderson) McConnell. She graduated from Sandy Creek in 1955. She was married to the late Mark Harvey with whom she raised eight children. The Harvey family are well known and very involved in the Sandy Creek community.

George Bibbins (Aug 3 1924-Jul 9 2020) Born in Pinckney, Lewis County, NY the son of Clarence & Cora (Brown) Bibbins, Clarence was a graduate of Adams Center Schools. He worked the family farm in Tylerville alongside his father, taking it over and operating it until 1960. Married to the former Beverly Greene who passed in 2018, the Bibbins' were well known

across Tug Hill. He was honored by the Tug Hill Commission as a "Sage of Tug Hill" a few years back. George will long be remembered by his family and host of acquaintances across the region.



Dan Colvin (Jul 17 1948-Jul 13 2020) Born in Pulaski the son of Lynn C. Colvin & Lucille (Holcomb) Colvin, Dan's family have deep roots here. His death occurred in Lake, Mississippi where he had been living since 1982. Besides his wife of 51 years Donna Hannah, Dan leaves a daughter Michele Rogers, H-S member, and son Bill Colvin, one granddaughter, three step grandsons and his sister in law our Secretary, Fay Colvin. Dan was a retired Deputy Sheriff and a US Navy Veteran. Our sincere sympathy to the family.

Justin Cronk (Oct 22, 1987, Jul 17, 2020) Born the son of the late Faron Cronk and Julie Miller-Cronk, Justin's unexpected death drew a pall of sorrow over his family and friends who were still reeling from his father's passing the year before. Our thoughts are with the entire Miller family.

Glenn Kreglogh (Jun 27 1923-Jul 17 2020) Born in Clifton Springs, NY the son of Willis & Sarah "Beth" (Harland) Kreglogh, Glenn was a Navy veteran of WWII. He retired from American Can in Geneva, NY and was married Alice Pray who passed before him. Glenn and Alice had two daughters, Christine Wheaton and Dorothy "Dottie" McLaughlin of Williamstown. Dottie is a donor of ours, and is known to many as the widow of Dave Balcom (1944-2006).

Rose Paryzch Driscoll (Jun 23 1928-Jul 31 2020) Born in Syracuse to Anthony & Margaret Parzych, Rose married Thomas Driscoll. The couple later moved to Sandy Creek where they were active in promoting winter tourism in the Winona Forest of Boylston. She loved the outdoors and was recognized for her work in tourism promotion. Her 3 children and 7 grandchildren who survive have our deep sympathy.

Dawn Waterbury King (Jan 27 1942-Aug 3 2020) Dawn was born in Oswego the daughter of William & Thelma (Whitmore) Waterbury. She attended Sandy Creek Schools and was married to Francis Bouchard by whom she had five children. She married Paul King in later years. Besides her children, 15 grandchildren and 23 great-grandchildren Dawn is survived by three sisters. Dawn was a long-time bus driver for Pulaski School District and is well-remembered.



Nancy Forbes Hilton (Jan 16 1948-Aug 9 2020) Nancy was born in Parish, the daughter of Phillip & Darcy (Davey) Forbes, former owners of "Phil and Darcys" in Richland and "Forbes" in Mapleview. Nancy was married to Cliff Hilton of Pulaski in 1965, and together they raised a family of five children. Following the sad death of daughter Darcy in 2014 after a long struggle with Cystic Fibrosis, Nancy's health declined. She was cared for in her last days by her beloved husband Cliff and their children and grandchildren along with other skilled care. Several members of this family are among our members, and we will be dedicating a brick in Nancy's name next summer.

Jonathan Wood (May 12 1994-Aug 11 2020) Jonathan was the son of George & Laurie (Thomas) Wood of Pulaski and a 2012 graduate of school there. His passing is mourned by friends and family and a community that has seen too many youths pass in their prime in these challenging times. Jon's

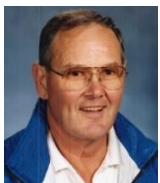
grandparents Valerie, and the late Bob Thomas are past members of ours.

Frank Trendell (Dec 8 1927-Aug 13 2020) Born in Syracuse the son of William and Rosina (Thomas) Trendell, Frank's family had come to the US from Surrey and Cornwall in England. He was educated in E. Syracuse and earned a degree in civil engineering from Syracuse University in 1951. Frank married the former Eleanor Zufelt of Pulaski and together the couple raised a family of five children who survive them. Frank and Eleanor were very active in Pulaski Historical Society and belonged to our group. Frank will be remembered for his steady hand managing Sand Hill Cemetery in Daysville and helping facilitate the transfer of the cemetery and records to the Town of Richland.

Janice Wansink Beck (Dec 27 1933-Aug 15 2020) Born in South Richland the daughter of John & Helen (Lacey) Wansink, Janice was a member of Pulaski's class of 1951. She was educated at Syracuse University and was a Dietician many years, later earning another degree in Teaching with Stroudsburg State College, and embarking on a teaching career in Wilson Borough Pennsylvania where she settled with her husband, the late Harold Beck, Sr. Jan was active in her community, serving on her local Library Board, the DAR and working with the ProjecT Adult Literacy Program and Senior meal delivery in her area. Among her survivors are her son Harold Jr. of Texas and daughter Dorcas of Colorado; one sister Betty Black of Dallas, Oregon and the Wansink nieces and nephews in our region, among our members and donors.

Thomas Patrick Roche (Jul 22 1946-Aug 15 2020) Born the son of John and Joan (Jordan) Roche of Syracuse, Thomas was a great-grand son of Captain William O'Toole whom we wrote about in the last newsletter. Many of the Roche family are members of Half-Shire, Tom's sister Barbara Gaines has been a frequent correspondent of ours.

Deborah Yerdon (Feb 6 1959-Aug 24 2020) Born in Oswego the daughter of Eugene & Nellie (Stevens) Yerdon, Deb attended Clinton High School and Mohawk Valley Community College. For a time, she lived and worked in Virginia and had returned to Oswego County several years ago to be near family, working in retail. She was very close to her nieces and nephews, siblings. Several of this family are members of Half-Shire.



Grant G. Decker (Oct 8 1943-Aug 25 2020) The death of a coach in a small school district is always something that brings a community together in mourning. Facebook was alive on Aug 26th with news that APW school district had lost their beloved basketball coach of 40 years. Grant Decker was born in Malone, NY the son of Stewart & Doris (Daggett) Decker. A graduate of Brushton-Mona HS and SUNY Brockport, he was a Physical Education teacher, Varsity Track, Cross Country and Basketball coach for APW for over 40 years. Coach Decker will long be remembered by the youth he mentored in that rural district, and his family have the sincere sympathy of those of us at Half-Shire.

Barbara Keeney Mandigo (Apr 17 1915-Aug 27 2020) Born in Genoa, NY the daughter of Noble & Ellen (Bacon) Keeney, Barb was a 1932 graduate of Genoa HS and a 1937 graduate of Cornell University. It was at Cornell that she met her husband Richard Mandigo (1917-2010) of Pulaski. The Couple wed and set up housekeeping on the old Stewart farm

between Pulaski and Richland. Barb was employed by Oswego County Cooperative Extension, and later the Oswego County Department of Social Services. Barb is best known for her incredible years as a volunteer. An 81-year member of the Grange, 81-year member of the DAR, a 77-year member of Oswego County Farm Bureau, 17-year Village of Pulaski Historian and leader of the "Spring Brook Hustlers" 4-H group for 35 years. Barb impacted countless lives by her service.



Before COVID struck Barb contacted us about some information on early schools for a "talk" she was preparing in her senior community. She was a longtime member and benefactor of Half-Shire, and the Pulaski Historical Society.

The Mandigos had six sons who survive, along with many descendants and an array of close friends around the globe. The Mandigos hosted AFS students from abroad and nurtured the program here Pulaski. They later travelled in retirement and visited many of these students, as well as many nations. Upon each return they would share their experiences in talks and local news articles. Barb famously told how she shook the hand of a Civil War veteran who had shaken the hand of Lincoln. She also met Eleanor Roosevelt as a student at Cornell. Barb leaves an amazing legacy and a wealth of fond memories for those who knew her.

Joan Nutting McNitt (Oct 24 1943-Aug 27 2020) Born in Pulaski the daughter of Arthur & Florence (King) Nutting, Joan was a graduate of Pulaski Schools in 1961 and later married Elmer McNitt who passed away in 1999. Joan worked 44 years at the C & M diner in Pulaski that once stood on the SE corner of I-81 and Rte. 13. She was known by many, and her four children, and large extended family and wide circle of friends have our deep sympathy.

Shirley Rowe North (May 28 1950-Aug 31 2020) Born in Pulaski the daughter of Donald & Charlotte (Murray) Rowe, Shirley and her husband Robert North were both graduates of the Pulaski Class of 1968. The couple was well-known in the area, Bob serving as a long-time town official including several years as Town Clerk (a favorite for researchers to work with!). Shirley was an Onondaga Public Health employee for 32 years before retirement. Besides her husband and best friend Bob, Shirley is survived by their two daughters, four grandchildren and her sister Brenda DeGone. Shirley's mom Charlotte was an active correspondent of ours, and Bob has always been a great supporter of history in our region. We will miss Shirley's smile and kind manner.

John C. Bucher (Aug 9 1964-Sep 8 2020) Born in Kane, Pennsylvania the son of Joseph and Myra (Treusdell) Bucher, John was employed by Oswego County as the Director of Facilities and Technology. He was previously employed by Oswego Hospital for more than 30 years. His tragic death just as we were going to press was all the more shocking as we were writing him a thank you letter for his help in transferring the Oswego Newspaper collection here last month. He was a good man and took his job very seriously. He loved Oswego County and was a great custodian of our buildings. He had a goal to see the Barclay Courthouse in Pulaski brought "back up to snuff" and spoke to Shawn on occasion on the building's history and past uses. John is survived by his wife Mary, two children and three brothers. Our sincere condolences to the family, John's passing was a loss to our County.

PANDEMIC/SUMMER 2020 MEMBER NEWS AND VIEWS CENTERFOLD

Caroline Stainton of Pulaski was this year's recipient of the Erma Potter Schroeder \$500 Community Service Scholarship. When Erma was running the kitchen & needed help for an event, she always asked "can we get Caroline?" From the time Caroline was 12 she has assisted us at dinner dances, special events & most recently served as our Snow Scholar. She is now attending Elmira College for Criminal Justice & Legal studies.

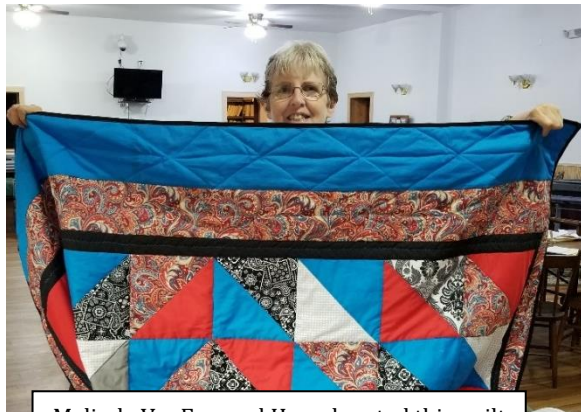


Barb & Jim Joslyn in the Park in Pulaski on Friday July 24th.

Member Janice Wilcox of Henderson visited on Jul 31st & brought in a nice collection of photos of her family in Pulaski as well as her late husband Rev. William Wilcox's time as a Methodist minister in Westdale, Amboy & Williamstown.



John & Helen (Lacey) Wansink with their children Dirk, Betty & Janice in the 1940s. Betty, the last survivor of the Fernwood family is a frequent correspondent. Janice recently passed away5



Melinda VanEgmond Hare donated this quilt she made this summer while staying with her mother, Natalie., for our December raffle.



On Au. 4th we were visited by Janet Menter Garlock of Tulsa Oklahoma who is the daughter of the late Linus & Bellie (Youngs) Menter formerly of Daysville & Parish. She was led to their graves in Pleasant Lawn Cemetery in Parish by President Shawn Doyle & Parish Trustee, Venita Ackley,



Barb Fero of Syracuse & her brother Bob Bakeman of Boylston were our guests on Aug 8th.

Maggie Seeley & Don Bielewicz stopped by the Richland Farmers market on Aug 1st.



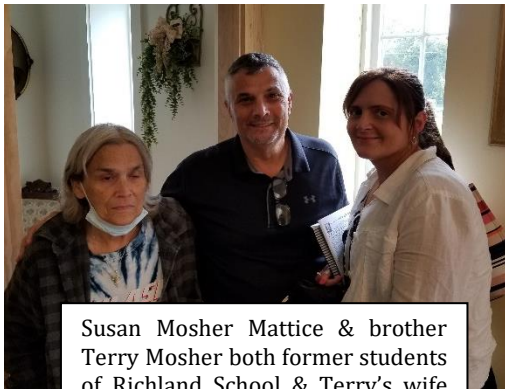
PANDEMIC/SUMMER 2020 MEMBER NEWS AND VIEWS CENTERFOLD



Marie Rainbolt of the US Census was on hand for the Richland Farmers Market on August 29th. We hope everyone has done their census...how else will your researching descendants find you in 100 years?



The August 22, 2020 meeting of the Society brought together a good number of friends and all but 4 of the 18 officers and Trustees. the meal was served and cleared by volunteers and COVID spacing was enforced.



Susan Mosher Mattice & brother Terry Mosher both former students of Richland School & Terry's wife Lisa visited the Society on Sep 5th.

Oswego County workers delivered the Oswego newspaper archives on Jul 27th. They are presently stacked on the stage while we prepare to rewrap them before storage in the Pomeroy Room.



Pat Kimber & Elaine Peeters. were in on Aug 17th. They shared research and visited.

Political correctness aside, what's a centerfold without pretty girls in swimsuits? Members & volunteers (L-R) Jennifer Munson Mooney, Kathy Robarge Hilton, Selena Hoyt Belser, Trustee Robin Warren Philips, Kelly Cummins Sharky & Anna Leib took time out to enjoy a warm summer day swimming & frolicking with others at Pulaski's Black Hole on the Salmon River. (other than the photo, we all floated apart during the day in view of COVID)



Valarie Williams & family gathered for a visit at Half-Shire before going to the Evergreen Cemetery in Orwell to visited the grave of Revolutionary War patriot Samuel Stowell (1762-1850), an ancestor of all present in the photo.



News and Contact Info from Across the Fifteen Townships

Albion—Florence Gardner, Historian and H-S Trustee: Box 394, Altmar, NY 13302. 315-298-5723.

Florence continues to work with researchers. She was the first person in our region to work with Dan Lee who authored our cover story, and she continues to look into the Rathbun family for him and for our files.

Amboy—Tim Kelley, Historian: 822 NYS Rte. 69, Williamstown, 13493. Phone/Fax: 315-964-1165. amboytownhistorian@gmail.com **H-S Trustee Lori E. Monette:** 1847 Co. Rte. 6, Fulton, NY 13069. 315-657-3579. gratefullyadopted@yahoo.com.

Boylston—Marcy Newman, Historian and H-S Trustee: 184 County Rte. 13, Lacona, NY 13083. 315-387-5458. marcyn@frontiernet.net

The annual Town picnic was cancelled due to the Pandemic. Marcy continues to work on files from Rita Rombach at Half-Shire as time allows. She donated a handsome cherry secretary to Half-Shire recently in honor of her late father.

Camden—Tim Nichols, Historian: 56 Harden Blvd., Camden, NY 13316. 315-245-1982; **Becky Kennedy, H-S Trustee:** 4939 N. Jefferson St., Pulaski, NY 13142. 315-298-0120. rkennedy62@yahoo.com

Camden's Pioneer Cemetery on Mexico Street near the center of town is a wonderful little gem. Members of the earliest Camden families are buried there. While wandering through the well-tended graves recently we marveled at the number of Revolutionary War veterans buried within the small enclosed area. One veteran's stone that caught our eye was that of Captain Joel Dunbar, whose life we wanted to explore.



Joel Dunbar was born on November 15, 1753 in Wallingford, New Haven County, Connecticut, the son of John Dunbar, III and Temperance Hall. He married the former Rebecca Curtiss on May 29, 1775 in Plymouth, Litchfield County, Connecticut, where they began their family. During the war Dunbar relocated his family to Vermont, and years later moved westward to Camden, NY. In April 1818 he initiated an effort to obtain a pension on his Revolutionary War service (\$-43,525). In his statement he recounted that he first enlisted in the Spring of 1775 and served until December that year, being discharged from Montreal in Canada. He re-enlisted in the Spring of 1776 and served until February 1777, stationed with the Connecticut troops at German Flatts and Ft. Stanwix where he recounted that the troops worked at fortifications. In the application

Bartholomew Pond also of Camden attested to Dunbar's second tour of duty as he also served alongside him.

In applying for the pension Dunbar mentioned he was blind in one eye as a result of Smallpox during his revolutionary War service. In September 1819 Dunbar was awarded \$96 a year, with arrears to 1818.

He lived on in Camden with his wife and children until his death on December 31, 1827.

The rank of Captain was not earned during the revolution, but in subsequent service in the New York State Militia in Camden, likely in the War of 1812 era. We are searching for more information on Joel Dunbar, and the other Camden Revolutionary War Vets. We have his pension printed out at Half-Shire.

Florence (Oneida County)—Sherry McNamara, Historian: 11899 Tompkins Corners, Florence Rd., Camden, NY 13316. 315-245-0487. **Doreen Tilton, H-S Trustee:** 12334 Florence-Redfield Rd., Camden NY 13316. 315-245-2760. Doreen_Tilton@yahoo.com

The Book committee has begun work on the Florence History Project at Half-Shire. George Link has done extensive work indexing the old printed maps that list landowners. Glenna Gorski has also made copies of the old town census to work with.

Mexico—Judy Greenway, Historian: 503 East Stone Rd, Mexico, NY 13144 315-963-9593. jumangree@yahoo.com **Louise Meyer, H-S Trustee:** 513 Co. Rte. 58., Mexico, NY 13114. 315-963-3652. llhjmeyer@gmail.com

The Mexico Historical community was saddened by the death of Marilyn Marks in July. The Historical Society continues to work on the old bank building next to the Starr Clark Tin Shop.

Montague—Dave Andolora, Historian: c/o 6353 Salmon River Road, Lowville NY 13367. **Leona Cheresnowski, H-S Trustee:** 1075 Comins Rd., Redfield, NY 13437. 315-599-8836. lchere@hughes.net

New Haven—Marie Strong, Historian: PO 141, New Haven, NY 13121. 315-963-3900. historian@newhavenny.com **Louise Meyer, H-S Trustee:** 513 Co. Rte. 58., Mexico, NY 13114. 315-963-3652. llhjmeyer@gmail.com

Marie Strong worked at home on Research during the summer.

Orwell—Rose Graham, Historian and H-S-Trustee: 1999 County Rte. 2, Orwell, NY 13426. 315-298-2070. rosemgrah@yahoo.com

Historian Rose Graham has been busy this summer sorting papers donated that detail the organization of the Evergreen Cemetery Association in the early days. Included in these papers were some records on the Orwell Hearse Company that operated over 150 years ago. Rose is working on a report that we will print in the

next issue on this fascinating topic. Rose has been a great help in editing the Evergreen Cemetery book.

Osceola (Lewis County)—Richard Ancalm, Historian: 681 Barker Rd., Camden, NY 13316. 315-599-7344. **Leona Chereshnowski, H-S Trustee:** 1075 Comins Rd., Redfield, NY 13437. 315-599-8836. lcchere@hughes.net

Leona has been busy in her time at home sorting family papers for copying at Half-Shire. She has also been working with people on some very interesting photos. We are grateful at Half-Shire for Leona's active interest in her town's history and the material she finds for us.



The Osceola Hotel has recently changed ownership, the famed Turtle races were sadly cancelled this year due to mass gathering concerns. The Hotel is

seen in this image from about 1910 when it was the "Temperance house".

Parish—Bridgett Swartz, Historian: P.O. Box 195, Parish, NY 13131. **Venita Ackley, H-S Trustee:** 422 Kipp Rd. Parish, NY 13131. 315-382-6529. ackleyv@gmail.com

The town Historical group is in the process of acquiring an antique coverlet woven by Cordelia Crim of Parish, New York in 1855 with the wool from her own sheep. It was also owned by Sarah Hollenbeck who was 92 years old in 1909. This arrangement was made through Mary Kay Stone at Oswego County Historical Society, to whom all in Parish are very grateful!

Redfield—Liz Grant Historian and H-S Trustee Emeritus: 722 Co. Rte. 47, Redfield, NY 13437. 315-599-7735.

The annual Old Home days were cancelled this year sadly. Like so many other events this year, this has hurt the fire departments ability to raise funds, as well as for the community to come together. The Department has offered takeout meals on a couple occasions.

Richland/Pulaski—Shawn Doyle, Town & Village Historian: 85 Lake St., Pulaski, NY 13142. 315-298-3620 or 602-6388. spdinpul@hotmail.com **Kevin Stewart, Deputy Town Historian:** junkyinny@gmail.com **Robin Philips, H-S Trustee:** 102 Ivens Rd., Pulaski, NY 13142. 315-298-7279. designsofelegance@netzero.net

Shawn continues to work at the Veteran biographies for the town, with particular focus on the 147th and 110th Regiments from The Civil War, as well as the Revolution and War of 1812 vets.

Snow Scholar Caroline Stainton is nearing the end of the Pulaski yearbook digitalization project, and next year will move on to other records.

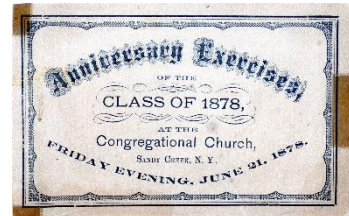
The Town Historian's office has been unavailable to use during COVID, and Shawn has worked from home and Half-Shire. Plans to visit Arkansas to pick up a large collection of Richland/Pulaski material to share with Oswego County Historical have been put on hold. We are all most anxious to get these records from the Bentley, Beadle and Wellman families.

Sandy Creek—Peggy Rice, Historian (Town, Village and Lacona): P.O. Box 52, Sandy Creek, NY 13145. 315-387-5456 x7. schistoriansandycreek@gmail.com Website: <http://SandyCreeknyhistory.com> **Margaret Kastler, H-S Trustee:** 1695 Co. Rte. 15, Lacona, NY 13083. 315-387-5209. kastlerm@hotmail.com.

Open hours for the History Room to be announced later. Contact information remains the same.

Sandy Creek Central School District Alumni Association—Sharon Turo '64, President: P.O. Box 256, Sandy Creek, NY. 315-387-3112. slturo@earthlink.net **Margaret Hollis Kastler '51, Historian:** 315-387-5209. kastlerm@hotmail.com

The Association historians are pleased to announce that our collection of class related documents and photographs from 1873 to 1940 have been scanned, cataloged, and preserved in archival sleeves, folders, and boxes. When completed, the original collection will be housed in the fire-safe room at the Sandy Creek Town Hall with digital and paper catalogs and albums available to the public in the Sandy Creek History Room or by appointment with the Alumni Association Historian. (Right, from our collection: the cover of the Class of 1878 Commencement Exercises Program.)



Williamstown—Glenna Gorski, Historian & H-S Trustee: P.O. Box 54, Williamstown, NY 13493. 315-964-2393. glgorski@frontiernet.net Historical Building open Tuesdays: 9 AM to 12 Noon.

Work on completion of Volume I of the Woman's book was delayed this summer due to the addition of more ladies, and the complexity of the task. The committee works daily from home and at least twice a week together. We appreciate the patience of those who want to get the book soon.

The Former Presbyterian Church in Williamstown, long abandoned was recently sold at County Tax auction. Residents are anxious to see if this once stately New England style structure will be rehabilitated.



McKinney Family Bible and Records of Redfield and Orwell

(Redfield/Orwell) In the 1980s our early trustees had the opportunity to xerox a ledger once owned by Chauncey McKinney, an early Redfield settler whose family later relocated to Orwell. The papers were later destroyed in a house fire, and our copies are the sole remaining set. This page torn from a family bible chronicles the dates of birth and deaths for this early family.

Many of the Bass descendants come down from this family, as do others in Orwell and around the nation.

Family Record (McKinney)

Births

Chauncey McKinney was born Aug 12, 1803
 Sophia D. Hunt was born July 21, 1803
 Dwight McKinney was born Mon February 22, 1830
 Albert McKinney was born Thurs Dec 13, 1831
 Fidelia McKinney was born Dec 9, 1833
 Julia Sophia McKinney and her twin brother was born Thursday July 21, 1836
 Elvira McKinney was born Mon August 29, 1842

Married

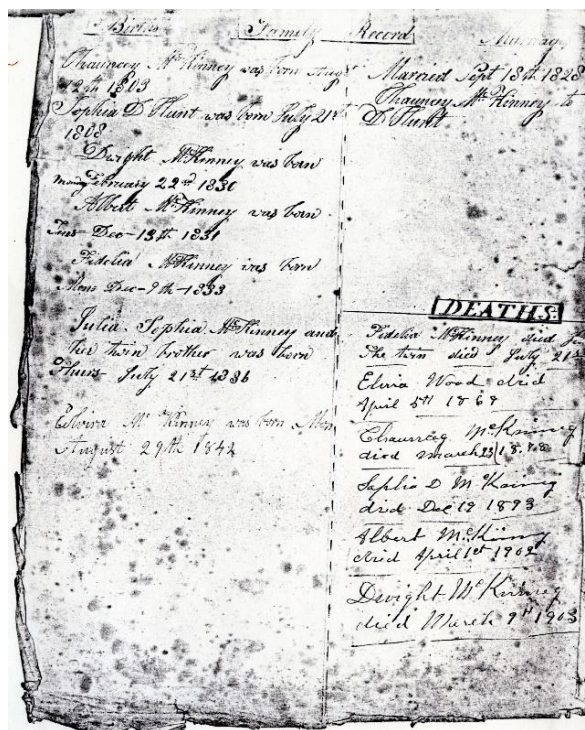
Sept 13, 1823 Chauncey McKinney to D. Hunt

Deaths

Fidelia McKinney died and Julia's twin both died July 21, (1836)
 Elvira Wood died April 5, 1859
 Chauncey McKinney died March 23, 1879
 Sophia D. McKinney died December 19, 1893
 Albert McKinney died April 1, 1902
 Dwight McKinney died March 9, 1903

Chauncey McKinney's Newspaper Obituary

Obituary - Thursday, April 10, 1879 Pulaski Democrat - Pulaski, New York - Died - McKinney - In Orwell, New York, March 24th, 1879, after a brief illness, Chauncey McKinney, (Born in Ellington, Tolland County Connecticut son of Alexander & Sarah (Talcott) McKinney) in the seventy-sixth year of his age. Deacon McKinney was for more than fifty years a well-known and much esteemed resident of Oswego County. Born in Tolland, Connecticut in 1803 in 1828, he married Miss Sophia D. Hunt and together they started immediately to make a home in the wild and sparsely settled town of Redfield, New York, where a few Connecticut people had preceded them. They found there two church organizations; and in 1831, Mr. McKinney made a profession of faith in Christ and united with the Presbyterian Church of Redfield, which the writer believes to be the oldest church in Oswego County. A residence of thirty-seven years in that town endeared him to a very large circle of friends. A member and trusted officer of the church, his daily life witnessed to the genuineness of his Christian profession and found him devoted to the interests of his Redeemer's kingdom. In 1866 he removed to the adjoining town of Orwell. There he and his son, Mr. Dwight McKinney, united their interests in the purchase and occupancy of one of the



finest farms in that prosperous town. He was soon chosen deacon of the Congregational church in Orwell, And his same sterling qualities of conscientiousness, honestly, kindness of heart, and faithfulness to Christian principle, made his service in the church invaluable and gave him a social influence in the town which was pronounced and widely felt. All esteemed him, all loved him; and upon the day of his funeral, it was a gathering of genuine mourners that crowded his home to pay the last tribute of respect to their honored dead. Although seventy-five years of age, he was not removed by his years from an active interest in all that concerned the welfare of this town. Almost to the day of his death, his counsel was sought and his service offered to his townsmen in the project of church improvement. He passed away quietly and peacefully. The Redeemer in whom he humbly trusted, had robbed death of his terror and his sting. Deacon McKinney leaves a widow with whom he spent more than fifty years of wedded life, two sons, and a married daughter, Mrs. A. G. Stowell of Mexico, New York.

*More information on this family and others in Orwell will be in the forthcoming book by Trustee Julie Litts Robst documenting the people and the families at rest in Evergreen Cemetery, Orwell, NY.

Guess who? Way Back:

The last "Guess Who" stumped everyone. Even the donors of the photo image didn't call. The photo was brought in to be copied in the fall of 2017 by Diane Sanderson Wilson and her sister, "Sis" Hilliker. The image is of the Ebenezer and Eliza Jane (Howard) Sanderson family. It was likely taken in the late 1890s.



These family members are ancestors to many of our Society members and scores of people in our region. The children in order of birth were James Sanderson (1859-1925); David Sanderson (1861-aft. 1930); Ellen S. Coon (1863-1905); Harrison Sanderson (1863-1945); Emogene S. Whitford (1866-1946); Eva. S. Fuller (1872-1941); George Sanderson (c1880); Frank Sanderson (1883-1947) and Burt Sanderson (1886-1961). The family lived in Scriba, and many settled in eastern Oswego County as time went on.

This month we have captured an image from a school group photo. This young lady lived in the Half-Shire region most of her life, and has a few members on our rolls among her relations.

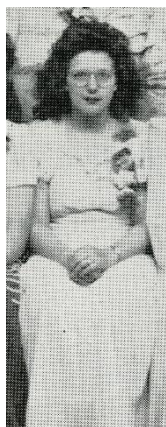
Do you know who she is? If you do, call 315-298-3620 or send an email to: halfshire@hotmail.com.

Winners will be selected from two mailing districts: People who live in zip codes beginning "13----" and all others. This is how the mail goes out. First call or email from each mailing district will earn a year's membership and a Half-Shire publication of their choice.

We are now accepting 2021 dues.

Several years ago, we changed our fiscal year from September 1 to January 1. However, we have continued over the years to begin solicitation for the next year's dues in September as we have since our founding.

2021 basic dues remain at \$15.00, supporting memberships, \$50.00 and life-time membership \$400.00.



Trustee Spotlight: Venita Ackley

Venita, the daughter of Chester & Anna Spencer Murphy, is the wife of Harvey Ackley, formerly of Pulaski. Except for about 10 years in Florida, she has lived the rest of her life in Parish.



Venita had a 35-year career in banking and retired as an assistant cashier and loan officer. She also has held public office as Zoning Office for the Town of Parish for six years. She is currently serving as Deputy Village Clerk for Parish and has been Secretary/Treasurer of Pleasant Law Cemetery for over 20 years. She has also worked as a waitress at a popular summer resort in Parish.

During her years in Florida, Venita was employed in an assisted living community in Boca Raton and as a veterinary's assistant at a local Polo Club.

Outside of work, she and Harvey enjoyed square-dancing with a club in Fulton for a number of years and were active in the Pulaski Service Club and Pulaski Lions Club until Harvey retired.

For about 15 years Venita raised Holland Lop Rabbits and competed in regional and state shows achieving the number two spot for New York State clubs. Now she spends her leisure time gardening.

Venita has volunteered for the Parish Historian for many years. Since joining Half-Shire, she has researched and compiled a book on Parish World War II veterans. and took charge of managing Find-A-Grave entries for Pleasant Lawn Cemetery. Venita spends one day a week at Half-Shire, helping with inventory of the genealogy collection, filing and any other task that comes along. At home, Venetia works on scanning Half-Shire photograph collections and continues to manage and update Find-A-Grave entries.

Summer Raffle Winners

1st place, a light quilt donated by Stephanie Pierce won by Roger Barber of Michigan.

2nd place a dark green quilt donated by Betty Jane Davis won by Brenda Oyer Kellogg of Williamstown. *(See right)*

3rd place, a DNA kit won by Darlene Mitchell Adydan of Pulaski.

A set of tickets are enclosed for the next raffle which will be drawn at the Christmas party on December 5th.

We have a red, white & blue pattern quilt hand made this summer by Melinda Hare *(see picture in centerfold)* along with a selection of afghans hand crafted by Doreen Tilton and Lillian Frazier and our usual third choice of an Ancestry.com DNA kit.



Half-Shire Historical Society
P.O. 73, 1100 County Rte. 48
Richland, New York 13144-0073

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Meetings and Upcoming Events for 2020***

- Sat. Sep. 19, 2020 NYS SAR Quarterly meeting and luncheon (Private)
- Sat. Sep. 26, 2020 Annual luncheon and meeting, Richland headquarters noon-2 p.m.
- Sat. Oct. 24, 2020 Regular luncheon and meeting, Richland headquarters noon-2 p.m.
- Sat. Nov. 21, 2020 Regular luncheon and meeting, Richland headquarters noon-2 p.m.
- Sat. Dec. 5, 2020 Christmas party, Richland headquarters-noon-3p.m.

*****All Events are subject to cancelation depending on the COVID situation and warnings in our area, best to contact us ahead at 315-298-2986 or Shawn Doyle at 315-298-3620
Facebook "Mary White/Halfshire"**

(Unless otherwise stated, all meetings are at Richland headquarters)

Half-Shire Headquarters is located in the former Richland School building at
1100 County Route 48 North in the Hamlet of Richland NY, (Just north of the County Route 2 intersections)

*Meetings subject to Change - see the Local Papers or our Facebook "Mary White"
Or call the Society at 315-298-2986 or Shawn Doyle at 315-298-3620