A 1964 Circle Drive Christmas

by Maureen O’Connell Baker

The past five months have been full of 1964. Our recent exhibit focusing on this year has been very well received. If you haven’t been in to take a trip back in time…please do so, as this exhibit closes on January 6, 2018. With this year in mind, I was inspired to share with you my 1964 holiday season in this edition of The Chronicles.

I was a nine-year-old living on Circle Drive, a newly developed cul de sac in Canandaigua, with 8 or 9 houses and a bunch of kids. The road went up and formed a circle around a small piece of grassy land. We named the land “the pickle” (after Pickle Park, Gorham St. Canandaigua) and it was the official gathering place for kids, bikes, sleds and dogs.

Winters always provided ideal conditions for “street sledding” on Circle Drive. We’d meet at the pickle and with a good push, sleds, kids and barking dogs were racing down the road. Sonnenberg Park, adjacent to Circle Drive, was the ideal place to turn in to when stopping was not an option, and crashing was a possibility. Kids and dogs always practiced safe sledding.

The pickle was also prime real estate for holiday decorating. Families gathered to assemble the fully illuminated life-size manger scene, and adorn the tall evergreen with colored lights. Dad would put speakers from the stereo hi-fi on the front porch and play seasonal music. Cookies, hot cocoa, and our dogs were always in attendance. This was the unofficial beginning of a Circle Drive holiday season. Everyone helped and every house had a view. When it snowed the pickle appeared magical.

‘64 was also the year my dad built a new decoration for our lawn. It was a giant holiday greeting card, made of plywood and painted white. The left continued on page 3
Excelsior
The New York State motto is ‘Excelsior’; from the Latin meaning forever onward and upward. It is a good way to approach the future. Reach for the sky; continuous improvement, make it better, all give encouragement to set and pursue higher standards.

Here at the Ontario County Historical Society stagnation is not an option. I have always felt that standing still is, in essence, moving backward. In that spirit, we always move forward and only look back to research information or to gauge where we are. After all, we are an information-based history organization operating in what is frequently called the Information Age. Our mission is to preserve and promote the history of Ontario County and we have never lost sight of that. But it is not always that easy.

Working to make the best of today’s world we have embraced computer technology, social media and the cloud while keeping a personal approach to greeting our visitors, helping our audiences discover their roots and in recruiting and guiding volunteers. It can be a balancing act at times but from the feedback we receive, our team seems to get it. The nice notes we receive from time to time reflect our success.

Moving onward and upward has bumps and challenges, some immediate, some short term and some looming over the hill. Our ever-growing collection of artifacts, photos, ephemera and publications we use in delivering our services to our customers are held in the public trust pursuant to our 1902, New York State Regents Charter (No. 01549). A major part of our day-to-day work is managing and accessing these collections. If you visit on any day you will find that museum is a beehive of activity; each person going about their tasks and responsibilities—scanning, sorting, copying and discussing appropriate keywords for our finding aids. I tell our volunteers that their jobs are secure because there is an endless stream of work awaiting them. After all, if you think about it, time creates our product.

This offers us another challenge as we move forward in the 21st century, assuring the space is adequate to store and display our collections. This challenge has two parts. The first is caring for our 1914 landmark museum building designed by the early 20th century architect, Claude Bragdon, which is aging. The second, and just as important is to assure there is enough space in the proper ratios to both manage and store our expansive collection and to interpret and display our county’s unique history.

To move onward and upward would have us preparing the museum for future generations just as our grandparents did for us in 1914, when space was full and they built our current museum building. We cannot shirk this responsibility so we have faced it head on. The Board’s Committee on Space Needs over the last 2 years has studied the maintenance needs of our museum building. And they have dreamed a little about what we could do to increase future space for storage and exhibits. We are now facing a crunch year in this matter.

The committee on space has set the goal to have a “project”, approved by the board by the end of 2018. It is a reasonable goal that can be achieved. I am sure the public will be interested in how the Historical Society will be managing our county’s history in the coming years.

As we approach the new year, we will continue to invoke the state’s motto, “Excelsior” in all we do here at the Historical Society. With this in mind, we ask for your continued support.
What’s in the Collection?

by Wilma Townsend, Curator

With the recent closing of the US Army Reserve Center on Charlotte Street, Canandaigua and the transfer of that site to Sonnenberg Gardens, several items of local significance have found a new home at the OCHS museum. These include two large framed photo portraits of the first Canandaigua servicemen to make the ultimate sacrifice in each of the two world wars – Samuel Lemma and Frederick Whyman, a bronze commemorative plaque, and a 48-star American flag. The transfer of these items was made possible by members of the Whyman family.

So who were these two Canandaigua heroes? Samuel Lemma was born in Italy in 1888 and came to Canandaigua with his family when he was about 12. Prior to his military service he served as an interpreter for the district attorney’s office in Ontario County and as a special investigator for the NYS Department of Excise. He entered the service for World War I on September 9, 1917 as a Private in Co. G, 8th Infantry, American Expeditionary Forces. He died June 18, 1917 near Lucy, France after exposing himself to enemy fire to give medical attention to the wounded. He received the Distinguished Service Cross posthumously for his heroism in action. He is believed to be the first Canandaigua service member to have been killed in WWI. Lemma is buried in Calvary Cemetery in Canandaigua.

Frederick Whyman was born in Batavia, NY in 1922; his family moved to Canandaigua in 1932. He was a 1939 graduate of Canandaigua Academy. During World War II, he entered the US Army on November 19, 1942 in Rochester, NY as a Private in the 1st Ranger Battalion. He received his training in the Rangers at Fort Bragg, NC and was sent to North Africa. He was listed as missing and later as killed in action in the July 10th, 1943 Allied invasion of Sicily. He received a Purple Heart for “military merit and for wounds received in action resulting in his death.” He is believed to be the first Canandaigua service member to have been killed in WWII. Whyman is buried in Anzio, Italy.

To honor these two local servicemen, the new Army Training Center built in 1961, was named the Lemma-Whyman Army Reserve Center. The dedication ceremony was held on July 15, 1961 with dignitaries and family members of the two men, and the two portraits and plaque were presented for display in the Center. We are pleased that the portraits, the plaque and the flag are now part of the OCHS collection and our thanks are extended to the Whyman family who made this possible.

continued from page 1 — A 1964 Circle Drive Christmas

side had a large stenciled colorful candle image. On the right side, in old English script, was the message “Season’s Greetings from The O’Connell’s”. It was illuminated by an electric color wheel casting its ever changing hues. This was the coolest decoration ever, and in my heart, we were the only family in the world to have this. The holidays were always a special time in our neighborhood with the fondest memories, and lots of fun. Christmas 1964 held a special meaning for me…… one more kid and dog were added to the mix. A sister, and a basset hound puppy joined our family five months earlier. Baby Kelli, always peacefully mesmerized by the twinkling tree lights, and Agnes the hound, incessantly barking at the Santa ornament, were the best ‘64 gifts anyone could ask for.

Best wishes to all for a joyous, memory making 2017 holiday season.
The Educator’s Post

by Preston Pierce, Museum Educator

The Holiday Season in Wartime America 1917

One hundred years ago, America was at war. Thanksgiving Day that year was November 29th. In less than a month, it would be Christmas. As we move toward 2018 and focus on the centennial of World War I, we can look to the holiday season of 1917 for some important perspective. By holiday time 1918, the war was over; the armistice had provided the foundation for a new holiday; and the focus had turned to redefining America’s role in the world and the threat of influenza.

There was a great outpouring of enthusiasm for the war following the declaration by Congress on April 6, 1917. Seven months into the American war, President Wilson issued a Thanksgiving proclamation to the nation.

“It has long been the honored custom of our people” Wilson said, “to turn in the fruitful autumn of the year in praise and thanksgiving to Almighty God for His many blessings and mercies to us as a nation. That custom we can follow now even in the midst of the tragedy of a world shaken by war and immeasurable disaster, in the midst of sorrow and great peril, because even amidst the darkness that has gathered about us we can see the great blessings God has bestowed upon us, blessings that are better than mere peace of mind and prosperity of enterprise.”

Wilson was the son of a Presbyterian minister. The times were tense. America was coming to the aid of the Allies just in time. All of those factors contributed to the serious religious nature of Wilson’s proclamation. His conclusion was as reverent and determined as his first paragraph had been.

“And while we render thanks for these things let us pray Almighty God that in all humbleness of spirit we may look always to Him for guidance; that we may be kept constant in the spirit and purpose of service; that by His grace our minds may be directed and our hands strengthened; and that in His good time liberty and security and peace and the comradeship of a common justice may be vouchsafed all the nations of the earth.”

When President Wilson proclaimed Thanksgiving, no local service man had been lost. However, Americans knew it would not be long before we, too, felt loss and sorrow. Just seven days before Thanksgiving, 38 more Ontario County men were sent to Camp Dix by our two local draft boards!

The first American soldiers to die in the First World War were killed in a trench raid on November 3, 1917. The first Ontario County soldier died on December 22, 1917. Shortsville resident, John Henry Miles, died of disease at the League Island Navy Yard in Pennsylvania. Shortly after the holidays, on January 7, 1918, Geneva resident, Frank J. Makovsky, also died of disease at Ft. DuPont, Delaware.

Local people turned out for union Thanksgiving services in large numbers on November 29th. The Ontario County Times reported that: “The Baptist church in [Canandaigua] was crowded for the Thanksgiving service, Thursday morning, it being necessary to place chairs in the aisles to accommodate the late comers. … The collection received for the relief of Armenian and Syrian war sufferers amounted to over $72…”

The newly established Food Administration, under the direction of Herbert Hoover, asked farmers to increase food production and civilians to ration consumption by observing certain days of the week as "wheatless," "meatless," or "porkless."

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Home economists, nutritionists, and housewives (who did most of the cooking in 1917) became very creative. At a time when most families ate home-made bread, “War Bread” was promoted. It used less wheat flour with oatmeal and barley (along with the usual lard)! The use of Oleomargarine was promoted to save butter. Cooks were told of the virtues of butterless, eggless, milkless cake, and the benefits of substituting bananas for bread in the diet.

Cranberry Sauce, that staple of holiday feasts, was frowned on by members of the New York Food Conservation Commission. The berries weren’t the problem. Elimination of that quintessential New England sauce would help to solve the sugar shortage, such a large amount of sugar being required to make the cranberries edible. Store advertising reflected the new food conservation.

Murray Brothers grocery store (168-170 Main St., Canandaigua) offered the following for Thanksgiving cooks on November 28th, 1917. Walnuts; Brazil and mixed nuts; almond meats; walnut meats; pecan meats; Malaga grapes; Emperor grapes; boiled cider, cranberries; mincemeat; plum pudding; ripe olives; Florida grapefruit; oranges; Baltimore oysters; Buffalo sausage; pure maple syrup and Penn Yan buckwheat and pan cake flour. Just think about what is missing from that list of featured items.

There was much to celebrate on Thanksgiving in 1917. Just three weeks earlier, on November 6th, the male voters of New York approved a woman suffrage amendment to the state constitution. Women were taking on a much larger role in the war effort than in any previous conflict.

Athletic contests, balls, parades, militia and fire company drills were already traditional parts of our Thanksgiving celebrations. In 1917, football was seen as an important part of military training. An early October headline read; “Camp Dix Soldiers Will Prepare to Rip the Kaiser’s Line on the Football Field.” On November 19, Rochester draftees comprising the 309th Heavy Field Artillery, training at Camp Dix, defeated a team from the 307th Machine Gun Battalion in a widely publicized contest.

At Camp Dix, NJ, where most Ontario County draftees were training, Thanksgiving dinner was spectacular. The Christmas feast was expected to be equally good for those a holiday leave. However, the after dinner smokes seem very odd today. “The menu of the Thanksgiving dinner was as follows: soup; puree of tomatoes from Mexico; pickles; celery from Michigan and stuffed olives from California; roast turkey; chestnut dressing from Maine and cranberry sauce from New York; candied yams from Georgia; mashed turnips from Jersey and potatoes ‘smashed like Germany’: salad; mince pie English style; pumpkin pie a la New England and ice cream colleur Francaise; bananas from Cuba; oranges from Florida; grapes from Italy and apples from Oregon; nuts from every state; coffee from Brazil; cigars from [the] Philippines; and cigarettes.”

The holidays of 1917 led to a new and momentous year, 1918. Our programs and exhibits this coming year will explore the “Great War” and its impact on Ontario County. On Thanksgiving Day, at the start of the holiday season, the Democrat and Chronicle published an editorial that is best remembered in troubled times like those of 1917— or 2017. “Obviously, this is not a time for indulgence in frivolous gayety, nor is it a time for sackcloth and ashes. The situation demands sober, serious thought. The occasion emphatically calls for thankfulness that the valor which impels men to fight for justice and righteousness has not died out, but is being gloriously demonstrated. And let us be thankful that every cloud still has its silver lining.”
Your Historical Society

November 11 Treaty Day — Canandaigua Treaty and Artifacts Display

Regular Meeting of the Historical Society's Book Club 10-25

Students Visit “1964, Gone But Not Forgotten” Exhibit

Brigham Hall Talk by Canandaigua City Historian Lynn Paulson
Viral Leanings
by Maureen O'Connell Baker, Social Media Coordinator

Our Audiences in 2017
The Historical Society reports that at the end of 2017 we have 540 individual memberships and 34 business memberships. We are pleased to say that memberships have leveled out after a declining period that started in 2008.

Our cyber audience is another way we measure our membership success. In this day and age with social media garnering the attention of the world we also have an extensive social media following. Our website: www.ochs.org is the portal through which much of our cyber communication takes place had 67,747 visits last year. This is up from past years.

We are happy to report that followers of our Facebook page “Ontario County Historical Museum” grew during our fiscal year from 2,831 on November 1, 2016 to 3,187 followers on October 31, 2017. That is an impressive 12.5% growth! A large amount of that growth took place when we released our set of You Tube videos and when we posted nostalgic images. One of our posts reached 11,000 people. Our Twitter page has 218 active followers and our YouTube Channel houses 23 videos we have produced in-house. The Channel has 84 subscribers and our history videos have been viewed 8,104 times.

Next year we expect growth in our cyber audiences. The challenge is to figure out how to turn this phenomena into a revenue stream. Suggestions and assistance welcome.

Mail Box

Director’s Note:
If you have visited our “1964 Gone, But Not Forgotten” exhibit you probably noticed an antique Smith Corona portable typewriter with plenty of typing paper available in the kitchen display on which visitors tested their skills typing notes.

Below is a sample of a few of them:

− All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy
− Where is the correction tape?
− I taught typing on machines like this in Lavonia
− I like to eat food
  Sometimes it is really bad
  but it is edible
− Grama is SUPER COOL
  She’s cool because she is not an alien
− Thank you for the walk down memory lane.
  Great exhibit.

.... And some entries were longer.

My name is Daniel DiSalvo. I moved here end of the school year in June. My Father Nick DiSalvo grew up here as a kid and told me many stories about how great Canandaigua was and from my experiences I’ve had since I moved here in early June of the summer of 2016 I have to say I love it here it is a great community and has a lovely school system and amazing people in Canandaigua. I hope when I am older I can do as my Dad has done and tell awesome stories of his childhood to my kids. I wish to whoever reads this to have a lovely day and be blessed that they live in the great city of Canandaigua.

Sincerely,
Daniel DiSalvo

And finally, this note had to be redacted and displayed as an image.

Hi, My name is Milo and I am looking for a single female between the ages of 23 and 37. I'm 31, fun, adventurous and I enjoy taking nature walks along the Niagara River. I would love to meet you. Please contact me at www.XX@gmail.com

P.S. Dalton is my cousin and is also interested in meeting you.
News and Announcements

- Welcome to our three newly elected members of the Board of Trustees: David White, Linda Hawks and Dr. Robert Ward. All will serve three years terms that expire October 31, 2020. With the retirement of Ellen Lux and Barbara Fuge, we welcome Carole Lillis (Secretary) and David Hewson (Vice President) to our Executive Committee. We also say fare-the-well to John Cosgrove after three years on the Board, too. If you are interested in serving on our Board of Trustees we would be happy to talk to you.

- We want to thank all the volunteers who assisted with our museum’s programming this past year. Without them we could not offer the services we do.

- The popularity of our exhibits, “1964” and “Votes for Women” have increased attendance this year to an all time high. Before the end of the year we expect to have had nearly 20,000 people visit the museum. Our free admission policy promotes visitation for all.

- The museum was featured in a live remote on Fox News Rochester’s Morning Show on November 20. Several segments were aired. “1964” exhibit creators, Dave Hayden and Greg Russell did a wonderful job presenting the exhibit and pitching our museum.

- We have launched a new online survey that will help us develop better programs for our audiences. The survey can be accessed on our website www.ochs.org; on our Facebook page, Ontario County Historical Museum or on our Twitter feed @OCHSMuseum. Please take the time to tell us how we are doing and how we can be a better community history museum.

- Work is progressing on the building space challenge. The committee led by board member, Geoff Astles, will be looking seriously at the project. The committee’s goal is to have a “defined project” to pursue and fund by the end of 2018. If you would like to review a copy of recently completed building condition report, please contact Ed Varno at director@ochs.org.

- Please remember to send in your donation for our 2017-18 Annual Operations Appeal. This year we are looking to raise $17,000 so we can keep free admission to the museum for another year.

- Our popular Model Railroad and Polar Express Village will once again be up and running for the holidays. This year we will feature a “Thomas the Train” display for the young’uns. Special thanks to Museum Educator, Preston Pierce, who brings this to us each year. Children, of all ages, love to see it.

- The Historical Society and the Ontario County Arts Council have joined hands to present a history/art exhibit. The exhibit will open April 7th and have a spring theme of gardens. The exhibit will be in the North Gallery. A opening reception for the public is planned.

- Finally, on behalf of the staff, volunteers and Board of Trustees of the Historical Society, we want to thank you for your financial support this past year and wish you the best for a wonderful holiday season and a prosperous 2018. Happy New Year!
Museum to Host National Motometer Exhibit

by Francis Clax

In conjunction with our 2018 WWI theme, the Historical Society will present a unique automotive technology exhibit dating to the early 1900s.

What are Motometers? Throughout the 1920s motometers or radiator-mounted engine temperature gauges presided on the front of almost every automobile, truck and airplane. Your automobile's engine temperature gauge, "Check Engine" light and hood ornament trace their origins back to these devices. Internationally known automotive industry historian, artifact preservationist and Canandaigua resident Francis Clax is lending his extensive motometer collection to the Ontario Historical Society for an exclusive exhibition to be held between February 2nd and September 8th, 2018. This exhibition will provide an unprecedented look into the 100-year plus history of these unique artifacts and the early automobile industry.

An opening reception is scheduled on Friday February 2, 2018.
The OCHS Organization

Staff
Edward Varno  Executive Director
Wilma Townsend  Curator
Ernie Maiorani  Accountant
Maureen Baker  Receptionist
Preston Pierce  Educator
Barb Hill  Part-time Receptionist
Karen Strapp  Webmaster*
Betty McMahon  Research Coordinator*
Gene Rogers  Building Support*
Linda Alexander  Librarian*
Darlyss Boates  The Chronicles Editor*
*Volunteer

We wish to extend a special thanks to all of the volunteers who donate so many countless hours in support of the Historical Society.

Address correspondence to:
Ontario County Historical Society
55 North Main Street
Canandaigua, New York  14424

We are open Tuesday through Friday 10:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.,
Saturday 11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.  Closed on major holidays.

Board of Trustees
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Phone:  585-394-4975
Fax:  585-394-9351
Webpage: www.ochs.org
Email: museum@ochs.org
Please “Like” us on Facebook! Just go to www.facebook.com and search for the Ontario County Historical Museum.

Business Members

We wish to thank the business members listed below for their continued support. Please consider them when purchasing goods and services. In addition to these business members, we also appreciate the small donations we receive from dozens of local businesses in Ontario County each year.

1840 Inn On The Main
Aberle Eye Care
Bella Rose Bed and Breakfast
Canandaigua Carpets Inc.
Canandaigua National Bank
Edelweiss Properties Realtors LLC
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Mayflower Gardens Ltd.
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Morgan Samuels Inn
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We Welcome These New Members

- Alan Stone
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- Barbara Davis
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- June Lincoln
- Linda Krossber
- Alan Reynolds
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- David White

Membership Benefits in the Ontario County Historical Society

Receive Regular Museum Mailings — Keep Up-to Date on all Society Activities

Reduced Admission to Society Events and Fund Raisers, including Tour of Homes

(admission to the museum is always free)

Free assistance in the Museum’s Rare Documents/Genealogy Library

Membership in Time Travelers, a National Museum Benefit Program

10% savings on Museum Books Shop purchases

Subscription to our quarterly newsletter, CHRONICLES

Ontario County Historical Society

Name(s) ___________________________ Email ___________________________ Phone ___________________________

Exactly as it will appear on the Membership Card

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Optional Alternate Winter Address from __/__/____ to __/__/____

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General Membership Support:

___ Sr. Citizen $30; ___ Individual $35; ___ Family $50; ___ Friend $75

Centennial Club Level

___ Centennial $100; ___ Benefactor $150; ___ Heritage Circle $250; ___ Director $500+

___ Please accept my additional gift of $ ______

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Total Membership: $ _____________ + Additional gift: $ ______ = Total $ _____________

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Return to: OCHS; 55 No. Main St.
Canandaigua, NY 14424
December 23: Museum closes for Christmas holiday (watch for special holiday time events)

January 2: 10 a.m. — museum reopens

January 17: 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. — “WWI Video Series” — Robert Ryan’s celebrated documentary continued

January 20: Breaking news! — “1964 – Gone But Not Forgotten” — exhibit closing held over two weeks

February 2: Opening — “Motometers - The Technology that Saved the Internal Combustion Engine”

February 21: 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. — “WWI Video Series” — Robert Ryan’s celebrated documentary continued

March 17: “Finger Lakes Regional History Day” at the museum