A Grand Old Brick Place

by Maureen Baker

In 1853 Canandaigua was a bustling village of about 2,500. The famed old Blossom House, built in 1815, had just burned. The community needed a good hotel and so with that pioneer spirit so evident, business leaders raised $70,000 and erected the new inn.

John Thomas was hired to manage the newly built hotel. He started with a flourish, inviting 200 leading Ontario County citizens to a dinner which began with watermelon and ran through 14 courses ending with a roast pig served with rum and spice sauce. The opening must have been a festive occasion according to the remark on the Ontario County Times for July 23, 1853. “…hilarity continued until dawn when the Landlord Thomas served breakfast to his guests.”

The Canandaigua Hotel, a familiar name to many, was known for its elegance, and grandeur. However, its humble and rather colorful history began in the spring of 1815. Mr. Belah D. Coe erected a three-story, pillared tavern on the incline overlooking the village square. In December 1824, Colonel William Blossom arrived to take over the hostelry. Now named the Blossom House, for the next 18 years it was one of the top stage coach stops between Syracuse and Buffalo. It was also in this house that the citizens of Canandaigua gave a big reception for the Marquis de Lafayette on his triumphal tour of the United States in 1825. But, on a cold winter night in 1851, the hostelry burned to the ground.

Rebuilt in 1853, Hotel Canandaigua was born. The construction of the hotel was considered a grand event in the village. Extravagant balls and parties were held there. It was also the headquarters of the politicians. For many years the basement was used as the waiting room and ticket office for the railroad, until the new depot was built in 1890. According to reports from that era, Canandaigua, even then, was the “center of social gaiety…with princely entertainment at the private houses and in the ballroom of the hotel.”
In 1921, the hotel was destined to become a corset factory. It took an exhibition of spirit and great wealth to save it. Mrs. Frederick Ferris Thompson bought the property for $30,000, renamed it the Canandaigua Hotel and promptly spent $315,000 in modernizing it into “the finest small city hotel in America.” Mrs. Thompson died in 1923 and her estate sold it in 1925, and then purchased it again in 1931, spending an additional $45,000 in renovations.

The hotel changed ownership in 1942 and prospered during and after the war years. It was a destination place. Local factories and banks often held their fetes there. The spacious wood-walled ballroom was always reserved for a reception or holiday revel. In 1957, it was sold to Treadway Inns. A serious fire in February, 1958, resulted in another extensive renovation and major redecoration program costing about $125,000.

In 1960, the property was again sold and now named the Canandaigua Inn. Then on February 24, 1963, fire damaged the second and third floors, and water damaged the rest of the building, but it again could be repaired.

For the next eight years, the inn struggled to regain the grandeur and reputation it once held. Perhaps it was a result of changing times during the 1960s. Her bones were old and weary, and sadly, in March of 1971, the inn was victim to a devastating fire, taking with her, eight souls.

For 118 years, the tall brick building, perched like a fortress on a hill, stood watch over the village square, welcomed weary travelers, and entertained high society in the grand ballroom. The fountain on the front lawn is a reminder of a bygone era that many of us have only read about. The Canandaigua Hotel really was A Grand Old Brick Place.
Salem Witch Trials and the Tie to the Town of Victor

by Dianne Parks

In the center of the village of Victor, behind the Methodist Church, is a small pioneer cemetery. Although it appears small, there are over 800 early pioneers of Victor buried within its gates.

As a previous co-chairman of a Town of Victor Committee to preserve and restore the cemetery, I not only took pictures of the grave stones, but over the past several months, have begun to research the people buried in this pioneer cemetery.

One of the families buried there are members of the Town family. As I researched the ancestry of this family, I started to uncover the story of one of the nation’s biggest tragedies. The Towns were direct descendants of the Towns of Salem, Massachusetts. Further research really sparked my interest and curiosity, as I soon found out that three Town sisters were accused of witchcraft in Salem, Massachusetts.

The charges stemmed from an apparent land dispute. (According to the Ipswich Deeds, Vol. 4 page 515). Tituba, the slave of Rev. Samuel Parris, was the accuser of Rebecca Town Nurse, one of the three sisters. “Rebecca was a respected grandmother of seventy-one in 1692. She had brought up eight children. She appeared to have no dark secrets in her past……. She was on good terms with her husband. He had not led a scandalous life, unless to be considered by some of sharp dealings in acquiring his property. Unlike the husbands of the three previous suspects, all of whom had in one way or another, failed to defend their wives, Rebecca’s husband was faithful and loyal throughout. He and his sons-in-laws had all been active in parish activities ever since their settling in Salem Village some fourteen years before. Rebecca herself had only one thing in common with those already accused. She was a woman…”

On March 24, 1692, she was taken from her sickbed, arrested and brought to the home of Nathaniel Ingersoll for examination. She was committed to prison, but refused to confess. At the trial, Rebecca Town Nurse was found not guilty by the jury. But with an out-cry from the accusers, the chief judge said he would not tamper with the jury, but if another accused witch, a woman by the name Hobbs who had confessed, was brought before the court and would be a witness against Rebecca, the jury would be sent out again for deliberation. Hobbs said, “she is one of us”, and the jury then found Rebecca guilty.

Rebecca’s sisters, Mary Estes and Sarah Choyes were also accused. Rebecca and Mary were executed. The trials ended nine months after they began and Sarah was never brought to trial.

In 1721, at the request of her children, Rebecca’s excommunication from the church was erased. In 1885, the Nurse family had a monument erected to her at Danvers, Massachusetts. In 1997, the Rebecca Nurse homestead was opened to the public.

Rebecca was also the main character in the play The Crucible. For more information on the Town family, contact Dianne Parks, Victor Genealogical Society, Victor, NY. www.victorgenealogicalsociety.com.
From the Director’s Desk
by Ed Varno

Community Celebrations
There is nothing like a community celebration to build spirit and create a sense of accomplishment. Over the years, residents in virtually every municipality in our great county have found a reason to mark time and reflect on accomplishments. For example, this year, the town of Victor is commemorating its 200th birthday with a year long celebration.

In the town of Canandaigua, the completion of Outhouse Park was celebrated this year with a simple, yet beautiful “ribbon cutting” on a sunny Saturday morning in mid-October. The park was 10 years in the making. The well-attended event was as much a celebration of the generosity of Richard Outhouse and his family as it was the completion of the facility. Richard Outhouse wanted to convert his hay field into a happy place for families to enjoy an outing and the town wanted a diverse multiple use recreation facility. Through work, planning and perseverance; both received what they wanted in the park. The ribbon cutting was also a good reason for people in the town to gather. Vanessa and I accompanied Ruth M. Outhouse, Richard’s daughter, and attended as representatives of the hamlet of Cheshire. As the guests arrived each was given a program that had a mysterious piece of red ribbon stapled to it. Soon, the area surrounding the tent with clear plastic sides became a scene of handshakes, hugs, back slapping and even a welcoming kiss or two. We also saw a lot of pictures being taken; some would up on Facebook. When the time arrived for the ceremony, the crowd moved into the enclosure and gathered around the front where politicians, town employees and Outhouse family members told the story of how Richard made his wishes known and how the town fathers worked diligently to finish the park this year. Looking around we saw masses of green open space dotted with swing sets, exercise stations, walking trails, gardens and a host of other park amenities. The list of those assisting in the project included, architects, civil engineers, highway crews, Rotarians and many volunteers. The speeches made the attendees laugh as we heard how Supervisor Casella tested the slide. The comments of the Outhouse family brought some to the brink of tears. Dennis Brewer, the town Recreation Director, stood before the gathering and told them that the facility was too large to cut a ribbon at one place. Therefore, he cut up a long stretch of red ribbon into 3-inch lengths and included a piece in each program. The group appreciated the symbolic gesture and it solved the mystery of the red ribbon attached to each program. It was truly a day of which Canandaigua could be proud.

In 2013, the city of Canandaigua will commemorate its 100 years as a city. In 1913, the village of Canandaigua took the bold move and changed its municipal status from a village to a city. It was not a complicated process, it was completed in only four months. However, it was political. The referendum passed by only 259 votes. The primary thrust behind the move to a city charter was to prevent Canandaigua from going “dry”. In New York State at that time, cities could not vote their communities dry like villages and towns could. To keep alcohol available in the community, the city voted itself into history.

The city has formed a Centennial Committee that is scheduling celebrations throughout next year. The premiere event on January 1st, will be a reception honoring the new Tower Clock at City Hall. The Historical Society will open an exhibit in late April on Canandaigua in the 1900s; present its “Walk into the Past” downtown in July; and bring its “Tour of Homes” back to the city in September. A speakers series is also planned. Four historians will tell the story of the history of Canandaigua from its settlement to the present and even look into the future’s crystal ball. These events are just the tip of the iceberg, so to speak.

When communities love their history and celebrate their accomplishments, magic happens. Participate, celebrate and generate support for your community’s celebrations. It brings people together and creates memories that will last into perpetuity well beyond the photo album you will see on Facebook.
In the late summer of this year, Terry Smith of Smitty's Coin and Currency, Canandaigua, generously donated to Ontario County Historical Society a sheet of Giori Test Notes that was printed on a press designed by American Can Co. engineer Edgar L. Pigman and built in Geneva, NY in the 1970s. Because of the rarity of such notes and their local connection, he felt that one of the sheets should be preserved at the museum. Below is a brief history of the test notes, written by Terry:

“In 2012, Smitty's Coin and Currency, Canandaigua, NY, announced the verification of a newly discovered hoard of Giori Test Notes that were printed on a press designed and built in Geneva in the 1970s. PCGS Currency, the most respected company in currency grading and authenticating, recently released some of the notes back to Smitty's. Being called the "Edgar L. Pigman Hoard", these notes are recognized to have significant local and national historical value.

Until recently, these test notes were almost forgotten, with only the nephew of the late design engineer, Edgar L. Pigman, being aware of their existence. The American Bank Note Company, a subcontractor for the US Bureau of Engraving and Printing contracted Edgar, an engineer for the American Can Company's Geneva location, to design the press.

These Geneva-made machines were shipped to Washington, DC and using "nonsense plates" from the BEP were used to print the notes in sheets of 32. These plates have about 30-34 different vintages from a variety of notes. Most recognized are Washington $1, Lincoln $5, and Grant $50 bills.

These notes were not legal to possess since they somewhat resembled real currency, even though there were no denominations. Only with a change in the BEP policy are these rare notes now legal to be bought and sold.

The History of the PCGS Certified Pigman Horde - Giori Test Note

To understand the significance of the Giori test notes requires a little history of United States Currency. At the conclusion of WWII, Gualtiero Giori created what was eventually known as the Giori Press. This groundbreaking method allowed two-color and even three-color engraving from a single plate, in one pass. Using precisely cut special rubber inking rollers, this allowed the application of each ink selectively to parts of the same plate. Adding to the new faster drying ink and other new technologies, a new press was to be commissioned by the Bureau of Engraving and Printing (BEP), many times faster than anything before it.

In a strange and still not completely understood decision, American Bank Note Company (ABN) chose American Can as the subcontractor to actually create the new printing machines. Founded in 1901, the American Can Company was mostly

continued on page 9
Announcements

☆ We are pleased to announce that our long anticipated exhibit, “Desires, Opportunity, Change” on the early history of western New York will have its ribbon cutting at the Historical Society’s annual holiday open house, December 16. It is our gift to the community. The event will begin at 4 p.m. You are invited to attend.

☆ The Ontario County Genealogical Society has donated research material to the Historical Society’s Library. First is Freedom Fight — The War Years, the stories of local families in WWII, by Fredrick L. Gifford; the other is a three volume collection of Ship Passenger Lists. The passenger lists are from the years 1600 – 1825 and compile names from ports in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Delaware. We have an outstanding genealogical research library. Thank you, Ontario County Genealogical Society.

☆ Our Volunteer Appreciation Night was held on November 14. It was a celebration of those who give their time to help the museum pursue its mission. The event was held in memory of Jim Ingalls, a board member that passed last year.

☆ The Ontario County Historical Society is a membership-based, 501©3 not-for-profit corporation. You have by now received your Annual Appeal request in the mail from the Historical Society. Your gift this holiday season is important to our fiscal success in 2013. In addition to traditional cash gifts we can also accept stock as donations, call for details. Please give generously this year.

☆ Got 1913 Stuff? 2013 marks Canandaigua’s City Centennial. On April 28, 1913, Governor Sulzer signed the charter that changed Canandaigua from a village to a city form of government. We are looking for items from the 1913 era that can be displayed in our Centennial Exhibit. Please call or email Wilma Townsend, our curator, to discuss; 585-394-4975 or curator@ochs.org.

☆ Unfortunately, one of our local libraries has lost to user damage their only copy of Building Canandaigua, by Barbara Swartout. If you would like to donate or sell your copy to this forlorn library, please call Ed Varno, who has the particulars.

☆ Seventy degree weather helped make the 218th anniversary of Treaty Day a glorious event. The museum welcomed a diversity of visitors who enjoyed the museum and viewed the Canandaigua Treaty. Thank you for the donations!

☆ We were saddened on October 20, by the untimely death of past Board of Trustee Member, Fran Gersbach. Fran served on the Board of Trustees for 6 years and served as Chairman of the Personnel Committee. His counsel and wry sense of humor will be missed.

☆ Finally, on behalf of the staff, volunteers and Board of Trustees we wish you and your family a joyous holiday season and a prosperous 2013.
Mail Box

Dear Ed and Wilma,

Thank you for presenting “A Walk Into The Past”. It was wonderful to meet Laney and Caroline Cowles Richards. I would have been happy with that. Mary Carr, Augustus Coleman, Nicholas Chesebro and Theodore Hart were “the frosting on the cake”.

Your performers were wonderful. It was obvious they spent a lot of time studying their parts. It was a perfect way to spend the evening.

I hope you will make this an annual event. Again---thank you.

Carla DeMeco

Dear Ed,

Thank you so much for the display and the book for our door prize.

Sincerely,

Carol

The Legacy at The Fairways

Nancy,

Thank you so much for loaning the Town of Gorham Historical Society your collection of items from the Lincoln Exhibit. Approximately 100 fifth graders got to view and discuss these items.

We had another hot day for our event (especially in long dresses) but it was again a huge success with the teachers and students.

We were much more relaxed this year and definitely plan to continue this event. Thanks again.

Sincerely,

Sharon Cornelius
Barb Lippencott
Steve Mumby

To Ray Henry and Tour Staff,

My compliments to you all — it was a wonderful “Tour of Barns”. It was an excellent choice of locations and well planned. I hope you will continue with this project.

Sincerely,

Dennis Brewer

The Board, Staff and Volunteers at the Ontario County Historical Society,

Thank you for the flowers sent in memory of my father.

Sincerely,

Dan Gersbach and the family of Francis C. Gersbach

From the Desk of the Treasurer

by Sherry Rodin Sulkes

The holiday season is upon us and it’s time to look back on a busy and rewarding year at the Historical Society. As 2013 approaches, I’m looking forward to a successful New Year with many new programs and projects ahead. On behalf of my fellow board members, thank you for your continued membership, friendship and generous support of the Historical Society. We wish you and yours a very happy, healthy holiday and New Year, and look forward to seeing you in 2013. All the best!

The Oliver Phelps Fund

In Memory Of:

Marc and Sherry Sulkes
Francis Gersbach
From the Curator’s Loft

by Wilma Townsend

Formally opening in January 2013 will be an exciting, long-term exhibit – “Desires, Opportunities, Change: the Shaping of Western New York, 1650 to 1797”. Today, the western New York landscape is filled with rolling hills, fields, lakeside vacation homes, industrial centers and suburban malls. In this exhibit, we will explore the many changes that occurred 300 years ago that transformed this area from the forested center of Iroquois life to an agrarian landscape that we can still see today. You will find that it was a time of great ambition, of both greed and compassion, and of conflict and compromise between nations and cultures. You will see native and non-native artifacts from our collection, sweeping illustrations and historic maps, explore in more depth through interactives, and meet twelve characters from the past that will help tell our story. Funded by a federal grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, this is an exhibit you will not want to miss!

Portion of panel in “Desires, Opportunities, Change”

As we join our community in celebrating the Centennial of the City of Canandaigua, we will open an exhibit in April 2013 entitled “Canandaigua Becomes a City, 1913-2013”. We will explore Canandaigua’s transition from a village to a city in 1913 as well as the ensuing 100 years to the present. What challenges and opportunities has Canandaigua met that were brought on by social, economic and political changes such as immigration, prohibition, wars, economic booms and busts and urban renewal? What has attracted people to settle in Canandaigua, what made and makes Canandaigua a viable, prosperous place to live, where will we be in 25, 50, 100 years?

City Hall, Canandaigua, NY

Winners of the Tour of Barns Raffle

Liz Fasel, Honeoye Falls:
Holloway House Gift Certificate

James Wilson, Clifton Springs:
Halloween Gift Basket by Marcia Farrell

Laren Houck, Bloomfield:
Pam’s Diner Gift Certificate

Robie Schlenker, Bloomfield:
Windmill Lawn Decoration from Lowes

Jodi Kaufman, Canandaigua:
Country Max Bird Feeder w/seed

Gloria Martlew, Rochester:
Country Corners Gift Certificate
Learning Horizons

by Nancy Parsons

Coming to the Historical Society for an extended visit, an array of interesting people who had an impact on western New York’s early history.

Beginning December 16, at the Holiday Open House and Party, meet six members of the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) and six European/American individuals and hear their stories of western New York as it was transformed from Iroquois landscape to outposts of European empires to American farms and villages.

Meet the Marquis Denonville who led his army into the Seneca homeland to destroy France’s competitors in the fur trade.

Meet the Seneca who lived in this area since they came to be a people. Hear their concerns about the Dutch, French and British newcomers. The Europeans’ trade goods were welcomed but what other changes would impact Seneca culture in the future?

Meet Sir William Johnson, British Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the northern colonies who with the Iroquois polished the Covenant Chain of good relations between the British and their Iroquois allies.

Meet Catharine Montour, a Seneca/French woman who with her fellow Native villagers paid the price of being British allies as an invading American Continental army destroyed crops and burned their village.

Meet Oliver Phelps, who with other members of the land development company envisioned American villages and farms prospering in western New York.

Come learn about the people and stories that transformed our region.

continued from What’s In the Collection from page 5

known for the making of tin cans and their labels. They had manufacturing facilities nationwide, but chose the Geneva, NY plant as the site for building the press. Edgar L. Pigman (1932-2008) from Phelps, NY was selected as the American Can engineer to work on the project.

Mr. Pigman designed the presses and tested them using the Giori process. These plates display approximately 32 different vignettes, including portraits of Presidents Washington, Lincoln and Grant that are identical to those on the $1, $5 and $50 Federal Reserve Notes that were then in current circulation. While the presses worked fine in Geneva (making these test notes), and were delivered to DC, they were never used for making any currency that went into circulation. There is no proof the presses were ever used once they made it to Washington DC.

Many stories have circulated about the entire situation, and all are not completely understood or officially confirmed. It does not seem coincidental that this large waste of taxpayer dollars was soon followed by the resignation of the Director of the BEP with a lawsuit to follow against him. Pigman's nephew talked about his uncle being unhappy about the entire situation, even though he had long since moved on to other projects. The test notes sat in his closet, undisturbed for 30+ years.

Originally they were considered by the BEP as illegal for collectors own, since they somewhat resembled authentic circulating currency, but the restriction on private ownership has since been lifted. The test notes in this portfolio are one of the largest groups to ever become available to the collection community.”

If you would to see the sheet of Giori test notes, please call 585 394-4975 or email curator@ochs.org.
The OCHS Organization

Staff
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Wilma Townsend Curator
Nancy Parsons Learning Coordinator
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*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., Wednesdays until 9:00 p.m.; Saturday 11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. Closed on major holidays.

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
American Gutter Supply Inc.
American Legion Post #256
Badge Machine Products, Inc.
Canandaigua Carpets Inc.
Canandaigua Federal Credit Union
Canandaigua Garden Club
Canandaigua Inn On The Lake
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Reliant Community Credit Union
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Star Cleaners
Turnbull Mfg. Co., Inc.
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*Volunteer
We Welcome These New Members

Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Beaulieu
Mr. & Mrs. Robert T. Barkstrom
Ms. Cathy French
Mr. Orville E. Hamman, Jr.
Ms. Judy Smith
Ms. Cynthia J. Wallace
Mr. Edward Westermann

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 ________

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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 $ ______

_____ I am interested in making an endowment gift; please contact me.

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

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Exp Date ____/____; VC Code ______

Signature: ___________________________

Return to:

OCHS; 55 No. Main St.
Canandaigua, NY 14424
CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Dec. 6 – 6 - 9 p.m. – Ganondagan at the Gallery – Fundraiser to benefit Friends of Ganondagan State Historic Site, at the Memorial Art Gallery, supports exhibition “Changing Hands: Art Without Reservation” tickets required and available at the Ganondagan and Memorial Art Gallery web sites

Dec. 16 – 4 - 6 p.m. - Museum Holiday Open House and Party, view the new exhibit “Desires, Opportunities, Change: Shaping Western New York”

Dec. 22 – 6:30 p.m.) and Dec. 23 (2 p.m.) – Dickens “A Christmas Carol” one man show performed by Kim Tenreiro at St. John’s Episcopal Church – tickets for both performances available at the museum, $10/ticket

Dec. 23-Jan.1 – Museum closed for the holidays – reopens Jan. 2 at 10 a.m.

Jan. 1 – Reception for new Clock Tower at City Hall – time TBA

Jan. 10 – 7 p.m. - Centennial Speakers Series # 1, Ray Shedrick will speak on the “Settlement of Canandaigua” at the Canandaigua Middle School

Jan. 16 – 6 - 9 p.m. – History Book Club Potluck at Wood Library

Jan. 26 – 6 - 9 p.m. – Gala Exhibit Opening and Reception, “Desires, Opportunities, Change: Shaping Western New York” at the Museum

March 1 – National History Day registration deadline

March 18 – 12 p.m. – Books Sandwiched In at Wood Library, Museum Director Ed Varno will discuss Matthew Lifflander’s “The Impeachment of Governor Sulzer”

March 22 – National History Day competition – site to be announced

NOTICE: If your address changes seasonally, please let us know the alternative address and the effective dates.

The Chronicles

55 North Main Street
Canandaigua, New York 14424

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Historical Society of Ontario County

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