The Unspoken Speech
by Anne Peacock-Jacobs

Note: This article on Charles Dickens Wader was to be a presentation at the Historical Society on September 8th, 2018. Due to a miscommunication, it could not be delivered as planned. However, we wanted to share this information on one of Canandaigua’s well-known landscape artists with our readers. This article has been edited from the original speech due to space constraints.

Charles Dickens Wader was born in Orleans, Town of Seneca, NY, in 1849, the third of nine children. Wader’s father, Jacob Arden Wader, was from Holland and originally lived in New York City. Jacob Wader’s parents died when he was a small child and he eventually moved to Phelps, NY, to live with family friends. Jacob Wader was quite a scholar. While in Phelps, he married Clarissa Peck who was born in Phelps. From there, they moved to Orleans where he became a Baptist minister and lived next to the church. Clarissa was very fond of the English author Charles Dickens. As the story goes, she was reading the book *Dombey and Son*, when she went into labor with her third child. It seems obvious where C.D. Wader’s name came from. From Orleans, the family moved to Canandaigua where Jacob Wader became the Ontario County School Commissioner in 1867-1868.

From 1870-1872, Charles Wader was an assistant teacher in Phelps where he taught drawing, bookkeeping and penmanship. In 1872, Wader moved to Geneva and worked at the First National Bank. He eventually painted many scenes of Geneva including one of the Trinity Church on Main Street. From 1877-1887, he was the drawing master at Geneva Union School. To our knowledge that was the last time Wader was employed.

In October 1877 at age 28, he married Carrie Clark of Geneva. By this time Wader’s art career was really flourishing. His watercolors were very defined and the objects were very life-like. He also produced several charcoal drawings including portraits of a couple believed to be his in-laws, Mr. and Mrs. Clark. We also know of a charcoal portrait dated 1880 of Ellen Clara Wader Ferguson, Wader’s oldest sister. Wader generally did not date his paintings. I have one dated 1890, as does Brett Utter. Bob Murphy owned one dated 1891. Charles and Carrie had one child, a son, Charlie.

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“Hail to the Chiefs:” Presidents Visit Ontario County

As far as we may think we are from the world of our presidents, the fact is that fifteen of them have visited Ontario County over the years. For some, an Ontario County community like Phelps or Oaks Corners was merely a stop-over on the way to a more important destination. For others, Canandaigua, Geneva, or Clifton Springs were actually important destinations, if only for a few hours or days. Two of our early presidents came for a visit when travel was still pretty arduous and speeches and receptions were limited to parks and churches.

Martin Van Buren was one of those who came here twice. On September 10, 1839, Van Buren came as a sitting president hoping for re-election. While inspecting Lake Ontario harbor improvements being carried out under the direction of General Joseph Swift of Geneva, Van Buren came ceremoniously into Geneva from Phelps, via Oaks Corners. Met by a band from Penn Yan in the latter place, Van Buren’s entourage included Secretary of State, Joel Poinsett (for whom the holiday flower is named). Hundreds of people greeted their “march” into Geneva where the president addressed a crowd in Pulteney Park. Van Buren stayed a few days, visited Rose Hill, and then traveled on via Waterloo.

A New Yorker and master politician, Van Buren was not well-liked in the Finger Lakes Region. He was not re-elected, largely because of a “panic” in 1837 caused by financial irregularities during his predecessor’s (Andrew Jackson) term.

Van Buren returned to Ontario County when he stopped overnight in Canandaigua, July 22-23, 1847. Van Buren and his son were friends of Stephen Wadsworth and they were on their way to visit his family in Geneseo.

For John Quincy Adams, a visit to Canandaigua, July 28, 1843, was apparently a highlight of his travels in the years after his presidential term. Adams arrived by rail, a new innovation. Contemporary accounts say that he got off the train where the rails crossed “the road north of town.” That was probably the crossing that once existed where the rails emerged behind present May’s garden store, and then swung around the west side of town near Tom Wahl’s.

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Museum Master Planning

Yes, that’s right. Our 1914 Historical Museum is just about out of space. That was the conclusion of a study recently completed for us by BERO Architects.

The study was commissioned in 2018 by the Board of Trustees to assess the extent of the museum’s perceived space problem. They looked at what was stored here, how it was stored and whether we could reassign things to create more space for exhibits and educational programming. The study pinpointed the problem areas and offered some ideas for reorganization. But the bottom line found that Historical Society really needs to find a location offsite to house our collections of county antiquity.

In 2017 prior to the space study with a Preserve NY grant, we asked DeWolff Architects to look at the current condition of our 1914 building designed by Claude Bragdon. There were many changes that were made in the 1980s after the Wood Library moved to a new location. These included removals of windows and covering over windows; construction of new walls and creation of galleries and storage space. A new heating and air conditions system was also installed. The modifications were effective — for the time — but, we really miss the old chandeliers.

Some of these 1980 changes the study concluded, need replacing, some should be reversed. The most prominent is the reinstallation of the long windows at the rear of the building that were removed and bricked up. Today’s glass technology the study concluded, would permit prevention of ultra violet radiation from harming our collections housed in the old stacks of the Wood Library. Plus, it would return the building to the glory of what it once was.

Nonetheless, at the February meeting of our Board of Trustees, the ad hoc Space Committee led by retired Ontario County Administrator, Geoff Astles, recommended that the next step in the process should be to develop a master plan for the future of the building, storage of our collection and its functional utility. The help of the general public in focus groups will be sought to assist in our decision making.

We will continue to bring information on this project to our membership as it becomes available.

A procession escorted Adams to the Congregational Church, the only large public venue at the time, and there he gave a speech and was honored by a reception. We don’t know the subject of his talks, but he was an ardent abolitionist. Adams dined at John Grieg’s mansion on Main Street, demolished when Scotland Road was developed. He left town later that same day on another train. The Auburn and Rochester Railroad had only completed its line two years earlier. John Quincy Adams spent seventeen years serving in Congress representing Massachusetts after his term as president. There, he was an outspoken opponent of slavery and its extension.

I will recount the visits of other presidents in upcoming issues. In the meantime, I invite you to come to the museum and see the special presidential exhibit put together by our Curator, Wilma Townsend. There is something there from every president.
“99 Bottles of Beer on the Wall . . .” – Well, Actually 80

While doing research for our exhibit on Prohibition, I started looking for local beer bottles in our collection. I found quite a few! At last count, the museum holds 80 glass bottles used for beer, distilled liquor, patent medicines, as well as carbonated beverages. Most of these bottles come from the McKechnie Brewing Co. or the Union Bottling Works.

In 1910, the souvenir book *Canandaigua as it is Today* described both businesses:

“The McKechnie Brewery [Buffalo Street]: Canandaigua Ale is celebrated the country over and justly so. It is made entirely from the choicest Western New York hops and high-grade malt made from WNY barley. The process of its manufacture insures its purity and reliability. Since its first appearance in 1843, Canandaigua Ale has enjoyed a steady growth in popular favor. This Canandaigua industry employs almost thirty men with a yearly payroll of $35,000. The average yearly output is 40,000 barrels, and this is shipped to all parts of the country.”

“The Union Bottling Works on Mill Street is among the most important industrial establishments in Canandaigua. Owned by John E. Dwyer, it is the headquarters of an extensive business, employing many assistants. Mr. Dwyer manufactures all kinds of high-grade carbonated beverages and mineral waters, of which large quantities are shipped to outside points. He is also the local agent for the Bartholomay Brewery of Rochester, NY.”

Prior to Prohibition these local businesses thrived. In 1904, the McKechnie Brewery was sold to Schopf Distributors of Buffalo and was refurbished for better quality and greater production. In 1916, with the advent of Prohibition in New York and later nationwide in 1920, the McKechnie Brewery was forced to close. For a time, it attempted to stay open producing vinegar and pickles, but this failed.

The Union Bottling Works, owned for many years by John E. Dwyer, continued producing and bottling non-alcoholic beverages after Prohibition began. When Dwyer died in 1921, his son Howard, took over the business. Tragically, the son took his own life in 1922, despondent over his father’s death, his mother’s poor health and the mounting debts of the business. The business was taken over by J.S. Cummings, however, by 1928 the business was gone and the building on Mill Street was vacant.
Their marriage soon fell apart and Carrie took their son and moved to Minneapolis. In 1886, at the age of five, Charlie died of diabetes.

There is a time span from 1887-1890 that I cannot account for Wader’s specific whereabouts, but we have some clues. This period was the beginning of Wader’s not-so-happy life. His only income was sales from his paintings. He lost his wife, lost his son, didn’t have a job nor any money. Things were very bleak for Charles Dickens Wader. Excessive alcohol took over his life.

I believe he moved to Rochester, NY, and resided at 263 State Street. While there, he painted several Erie Canal scenes and Genesee River scenes. This is the time period in which he painted the Chimney Bluffs on Lake Ontario. There was already a noticeable difference in his style of paintings from his earlier scenes in Geneva. In 1890, he was pictured in the Rochester newspaper in his studio. In the picture, he is standing next to a large oil painting of his friend, Fred Crandall, fly fishing in Farmington, NY. Some think C.D. Wader, in a bit of irony, depicted his friend Fred in shiny “waders” in this painting entitled, *Fly Fishing at Mud Creek*. Coincidental or planned?

In 1894, he returned to Canandaigua with his friend and student, Fred Crandall. According to the Ontario County Times, that November, Wader ran a Christmas art show at the Crandall Brothers photo gallery. Fred and his brother, William Crandall, a photographer, had a studio at 30 South Main Street with a wonderful, large window through which sunlight streamed. There also was a large skylight in the studio. This was where Fred learned to paint.

In time, Wader’s alcohol addiction grew more intense. Poverty stricken, he found his way to Peter E. Burke’s bar on Main Street where Sweet Impressions is now located. Fred Crandall followed Wader to the bars wanting to learn his techniques, and soon Crandall got a reputation of also being a “drunk.” This is not true! He merely went where Wader went. During this time, Wader traded paintings at Burke’s for drinks. The Burke families who now live in Avon, NY, still have some of Wader’s paintings.

Thomas E. Murphy Restaurant and Bar was right across the street from the Crandall Studio at 57 Niagara Street. At this time, the Crandall Studio was Charles Wader’s legal address. Again, at the bar he sold his paintings to pay for his bar bill. Now we know why the late Clifford “Bob” Murphy received so many beautiful Wader paintings from his grandfather. Wader also was a life member of the Merrill Hose Fire Department in Canandaigua. I am sure that the five paintings that the fire company now owns came to them in the same way as the Burke and Murphy families acquired theirs.

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Your Historical Society

Chloe and Natalie at the January reception to introduce Curator Wilma Townsend’s book “Votes for Women”

Preston Pierce presents a talk on presidential visits to Ontario County to audience at Wood Library

Austin Steward Historic Marker on display in the museum after the dedication ceremony

January reception to introduce Curator Wilma Townsend’s book “Votes for Women”

Museum entertained a full house at the dedication of the Austin Steward Historic Marker

Lincoln life mask and campaign flag in “All Things Presidential” exhibit
The cold, bleak days of winter seem to drag on forever... and years ago Canandaigua had an answer to help ease those winter blues... Red Jacket Park! Now the Canandaigua Lake State Marine Park and boat launch, Red Jacket Park was home to baseball in the summer and ice skating in the winter.

The ice rink was maintained by the City of Canandaigua. There was a little “warming” hut with large heaters suspended from the ceiling, benches around the perimeter for resting and lacing up, and a Coke machine for thirsty skaters. Outside the music was always blaring from giant speakers and huge lights brightly illuminated the area for night time skating. But before heading to Red Jacket, it was important to check the daily “rink condition” report in the local newspaper.

Recently we decided to celebrate a snowy, cold day by posting some wonderful images of the old skating rink on our social media Facebook page. Immediately it was flooded with endearing comments of fabulous memories. One of those comments came from a follower who now lives in Haiti, and I bet he may have been one of those rowdy boys who would steal our stocking caps, which we spent the rest of the evening chasing after.

Here is a sampling of memories shared by our viewers:

“The best of times, skating”
“Long walk to get there from East Gibson St., but so much fun!”
“Red Jacket Park... so many good memories from there!”
“Was a great place to go in the winter”
“Spent many a day down there in 40s”
“Our children had many fun days skating at Red Jacket”
“Oh what fun, we skated every chance we could get... would stack up Coke crates and jump them”
“It was one of the best parts of winter in Canandaigua!”

This post had a reach to over 6700 Facebook users, and we welcomed 171 new members to our Facebook family. Connecting people with their past always gives us a warm, fuzzy feeling on those cold winter days.

Mail Box

Dear Ed,

Thank you so much for helping me bring recognition to Austin (Steward). Over the past three years, it has been a pleasure getting to know and work with you.

In gratitude,

Chester Freeman
News and Announcements

- Our museum topic for the coming year is the Prohibition Era. We are preparing a new exhibit on Prohibition Era and its impacts on Ontario County. We have even located an old copper still that dates to the 1920s. We haven’t tried to see if it is still functional. Preston Pierce is developing educational programs on Prohibition and its origins while the staff is working on an event or two that will bring local distilleries into the museum for a fun tasting. The exhibit will open on May 18th with a reception for our museum’s benefactors and will run for a year.

- We want to thank all our members who so generously donated to make our March 15th “National History Day” competition a success. We have been the regional sponsor for the Finger Lakes region since 2000.

- On January 17th the Historical Society held a reception to celebrate the publication of our latest book, *Votes For Women: The Suffrage Movement in Ontario County*. The 147-page color book was written and produced by our Curator, Wilma Townsend. Funding was made possible by a Humanities New York Action Grant with support from the National Endowment for the Humanities. The reception was attended by over 50 supporters. Guest speakers included, NYS Senator Pamela Helming, Wilma Townsend and Edward Varno. Dana Teets gave an update on a new suffrage project we are involved in with Dr. Judy Wellman.

- The Historical Society was recently notified that we were awarded two additional years ($12,000/year) of general operating support from the New York State Council for the Arts. These unrestricted funds to help pay for the day-to-day operations of the museum. We want to thank the Council, our members of the State Legislature and Governor Andrew Cuomo for making these funding sources possible.

- We want to welcome two new members to our Board of Trustees, Natalie DeTraglia and Jack Schuppenhauer. Each bring a unique perspective to the Board. They are both filling one-year terms and will appear on the OCHS ballot next October.

- As you know, the museum is quickly running out of space. In 2017, we produced a Building Condition Report funded by the Preservation League of NY. We have just completed a study performed by BERO Architects that critically analyzed our museum space and how it is used. Their conclusion is that we are out of space. The next step in the process is to undertake a Museum Master Plan that will look out 30 years and identify a new vision for building and our mission. The Board of Trustees Committee is chaired by Geoff Astles, former Ontario County Administrator. We will be reporting on the progress in future issues of *The Chronicles*, or as matters warrant.

- We are pleased to report that the Ontario County Arts Council will be having three exhibits again this year in our North Gallery. Each will open with a public reception. There will also be several educational art programs, too.

- Dave Hewson, our Board’s Fundraising Chairman, has announced our 2019 fundraising events. Save the dates. They are: “A Spring Garden Tour” — June 29th; “Mystery Drive” — August 15th; “Small Treasures Out of the Attic” auction — August 24th; “John North Willys Bike Rally” — August 25th; and our 3rd annual “Speak Easy” — October 19th at Warfields. Please support these events; they are critical in balancing our budget.

- We want to thank Board Member, Fritz Cermak, for digitizing many of our analogue videos and recordings. They are now in permanently saved, accessible to the public on our computers and backed up to our cloud storage for posterity to use in research.

- We would like to mention the passing of Bruce W. Baker on January 10th of this year. Bruce was a Navy veteran of the Korean War and was later a community volunteer. He loved history and shared that love with high school students in Honeoye Central Schools for many years. Bruce and his wife, Jane, were married for over 60 years. In his obituary, the Ontario County Historical Society was mentioned as an organization to which memorial contributions can be made in his name.
Wader was always a well-dressed gentleman. He would walk up and down Main Street going to and from the lake where he liked to sketch. He would return to the studio to finish the sketches. Wader and Crandall painted and sketched together daily. In the winter when walking was difficult and they could not easily get to the lake to paint, they would stay in their studio and use images from Canandaigua Lake postcards to create their work.

In March 1896, the Ontario County Times reported the completion of Wader’s most magnificent painting The Interrupted Sitting, which measured 6 ft. x 5 ft., and was placed on display in the café at the Hotel Dwyer. But where was the Hotel Dwyer? I have researched all the local historical societies in Phelps, Geneva, Rochester, and Canandaigua. Google and ask.com offered no answers either.

Then, with the help of Wilma Townsend, Curator of the Ontario County Historical Society, I think we found the answer. In 1896, there was a hotel in Victor called the Dryer Hotel. If you look at a standard keyboard, the W is just two keys from the R key. Misspelled by the paper’s typesetter? Maybe. Also, in 1818, the hotel was owned by the Rufus Dryer family. The Dryer Hotel was on the southwest corner of Main and Maple Streets in Victor where the Five Star Bank is now located. But the question lingers, where did the famous 6 ft. x 5 ft. painting go? Where is it now? Was it done in oil or watercolor? Think of the value of that painting now!

After 1904, Wader lived for some time at the county poor house. In May of 1911, diagnosed as insane, he was admitted to Willard State Hospital. In November 1918, a great influenza epidemic swept through the country and particularly in the area hospitals. It was during this epidemic, that C.D. Wader died at the age of 69. Like others confined to the asylum, Wader was buried in an unmarked grave at Willard Hospital in Ovid, NY. Death records were not recorded at that time. His best friend, Fred Crandall, died just 3 years later in 1921, at the age of 62.

There is a Wader family plot in Woodlawn Cemetery in Canandaigua. It was purchased by Everett Wader in 1889, possibly Charles’ older brother. Jacob and Clarissa Peck Wader, Charles’ parents are buried there. Also, Herbert Wader another brother, Wader’s ex-wife Carrie and Seba Peck, are all interred there. The plot is in Section 5, Lot #249. In 1979, a bronze plaque was placed at the site in C.D. Wader’s memory.

In 1996, I hosted the largest and longest running exhibition of Wader and Crandall paintings. The Mill Gallery in Honeoye Falls, NY, displayed ninety paintings of the duo and ran for four weeks. Due to public demand, it was extended to six weeks. It was the most highly attended show in the history of the Mill Gallery.

In retrospect, it is a shame that neither Wader nor Crandall lived to see what an impact they both left on the art world, Ontario County, and their beloved chosen spot, Canandaigua!

*Museum Note: In 1971, Fred Hollis donated Wader’s watercolor box to the Ontario County Historical Society. The accession number of the gift is 1972.16.*

Anne Peacock-Jacobs’ book, *Scenes of Monroe and Ontario Counties, Past and Present Featuring Canandaigua Lake and Squaw Island*, is available from the Historical Society for $30.00. To order contact Maureen Baker at maureenb@ochs.org or 585-394-4975.
The OCHS Organization

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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.

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.

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Please “Like” us on Facebook! Just go to www.facebook.com and search for the Ontario County Historical Museum.
We Welcome These New Members

Deborah Havens
Wendy Hubert
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Lynne O'Connor
Sandra Olson
Michael Pierce
Joanne VanderVen
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Suzonne Wied

New Sign for the Historical Society

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

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Return to:

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

March 15:  8:00 a.m. — 12:00 p.m. — “Regional History Day Competition”
April 3:   7:00 p.m. — Genealogy Society meets
April 6:   1:00 p.m. — 3:00 p.m. — Arts Council Exhibit opening: “The Majesty of Flight”
April 18:  1:00 p.m. — 3:00 p.m. — “Centerfield Homemaker’s Program”
May 1:     7:00 p.m. — Genealogy Society meets
May 18:    1:00 p.m. — 3:00 p.m. — Benefactors Reception — “Prohibition” exhibit opens
June 5:    6:00 p.m. — “Genealogy Society Annual Picnic”
June 22:   1:00 p.m. — 3:00 p.m. — Arts Council Exhibit Opening: “Tell A Story”
June 29:   Save the Date — “Garden Tour”