



# SCHOOL HOUSE MUSEUM NEWSLETTER

Volume 4, Issue 1

PO Box 122, Strykersville NY 14145

June 2009

## 2009 Calendar of Events

- **June 6 & 7** 19th Annual Town-Wide Yard Sale Weekend in Strykersville
- **June 7** 2:00 p.m. at the Schoolhouse: Gospel Music Concert by the Calvary Heights Baptist Church from Elma.
- **Cook Book Sale at School House.** \$16.00 ea. Regional Winner 2008 Tabasco Community Cookbook Award! Have yours autographed by our Curators!

## Sheldon Historical Society Officers

President, Susan Szucs  
 Vice President, Mary Ann Bartz  
 Treasurer, Mike Szucs  
 Secretary, Betty Reisdorf

### Curators:

Mary Ann Metzger  
 Marilyn Smithley

### Board of Trustees:

Mildred Ash PJ Almeter  
 Judie Coffey Janet Kirsch  
 Mary Ann Metzger

## Visit Our New Web Site:

[www.Sheldonghistoricalsociety.org](http://www.Sheldonghistoricalsociety.org)

## UPCOMING MEETINGS OF THE SHELDON HISTORICAL SOCIETY AT THE SCHOOLHOUSE MUSEUM:

Wed. June 18 at 7:00 p.m.  
 Wed. July 16 at 7:00 p.m.  
 Wed. August 20 at 7:00 p.m.

ANNUAL DINNER MEETING  
 AND ELECTION OF OFFICERS  
 @ BYRNCLIFF RESORT:

September - Date & time TBD

## History of the West Star Lodge



West Star Lodge No. 205, Free and Accepted Masons, of the town of Sheldon was the first Lodge instituted west of the Genesee River. Its records, now in the office of Grand Secretary in New York, reveal a petition was presented to Grand Lodge under date of March 10, 1809, requesting permission to constitute a Masonic Lodge in Sheldon. The exact meeting place is not known but available evidence points to Sheldon Center. This petition, signed by 11 members of the craft, advised the Grand Master that they were 30 miles away from any Masonic Lodge and that they had nominated William Vary to be Master, John Ralph to be Senior Warden, and Philo Welton to be Junior Warden. This request was approved by Genesee Lodge of Hartford (now Avon) on May 12, 1809.

On July 24 of that year, DeWitt Clinton, Grand Master, granted a dispensation, the same to be valid for one year. The requirements for a charter or warrant having been satisfied, it was finally granted in 1812. The Lodge was prosperous for a time; however, in 1818 it sustained the loss from fire of its Lodge room. Its charter and all the jewels and working tools were lost. Grand Master DeWitt Clinton ordered a new charter sent to them without charge on January 13, 1819. About three years later, in 1822, the Lodge applied for remission of its Grand Lodge dues basing its request on reduced membership due to a fluctuating population in its wide jurisdiction and the loss sustained by fire in 1818. Grand Lodge cancelled all indebtedness of the

Lodge in June 1822, and it met more or less regularly until the period of the Morgan episode. Being unable to collect its dues, it failed to meet its obligations to Grand Lodge. In June 1833, its charter was forfeited.

About twenty-four years later, the present West Star Lodge #413 at Varysburg, the lineal descendent of the pioneer Masonic body of the region, was constituted. The first officers of the Lodge under dispensation were Worshipful Master Eli Williamson, Senior Warden, George A. Johnson, Junior Warden Joshua Coughran, Treasurer Owen Cotton, Secretary Lindorf Potter, Senior Deacon Harvey Johnson, and Junior Deacon H.G. Parker. West Star Lodge No. 413, Free and Accepted Masons, was granted a charter on June 5, 1857. The charter members were H.G. Parker, Chauncey Beebe, Owen Cotton, Roswell Gardner, William Tanner, Amasa Barret, Harvey Johnson, Lindorf Potter, M.D. The first communication under dispensation was held on June 23, 1856 in a room over the store on the corner of Main and Attica streets then owned by a Mr. Ainsworth. It continued to hold its communications there until February 20, 1892, when it moved to its present location. The building at that time was owned by Brother George M. Wolf. During the year 1906, the Lodge purchased the building which has since been remodeled and improved to its present appearance. The remodeling was financed by a loan from the Citizens Bank of Attica which was not repaid in full until 1955, during the administration of Brother Fred Rhebergen. The Lodge has been fortunate in the caliber of men who have been its leaders during its existence in Varysburg starting with Col. William Vary who was a gristmill operator and the first master of the Lodge.



Compiled by Glenn Cramer

Reference: This information was taken from records at Grand Lodge from the 1957 Centennial Committee presentation.

## HAMILTON



By the roadside more often named North Road was erected in the year 1930 by the State Education Department a tablet in memory of a distinguished notable. The tablet reads: Here stood a log house built in 1807, home of Ziba Hamilton, physician of Holland Land Co., surgeon in the war of 1812, Pioneer Settler.

At a regular meeting of the Town Board held Feb. 25, 1931, a resolution was unanimously adopted, designating the entire length of the highway running north and south through Sheldon in which the Tablet is erected to be named and known as Hamilton Road. Dr. Hamilton was well and favorably known far beyond the limits of his home town. At any rate, the Office of the Adjutant General at Albany, of the War of 1812, together with the Department of Education remembered him and honored him by erecting a tablet to his memory, while his fellow townsmen of another generation persisted in referring to the highway as North Road in spite of Tablet and sign. He was a large holder of real estate owning about one half the land from Route 20A to Center Street. When the elder Martin Keem was foreman he employed 13 hired men.

Sheldon has a pardonable pride in having an authority as competent and widely experienced in the matter of choosing a location to live, progress and prosper, as Dr. Ziba Hamilton, in having preferred Sheldon from all of the select terrain of Western New York, aptly referred to as: "The garden of America." He died in 1854 and lies buried in Cemetery Hill, Sheldon, N.Y., Route 20A.

North Sheldon Road  
Sheldon, NY USA

*According to a Town of Sheldon historical narrative  
Submitted by Mary Ann Metzger*

## Pieces of Our Past

The late Howard B. Bennion, Arcade, who lived in the village of Strykersville from 1876 to 1919, prepared a memo of recollections some years before his death in 1951. Then, as now, the village limits extended about a mile, going south into the Town of Java about one-fourth of a mile; the center being at the location of the district school and the two portions being known as Up Town and Down Town. The original frame school, long inadequate, was replaced by the present two-room building, the old building was sold at auction and bought by the Independent Order of Good Templars, and from them passed into the possession of the Odd Fellows. Several years later, the store keeper at East Arcade purchased the building, demolished it and rebuilt there and donated the Strykersville land to St. Mary's Church. Mr. Bennion remembered that the site of the Catholic church and school was an open space, and opposite, his father, Owen Bennion, erected a hardware store, a dwelling and barn. The hardware continues in operation and includes the village post office. Three-quarters of a century ago, leading business men were Peter Reisdorf, who ran a saw mill, cider mill, and cooper shop, and later a grist mill, all by steam power.

Enos P. Clapp ran a sash and blind factory on the Wales Road (Route 78), his power being created by a team of horses traveling on a large round wooden wheel or platform set at an angle; this property was used by several enterprises after Mr. Clapp, and wound up also as a cider mill.

By the Civil War period, Thomas Bettendorf, a brewer from France, established a beer-making business at the north end of the village. On April 10, 1870, the

brewery, and adjacent house burned at a loss of \$7,000. It was rebuilt soon after by John Metzger or Frank Glaser at a cost of more than \$9,000 for a hotel, barns and other buildings. There was a large hop yard on the property. Beer was peddled in eighths, quarters and halves as far east as Hermitage, north to Cowlesville, south to Arcade, and west to Sardinia. The product was aged in large hogsheads in deep cellars, some one-half mile in length; ice was always put up in the winter in ice houses, packed in sawdust, and when the season was mild with little ice forming, the brewery would cut snow hanks into squares to store in the cellars to save the ice crop. Mr. Glaser continued operation of the brewery until August 13, 1909, when again fire swept the large hotel and brewery nothing remained but the hotel sign. The brewery was rebuilt and flourished but a brief time until Prohibition closed its doors forever. Lastly, the buildings were used as a GLF branch of the Java Village feed mill, then closed. Cider was made there seasonally also. Today, the edifice remains untenanted, a mute reminder of a colorful local industry.

*Submitted by Mary Ann Metzger*

## **SHELDON HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

**2009-2010 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES:  
\$5.00**

Membership is open to anyone with an interest in the work of the Society without restriction to age or place of residence.

Please make your check payable and mail to:

Sheldon Historical Society  
P O Box 122  
Strykersville, NY 14145

## Obit's Corner

MRS. FRANK WINCH

Mrs. Frank Winch passed away at her home in Java Village, Tuesday, October 19, 1937.

Funeral services were held in the home, Thursday, Rev. Northey of the Congregational church officiating.

Cora Whaley was born December 28, 1880, at Java Village, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Seymour Whaley. She was married to Frank Winch, November 27, 1907. She spent her entire life in the neighborhood of Java Village and loved the place and its people. During the long years of her illness she kept a cheerful interest in all activities, and as long as she was able, was an active member of the Congregational Ladies' Aid and the Women's Club. She will be greatly missed.

Mrs. Winch is survived by her husband; two daughters, Mrs. Ellsworth Kirsch, Strykersville, and Charlotte Winch, Java Village; three grandchildren Elaine, Terry and Dean Kirsch; two sisters, Mrs. Arthur Hogan of East Aurora and Mrs. Edward George of Westfield; and one brother, Riley Whaley of Java Village.

Before the preceding notice could be printed sorrow had once again come to the home of Frank Winch when his son Elliott Winch passed away October 27, at Mt. Mercy hospital, Buffalo, after an illness of a few days.

(Arcade Herald)