

The Preservationist

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear NHS members,

Greetings to all!

It has been a difficult 14 months, but it seems as if we are near the finish line dealing with Covid 19. Unfortunately, we lost some friends and great supporters during the pandemic. Let's look forward to better days.

With this in mind, I will start this message with good news. Firstly, we started the year with membership programs. March brought an interesting program on the Richardson Complex, presented by Mark Saglian. April needed to be cancelled due to a venue issue. May had Erie County Historian Doug Kohler's presentation on WNY in the Civil War. Both programs had a smaller audience due to space limitations, but both were well received by attendees in person and on zoom. It was wonderful to have meetings again. Note: the antiques appraisal program will be rescheduled for the fall.

2021 is Erie County's Bicentennial. Many activities are being scheduled so check out the EC200 website for updates. One component of the bicentennial is the passport program. Don Holmes and I have worked on this program with representatives from Clarence, Alden, Lancaster, and Elma to create a booklet which encourages Erie County residents to "discover" all the museums in Erie County. We are proud to say that the free passports are now available at local Buffalo and Erie County Public Libraries and at museums. I encourage our members to pick up a passport and travel around Erie County this year to check out these interesting buildings. It will be a great adventure.

More good news: there will be a Fourth of July parade this year. See the article later in this newsletter.

Along with good news, must come some bad news. In the last newsletter I was confident that the Octagon reconstruction would be finished by the Fourth of July. I was also confident that the cost of repairs would be completely paid by the insurance company. Unfortunately, neither is the case. As of this printing, the house has had setbacks due to insurance and contractor issues. Without going into specific issues, there has been a disagreement on the amount the insurance will pay compared to contractor's prices. It appears the society will need to pay

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many thousands of dollars to complete the repairs. As president, it is very difficult to give you this information. The board has authorized payment to the contractor but realizes this will cause a significant reduction of our capital reserve fund.

Our members have always been **extremely supportive** of our museums, especially the Octagon House, so I am humbly asking anyone who feels able to contribute financially to this issue, no matter what the amount, to do so. We need to finish the reconstruction so our House can once again shine in the community.

I think everyone knows the NHS has always been a good steward to the community. The museums and we will carry on for years to come to preserve our heritage.

Sincerely,

Patricia Pearce



MORE GOOD NEWS

- Nick Abraham gifted the NHS two flags to participate in the “Avenue of Flags” program sponsored by the Lions Club. The flags will be placed in front of the Octagon House and Knight-Sutton Museum. Many thanks to Nick.
- Our 2021 scholarship winner has been chosen and will be announced at the Awards assembly in June. Congratulations to our winner as he/she enters UB in September.
- Don Holmes, Akron/Newstead Town Historian, will have an article regarding Newstead in an upcoming edition of *WNY Heritage Magazine*. It will probably be the July edition which will be part of Erie County’s bicentennial year.
- We had the opportunity to have our collection of Akron Central High School yearbooks (minus 2005) digitized at no cost to the society. A grant from Oklahoma Correctional Industries enabled us to send the yearbooks to Oklahoma for the service. The KSM, the Newstead Public Library, and Town Historian’s office each has a set of CDs containing the yearbooks. Note: if anyone has a 2005 yearbook he/she would like to donate, please call the KSM.
- NHS will host the Friday night refreshment stand on July 30 during a band concert.

PROGRAMS

Susan Eck, will present “Emblem of Equality: Women’s Suffrage in WNY” on Thursday, June 10 at the Newstead Cultural Center. Last year marked the 100th anniversary of the ratification of the 19th Amendment, granting American women the right to vote. Come and hear about WNY women who contributed to this fight. With Covid restrictions being lifted, look for future publicity that will convey the number of attendees that will be allowed. Reservations will probably be needed. Please call 716-542-7022 or 716-542-4191 to reserve a spot. Please leave your name and phone number.

FOURTH OF JULY

The Fourth of July parade is scheduled. NHS will have its annual Amish quilt raffle also on this date. Dave Wakeman has purchased another beautiful quilt; this year's pattern is "Barchello". The colors are yellow, gray and blue with a lovely, scalloped edge at the bottom. Expect your tickets in the mail soon. You will be able to view it at the Sidewalk Sale on June 19. Along with the quilt we usually have a pie sale. Again, the Board feels it would be prudent to substitute the "Pick-a-Pie" raffle for the pie sale this year. It will be explained in the quilt letter. Hopefully, next year the pie sale will be back.



Did you know . . .

We have over two dozen quilts in our collection?

The Directors of the KSM and the Octagon are planning themed "pop-up exhibitions" beginning next year that would highlight such things as our beautiful quilts for the public to view at both buildings.

Quilting originated in Sweden in the fifteenth century with heavily stitched and appliquéd quilts made for the very wealthy. These quilts, created from silk, wool, and felt, were intended to be both decorative and functional and were found in churches and in the homes of nobility.

MUMFORD TRIP

Some of the board members were granted a "backstage" view of the handling of artifacts at Genesee Country Village Museum. Arranged by Kim Burg, the group was extremely impressed by the quality control facility at the museum. We also toured the octagon house and Hamilton House at the museum. Kudos to Kim for a great learning experience for our members.

RICH-TWINN OCTAGON HOUSE

by Kate Stapleton Parzych



Restoration projects seem to run on their own timeline, alas, there have been many delays. However, the outlook is bright. Wallpapers for the Drawing Room, Foyer, and Lady's Bedroom, as well as carpeting for the Drawing Room have been decided upon. When the time arrives for tours to take place again, the Rich-Twinn Octagon House as Museum will be a place for visitors to learn about mid-nineteenth century life and be featured as a unique example of American Architecture.

Charles Rich and his family were residents at the Octagon House from circa 1850 - 1870. The Museum will highlight various furniture pieces, curios, pastimes, and garments from those years (approximately). Using the information we have on the Rich family, as well as researching American life during those two decades, the House will be furnished in the manner of how they may have lived. For example, we know Mr. Rich was a botanist, therefore, evidence of that will be on display.

It is very fortunate that the Octagon has so many beautiful Eastlake furnishings, a style that really gained popularity as the 1870s began. The wallpapers that have been chosen for the House are based on motifs from prominent craftsmen of that time such as William Morris and Christian Herter, who so were inspired by Eastlake designs that they created wallpaper to compliment that very prevalent style of furniture.

Neo-Classicism, highlighting Greek and Roman influences, was a major part of architectural and decorative arts during the Victorian era. (As you may already know, the House is a Greek Revival building with Italianate windows at the cupola). The Aesthetic movement, which focused on beauty for beauty's sake, was also a predominant interior design style. Influenced in part by Japanese and Persian motifs, the inspirations for this genre were brought to Europe and North America from world travelers eager to bring some of these intriguing new design elements into their homes. The Octagon will be reflecting these historical influences.

Guided tours will highlight the lifestyle of the Rich family and share information about the unique items contained within the Museum. Additionally, specific guided tours that focus on the architecture of the Octagon House using Orson Fowler's recommendations for healthy living in the mid-nineteenth century are being developed. All of the tours that will be offered at the Octagon are being updated and aligned with current public-space policies. Information about upcoming opportunities to help with guided and self-guided tours will be announced soon!

PIECES TOO SHORT TO SAVE

Knight -Sutton Museum

By Pat Rodrigues

I have decided to rename this column after one of my favorite stories about an elderly gentleman who was a bit of a hoarder. When he died his children began the difficult task of going through his possessions. In the attic they found an old trunk and when they lifted the lid, they discovered a big ball of string, composed of many smaller pieces all tied together with a note attached to it. It said, "pieces too short to save".

And so, as I am sorting through things in the archives, I am finding little tidbits of information - not enough for an article but still little treasures to be noted and remembered, strung together, "pieces too short to save".

One such discovery was an old clipping about Mr. Gillings, a Civil War veteran who lived in the Octagon house from 1882 until his death in 1928. The obituaries were written a bit differently in those days and so I found the last paragraph quite charming. According to his obituary he was born April 15, 1840 in Lockport," the day the Erie Canal was completed in that place. He received his education in the schools of the day but was a great reader, keeping in touch with the affairs of the times. But possessed a good memory, could give many interesting facts of history." "Mr. Gillings was a good neighbor and friend and will be missed by those who knew him best as well as by the many little folks of the town for whom he always had a bit of candy."

So, there you go!

Meanwhile we have opened our exhibit and what a fun exhibit it is! If you have never seen what I call the "bean machine" you ought to stop by and bring the kids and grandkids. This artifact was donated by Akron native, Barbara Kopp, whose grandfather, Cortland Otis Tinkham invented it with his partner, O. B. Sims.

It is a machine that scoured and cleaned grain and nuts and was known as "The Advanced Bean Cleaner and Polisher". Mr. Tinkham ran a feed business on Eckerson Ave. near what was then the Akron Produce Co. and the old railroad line. Akron Produce shipped beans and grains as well as being dealers in produce. Local farmers brought Mr. Tinkham their produce for cleaning before it was shipped.

The story behind the machine is of even more interest. In October of 1981, an ad ran in the Akron/Corfu Pennysaver listing the machine for sale in a lumber auction. As luck would have it, Barb saw the ad and went to the auction to bid on it. When others in the audience heard she was a descendant of the inventor they stopped bidding on it. Mrs. Kopp was able to reclaim her family heirloom for \$15. She then donated it to the historical society.

Then there is the birdhouse in the shape of the Octagon house built by the late Mr. Elmer Ottney, also of Akron. Stop by. You will always be intrigued by what you see. Admission is free. Every Wed. 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and the first and third Sundays of the month 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

RECIPE CORNER

By Jannette Potera

Here's a recipe from *A Book of Favorite Recipes* by the Akron Parent-Teachers Association of Akron Central School dated 1969. This is titled "Farmers Pork Chops" submitted by Shirley Sescil. I have made a similar recipe where I also lightly browned the potatoes and used chicken broth for moisture. It was delicious and a big hit with the family.

FARMERS PORK CHOPS

4 loin or shoulder pork chops	2 large onions, sliced
1 clove garlic, chopped	1 1/2 c. sour cream
Salt and pepper	1 1/2 tsp. salt
4 potatoes, sliced	1/2 tsp. dry mustard

Heat oven to 350 degrees. Brown chops and garlic. Season, place potatoes in 11 1/2 x 7 1/2 x 1 1/2 inch pan. Top with browned chops. Add onion rings. Blend sour cream, salt, mustard, pour over potatoes, chops, onions. Bake 1 1/2 hours. 4 servings.

GARDEN COMMITTEE

Once again, we are looking for gardening help. Typically, we depend on volunteers to do much of the upkeep on our Octagon House gardens. Planting is always a big job but during the summer volunteers sign up for a week or two of watering and weeding. Many hands make the job easy. If you can help, please call and leave a message at 542-7022.



WHAT FLOWERS WERE POPULAR DURING THE VICTORIAN AGE?

Gardens were filled with dianthus, lilacs, pansies, lilies, geraniums, heliotrope, wisteria, honeysuckle, hollyhocks, forget-me-nots and **roses**. The **Victorians** preferred their **roses** large, full and strongly scented and usually grew them on arbors or trellises.



MEMBERSHIP

by Linda Capan

Activity from February 1 – April 30, 2021:

We are saddened to report the recent passing of member Norma Bluhm on March 6, 2021. We extend our sincerest condolences to her family and friends.

WELCOME to the following new **ANNUAL** members:

Joe, Kristi & Christian Klonowski

John & Clara Noce

THANK YOU FOR A MEMORIAL DONATION given for:

Richard Komroy by Kimberley Burg

Charles Kopp and Cortland & Helen Tinkham by Barbara Kopp

THANK YOU FOR DONATIONS received from:

John & Jan Lauridsen, John & Clara Noce, and Anthony Zola

Memorials and donations to the Society are always appreciated and can be made by mailing to:
Newstead Historical Society, P. O. Box 222, Akron, NY 14001



2020 NHS Executive Board

President	Patricia Pearce 542-4191
Vice President	Adam Burg 570-0633
Treasurer	Annette Komroy 542-4714
Recording Secretary	Kimberley Burg 907-2720
Membership Secretary	Linda Capan 542-5300

Trustees

<u>Trustees: 2018-2020</u>	<u>Trustees: 2019-2021</u>	<u>Trustees: 2020-2022</u>
John Jendrowski	Pat Rodrigues	David Wakeman
Carole Borchert	Jannette Potera	Mary Sellers Hanley
Dusty Blasko	David Hofmeier	Marlene Gehl

Directors and Committees

Rich-Twinn Octagon House Director	Kate Stapleton-Parzych
Knight-Sutton Museum Director	Pat Rodrigues
Museum Coordinator	Kim Burg
Collections Manager	Jannette Potera
Publicity	Michele Asmus
Website	Colleen Salmon/Patty Buckley
Sales	
Century Homes & Landmarks	Pat Rodrigues
Newsletter	Donald Holmes/Julie Brady
Town and Village Historian	Donald Holmes

If you would like to receive notifications and information by e-mail, please send a note to Carole Borchert with NHS in the subject line to caroleborchert@gmail.com. Rest assured - You will *not* receive numerous messages; this is meant to be a convenience for those who would like it.

Please donate your bottles & cans to NHS by dropping them off at:

**BOTTLE & CAN
RETRIEVAL CENTER**
52 Cedar St.
Akron, NY



Tell them you want to donate to NHS!

Newstead Historical Society
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The Newstead Historical Society deeply appreciates the support of the County of Erie, the Town of Newstead, our members and the community at large.



