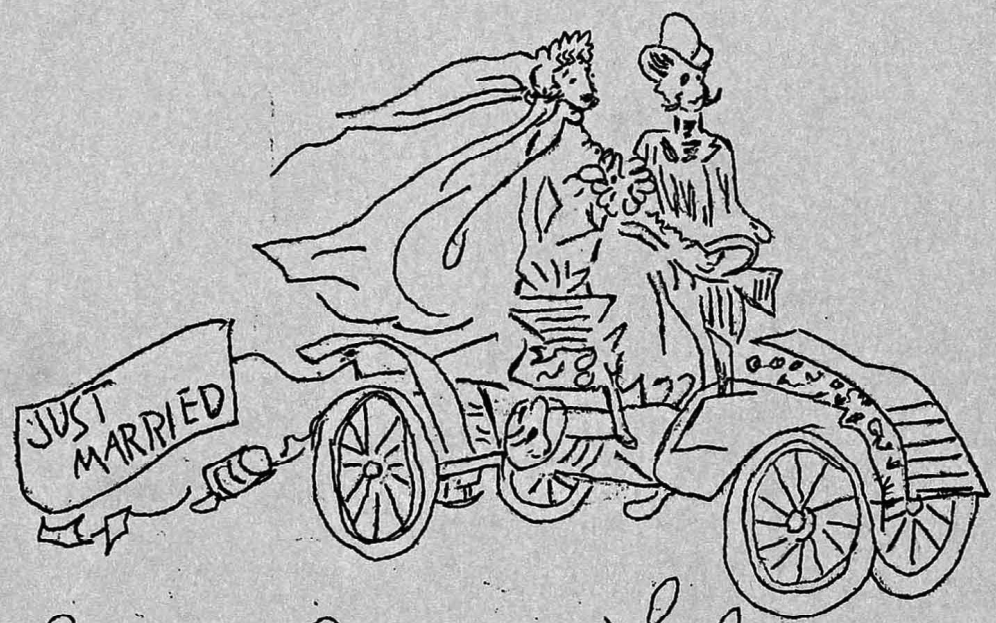


1269

JUNE 1969

VOLUME VI NUMBER II



The John Shurman
Historical Society, Inc.
Quarterly

SUMMARY OF J.T.H.S., INC. SEASON OF 1968,69

At the instigation of the John Thurman Historical Society, Inc. many representatives of Warren and Essex County Historical Societies met at Lake George on Saturday, September 21, 1968 to participate in a shore line cruise and a tour of the Fort William Henry Restoration. The day was enjoyed by all and the hope was expressed that in the near future the area societies might join in a federation, one purpose of which would be to make possible mutual excursions such as this.

The November meeting was to have been a dinner meeting followed by a musical entertainment by Lawrence Older. Unfortunately, an untimely ice storm forced cancellation of these plans and the society did not meet again until January 10, 1969. At this time, Stewart Farrar showed slides featuring old-time citizens and scenes of early days in this area, making appropriate comments about the photographs which were of interest to all.

On March 14th Mrs. Ethel Roberts gave an informative talk on "Care of Antiques" which was greatly enjoyed by her audience. She displayed many of her own articles to illustrate techniques of restoration and preservation, concluding with comments and suggestions concerning items brought to the meeting by the members.

The Society was delighted that Lawrence Older and his wife and son provided a program of old-time music at the meeting of May 9th. As an innovation Miss Nancy Dymond of the Adirondack Museum was on hand to make a tape recording of the entire concert.

Last year, at the annual meeting May 10, 1968, it was decided to retain the slate of officers elected for a two year term to end in May 1970. These officers were:

PRESIDENT:	MRS. MYRA MAGEE
VICE PRESIDENT:	MRS. GLADYS MURPHY
RECORDING SECRETARY:	MRS. ARMINE GURNEY
ASSISTANT SECRETARY:	MRS. FAUSTINE BENNETT
FINANCIAL SECRETARY:	MRS. BEATRICE CAMERON
TREASURER:	MRS. FANNIE HACK

At the May 9, 1969 meeting, Mrs. Alice Parker was elected Vice President in place of Mrs. Gladys Murphy who had resigned. The Recording Secretary, Mrs. Armine Gurney, will assume the duties of the assistant Secretary. Miss Faustine Bennett, resigned. The one year term of Directors, Mrs. Beatrice Cameron and Mrs. Alice Parker having terminated, - both were re-elected to serve for a three year term.

During the season 1968-69, the Quarterly has contained an announcement of dates and topics for all following meetings and, with publicity concerning them appearing in the local newspapers, the sending of individual notices to members has been discontinued unless some special reason might require such notice.

The total paid membership for 1968-69 was 54, as recorded in the March Quarterly. 1969-1970 dues have been paid since this making a total of 22 paid members. The number of membership certificates issued since January 1, 1968 is 75 which indicates a drop in the active membership. A few new members have not yet been issued certificates which will be mailed out soon.

When the program is made up for 1969-70 it will consist of four meetings instead of six as decided at the meeting of May 9, 1969: that is, a field trip in the fall, one program meeting in Warrensburg, one program meeting in Athol, and the annual May business meeting in Athol.

--Submitted by

A. Gurney
Armine Gurney, Secretary.

LOOKING BACKWARD

Count back the summers slowly, to one hundred years ago:
Dark forests in their glory, no matter where you go;
Brave men and queenly women to start new homes had come;
A box held their possessions, their knapsacks, scarce a crumb.

Log houses lined the roadside: log stables, sheds, and stacks.
The axes in the forest were heard in mighty whacks;
At every door a cluster of merry boys and girls;
The North Wind, their good doctor, at hardship, challenge hurls.

No day was ever prouder than when the logs were raised
By men who journeyed thither on trails they'd lately blazed.
A school for all the clearing, a real romantic spot!
Gay scenes inside the schoolroom and battles sternly fought.

The desk, in awful grandeur stood on its mighty legs.
The farther wall was covered with hats and coats on pegs.
Across the floor a "Fourth Class" in fractions or in "roots".
Around the stove were warming some urchins' leaky boots.

Had trouble with our lessons and often spats were keen.
The knowledge of the teacher was sometimes pretty lean.
But a window there was opened, we saw the road to fame,
And oft a schoolday ended with heart and mind aflame.

This then was the beginning of many a family plan.
Not all the lessons aided the making of a man.
Boys learned how from fathers to lumber, hunt and farm.
Girls could cook, could spin and sew; and milk a cow, and darn.

The sun still burns and blisters, and breezes cool the nights
The cattle roam the pastures. There are berries on the heights.
And life in good old Thurman keeps going just the same.
Because the good Lord wills it, He keeps us. Bless His Name!

--Adapted from verses for an old school
reunion, by R. Rolleston

-*-

ROAD TO THE ASBESTOS MINE

Thirty-seven years ago and seemingly just yesterday, the writer and her family were new in Thurman, out of Canada. Asbestos, they had never seen. Rumors of such in a native state sent them exploring on their own. An interesting account follows:

Near the junction of the Valley and the Mountain roads we drove our yellow Essex, (1930 vintage) into a roadside pasture field, to the brink of a jagged cut over ten feet deep or more, stretching a good two hundred feet. We found a good plain path and descending, found a small canyon of pale grey and greenish rocks. A closer look revealed bands of shiny grey clothlike material and this then was asbestos. The greenish rock was serpentine.

We collected samples. Obviously this place was old, abandoned and interesting. Satisfied, we ate our lunch in the midst of these surroundings. The children played in pools of water. A visit to the former asbestos mine made a very pleasant day.

Ten years passed and we came again with a minerally-minded group. Ever-green trees had grown around the opening, and seeking it at

random we nearly fell into it. Recognition came finally. This historic place was vanishing and going back to nature.

In 1967 we had a terrific time to find the mine at all. Indeed, we used the topographical map for directions. Paths were brushy and filled with growth. Alders made the going rather rough. Little bug-lets were in swarms. The once wide cavity appeared quite narrow. Only rays of sunshine broke through. Down in the mine the air was refreshingly cool. We came out scratched, warm and bitten.

However, to those who persevere there are still samples of native asbestos in serpentine rocks to be taken for the having. Anew we marvel. Damp rocks are very green. Dry rocks are greyish and chalky in appearance. The asbestos is like lacings through the rocks. It helps to use a pick and hammer such as miners use for obtaining good samples. This is superbly educational and rewarding. This historic place was once the site of an industry in Thurman, and on this spot a free gift from God was turned to useful purpose. --Ruth Rolleston

-*-

"FROM MY BOOK OF MEMORIES"

Now that my teaching days are past, I often look back in my book of memories for some of the happenings in my early days of teaching and compare them with the later years. The changes in curriculum, the method of presentation, the attitude of students.

My first teaching was in a little one room school, a far cry from the present day imposing central school structures. I boarded at the Trustee's home, the nearest place to the school. By going across lots through the fields, it was only about a mile and a half. I had the company of the Trustee's three children; a little girl in first grade and two who were older. Caroline was small and the long walk tired her, so I usually carried her part of the way. Three other children from another family made up the enrollment, six children in four grades.

I was "IT": janitor (built the fires and did the sweeping), doctor, truant officer and last but not least, teacher. For these services I received the munificent sum of nine dollars a week, five of which I paid for board. I was paid once a month but I felt quite rich as it was the first money I had ever earned. Money went farther in those days.

Early fall was lively with fall flowers and trees in their gorgeous colors but winter was coming, then what? My boarding place was the only house on the road and it was not plowed beyond there. The mile and a half across the fields was impossible. The other three children moved away. After a conference with the superintendent, it was decided that for the winter until other pupils returned, I could hold classes at the house. Books, etc. were brought to the house and a school room was established in an upstairs bedroom. Every morning at nine, the children and I hied ourselves to our "school room" and reading, writing and arithmetic were taught until noon; then came lunch. We were back at one o'clock until four. It was like a private school and we really accomplished a great deal.

At the end of the year I left and began teaching in a school nearer home. This time I had only three pupils, two from one family and one from another. The family with two moved away, so I was left with one lone girl about thirteen or fourteen years old.

We had been having trouble getting the fire to burn; no draft, but lots

of smoke.

One especially smoking morning, after I had poked and prodded the fire with no results, Mary my lone pupil said, "Lets clean the stove pipe. It probably needs cleaning".

The long wood stove stood toward the front of the room and the long expanse of pipe ran the length of the room to the chimney at the back end of the building. We had the teacher's desk, two chairs, the dictionary and books to stand on. Neither one of us was tall and the footing rather precarious, but we managed to get the stove pipe apart and down. I do not think the pipe had ever been cleaned as it was nearly filled with soot. We banged and shook and pounded until it was fairly clean. We could see through it. Now came the task of putting it up. It took us the rest of the morning and part of the afternoon to get it together, one length at a time and back into the chimney, but at last it was finished.

We started the fire and did it burn! We had to shut the dampers and open the door. No more shivering.

About Christmas time Mary moved away but would be back in the spring. One school house, one teacher, but no children. The school could not be closed so there I was teaching in a 'pupilless' school. Every morning I walked to school, built my fire, got out my knitting and went to work. It was during World War I. I could knit a pair of socks in three days. I do not remember how many pairs I knitted for the soldiers that winter.

Later, the teacher in another district was sick for several weeks so we had a winter vacation and I substituted for her. By the time spring came my Mary returned and school began again. No more knitting!

I think teachers who never had the opportunity of teaching in a one room school missed something. It taught me self-reliance. One made decisions, meted out rewards; punished according to one's judgment and planned for all ages. In fact the Teacher was "IT" for better or for worse.

Later, I began teaching in a graded school with only one grade, but I have many fond memories of the little one room schools. They turned out many brilliant people who occupied high posts in our world, even though they began their careers in a one room country school.

--Mrs. Kathleen Baker.

-*-

PLEASE NOTICE!

THIS WILL BE THE FINAL COPY OF THE QUARTERLY FOR THOSE WHO HAVE NOT PAID THEIR ANNUAL DUES. In the event YOU are in arrears, you may send your dues to Mrs. BEL CAMERON, ATHOL, N.Y. In this way you may be assured of obtaining your next copy of the J.T.H.S. Quarterly.