



Sheldon Schoolhouse Museum
3859 Main St.
Strykersville, NY 14145

Sheldon Historical Society Schoolhouse Museum Newsletter



An update on our progress as a Society and a Chartered Museum "A New Look at Old News From our Town"

Welcome to our newsletter! We have had a busy summer, starting on June 1-2 with our Strykersville Town Wide Yard Sale. Now we are open every Tuesday afternoon from 1:00-4:00 from June until October. Please contact us at: townofsheldonhistorian@gmail.com or call (716)474-3156 or (716)863-1474. Our next meeting will be September 19, 2024, at the Schoolhouse Museum, 7:00pm. We will have a special program at the meeting. Joyce Thompson-Hovey will present the story of her ancestor, Moses Dunbar, who was hung as a spy during the Revolutionary War. Our final meeting for this year will be Oct. 17, 2024, when we will have election of officers.

HISTORY OF SHELDONVILLE AND STRAUB'S CORNERS

BY JEANNE MEST, WITH THE MEMORIES OF MARY JANE ALMETER

This summer I had the privilege of meeting and interviewing a lady who has called the Town of Sheldon home for almost 97 years. Mary Jane Almeter and her family lived at Harmon and Almeter's store, at Straub's Corners. The area around the corner of Centerline, North Sheldon and Bartz Roads used to be known as Sheldonville or Straub's Corners. St. Cecilia's, the beautiful stone church, is the outstanding feature of this location. Also there were two hotels, the Harmon Hotel and the Sheldon Hotel. From 1919 to 1982, Harmon and Almeter's Store was also an institution in this part of the Town of Sheldon.



Mary Jane Almeter on a Farmall tractor in the 1930's

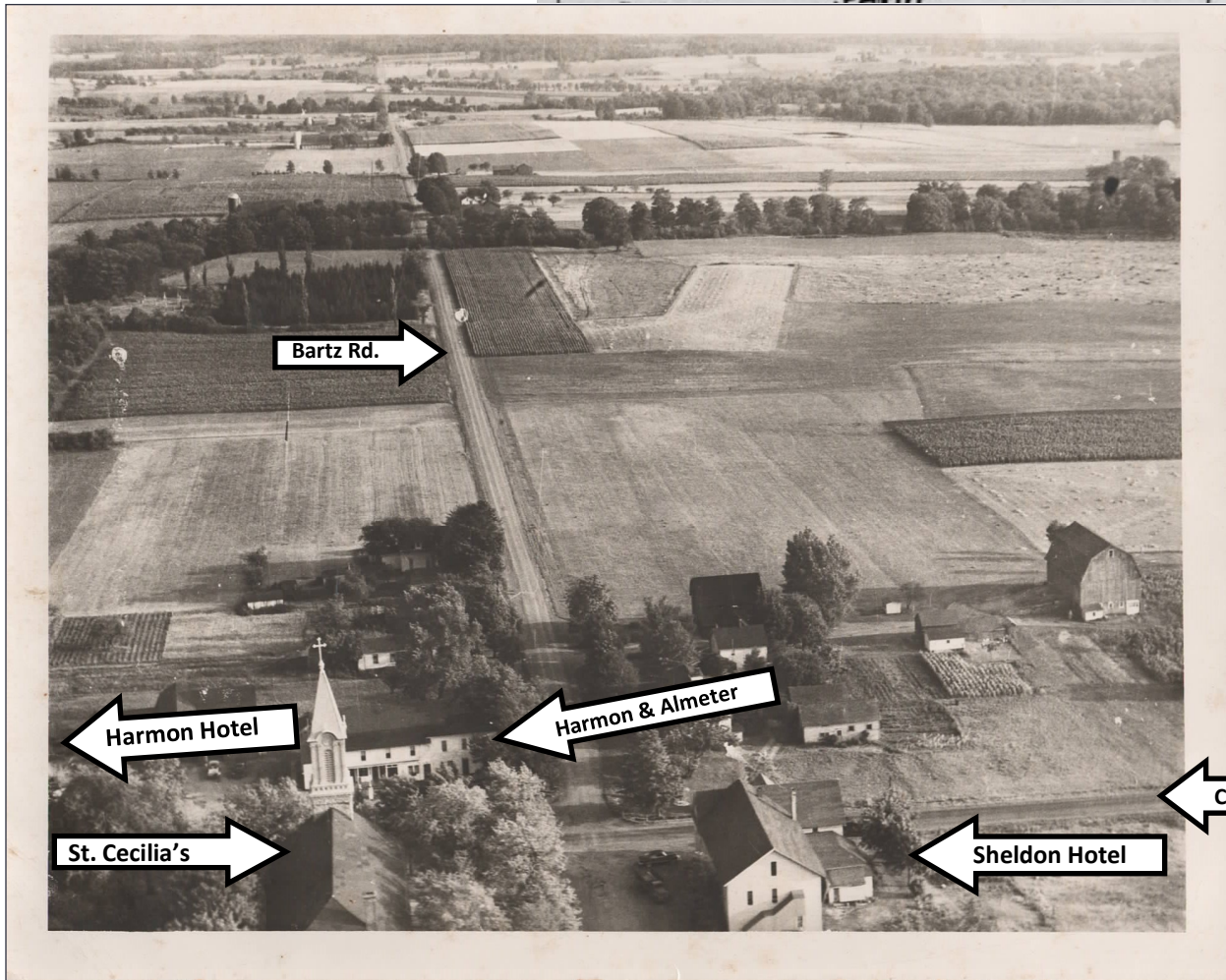
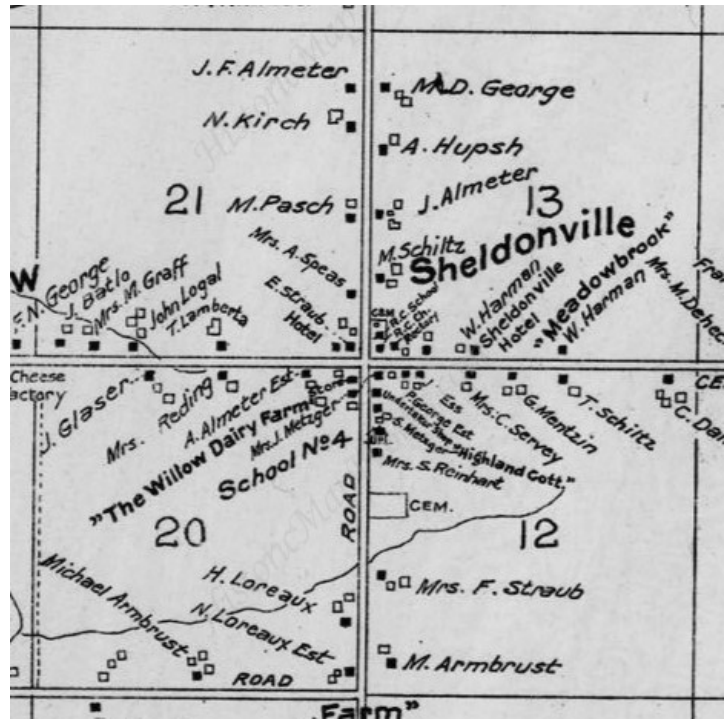
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SHELDONVILLE (CONTINUED)

Mary Jane Almeter has lived there all her life, and she agreed to do an interview with me to help me learn what life was like here years ago.

Harmon and Almeter's store was originally opened under a different name in the late 1800's. It was owned and run by Sylvester Metzger, an undertaker who was known to keep his coffins on the top floor, above his general store.

Like many other stores throughout Sheldon, it was an important place in the community. Sheldon Center had Riter's Store, where Ed Riter sold ice cream. Harris Corners had stores



Aerial View of Straub's Corners, 1950

owned by Julius Metzger and Matty Mathiesen; Johnsonburg had George Bauer's store. Varysburg had the Davis General Store and Strykersville had at least two. People depended upon these stores. There was no Walmart or Amazon to buy from, and going to Buffalo to shop was out of the question. Like the family farms, these stores were owned and operated by family members. Many of them had immigrant ancestors who came here from the same area of Europe.



Theodore Martin General Merchandise



Ed G. Riter General Merchandise

The Martin Store and the Riter Store were the same building. Riter evidently owned it later, due to the gas pump.



Harmon & Almeter's Store (note the gas pump)



Dole's General Store, Strykersville



Davis Store, Varysburg

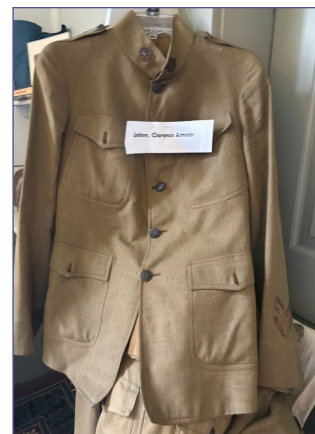


Varysburg Corner Store, Rt. 98 & 20A

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According to *"Reminiscing with Mr. & Mrs. Francis Almeter"*, which was published in the *Tri-County Times* in October 1976, Nicholas Almeter, Sr. and his wife, Mary Ghanty, had left their native Luxembourg and arrived in New York City. Mary Catherine worked as a seamstress and Nicholas as a hod carrier until they saved enough money to move to a home on Dutch Hollow Road in Sheldon in 1852. Later they moved to the farm on North Sheldon Road which has been in the Almeter family since 1870 and is known today as Breezy Hill. Nicholas was a carpenter and built their home and barns. Their children were Michael (who died at sea in 1852) John Bert, Francis Nicholas, William, Mary Anna, John F., Nicholas Jr., Catherine (who died as an infant) and another Catherine, who lived to adulthood.



Clarence Almeter's WWI uniform, currently on display at the Schoolhouse Museum.

Nick Jr. inherited the Almeter's gift with woodworking from his father. He built his own house and was one of the carpenters who built St. Cecilia's church and later the sheds for the horses and buggies at St. Cecilia's. He and Mary Reding were married and lived with his brother John F. Almeter and his wife Barbara until their house was built. When Mary died in 1896, his sister Catherine and her husband Charles Conrad took in their children, Josephine and Clarence, until he remarried in 1903 to Helen Sylvia Armbrust. Nick and Helen went on to have Rosalia, Paul Nicholas, William and Sr. Lillian Almeter, RSM.

In 1912, Martha Emma Armbrust had married Eugene Harmon, the son of Bill Harmon and Mary Perry. In 1884, Bill and Mary Harmon had purchased the Sheldonville Hotel, where Judy (Charles) Perl lives today. It was built by Nicholas and Dorothea Pabst Straub in the early 1840's and became a very well known, popular hotel, so much so that Nicholas Straub sold it and purchased the land on the corner of North Sheldon and Centerline Road, to build another hotel.

Bill and Mary Harmon and later their son Eugene and his wife built up a successful business known as Harmon's Hall or Harmon's Hotel. The dance hall with its arched ceiling was the largest such facility in Wyoming County, and as many as 200 couples could dance on its finely polished maple floor, to the finest orchestras of the area. People came from all over WNY to





Sylvester Metzger's
hearse in front of
St. Cecilia's



Sylvester and Mary Catherine Armbrust
Married October 29, 1895 at St. Cecilia's RC Church

to this country inn. Eugene Harmon transported guests from the depot in East Aurora. Guests would dance and dine at midnight suppers, and there were bowling alleys under the second story dance floor. But in March 1918, the Harmon Hotel caught fire and burned to the ground. In Sept. 1919, Eugene Harmon and Clarence Almeter purchased the store from Sylvester Metzger. After remodeling, they opened as Harmon and Almeter's Store.

Mary Jane Almeter was born in Sheldon on December 16, 1927, to Clarence and Lucy Clara Armbrust Almeter. Clarence was the son of Nicholas Almeter, Jr., and his first wife, Mary Josephine Reding.

Her mother, Lucy Clara Armbrust, was the daughter of Michael and Frances George Armbrust. Her sisters were Mary Catherine, Helen Sylvia, Catherine Frances, and Martha Emma, with brothers William and Edward.

After returning from serving overseas in World War I, Clarence Almeter and Lucy Clara Armbrust were married on Thanksgiving Day, Nov. 24, 1921, at St. Cecilia's. For their honeymoon, they traveled to Creedmore, North Carolina and stayed with her sister Catherine Frances, who had married Albert Simons.

(Creedmore, NC was known as Muletown, the largest Mule trading center in the world.) While staying in North Carolina, Clarence and Mary Clara received a postcard from someone back home, with a picture of Sylvester Metzger's store and a note, which she showed me. It was addressed only to CM Almeter, Creedmore, N. Carolina, c/o AJ Simons. It was mailed with a 2-cent stamp. I thought it was surprising that a letter would reach someone without any street address, but Mary Jane said that was not unusual at all and they didn't always have street addresses in those days.



Harmon & Almeter's Store in later years

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Mary Jane had grown up in the house which contained the Harmon and Almeter store, and helped her mother run the store at an early age. She went to school at St. Cecilia's. Some of her classmates were Bob Daniel, Eddie Daniel, Mary Madeline Kirsch, Celia Bartz, Celia George and Margaret Hibsich. After finishing 8th grade at St. Cecilia's, she took the bus to East Aurora and completed high school.

With Martha and her husband Eugene living just up the street and their widowed sister Mary Catherine Metzger living close by at the corner of Bartz and Centerline Roads, it seems like these sisters must have been close and able to help each other. It was interesting to me that they married successful men who worked together, the way brothers-in-law Gene Harmon and Clarence Almeter did.

Christmas Sale

HARMAN & ALMETER'S

SHELDON, N. Y.

Sale Starts Dec. 18th **Ending Dec. 30th**

SPECIALS IN GROCERIES

Heart's Delight Coffee	43c
Sbeaco Coffee	37c
Special Blend 3 lbs for	\$1.00
Bulk Tea ½ lb.	29c
Sugar 10 lbs.	57c
Raisins	10c
Bulk Rice 2 lbs.	15c
Corn Flakes 3 pkgs.	23c
Shredded Wheat pkg.	11c
Peas 2 cans	23c
Tomatoes 3 cans	29c
Pink Salmon 2 cans	35c
Fig Bars 2 lbs.	25c
24½-lb. Sack G. L. F. Flour	\$1.00
P. & G. Soap 5 bars	19c
Fels Naptha Soap 5 bars	27c
Chocolate Drops 1 lb.	23c

Special Prices on all Christmas
Candies and Nuts

Christmas goods at very reasonable prices.

15% discount on all Coats, Sweaters and Lumber Jacks.

Men's, Ladies' and Children's winter Underwear at a great reduction.

Men's sheep-lined Mittens, regular \$1:50 89c
Other Mittens at a discount

Best Outing Flannel, 1 yd. wide, regular 29c 23c

10% discount on all Shoes and a number of specials on Shoes and Felt Slippers.

All rubber foot wear at 10% discount, and a special price on boys' Rubber Boots and Arctics.

We invite You to Give Us a Call

HARMAN & ALMETER'S CASH Christmas SALE

Advertiser Print, East Aurora, N. Y.

Their older sister, Helen Sylvia, was the second wife of Nick Almeter Jr., and lived only a couple miles down North Sheldon Road. But these ladies lost a sister when Martha Emma Armbrust Harmon passed away at age 44 in 1933.

Harmon and Almeter's Store sold a huge variety of products; everything from gas, tires and farm equipment to home appliances, food, clothes and household goods. Cheese was kept there under a glass cover, cut fresh and wrapped. The store was so large that many organizations, conservation groups and farmers held meetings there. Between the church and store, Straub's Corners was a hub of activity.

Mary Jane remembered her mother telling about Christmas Eve, when the Sheldon farmers came in around 9 PM, some on foot, some in their horse and buggies or sleighs, to do their Christmas shopping, right up until it was time for Midnight Mass. Harmon and Almeter didn't sell toys. Their customers shopped for practical gifts like clothes; socks and children's boots.

Mary Jane recalled a familiar story which we printed recently in our newsletter, but with a few extra details. She described the incident in which her grandfather, Nicholas Almeter, Jr., had his horse stolen. Apparently there had been several horse thefts in the area around that time and sometimes the thieves would change the horse's color and resell them to the same owner. But that didn't happen to Nick. She revealed that when he had despaired of ever finding his horse, he went to Lily Dale to see a fortune teller there. She said her grandmother was very mad! That was not a place that a nice Catholic man would frequent! But he was desperate. The fortune teller gave him information and Nick went to Erie, PA, in search of the horse. Mary Jane said the man who stole the horse was named Bobby Riggs. When Nick entered the stable where the horse was kept, as soon as the horse heard his voice he began to whicker, which means the horse is neighing or whinnying.



International trucks they would drive to Buffalo for supplies

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The Sheldon Brass Band toured the following villages last Wednesday evening in a new truck driven by Francis Simons, owned by Harmon and Almeter, they played their opening selections in Strykersville thence on to Java Village, from there to Java Center then to North Java then to Johnsonburg, thence to Varysburg, then back to Sheldonville, playing several selections in each town which was enjoyed very much by the townspeople.



Old newspaper sites, such as fultonhistory.com, often reveal details which we would not normally know, such as this one from the Buffalo Evening News, Friday, December 5, 1930, which shows when electricity was first available in our town, and where they had it first.

"The New York Electric & Gas Corporation, Lancaster, is extending its line from the Big Tree Road, Route 20, along the north of Hamilton Road, 2 1/4 miles to Straub's Corners. St. Cecilia's church, rectory, school and Sisters' home, the two general stores, Harmon & Almeter and Victors, and several private homes are being wired for the electricity."

Mary Jane shared several photos with us, showing the variety of farm equipment they sold. One showed the truck they drove to Buffalo weekly, to pick up supplies and fertilizer. She usually had to go along. The photo with the Sheldon Fire Company in their white marching uniforms is so impressive. It may have been the year they were formed. She said her dad marched in every parade.

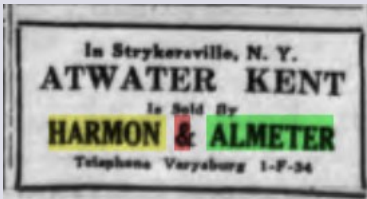
When school let out at St. Cecilians, the children would rush over to the store to buy candy and want a penny's worth of this or that, trying to make up their minds. One boy wanted to buy candy for all his friends, and he told Mary Jane to give them whatever they wanted and "Just charge it to my Dad's account". Mary Jane questioned this of course, and that was the end of that young man's line of credit!



This photo shows men working on the roof at the Sheldon Hotel, which was built by Nicholas Straub and became a famous inn, drawing guests from all over Western New York.

At 5:00 am on the morning of March 4, 1981, the Sheldon Hotel caught fire and burned down. The lot is now a parking lot for St. Cecilia's Church.





Clarence Almeter and Eugene Harmon

Clarence M. Almeter

SHELDON, Sept. 24 — Clarence M. Almeter, 78, a partner in a general store and farm implement business here for 52 years, died in Buffalo Mercy Hospital Thursday after he was stricken ill suddenly at his Centerline Rd. home.

A lifelong resident of Sheldon, he was a veteran of World War I. He opened the Harman & Almeter General Store in 1919.

He was a member of St. Cecilia's Church of Sheldon and its Holy Name Society, Strykersville American Legion Post and the Arcade Post of World War I Veterans.

Survivors are a daughter, Miss Mary Jane Almeter at home; three sisters, Sister Mary Lillian, RSM, and Mrs. Rose Parr of Buffalo and Mrs. Josephine Calkins of Eden, and two brothers, Paul and William, both of Sheldon.

Following prayers in the family residence, a Requiem Mass will be celebrated at 11 AM Monday in St. Cecilia's Church. Burial will be in the church cemetery.

HARMON

Eugene M. Harmon, 94, of 1013 Centerline Rd., Sheldon, died Sunday, Dec. 26, 1982 at his home. Death was attributed to natural causes.

Mr. Harmon was born Nov. 10, 1888, in Sheldon, a son of William and Mary Perry Harmon. He was the oldest parish member of St. Cecilia's Church, where he was a member of its Holy Name Society and was a member of Sheldon Fire Department. He owned **Harmon and Almeter Farm Store and Implements**, which is opened in 1919.

Surviving are his wife, Hattie Gior Harmon; a stepson, Norman Tozier of Varysburg; a sister, Mrs. Irene Braun of Rochester, and three step-grandchildren. He was brother of the late Anna Harmon, Del Galligan, Mary George, and George, Edward and William Harmon.

The Marley Funeral Home, Attica held services. Burial was in St. Cecilia's Cemetery.



Lucy Clara Armbrust Almeter and her daughter, Mary Jane, working in the store.



Mary Jane

Mary Jane was a good saleswoman. She would drive around to the farms and deliver baling twine, and often when the farmer would say he only needed a certain number, she would say, "You better get a couple more, you know you might run out", and they would heed her advice.

It was interesting and inspiring to meet and get to know Mary Jane. Her memory is completely accurate, her vision is great, she is still able to drive and live on her own. She resides in a lovely, picturesque home, on the same road she has lived on all her life.

It was very gracious of her to invite me to visit and record her memories.

Thank you, Mary Jane.



Mary Jane Almeter, July 2024

Sources:

Straub's Hotels, by Anita Ripstein, Historical Wyoming, April 1981.

Buffalo Suffers from another frigid, stormy winter, by Mary Ann Metzger, Sheldon Newsletter, page 4, April 2017.

The Young Carpenters, by Elizabeth Almeter Reisdorf, Sheldon Newsletter, page 5, Feb. 2013

Newspaper articles from Fultonhistory.com

Photos courtesy of Mary Jane Almeter and Anita Hayes

EMMA JOHNSON SEMIQUINCENTENNIAL SUMMER FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

It was a huge honor to be chosen to work with a student fellow this summer from the Gardiner Foundation Semiquincentennial Summer Fellowship Program. Emma Johnson, a student in the history education program at Canisius College, completed over 150 hours for her summer semester, working with us as an intern at the Sheldon Historical Society Schoolhouse Museum.

On her first day, Emma met us at the Pioneer Cemetery, where several of our members were working, and she took photos, so the improvements could be seen after the cleanup. She also went to St. Cecilia's Cemetery and met with Paul J. Almeter, interviewed him and made some videos of him telling stories about many of the ancestors there. P.J. has been working at the cemetery for many years, sharing stories and giving cemetery tours, and he needed to be recorded to add to our collection of oral history.



Emma Johnson & Dr. Michael Oberg

Emma created a Revolutionary War exhibit for the upcoming Semiquincentennial. She worked with us throughout our Town Wide yard sale, helping us and the visitors. She made it even more fun than usual when she asked the children questions about the Revolutionary War and gave them prizes, which were tiny Lego Rev. War soldiers.

We met at the museum frequently during the summer and worked on projects. Emma helped with the visitors on Tuesday afternoons and learned about how people do research and how we can



help them. She even attended meetings with us and with the Wyoming Co. Federation of Historical Societies, seeing how organizations and events are run, and learned about the county fair and what other historians and historical societies are doing.



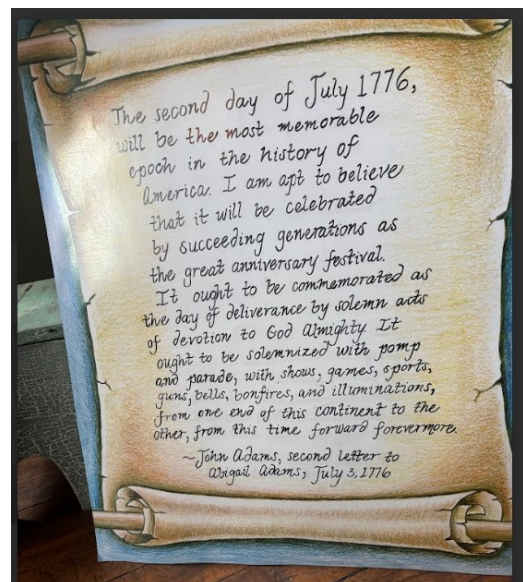
One day we had several children come and Emma taught school for them in our historical classroom. She explained to them what school was like in the 1890's, focused on the Rev. War by reading to them and asking questions, played some games and did a craft, making hats that looked like George Washington wigs. The kids had fun answering trivia questions by writing the answers on the chalkboards at the desks and holding them up. They spent most of the day and had a really good time, and said they want to come back. I think those children will remember that day and will likely think of it often as they continue to learn more about the Revolutionary War. We have a small library of historical books at our museum that we loan out, and we added more books about the Revolution, including some for children. We hope that having a children's section will help to teach more children history.

Emma did some interviews of descendants of Revolutionary War soldiers and others about what their childhood was like and what life was like growing up, 80 years ago. She interviewed one of our members, Joyce Thompson Hovey, a descendant of Moses Dunbar, who was hung as a traitor. Joyce will be giving a talk on this at our next meeting, on September 19 at 7:00pm.

Although there were no settlers here during the Revolutionary War, we had several soldiers of the Revolution who were among the first settlers of our town. Their graves are scattered throughout our pioneer cemeteries. I hope that Emma's research on these soldiers and preparation of information to present on our website will encourage others to start thinking about the 250th Anniversary and what it means.

The goal of America's 250th is to present history to as large an audience as possible. Thanks to Emma Johnson, Dr. Michael Oberg & the Gardiner Foundation, we are off to a great start. The fact that our small town and museum were chosen and that they sent this talented young person here to share her ideas, knowledge and enthusiasm has been an encouragement to all of us. We found a quote by John Adams that pertained so well to the upcoming anniversary, it seemed like it was written for it. It is included in our Rev. War display.

"The second day of July 1776, will be the most memorable epoch in the history of America. I am apt to believe that it will be celebrated by succeeding generations as the great anniversary festival. It ought to be commemorated as the day of deliverance by solemn acts of devotion to God Almighty. It ought to be solemnized with pomp and parade, with shows, games, sports, guns, balls, bonfires and illuminations, from one end of this continent to the other, from this time forward forevermore."
 ~John Adams, second letter to Abigail Adams, July 3, 1776



FAMILY SECRET WITH SHELDON CONNECTION REVEALED AFTER 100 YEARS

BY STEPHEN M. GERBEC

At the request of my late father Arthur Wallace Gerbec, his family secret was to be revealed only upon his death. My mother, Florence (Wright) Gerbec kept her promise to her husband for over 50 years.

My parents, Arthur and Florence, had several dozen cousins, aunts, uncles, nieces, and nephews who all maintained the secret throughout the years. This history was kept from all seven of my siblings the entire time even though we saw them on birthdays holidays, poker parties, and picnics. In every respect, that was quite a feat in those times of family gossip circles at the Sunday afternoon knitting club. The time finally came to let his children know the truth in September of 1997 upon his burial. His real name was Arthur Wallace Schuessler, and he was adopted. My mother did not elaborate with any further information and she never mentioned it again. As the initial shock of the unsettling news wore off over the next 25 years, we got all back to our normal lives. I finally took an interest in genealogy two years ago to explore the family history which led me to Wyoming County, Sheldon, Strykersville, Varysburg, Bennington, Holland, and Java Ctr. Additional research also led me to information from England, France, Germany, Austria & Italy.

Arthur Wallace Gerbec was the son of Arthur J. Schuessler (1906-1923) a 17-year-old from Buffalo, Grandson of Arthur Christoph Schuessler (1876-1938) of Sheldon, and Great, great, grandson of Arthur Schuessler (1846-1918) of Bennington, New York. Now back to the secret.

As a young man of just 17, Arthur J. Schuessler had a relationship with Marceline Bourassa in which she had a child out of wedlock. She returned to her hometown of Houghton, Michigan to have the child. Several months after the child was born in (1923), Arthur J. Schuessler traveled from Buffalo to be with Marceline and their baby Arthur in Houghton. Unfortunately, Arthur was killed halfway there, in an accident in Detroit while he was earning some money for the remainder of the trip. Marceline kept the child and married a gentleman two years later named Louis C. Gerbec. He was from Trieste, (Austria...at the time) Louis accepted the child as his own (no adoption records) and married Marcelein, and thus, the name change and the family secret began and the next three generations of the Gerbecs were generated. Currently, there is a clan of over 30 Gerbecs or should I say Schuesslers because of a man named Louis Gerbec who has no blood relationship to any of us and never had any children of his own. The Gerbecs represent a missing family branch if you will, with the family name of Schuessler's of Holland, Java, Sheldon, and Bennington.

I visited Sheldon in January this year with the help of Jeanne Mest, and several other locals, including some unknown cousins who were instrumental in confirming not only that I was in the right church, but also the right pew. We spent several pleasant hours going through records, notes, and personal belongings and discussing what they knew of the family's history. Most enjoying and yet somewhat humorous...that explains a lot now. Family is family after all.

Several family names that appeared in my genealogy tree coincide with the county map of property ownership and with the local cemeteries such as Dutch Hollow. A few were Kaderbeck, Wolf, Gerbig, Sillaway, Hale, Moore, Heintz, Bender, Ludwig, Stein, Geinmer, Shellman,

Kreutter, Hoertz, Neal, Gerhart, Reichle, Conrad, and Masser. There are many more associated with the Schuesslers which I will follow up on in future writing. In addition, about 50 percent of the current Gerbecs (Schuesslers) still live in the Holland area.

I am a two-year ancestry hobbyist. I am not very skilled but I'm working on building accurate records. If anyone has an interest in my records they can be viewed on MyHeritage.com. Drop me a line for access at stevegerbec62@gmail.com

Until next time...

A long time ago a friend reminded me of an old saying...that it's not the destination, but the journey. She also added that sometimes the wrong path leads to the right destination. She was correct on so many levels. I will continue my research as time permits and reach out to Jeanne Mest with any interesting information. Still, as any retiree can attest, there aren't enough hours in the day, when you participate in those afternoon naps.

Stephen M. Gerbec
stevegerbec62@gmail.com
windandwhim.com

Johann Christoph and Katharina Bender Schuessler arrived in this country from Eschelbach, Germany on the Ship Herman on July 29, 1872, with their children, Adolph, Catherine, Henrich, Christine, Erhard and John Michael, settling first in Sheldon and then Bennington. Adolph, in the photo below, was the great grandfather of Arthur Schuessler.



UPCOMING EVENTS:

Thursday, Sept 19, we will have a special speaker at our meeting. Joyce Thompson-Hovey will present a program about her Revolutionary War Era ancestor, Moses Dunbar.

Saturday, Oct. 5, we will be hosting the **Wyoming County Federation of Historical Societies Fall Luncheon Meeting**, at **12 noon at the Byrncliff**, with a delicious plated meal, your choice of 3 entrees. Entertainment by Don Dwyer, with songs and stories of the Civil War. Please see our Facebook page, call or email us for ticket information. **The deadline to sign up is Sept. 23.**



Thank you, everyone who helped at the Wyo. Co. Fair this summer. Donna Kirsch and Marian Lefort manned the Federation booth, in addition to all the work they did this summer, planting and caring for our beautiful flower garden in front of the Schoolhouse Museum. Thank you, ladies.

Barbara Logel created an amazing display in the historical house, "Wash Day", featuring many antique washing machines & starring our very own special lady school teacher, who usually stays in the classroom. (She was glad to get out for a change).

Laury Lakas designed a display for our historical box, and it was so impressive, we won first prize! Thank you all!

We continue to have visitors and receive inquiries by email or phone. We appreciate them all but when we are contacted ahead of time before a visit, it helps us prepare for the visit.

We are always glad to be able to provide or send whatever information we have in response to inquiries. The reason we can do this is because of our members and visitors who have shared their family histories with us. Also it is due to work of our curators and helpers who have worked so hard over the years to accumulate and organize the history of this town. This is a very important work that we do, and it makes a difference. Please consider volunteering at our Schoolhouse Museum in whatever way you are able. We can use help with record keeping, filing, creating displays, cutting out articles and we really need help with museum sitting. It is getting harder for some of our volunteers to be here on a regular schedule and we are currently in need of help on Tuesday afternoons, so that we can stay open for visitors. Thank you!



The Town Wide Yard Sale, viewed from the Schoolhouse porch

FROM THE SHELDON SCHOOLHOUSE MUSEUM AND HISTORIAN, JEANNE MEST

Thank you to everyone who came out to support us at our Annual Town Wide Sale! Special thanks to all those who donated items for our basket raffle. The funds raised go to our Scholarship Fund and to the maintenance of our museum and the cost of printing and mailing the newsletters.

I could fill a whole newsletter, just thanking so many people for their assistance, in so many ways.

Thank you to **Mary Jane Almeter**, for sharing her stories and photos.

Thank you to **Stephen Gerbig** for contributing his amazing story. Also I want to thank **Taina Armstrong Hoffman** for her article about John Potter in our last issue.

Thank you to **Jim Hurley**, President 9th NYVC, for donating your book, *The Story of the 9th New York Cavalry, War of 1861-1865*. Companies G&H were recruited from Sheldon and the surrounding area.

We can finally reveal the winners of our scholarships this year. High School Seniors at the three districts in our town each receive a \$500 Scholarship and this year they are: **Claire Zehler**, Attica; **Mackenzie Marcheson**, Pioneer, and **Lilah Linder**, Holland. Lilah has already completed her first semester of nursing school!

I need to make a correction, to thank the **Varysburg Lions** for their generous donation and their help with the cemetery cleanup! I had called them the Java Strykersville Lions, thinking of the Java/Strykersville Kiwanis, who provide us with the beautiful Christmas tree each year. Sorry! You are all so generous and we appreciate you all very much.

Persons Pioneer Cemetery Update: Great news about the cemetery sign! **Wayne George** ventured up the cemetery hill and located the old sign that had fallen and been left on the ground. He retrieved it, brought it to us at the Schoolhouse Museum and our intern **Emma** did a beautiful job repainting it.

Our application for a historic roadside marker for the cemetery was approved by the William Pomeroy Foundation and we will be receiving it later this year! Be sure to let me know if you have ideas of places which you think might qualify for a historical marker.

HISTORIAN (CONTINUED)

Welcome to our **new members**: **Michael Moran** of Maryland, **Jim Hahn** of Strykersville, **Don and Sharon Burkel** from the Holland Land Office Museum and **Steve Hausherr**, from Massachusetts and **New Lifetime Member: Diana Meyer**


Another thank you goes to **Randel Kibler**, for donating the theater style double chairs. When the Riveria Theatre in North Tonawanda was renovated, their chairs were donated to various organizations and museums around WNY. They were so handy during the Town Wide Yard Sale. There is never enough room to sit around outside and rest or have a bite to eat. These were just the thing.

Gerry Wlodarczyk did a great job repairing the siding on the Schoolhouse that had been destroyed by the invading bees. That was a big job and he saved us a lot of expense. Thank you, Gerry.

Thank You to **Marcia Hinson Kelly**, of Little Rock, Arkansas, who sent us a special donation in memory of her 4th Great Grandparents, Levi and Rhoda Brace Street. She included some information about them for us: Rhoda is buried in Clarksville, Arkansas and Levi was buried in Reading, Ohio. Marcia was so pleased to read about them in our article on the Persons Pioneer Cemetery. She also thanked all of us at the Sheldon Historical Society for the work we do in preserving history and she was so kind as to insist that her donation be in honor of myself as well as her ancestors. Previously I had been able to send her some information about her Humphrey ancestors which helped her trace them back to Connecticut.

I would be remiss if I didn't also take a minute to thank our **Sheldon Town Board** for all their support throughout the year. We really appreciate your help with repairs and all you do to assist us as we work together to preserve and present the history of our town.

Thank you to all those who continue to support us by sending in your membership dues and donations. It helps a lot with expenses, especially with the newsletters and scholarships. Whenever you give a donation in honor or memory of someone, we will send a note to let the family know.



Memorial Donations Received

Thank you for your Donations to the Sheldon Historical Society:


In Memory of Levi and Rhoda Brace Street (4th Great Grandparents)

by Marcia Hinson Kelly of Little Rock, Arkansas,

In Memory of Nicholas Hausherr by Steve Hausherr of Townsend, MA

In Memory of Jacob Mest and Rose Vondell by Paul & Jeanne Mest

Memberships, Memorials & Donations to the Sheldon Historical Society may be sent to:
PO Box 122, Strykersville, NY 14145



STRYKERSVILLE PIONEER CEMETERY RESTORATION PROJECT

We had a display at the Town Wide Yard Sale, showing the ongoing project at the Strykersville Pioneer Cemetery. Our members have been learning how to clean the old tombstones with D2 and they have been discovering more stones than we knew were there.

We were excited to find some more old church records that show more of the people's names and that is helping to identify the graves.

Thank you to everyone who has sent in donations for our Pioneer Cemetery Preservation Project. If anyone wants to donate to the Cemetery Fund, please note that on your check, and mail them to our PO Box. It is much appreciated.

If you would like to purchase tickets for our **Quilt Raffle**, they are available at the Schoolhouse Museum or from any of our members.




**Sheldon Historical Society
Quilt Raffle**
Handmade Queen size quilt
and quilt rack
Drawing to held on Thursday
October 17th, 2024
\$5.00 per ticket

A special thank you to new member Michael Moran, of Maryland, for a very generous donation to our Cemetery Restoration Fund. Michael is a descendant of Revolutionary War Patriot Omri Warner, buried in the Pioneer Cemetery.

We extend our sympathy to the family of John Knab, who passed away on August 28, 2024. He served as Sheldon Town Supervisor for 16 years, along with several other offices. He was a member of the Varysburg Fire Dept. for 62 years, serving as Fire Chief for many years and helped organize the town's Bicentennial celebration for 1808 to 2008.

We also send our sympathy to Anita Gephart Ripstein Hayes, for the loss of her husband of 32 years, Richard Hayes. He was a United States Air Force officer for 24 years. He was proud to be an airman was buried at the Western New York National Cemetery.

Anita has shared her historical knowledge with us for many years. She served as historian for the towns of Sheldon and Bennington, as Deputy County Historian and editor/writer for Historical Wyoming, and that is only a small part of the historical work she has accomplished in her career of over 50 years. She still travels from West Valley to Attica regularly to work with the Attica Historical Society and is a mentor to me as she shares her historical knowledge.

Sheldon Historical Society
Schoolhouse Museum
3859 Main Street, PO Box 122
Strykersville, NY 14145

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Research assistance is available throughout the year.

For inquiries please contact Jeanne Mest, Town Historian, email: townofsheldonhistorian@gmail.com, 716-474-3156 or mail: 470 Rt. 20A, Strykersville, NY 14145.

Newsletter compiled and edited by Jeanne Mest, with the assistance of creator/consultant Mary Ann Metzger, Scott Barvian and many volunteers. Submissions welcome; please send articles or questions to Historian. Newsletters can be emailed. Large print versions are available. For previous newsletters, see website or contact Historian.

Sheldon Historical Society Officers:

- President - Laury Lakas
- Vice President - Carol Felski
- Secretary - Kate Meyer
- Treasurer - Michelle Fontaine
- Archival Curator - Jeanne Mest
- Board Members:
 - P.J. Almeter, Chairman;
 - Janet Kirsch, Barbara Logel,
 - Elaine Almeter, Judie Coffey, Steve Lakas
- Museum Curator - Barbara Logel
- Classroom Curator & Town of Orangeville Historian - Laury Lakas laurylakas@gmail.com
- Town of Sheldon Historian and Newsletter Editor - Jeanne Mest townofsheldonhistorian@gmail.com

Sheldon Historical Society Membership

Being a member of the Sheldon Historical Society means being part of preserving history. Dues and donations support the maintenance of our museum and historical artifacts. As a member you have voting privileges, and newsletters are sent to you at no cost. The membership year is from July 1 through the following June 30. Current membership status is shown on your mailing label. Please remember to renew yearly, and let us know of any address changes. If you are currently a member, thank you for your support!

2024-2025 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION OR RENEWAL

Please send a check payable to the Sheldon Historical Society to
PO Box 122, Strykersville, NY 14145

Name _____

Address _____

Email _____ Phone _____

_____ New Member _____ Membership Renewal

_____ \$12 Annual Membership July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025

_____ \$75 Lifetime Membership

_____ Would like to make a Donation In Memory/Honor of _____

_____ Complimentary - Current Members Only 80+