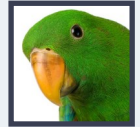




Volume 6, Issue 1
April 2017

Sheldon Historical Society Schoolhouse Museum Newsletter



Welcome to the first edition of our newsletter for 2017. Our next meeting will be on Thursday, April 20, 2017.

This advertisement for a Civil War era rifle brings to life the tale of a young man from Sheldon who might otherwise have been forgotten.

HOME WHAT'S NEW INVENTORY BUY/CONSIGN RESEARCH ABOUT US CONTACT US

EST. 1971

\$14,500.00

VERY NICE SHARPS NEW MODEL 1859 RIFLE ID'D TO 151ST NEW YORK SOLDIER WHO SERVED AS A BRIGADE SHARPSHOOTER - WONDERFUL MOUNTED SILVER PLAQUE ON STOCK ATTESTING TO ID

This weapon was carried in the Civil War by Dem Youngers of Company C, 151st New York Infantry and bears a silver plaque on the stock attesting to that fact.

This rare Sharps is a New Model 1859. Serial #37402 found on the barrel tang clearly places it in the very earliest of that scarce model, the production of which was limited. Left side of butt has a wonderful silver escutcheon with 19th Century style decoration and hand engraving that reads "DEM YOUNGERS / 1ST BRIG. SHARPSHOOTERS / 3RD DIV 6TH CORPS." A great museum quality item with fantastic provenance.

Dem Youngers was born **Dominic Jungers** in Hachy, Luxembourg, Belgium, on August 19, 1844, the oldest of seven children of Andrew and Johanna Bauer Jungers. They came to the US about 1846.

Dem was 18 years old when he enlisted at Batavia as a Private in Company C, 151st New York Infantry, on September 2, 1862. At the time of his enlistment he was described as being employed as a farmer. He stood 5' 6" tall with blue eyes, brown hair and a dark complexion.



Continued on page 2

The 151st was assigned to the Middle Departments 8th Corps where it served quietly until July 10, 1863 when it was assigned to the 3rd Corps of the Army of the Potomac. Private Youngers was present throughout the regiment's time in the Middle Department.

The 151st served with the 3rd Corps through Bristoe Station and Mine Run before being transferred to the 1st Brigade, 3rd Division 6th Corps with which it saw action at Wilderness, Spotsylvania, Hanover Court House, Totopotomoy Creek, Cold Harbor, Monocacy, Opequan, Winchester, Cedar Creek, Petersburg and Sailor's Creek. Private Youngers was present for all these engagements despite suffering illness. In Youngers' pension file a comrade speaks of Dem being ill and mentions that "At Petersburg he went with the Brigade Sharpshooters."

Dem Youngers was mustered out on June 26, 1865 and returned to NY, marrying Katherine Newell on November 27, 1867. They had only 5 years together when he died on August 11, 1872 at age 27 of a stomach ailment contracted in the army. Kate was 23; she remained a widow for the next 58 years, living in Batavia with a niece's family until her death in 1930. They are buried in Saint Cecilia's Cemetery.

Final resting place of Dem and Katherine Youngers
St. Cecilia's Cemetery, Sheldon, New York



At the time of the Civil War the U. S. military had no officially designated elite units such as the Navy Seals or Army Green Berets that are so celebrated today. But there was one branch of the service on both sides of the conflict that came close to that elite status: the Sharpshooters.

Sharpshooters were riflemen of extraordinary skill at the business of killing enemy troops. Man for man, they may have had a bigger impact on the course of the war than any other set of combatants. Yet today, when every facet of the Civil War experience is widely discussed, the sharpshooters to a large extent remain unknown.

Only the very best need apply

Riflemen,
ATTENTION!

A COMPANY OF ONE HUNDRED MEN to be selected from the
BEST RIFLE SHOTS,
In the State, is to be raised to act as a **COMPANY OF SHARP SHOOTERS** through the War. Each man will be entitled to
A BOUNTY OF \$22,00,
When mustered into the service of the United States, and
100,00 DOLLARS
at the close of the War, in addition to his regular pay.

No man will be accepted or mustered into service who is not an active and able bodied man, and who cannot when firing at a rest at a distance of two hundred yards, put ten consecutive shots into a target the average distance not to exceed five inches from the centre of the bull's eye to the centre of the ball; and all candidates will have to pass such an examination as to satisfy the recruiting officer of their fitness for enlistment in this corps.

Recruits having Rifles to which they are accustomed are requested to bring them to the place of rendezvous.

Recruits will be received by **JAMES D. FESSENDEN,**
Adams Block, No. 23, Market Square, **PORTLAND, Maine.**
Sept. 16, 1861.

Bridgton Reporter Press.—S. H. Noyes, Printer.

Sharpshooter recruiting poster | Source



The Green Parrot Inn at Varysburg

The Wyoming County Times, Thursday, October 24, 1929

In a deep wide valley where the sun is ever shining and through which a glistening state highway dotted by swift moving cars, winds its sinuous way like a giant python tormented by persistent flies; where meanders the Cayuga through deep meadows, where sings the lark at dawn and at eve the whippoorwill sounds its plaintive note from the wooded upland while transfixing the rising moon, mysterious lights flash and disappear as the hoarse repeating honk of the automobile horn disturbs the night song of the insect world, until the growing darkness like a protecting blanket descends to cover all in slumber, is located the "Green Parrot Inn", one of the best known hostelries on the Big Tree Road. This two story colonial frame house, one of the first to be built in the Town of Sheldon, was erected by Ira Thomas and has been owned in turn by prominent Sheldon families, including Welcome White, a son-in-law of Henry Hoard, one of the early settlers, "Demi" Yungers and Mrs. Elizabeth George, and is still in the George family as the home of Mr. and Mrs. Eli George and their family of eight children, and until quite recently that of the beloved "Grampa" John Meyer whose gentle spirit lingers vivid in the memory of those who miss him most. His eldest married daughter, Mrs. Frank Conroy, and her two interesting children are also frequent welcome additions to this happy household. Here political Sheldon history has been made, for Mr. George has served in the office of supervisor of the town for two successful terms and is again a prospective candidate for reelection.

The hospitality of the Green Parrot Inn is proverbial and it is

noted for its large family gatherings and social events. The guest is at once impressed by the spirit of friendliness and helpfulness that pervades its atmosphere as well as the shrill greetings of the 40 year old green parrot whose cage stands just within the portals of the doorway.

The religion of the house is Catholic and its practicability is best illustrated by the following true incident. In the days when the "Klans" were active in demonstration in Western New York, a prominent member stood in conversation with a layman on a certain street corner in Varysburg when the son of the house passed. The cordial greeting exchanged between the lad and the Klansman elicited from the Klansman the following story. He said, one day in late fall when on his way to Buffalo in an open car at Varysburg, he had encountered a storm of snow and sleet, and to make matters worse, erysipelas, to which he was subjected, was developing on his face. Continuing on his way, four miles further ahead, he passed the Green Parrot Inn, which he dimly discerned through the sleet and falling rain. But shortly the increasing pain and the intensity of the storm forced him to return and seek admittance and he continued: "During those three days of agony while I lay on a bed in a room where on the walls about me I counted 16 symbols of the Roman Catholic faith, I was ministered unto by those good Samaritans and at no time while under that room or after was I asked my religious belief, my business or destination. I was merely, to them, a sufferer, a passing stranger in need of care and attention."

(Published the week before Black Tuesday, October 29, 1929, the beginning of the Great Depression)

Sheldon suffers from another frigid, stormy winter in 1912

Undertaker tips over his sleigh six times in inclement winter storm

Excerpts from a letter written by Sylvester G. Metzger, to his mother, Catherine Clement Metzger, a resident of Sheldon living in Silver Creek with her daughter. Although a strange combination, he was both an undertaker and owner of a store which was located across the road from St. Cecilia's RC Church in Straubs' Corners, in the Town of Sheldon.

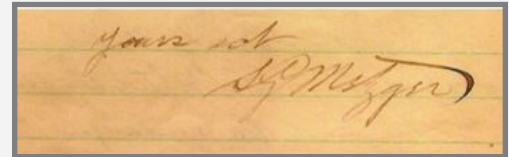
Sheldonville, N.Y., Jan. 17, 1912

Dear Mother,

Yours of Jan. 11 to hand. Did not have time to reply before because I was too busy. You ask if we had any snow on Jan. 9th, well I think we did. Joseph Winch died that morning at 3 o'clock and it took me 3 hrs. to go to Strykersville, tipped over 6 times and did not get back home until Thursday night, held the funeral Saturday Jan 13th. On Monday, Jan 15, old man Stephan died and was interred on Wednesday. The old lady is also very sick. Everything around your house is ok. Your blinds are kept shut. My health is good, Thank you. Thanks for your best wishes for my birthday. We have snow 8 ft. high in some places. Filled Icehouse yesterday, 15 inches thick. John Barvian gave up the stall he was renting. The family one and all send their love and best wishes and hope that you are as well as they are. Leona, Rosella and Walter passed their Regents Examination in Strykersville last week; Leona with 95%, Walter 86, Rosella 76; Irene Harmon 75%. There are so many coming in the store right now that I must close with best wishes for a Happy and Prosperous year. I am as ever,

Your son,

SG Metzger



A few words can relate so much about life over a century ago. We think winters are long, but a look back tells of how difficult they were then. Filling up an icehouse was a task performed by households. Also, people rented stalls for their horses. Mr. Barvian lived on Dutch Hollow Road.

Funeral home hearses were originally horse-drawn, but gasoline-driven hearses began to be produced from 1909 in the United States. Sylvester's hearse was chain driven, with a wooden box and wooden wheels. It had one headlight. He most likely had a horse-drawn hearse before this one. His embalming records start from June 1, 1899 and go until June of 1919, thus being an undertaker for 20 years. Records show he took care of embalming his own four-year-old daughter in 1913. He died Dec. 24, 1919 at 47 years of age, leaving a wife and six children. Christmas found a Sheldon family mourning the loss of a loved one and a staunch member of the community.

The Historical Society has a copy of Sylvester Metzger's embalming book. Anyone is welcome to come and browse that and any other items of interest.



When the place was packed full, the undertaker he slid around in his black gloves with his softly, soothing ways, putting on the last touches, and getting people and things all ship-shape and comfortable, and making no more sound than a cat. He never spoke: he moved people around, he squeezed in the late ones, he opened up passage-ways, and done it all with nods and signs with his hands. Then he took his place over against the wall. He was the softest, glidingest, stealthiest man I ever see, and there weren't no more smile to him than there is to a ham.

~ Mark Twain

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn (1884)

Sylvester Metzger's General Store and Residence

It is said he kept the coffins for his undertaking business upstairs.

S. G. METZGER,
General Merchandise and Country Produce.

MAPLE SUGAR A SPECIALTY.

P. O. Address Strykersville, N. Y.

Both Phones.



A typical Country store of the era late 1800's - early 1900's

Sylvester raised his family in this residence. He was also a teacher at St. Cecilia's, played the organ and sang at church. The store was sold to Harman and Almeter in 1919, the year of his death. Eugene Harman's wife, Martha and Clarence Almeter's wife, Lucy Clara were Mary's sisters. Mary and her children moved to the farm across the corner.

Sylvester George Metzger, b. 29 Feb 1872, d. 24 Dec 1919
Mary Catherine Armbrust, b. 27 Nov 1873, d. 18 Jun 1948

Wyoming Co. Times, Jan. 8, 1920

The funeral of Sylvester Metzger was held last Saturday. He was 47 years old and had kept the general store at Sheldonville for a number of years and was also undertaker there for a number of years.

Wyoming Co. Times, July 1, 1948.

Mrs. Mary Metzger, nee Armbrust, died and was buried Monday, June 21st in St. Cecelia's cemetery at Sheldon. Mrs. Metzger was a life long resident of St. Cecelia's church of Sheldon.



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

Submitted by Mary Ann Metzger

Mom's Address Books A Life of Their Own

Today I read an article in our local newspaper about the author's experience of updating her address book. As she transferred names, often eliminating names due to death, her memory machine went into full force. This has happened to me, as well, when I redo my own address book, but my mother's address books are truly a blast from the past! Immediately it came to mind that I had just used one of my mother's old address books to see if I could find my cousin's phone number in it. Yes, of course, there it was!

My mother's various address books, updated and replaced every few years, are a history within themselves. They have proven very helpful in my genealogy research, contacting friends and relatives and finding their descendants. My cousin's phone number was only one of many bits and pieces of information in these precious books. I recently found an entry for a distant cousin that my mom may have never met, but her name was mentioned over and over in letters regarding attempted plans to get together for a family 'reunion' to check out the Johnsonburg, NY area where their connecting ancestors lived for a generation or two. I could never figure out where she fit into the family but I had noticed and always loved the musical quality of her name. So I picked up the phone and dialed the number in the book. Voila! The lovely lady answered and we had a wonderful family history chat, with her explaining her place in the family tree and many adjacent family history stories. Of



course I had my genealogy notebook open and I found her easily on the family tree when she explained that her given name was Catherine and she went by Katy. What fun! Such an interesting person, nearing her 90th

birthday, and all it took was a phone call and some time to connect with her.

The address book has also helped me place some relatives and friends into the stories and diaries my mother kept. It has helped me find people in census records, property records, and in a few other cases, actually get in contact with them or their descendants, by phone or mail as I did with Cousin Katy.

When Mom remarried, she started a new address book with her husband's people in it as well. When someone died, she would write 'deceased'. As new address books were made, new names appeared from their winters in Florida, along with old friends and children of her old friends. She would note directions to someone's house, or jot down a book she wanted to read, condo information in Mazatlan, Mexico and even the death date of my husband.

There were lots of erasures and additions until the book had to be replaced. Although dates are hard to come by, they do follow a chronology by such events as marriages with some subsequent name changes, and the deaths and absence of certain relatives and friends in the next, more current, address book. It was interesting to note which folks had erasures and new addresses until she would finally have to make a new entry – obviously very mobile people! Then there were those whose address stayed the same and when they passed away, the children remained at the same place with the same address. In later years, many of their friends were 'snow birds' and had a different winter address, so both were penciled in. Several business cards were tucked in the tiny 3 X 5" book, but one was unique, as it was from the pharmacy. It had her blood pressure results written with the dates on the back in a tidy little chart, and her voter registration paper folded up from when she entered the nursing home in another voting precinct.

Even after she entered the nursing home, she kept her address book at hand. Although she no longer sent mail, it was like her security blanket, her last thin thread to her life at home. I went through her last book and read out the names to her so she could tell me, "relative" or "friend."

In one case the person was her husband's relative, but she said, "friend," so I dutifully wrote "friend" and sent her one of their "Christmas Letters" explaining the folks' move to the nursing home and their new address. Several years later after the passing of my mom and her husband, I received a letter from the daughter of that lady, who had recently passed away. When going through her things, she found the unopened "Christmas Letter" and promptly sat down and wrote to me, saying how sad she was that they had not had not known this when they took their annual trip to visit the hometown and cemetery. When they stopped by and didn't find my folks at their home, they just never knew where they were. Her mother was going blind at that point, and the "letter" slipped by, only to be found after her passing. After she wrote me, I not only learned of her family connection to my step-dad, but that she had been a close friend and

neighbor to my late husband. She was none other than his favorite playmate for the few years they lived next door to each other. He had talked about her as his 'first girlfriend,' and told me how he had missed her so much when she moved away. I had a darling picture of the two children, about ages four and five, which I then sent to her, this daughter of the lady in the address book. Small world it is, for sure! We have since corresponded and shared pictures, and now another generation of friends (almost relatives) has been added to my own address book.

I am my mother's daughter! My own children often call and expect me to have every relative's address and phone number in my address book. In this electronic age, they can easily look them up online, as I could have my cousin's phone number. But why do that when your mom's address book is the ultimate goldmine of addresses and phone numbers? My mother's last address book resides on the shelf at my computer along with my own.

Our address books – a golden thread to our lives. They display a life of their own – past, present and future.

From our Archival Curator: When we get a request for some history and start digging into our files, we learn much more about a person or family than we would have ever known without these inquiries. This was very exciting recently when I found some unexpected relatives and stories that all tied in together.

We received a letter from Connie Luker, author of "My Mysterious Grandfather" in our Sept. 2015 issue, about her Grandfather, Frank Andrew Bowers, who was born in Sheldon. Connie sent us something new, "Mom's Address Books" that many of us can relate to. Even better, she told us how excited she is to be making a trip from her home in Georgia this April, all the way to Sheldon to visit her past. She can't wait to follow in the footsteps of her mother and grandmother, who visited Sheldon back in 1930 and discovered a whole new family.

At about the same time, we received a call about a rare Civil War rifle seen on <http://www.horsesoldier.com> that belonged to a sharpshooter from Sheldon. It should not come as a surprise here in Sheldon, where so many families are related, but it is still exciting when different histories come together. Who would have thought that when recalling Connie's history, and at the same time researching that of Dem Youngers, that Johanna Bauer Youngers, Dem's mother, would turn out to be the sister of Frank Bauer, the father of Frank Andrew Bowers, Connie's "Mysterious Grandfather"! Johanna was Connie's great, great aunt! The Bauers' farm was located on or near the site of the present-day Byrncliff Resort. But before there was a Byrncliff, there was a Green Parrot Inn, which was once the home of Dem Youngers. It is believed it sat on the site where the Byrncliff sign is today.

Those of us who live here sometimes forget how beautiful Sheldon is; how it amazing it is to see St. Cecilia's Church and hear about the farmers who built a beautiful cathedral from the stones they had dragged out of their fields. We don't realize how exciting it might be for a visitor to drive down our country roads and see the homes or land where their great, great grandparents lived. Sometimes they even see their last name on a road sign!

Research continues on these stories; corrections and additions are welcome. If you are a descendant of the Bauers or have any information on them, please let us know.

Submitted by Jeanne Mest



Sheldon Schoolhouse Museum
3859 Main Street
Strykersville, NY 14145
Phone: 585-457-9509
585-457-3444 or 585-457-3061
E-mail:
sheldonhistoricalsociety@hotmail.com
or: metzgermaryann@gmail.com

Sheldon Historical Society Officers:
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 Vice President - Carol Felski
 Secretary - Jeanne Mest
 Financial Secretary - Donna Kirsch
 Board Members:
 P.J. Almeter, Chairman; Janet Kirsch,
 Elizabeth Reisdorf, Elaine Almeter,
 Marilyn Smithley, Gertrude Hyman.
 Classroom Curator - Elizabeth Reisdorf
 Archival Curator - Jeanne Mest
 Museum Curator - Marilyn Smithley

Newsletter compiled by Mary Ann Metzger and
 Jeanne Mest, with the help of many volunteers.
 Submissions are welcome, Send to the email
 above, or call (716) 474-3156 for information.

The Historical Society welcomes new members! If you find local History interesting, we hope that you make a membership contribution and join us. It is open to anyone with an interest in the history of Sheldon, or a desire to volunteer services, without restriction to age or place of residence. We maintain a School House Museum that is state chartered. There is always work to do to maintain this structure and to continue our research of data and archives and preserve treasured artifacts.

IF YOU ARE NOT A MEMBER AND WISH TO RECEIVE A COPY OF THE NEWSLETTER, PLEASE JOIN!

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

Phone: _____

DATE: _____ Email: _____

Make check payable to The Town of Sheldon Historical Society.
 Mail To:
 Donna Kirsch, Financial Secretary
 4458 Richardson Rd.
 Arcade, NY 14009

Applications for our Sheldon Historical Society Scholarships are due **May 1** at Attica & Holland high schools. Pioneer's applications are already received.

EAT YOUR WAY THROUGH HISTORY is coming soon. This will be a fun way to visit museums throughout Wyoming Co., presented by the Office of our County Historian.

Thank you to Anita Ripstein Hayes, Connie Luker, and Scott Barvian for their research and the vast historical knowledge they have shared in the creation of this newsletter.

PLEASE UPDATE YOUR MEMBERSHIP!

We have some members that we have not heard from in a long time. We hope you all want to continue receiving your newsletter and helping to support our efforts to preserve history. Dues are \$10, to be paid yearly on July 1. The date on your address label shows the status of your membership. Thank you for your support!

Printing of this newsletter by:
 The UPS Store
 174 Main St.
 East Aurora, NY 14052
 Email: Store 5490@theupsstore.com

Congratulations to Mary Ann Metzger for "And the Band Marched By" and Anita Ripstein-Hayes with "First Families of Sheldon"; their prize-winning stories in the Historical Wyoming Essay Contest! All the winning essays can be found in Historical Wyoming, which will publish 6 issues this year, in honor of their 70th anniversary, 1947 to 2017.