



Volume 34, Issue 1

THE TIMES

of Old Austerlitz

the quarterly newsletter of the Austerlitz Historical Society



The cold earth slept below

BY PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

The cold earth slept below;
Above the cold sky shone;
And all around,
With a chilling sound,
From caves of ice and fields of snow
The breath of night like death did flow
Beneath the sinking moon.

AS WE ARE CONSTANTLY MADE AWARE OF-WE HAVE NO CONTROL OVER THE
WEATHER.

Though Austerlitz fared quite well during the latest weather event, The Historical Society was not left unscathed. The flooding, common in the early springtime made a winter visit, causing us to cancel events and make plans to tackle the flooding issue in the spring. We apologize to all who have had to change your plans because of this situation.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Michelle Lagonia

Winter 2019

The problem with winter sports is that -follow me closely here-they generally take place in winter.”

Dave Barry

While I truly enjoy my role as AHS President, when I'm not at my full time teaching job I like to be out running the roads in Austerlitz. And as most of you know, that's impossible right now! Or at least unsafe. These cold wintery months force me to log miles on the treadmill and just dream of warmer days. The snow and ice have also caused quite a mess in our parking lot at Old Austerlitz. We've had a crew come take a look at it and will hopefully find a more permanent solution to the problem but until that happens please be aware that access to the grounds is limited.

If you haven't picked up a copy of The Old Houses of Austerlitz yet I'd recommend not waiting too much longer. They are available on our website and at the Spencertown Store.



Lifelong Austerlitz resident and AHS member, Dorothy Perry passed away in August 2018.

Dorothy's roots ran deep in the community. As a youth, she attended the little red schoolhouse, and fondly recalled during one winter, that her teacher, hearing sleigh bells, let the students run to the windows to see Edna St. Vincent Millay and her husband, Eugene, drive by in a one horse open sleigh. They were on their



way to the Post Office at the Varney house run by Robert Herron's mother, Mary. It was one of the few times students were allowed out of their seats. She grew up to marry Donald Perry in a double wedding ceremony (with sister Shirley and fiance Ed.) in the white Austerlitz Lutheran Church next to the schoolhouse, raised four children and became an active member of many organizations in town. She was a charter member of the Austerlitz Volunteer Fire Company women's auxiliary for over 50 years as well as a member of the Austerlitz Cemetery Association. In the early years of Autumn in Austerlitz she and her sisters (Emma, Evelyn and Margy) ran the soup kitchen out of the Varney House before its move to the food tent.

She is fondly remembered for her baking and made hundreds of blueberry muffins and pies over the years for sale or consumption for her family and AHS. Her service to this small town and her contributions to AHS will be remembered and missed by many.

Eagles in the Town of Austerlitz



Photograph and Article
By

Nancy Jane Kern

Our magnificent adult white-headed, white-tailed Bald Eagles have been observed in New York State by our 1700's settlers and probably before. We do not have early documentation (to my knowledge) of eagles in the Town of Austerlitz, and at some point maybe this will be found. When the Bald Eagle was adopted as our national symbol in 1782, our country had an estimated 100,000 Bald Eagles. As people increased in numbers, habitat was changed and farming became a major way of life. Eagles and other birds of prey were shot, trapped and poisoned because it was thought these birds killed livestock, fish and other wildlife. This was a belief held by old farmers and commercial hunters of that time here in Austerlitz. People of our area depended on fish and game as a significant source of food and income. Eagle numbers plummeted, and in the 1940s were a tenth of their colonial estimates. After WWII there was extensive spraying of DDT over large areas to kill unwanted insects. DDT got into the water and up the food web to fish. Fish are the primary food of the Bald Eagle (also called the fish eagle) and caused thinning and cracking of their egg shells. Thanks to Federal Government Agencies and our NYS Department of Environmental Conservation laws of protection and the ban of DDT helped turn things around. Another problem is still the presence of lead from lead shot and bullets used to hunt waterfowl and game. Some of these have been banned, but much still exists in use and in the environment. Types of lead alternatives are available and hunters are encouraged to use them. The good news is that the eagles are coming back thanks to our DEC bringing young eaglets down from Alaska. Over the past 35+ years they are becoming plentiful again and we are actually seeing them here in Austerlitz. Eagles have been observed feeding on road kill deer, fishing open streams like the Punsit, and feasting on deer carcasses on ice covered bodies of water. Deer are chased or travel across ice, slip, fall and break legs or are unable to get to their feet. They are eventually killed by other animals like coyotes, or freeze to death. Then they are food for eagles and other wildlife. At Beaver Dam, up to 14 eagles at a time have been feeding on deer carcasses. Adult Bald Eagles take about five years to develop the white head and tail, and the various color stages can often be studied at these gatherings. Young birds are mostly dark brown. So keep your eyes open as you travel about, and maybe you will spot one of these magnificent birds.

GIVING THANKS

Since its inception the Austerlitz Historical Society has been blessed with the involvement of many hard working volunteers. We would like to highlight some of the people who continue to put in many hours assisting us in keeping our doors open and festivals occurring.

Howard and Gunnel Reznikoff are active volunteers

As Gunnel recalls:

One day, the first winter we lived up here in 1996 there was a small pamphlet in our mailbox, introducing Austerlitz Historical Society, with an invitation to a meeting in St. Peter's Church in Spencertown to meet neighbors and learn more about the society. It looked like a pleasant way to meet local people and learn more about this group and the area. When we arrived Phyllis and Phil Paladino greeted us and made us feel very welcome. Phil walked us to two empty seats, and said: "Say Charlton Street to these two women." Rather curious to put it mildly, but we did as we were told. Mary Zander and Lorraine Zagarola looked stunned. It turned out we had lived across the street from each other in Manhattan for several years, and never met. We all laughed and started reminiscing about the neighborhood. We even knew a person in the building Mary and Lorraine lived in. How Phil knew of our connection we still are waiting to hear. The meeting came to order and we liked what we heard about the small group trying to build a society which needed ideas, and practical help with upcoming events. The first major event we participated in was Authors and Quilts at the Austerlitz Church arranged by Mary Zander and Jean and Rondi Brower from Blackwood & Brower's bookshop in Kinderhook. The quilts were all antique from Bob Heron's collection. The event was well attended and brought interested people, not only from the immediate area. Dick Mugler was the membership chair and had a wooden box with index cards, one for each member with address and telephone number.

I'll (**Howard**) take it from here and see what I can remember. As I recall, membership dues were \$5, whenever anyone remembered to pay. In addition to Dick's file, Bill Gustafson kept an IBM card file of names and addresses that was used to generate mailing labels for the newsletter, that was written by Lorraine Zagarola. At some point after that, it was decided to form the committees that exist to this day. I volunteered to take over membership. We formed a sub-committee, and at Lenore Ladenheim's request, we met in her house so she would feel obligated to clean the house first. Since I had experience with data processing, it was agreed that a computer would be appropriate. Fortunately, Sally Light recommended Pastperfect, which is software offered by Museum Software. It excellently handles both Membership and Archive data. I also learned what it is like to work with volunteers, rather than with employees. Enlightening. Now years later while I'm still on the membership committee, I'm glad to know the chair is in the capable hands of Gale Stockman and Margaret Hover.

In those days, the process of erecting buildings at Old Austerlitz, was supervised by Dick Mugler. I joined his group and we assembled several buildings that had been taken apart and stored for several years. The Granery and the Harvey House are two of them. I still remember being on top of the Granery, with Roy Carney, about to install the last rafter and it didn't fit. The parts had been marked with yellow crayon and some of the markings had faded. We also had a peg making day. When the buildings were originally taken apart, the pegs holding the boards together were mostly ruined, so a community event took place, just like a barn raising in the old western movies. I also became a Trustee, which gave me an opportunity to be in on the growth of AHS along with others of diverse backgrounds. We were accomplishing amazing results with an all volunteer organization.

Gunnel and I always participate at The Blueberry Festival and at Autumn in Austerlitz. All in all, we've had the opportunity to meet lots of neighbors, be in on the growth of AHS, and have a lot of fun. "

HOLIDAY GATHERING

Every December we hold a Holiday Gathering, decorating the Morey-Devereaux House and coming together to share some wonderful food and beverage, as we relax in the various rooms enjoying the warmth of the fires and the good company of those sitting next to us. This year we started a new tradition: A wreath decorating activity as a thank you to our volunteers. We had so much fun that we'll be doing it again next year. It was a day of great food, good conversations and of course a lovely wreath to take home.



UPCOMING EVENTS

BOOK CLUB MEETS AT AHS—A group of book lovers will begin to regularly meet in the Morey-Devereaux House to discuss a group picked book. The next meeting will be on March 23rd. at 10:00 am. The title of the Book is There There by Tommy Orange.

Please call Anne @ 518-392-0062 or e-mail us at admin@oldausterlitz.org if you'd like to join us.

DATE CHANGE: Please note that the date of our Autumn in Austerlitz Festival has been changed from the Sunday of Columbus Day weekend to the last Saturday in September. It will be held on September 28th this year. We felt that there was too much competition during the holiday weekend.

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Contributing/Business

Michael & Megan Adams
 Thalia Cassuto
 Rebecca Greer
 Maureen Wilson & Jim Newberry

Family/Household

Wendy & Greg Diskin
 John and Mary Grayzel
 David Marguiles &
 Else Smedemark
 Cris Morales & Michael Kreiger
 Ginny Nightingale
 Clarke Olsen
 Marcia Szymanski &
 Sharon Friedman
 Joan Weitzner

Individual

Damaris Botwick
 Julie & Jeff DeLisle
 Rebecca Laird
 Lynne O'Connell
 Donna Staron

Supporting

Roy & Karen Carney Jr
 John B Carroll
 Denise & John Dunne
 Cono & Eileen Fusco
 Vieve Gay
 Marilyn & Larry Greitzer
 Madaline Sparks &
 Wayne Greene
 Ruth & Andrew Suzman
 Paul T. & Frances N. Veillette
 Judith J. Choate
 Eric Spiegel & Henry Taliaferro

MAKE SURE YOU GET ALL ANNOUNCEMENTS !

IT IS OFTEN NECESSARY TO SEND ANNOUNCEMENTS VIA E-MAIL. IF YOU DO NOT HAVE A COMPUTER, PLEASE ASK SOMEONE YOU KNOW WHO RECEIVES OUR E-MAIL BLASTS TO KEEP YOU INFORMED.



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Michelle Lagonia	<i>President</i>
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Jane Magee	Jere Wrightsman
Connie Mondel	
<i>Robert Herron</i>	<i>Special Advisor</i>
<i>Anne Cipkowski</i>	<i>Director & Editor</i>

JOIN AHS NOW!

New or Renewal

MEMBERSHIP LEVEL:

Individual	\$15	<input type="checkbox"/>
Family/Household	\$25	<input type="checkbox"/>
Contributing/Business	\$50	<input type="checkbox"/>
Supporting	\$100	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sustaining	\$250	<input type="checkbox"/>
Additional Donation	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please check the level you prefer, and mail this form, along with check or money order payable to:

Austerlitz Historical Society
 P.O. Box 144, Austerlitz, NY 12017

Name(s) _____

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Can we email your newsletters -Y___N___

Email _____

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AUSTERLITZ HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to preserve, protect and interpret the history of Austerlitz. Our efforts will be devoted to safeguarding our heritage, fostering civic pride, and promoting the Town's historic resources.

