



Volume 35, Issue 2

THE TIMES

of Old Austerlitz

the quarterly newsletter of the Austerlitz Historical Society

HOW IT ALL BEGAN



There is always a story, the background information that sets the stage for an event. I began to wonder what brought about the creation of the Austerlitz Historical Society, bringing together people who would put in many long hours, building a community dedicated to the preservation of this town's history and the strong desire to share this with others.

Below is an excerpt of Philip Palidano's speech he gave on the 10 Year Anniversary of the Austerlitz Historical Society.

In the beginning there was a small white church and a little red school house, both long abandoned by the people who used to fill them with hymns and the noise of learning.

Then in 1988, the trustees of the church decided it was time to pass along the care of the church and the school to a new organization that could not only preserve the buildings, but breathe new life into them. The idea of Richard Mugler Senior, his son Richard Mugler Junior and fellow trustee Robert Herron would create life from dust and become the Austerlitz Historical Society.

This was just the beginning and from here on, dozens of townspeople would come together and dedicate hours, days, weeks, months and years into the creation of the Austerlitz Historical Society.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Michelle Lagonia

Spring 2019

Hopefully this message finds you ready for Spring and Summer. Our Director Anne has been hard at work planning events that are sure to encourage a visit to AHS. Whether it's learning to fly tie or browse a Community Tag Sale, there is plenty on the calendar for the upcoming year.

Of course we are also deep into the planning for the Blueberry Festival. While it's a tried and true event at AHS we always strive to offer something new and exciting as well as improve on the foundations of the event.

If you haven't picked up a copy of the "The Old Houses of Austerlitz" please do so soon. We have a limited supply and reprinting may not be an option.

As always, we would sincerely appreciate any volunteer time you have to offer. Just give Anne a call at (518-392-0062)



REMINISCENCES

We will begin to place reminiscences, bits of Austerlitz's past, remembered by others. Do you have a memory of life in Austerlitz, a snippet of history?

Please share these with us.

AHS, PO box 144 Austerlitz, NY 12017 or admin@oldausterlitz.org

By the early 1900' our church building was not being used. In the 1930's a young Lutheran minister revived services. The school was used until about 1950. The roof and the basic maintenance was done by William Herron. In 1939 Richard Mugler Sr. bought the Henderson farm and moved here with his family part time. As needed, Mr. Mugler tended to the buildings and got the finances into decent shape. Some years later he bought the one room school and gave it to the church. By this time Richard Mugler Jr. (Dick) was old enough to maintain these 2 buildings. Dick Mugler did the work and Bob Herron cheered him on.

The concern for the long term preservation of these 2 buildings was the catalyst for the formation of a group of townspeople who would go on to establish the Austerlitz Historical society.

Bob Herron

HISTORIC MARKERS FIRST UNVEILED DURING THE BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION ARE NOW PLACED



Town Has Five New Historical Markers

By Tom Moreland

The week of April 22 saw the Town's Highway Department install five historical markers around town celebrating important persons and buildings in the history of Austerlitz. These markers were all funded by the William J. Pomeroy Foundation of Syracuse, which granted applications for the markers submitted by the Society based on research by Town Historian Tom Moreland. The markers, proceeding east to west, are as follows:

EARLY TAVERN: in Austerlitz on Route 22, this marker stands in front of the building that was a tavern as early as 1829 and became the Harvey Hotel (1870-1915) and later the Columbia Inn (1921-61), both important meeting places in the hamlet of Austerlitz. Today it is the residence of Michael and Elizabeth Walters.

PETER WHEELER: This marker on Dugway Road stands near the site of Peter Wheeler's residence in the 1830s. Wheeler escaped from slavery in 1806 and, after some adventures on the high seas, settled in Spencertown around 1825. He is remembered today because his autobiography was published in 1839 through the efforts of Charles Edwards Lester, then the pastor of St. Peter's Church.

OLD CORNER STORE: The office of Johnnie Walker Insurance in Spencertown, at the junction of Route 203 and Elm Street, served as a general store for at least 150 years prior to closing in 1951. Its longest tenured owner/operators were Jared P. Clark, 1827-81, (Ira)Palmer & (Derret)Sawyer, 1886-1914, and Ed Mesick, 1932- 51. Mesick continued to conduct weekly auctions at the site, a fondly remembered local tradition, through 1975.

PRATT HOUSE: At the north end of Spencertown on Route 203 stands the impressive Georgian style house build in 1777 by David Pratt, today the home of Ron and Rita Van Alstyne. Pratt (1738-1828) rose to the rank of Colonel in the Revolutionary War. His petition to the state legislature led to the 1793 law clearing local land titles, theretofore clouded since New York refused to recognize the 1756 Indian deed, authorized under the laws of Massachusetts Bay colony, pursuant to which the area had been first settled.

CLARK HOUSE; Dr. Mary Clark (1845-1937) was a pioneering female physician and also a strong benefactor of the Spencertown Methodist Church. The marker on Route 9 stands in front of her house, today the home of Ryan Littrell and Penny Tehrani. In the late 1700s the land was owned by Nehemiah Spencer, born in Spencertown in 1767 and a grandson of one of the original settlers.

The Pomeroy Foundation will be accepting new applications for historic markers this fall and the Society will be considering whether to submit an application for up to five additional markers. The Society invites suggestions of any person, building or site believed worthy of an historic marker.

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.

THANK YOU

DAN AND BARBARA PERIMUTTER

How little Dan and I knew about country living when, in 1986, we found our run-down, patched-together farm house (the ad said 'cottage') on Fire Hill Rd., conveniently located between Spencertown and the hamlet of Austerlitz. After several years of intense weekends, learning to cope with tilting floors, leaking roofs and frozen pipes, we looked around to see who else lived in our neck of the woods and found the Austerlitz Historical Society - by way of Sally Light who suggested we research our house history. That opened a whole new passion for us because soon enough Sally delivered a batch of old deeds going back to the 1840s. We began to attend all sorts of lectures and meetings at the AHS, run as a tight ship for many years by Gail Cashen and, of course, would not miss the yearly Blueberry Festival. Soon enough we signed up with Connie and, year after year, got assigned some slot on her lengthy list of jobs to be filled for these glorious, and sometimes rainy, July Sundays. Two years ago, we got into the tag sale business. While Jeff got his gift shop organized, we unpacked endless cartons of donated gift items. Dusty fun and aching bones. We learned quickly, taste is a supremely subjective matter. Pricing tag sale items cannot - or should not - be done by committee; the discussions about value and worth are endless. Stuff we were ready to toss, found its way back onto the tables. And rightly so. On Sunday, first thing, some of the strangest items sold first. I know we're not supposed to profile people, but manning a tag sale seduces one to do exactly that. We met the quick deciders and the ones who could not make up their minds. In fact, it happened that some items found their way back to the person who had so kindly donated it in the first place. Meanwhile, mastermind Tom Moreland called out for volunteers to produce a book of house histories, based on a mid-19th century old map that actually showed little dots and names of owners for each house. Dan offered to do the photography while I had the much harder job of finding the actual houses. Why so many houses without house numbers? One needs a certain courage to walk up to the door of strangers and ask can we take a photo of your house? Yes, that ladder there needs to be moved out of the way. And - we need to wait now for the clouds to move over to the East. How long a driveway is too long to just drive up to the front door? It was a great way to meet a lot of our neighbors and as we all know, Tom and his helpers did a marvelous job putting the book together.

Dan and Barbara Perlmutter

UPCOMING EVENTS

May 17th- Revolutionary War Reenactment 9:00-12:00

As part of their Living History Program, the Chatham Middle School will bring The 2nd of NY Reenactment Regiment to the grounds of AHS. Approximately 85 students will participate in this interactive program. The regiment will be conducting battlefield tactics, period clothing demonstrations, erecting tents, and artillery demonstrations. Visitors are welcome to view the activity from the sidelines. **Free Admission**

IN CASE OF RAIN the school will not come to the Austerlitz Historical Society.

JUNE 1st 10am- AHS Book Club meets in the Morey-Devereaux House

Upcoming Events Continued

Fly Fishing Workshops

Morey-Devereaux House

June 9th, 10-2

June 15th, 10-2

Join Bill Newcomb, noted fly tyer and trout fisherman in this interactive workshop. Bill will entertain you with the fascinating lore of trout fishing as well as the rich history of the men and women who fished in this area, as you learn to tie a fly and cast with a fly rod.

“Not as complicated as you think” Bill Newcomb

June 9th- Learn to tie a fly that catches a fish!

June 15th - Learn how to cast a fly rod that will catch that fish!

Cost: \$25.00 per session.

Space is limited . Call 518-392-0062 to register.

June 9th 10-3 Community Tag Sale.

Table space will be rented inside the big barn as well as on the grounds.

Inside space-\$25.00 (inside space is limited)

Outside Table Space \$20.00

Tables provided.

Table space must be reserved in advance.

Call 518-392-0062 to reserve your table.



July 28th- The 19th Annual BLUEBERRY FESTIVAL 9-4 Rain or Shine

**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.

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

<u>Contributing/Business</u>	<u>Marilee Lobdell</u>
<u>Deborah Bowen/Inn at Green</u>	<u>Phyllis Howard</u>
<u>River</u>	<u>Nancy Wilson</u>
<u>Naomi Gauntlett</u>	<u>Nancy J Lang</u>
<u>Rebecca Greer</u>	<u>Gilbert Gott</u>
<u>Philip Palladino</u>	<u>Jim Hoon</u>
<u>George H Vollmuth</u>	<u>Analisa Allen</u>
<u>Edna St. Vincent Millay Society</u>	<u>D.Miller Restorers</u>
<u>Family/Household</u>	<u>Supporting</u>
<u>Nancy Jane Kern/Ellen Scott</u>	<u>Ben & Cindy Puccio</u>
<u>Dan & Barbara Perlmutter</u>	<u>Marion & Willard Ulmer</u>
<u>Dorothy & Donald Perry</u>	<u>Edward Wachsberger</u>
<u>Robin & Anne Tassinari</u>	<u>Stanley S DeRuggiero</u>
<u>Cheri Herron</u>	<u>Chet Stark/Roberta Reynes</u>
<u>Gordon Forbes/ Daniel Handley</u>	<u>Lee & Diane Tilden</u>
<u>Eva Telesnick/Sal Ledda</u>	<u>Trudi Roth/Larry Salzman</u>
<u>Michele&Ryan O'Connell</u>	<u>James & Leah Lieber</u>
<u>Paul Lappini/Ken Fox</u>	<u>Marjorie Waters/Myles Gordon</u>
<u>Erlyn& Richard Madonia</u>	<u>Karen Kaczmar</u>
<u>Ernest Rubenstein/Tova Usdan</u>	<u>Ellen & Kord Lagemann</u>
<u>Amy & Brian Muncaster</u>	<u>Margaret,John&Emma Avenia</u>
<u>Paul Pulcini</u>	<u>Sara Cashen/Tony Muoser</u>
<u>George & Agnes Tebolt</u>	<u>Jere Wrightsman</u>
<u>Bob Newman</u>	<u>Gabel Real Estate</u>
<u>Sandra Williams/Jack Arnold</u>	<u>Sustaining</u>
<u>Pamela Strouse</u>	<u>Paul Bernstein/Jane Magee</u>
<u>Individual</u>	
<u>Jerry DeBona</u>	
<u>Ruth Horak</u>	



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 Jane Magee Jere Wrightsman
 Connie Mondel

Robert Herron Special Advisor
Anne Cipkowski Director& Editor

P.O. Box 144
 11550 State Route 22
 Austerlitz, NY 12017

Phone: (518) 392-0062
 Email: oldausterlitz@fairpoint.net
 Web: www.oldausterlitz.org
 Facebook: Austerlitz Historical Society

JOIN AHS NOW!

New or Renewal

MEMBERSHIP LEVEL:

- Individual \$15
- Family/Household \$25
- Contributing/Business \$50
- Supporting \$100
- Sustaining \$250
- Additional Donation _____

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) _____

Mailing address _____

City _____

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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.

