

SPRING 2017

ECHOS OF ELMA

Volume XVI issue 4 quarterly newsletter of the Elma Historical Society, Inc.

A 501(c)3 corporation under the auspices of the New York State Board of Regents

OFFICERS EFFECTIVE MARCH 3, 2016

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FAIR COORDINATOR: MIKE TERNULLO, (652-0047)

HONORARY TRUSTEE: DENNIS POWERS, TOWN SUPERVISOR (652-3260)

TOWN HISTORIAN: FRANK MACIEJEWSKI 652-6256

WEBMASTER: KENNY SCHAFF
(KENNYSCHF@AOL.COM)

WEB ADDRESS: www.elmanyhistory.com

SAWMILL WEB: WWW.ELMASAWMILL.COM

E-MAIL ADDRESS: elmahistory@aol.com

May 20th There will be a public dedication of the shelter holding the gear from the Northrup mill, on the museum grounds. In conjunction with the dedication, we will also have an ice cream social. This dedication will take the place of our monthly meeting so we urge you all to attend, and support the Eagle Scouts and our volunteers who worked so hard to complete this project.

PLAN AHEAD

The theme for the historical building at the Fair this year is "Christmas Traditions in Our Town." I know we have had tree lighting for many years, but who can tell us when the tradition began in Elma? Also, did we ever have a Christmas Parade or other community event at Christmastime? Call Mike at 652-0047

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Historic signs for your home are now available at a cost of approximately \$160 for gold fleck, and less for gold paint.

The sign will read "century house" or "historic home" depending on the year the home was built, or its historic history.

This sign below will be displayed on our museum next to the herb garden.



Made of high density urethane, with gold flecks lettering, 1" thick, 10" X 15" oval. To order call Frank at 652-6256.

The Society is in desperate need of someone to write grants for us. If you have that talent, and can help us, please call Marlene at 652-9458.

SOCIETY EVENTS

March 13, 7PM at the Senior Center

Karen Muchow will present a program on Alden's Black Water Baths

April 10, at the Senior Center

Denise Reichard will present a history of the Underground Railroad. Denise always comes in period dress which is both informative and entertaining.

May 6 will be our Annual Tea

See brochure in this newsletter

HURD HOUSE MUSEUM

We are busy changing displays for the children who will be touring the museum this spring. The storage rooms upstairs are getting attention too.

Do any of you know of relatives or neighbors who lived in Elma who served in WWI? The 100th anniversary of the US entering the war will be on April 6th of this year and we would like to display the names in our military display. Please call Marlene at 652-9458.

Frank offers these interesting facts about our involvement in WWI:

- April 6, 1917. US declares war on Germany
- June 26, 1917 First US troops in France
- November 3, 1917 America engages German Troops
- November 11, 1918 German armistice signed
- November 21, 1918. German fleet surrenders

The Thursday Crew

SAW MILL AND BARN BUILDING AND GROUNDS

If you pass by the Museum, or drive along the driveway going to the community center during the night time, please take note if the security lights are on. There are night lights on the back of the mill and the museum, and these lights should be on during dark time. Also, when you drive past the museum using the driveway, or walk near the side porch at night, the porch light should go on. If these security lights are not on at night please let me know.

Frank Maciejewski, Building & Grounds 652-6256

DONATIONS FOR THE BARN

Many of our fundraisers will be dedicated to the task of raising money to expand our barn to better display the farm and dairy equipment that has been donated. We are gratefully accepting your tax deductible donations for our financial needs. This is an important barn expansion to help maintain the wonderful history of the Town

of Elma where all are free to bring their whole family for a visit. What a wonderful way to help all of us remember or learn what life was really like before cell phones and computers!

Thank you for your interest and support and a SPECIAL THANK YOU to all that have already donated!!!!

Jay Elliott, Frank Maciejewski, Fred Streif

SUNSHINE

We have sent out many cards thus far this winter. Hope you are all feeling well. I would be happy to send a greeting to cheer someone up, send our sympathy, or maybe a note of congratulations. Just call me at 652-6256.

Margaret Maciejewski 652-6256

In our Library

“Our library has periodicals from the various civic and student groups in Elma, and many of these provide an excellent history of events. One such Kiwanis newsletter was devoted to the high school in 1959, and it addressed a program that was in effect before BOCES. It stated as follows:

During the early days of the Iroquois High School, 1960s and 1970s, there were two active clubs in the school; Future Farmers of America and Future Homemakers of America. Their teacher was Cliff Luders. In November 1959, Kiwanis presented a vocational guidance program for students who would not be going on to college, but rather seek jobs, perhaps as a nurse's aide, lab technician, T.V. repair, plumber, telephone company, printing, radio, Armed Forces or Civil Service.”

Leita Reed, Librarian 716-655-4448.

MEMBERSHIP

Your support is very much appreciated. If you have a dot on your mailing label, we are asking you to renew your dues. Thank you.

Betty Braun 683-5258

PRESIDENT'S NOTES

The museum, barn and sawmill have been rather quiet since December, mostly due to the weather. We are busy planning for the children to come through in May and many other activities.

As always, we encourage those of you approaching retirement, or already retired, to consider helping at the museum complex. There are always projects to work on all year. Saving our history is so important. Recently I had a chance to go to the Holland Land Company in Batavia, and I asked the gentleman where the land records were being stored. He said they had been sent to the college in Fredonia and placed on microfiche. He added no one knows what happened to the originals. Please be assured that we do all we can to preserve Elma's history and would love to have more help.

Our annual tea will be on May 5th and the reservations go quickly. Call early to get your ticket.

Marlene Baumgartner

652-9458

HISTORIAN'S NOTES

The Cotton District

The Town of Elma essentially had 4 hamlets when it became incorporated in 1856: Ebenezer (Blossom), Spring Brook, Elma Village and East Elma. There was, however, another somewhat obscure hamlet, or district that existed, called the Cotton District, first named for public school district # 1 in 1852. Situated on the southeast corner of Clinton St and Girdle Rd it was undoubtedly named after the Cottons who owned property on the east side of Schwartz Rd and on the north side of Clinton. As time went on a Catholic school was built in 1864, adjacent to school house # 1, and in 1906 a Catholic church, Annunciation, was built next to the Catholic school. A grocery store was added in the late 1800s, just east of school house #1. Another addition to the district occurred when the Freiburger chapel was moved from its original location on the north side of Clinton, approximately midway between Bowen Rd and

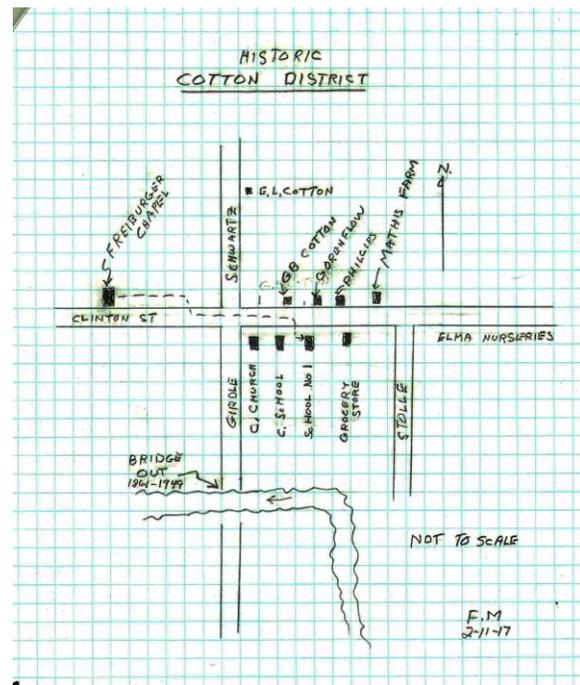
Schwartz, to the corner of Clinton and Girdle where it stands today on the spot vacated by school #1. School #1 was moved to Marilla to become a residence in the 1950s.

Nurseries also played a role in the development of this area with three businesses where plants, shrubbery, and trees could be purchased. The nurseries included Gorenflow, Phillips and the Elma Nursery in the immediate area.

So why was the Cotton District somewhat obscure? There is a reason for this. If you remember in the historian's report for spring 2016 it was noted that the bridge over Buffalo Creek at Girdle Rd was washed out in 1861, and was not replaced until 1949. This created a situation that cut off the Cotton district from the rest of Elma proper. I can recall growing up on Schwartz Rd when families living there would have to travel to Lancaster or Gardenville to pay utility bills, get a haircut or shop for groceries, etc. I will always remember the street lights on Clinton Street that seemed to lead to the Cotton District. The last street light was on the corner of Clinton and Schwartz/Girdle Rd., the end of the line.

FRANK MACIEJEWSKI,

Elma Town Historian 652-6256

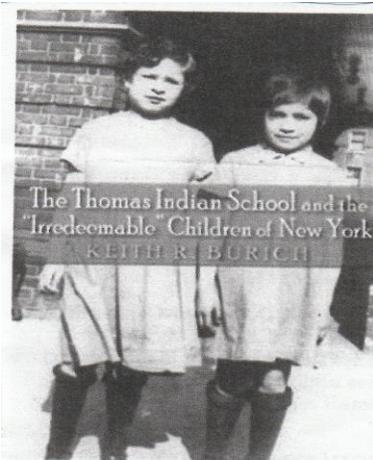


COTTON DISTRICT

SENECA INDIAN HISTORY

This is an interesting read for those interested in Elma's Indian history. East Elma history tells us that the Indians who had once lived here were sent to the Cattaraugus Seneca Reservation. The Thomas Indian School, formerly known as the Thomas Asylum for Orphan and Destitute Indian Children, was founded by the Presbyterian missionaries on the Reservation. The school began as a refuge, but it also served as a tool to "civilize" and convert Indian children to Christianity. The book describes their poor treatment, how they became alienated from their families, and the "destructive affect on generations of indigenous populations."

The author, Keith R. Burich, is a professor of history at Canisius College in Buffalo.



The Thomas Indian School and the "Irredeemable" Children of New York

Keith R. Burich

Cloth \$59.95L 978-0-8156-3454-6
2016

Elma Historical Society

*Presents an
Afternoon Tea*

At the Elma Town Museum

3011 Bowen Road, Elma, NY

Saturday May 6, 2017

Seating is limited and reservations are required

no later than April 30th

Cost \$15.00

Proceeds will benefit the expansion of the Barn Museum

Two Sitzings 11:30 & 1:30 pm



For Tickets call Eileen at 652-0648