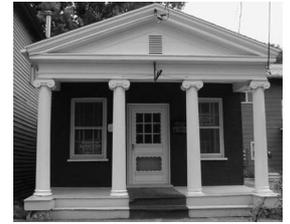




Phelps Community Historical Society

April 2021 Volume 29 Issue 250



Howe House Museum

66 Main Street

Phelps, NY 14532

(315) 548-4940

E-mail: histsoc2@gmail.com

Website: phelpsnhistory.com

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Museum Hours:

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From the Director's Desk

As we began our second year of social limitations, the work at the Howe House Museum and PCHS continues behind the scenes. We have a new website (phelpsnhistory.com), articles are being written for the newsletter, collection inventory is being updated, membership records are kept up to date, contractors are being consulted for estimates on roof repair and to update our security system, inside exhibits are changing, handwritten stories are being typed up, and we are planning events for this summer! (see newsletter insert). The Board of Trustees has held monthly meetings on Zoom and volunteered in numerous other ways. April 18-24 is Volunteer Appreciation Week. If you know someone who volunteers at the PCHS please thank them for all they do for this organization!



Diane Goodman

EAST EXHIBIT ROOM

Items recently donated to the PCHS collection include four documents in archival framing. The Subscription for the 1812 Oaks Corners Schoolhouse (two documents), the Purchase of Land by Jonathan Oaks from Israel Chapin, and the Land Purchase by John Wood from Cotton Dickinson are part of Oaks Corners/ Phelps history. Over two hundred years old, the documents, seen on the left, were passed on through the Oaks family and donated by Ann Oaks.



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Hometown Boy Comes Home

by Rosa Grube



Sargent Theodore Lee Flood
1946 –2018

On this Memorial Day, as we pause to remember those who have so unselfishly served, here is the story of one such Phelps boy.

When my brother, Ted Flood, died as a result of his exposure to Agent Orange in Viet Nam, my grandson asked if Ted's name would be added to the Viet Nam memorial in Washington DC. I explained that his name wouldn't be there, but his life was a memorial to strength, service and living to the fullest.

Ted was awarded several medals for his service in Viet Nam, including the Bronze Star. He never volunteered information about why he received that particular medal, but when asked, he offered that, when a helicopter went down near the search light he operated, he ran and pulled an officer from the burning helicopter.

Running into dangerous situations was part of Ted's life of childhood adventures in Phelps. The town itself and the supportive people in Ted's life in the 1950s and 60s gave him that courage and confidence. People like Gerry Gibbs, our Uncle Keith Falkey and of course our parents, influenced the man he was to become. Phelps was a safe place to be adventurous. As Ted's little sister, I remember some of his exploits.

When our neighbor screamed, from her second story window, that her baby was locked in the bathroom, Ted was the first one on the scene. The young mother had put water in the tub for the baby's bath, stepped into the hall to get a towel from the linen cabinet when the bathroom door was blown shut and locked. Ted climbed up to the second story (I don't know how), through that bathroom window, and picked up the baby to deliver to her mother. We heard about this when the baby's mother called our mother to let her know what Ted had done.

I remember standing with many neighbors as the GLF bean plant was engulfed in fire. We were told to stand well back as there was fear that the building and railroad cars next to it might explode. My mother looked around at her kids standing near her and noticed that 15 year old Ted was not with us. "Where's Ted" she said to anyone who was close enough to hear her. A man nearby said, "Oh Ted went in to turn off the gas... he was the only one who knew where the switch was."

Ted survived his childhood adventures... falling through the ice at the top of the falls on Main Street, broken bones from vigorous and sometimes dangerous play, as well as other fun activities that happen with a large family in a small town. He went on to college where he met Mary, the love of his life. They graduated, married and had an adorable son, Scott. By that time, Ted had been drafted. He was able to be with Mary for Scott's birth, but was soon in Viet Nam, missing Scott's first year of life.

As I mentioned, Ted did not relate much of what he did in Viet Nam. We only knew that he was perched in a high tower, shining a light on the battles and that the Viet Cong were always trying to put out that light. The battle field was often cleared of foliage by spraying Agent Orange around the area.

When Ted returned to Mary and Scott, he finished his Master's Degree and moved to the Washington, DC area. Coming from this friendly town, Ted was ready to strike up a conversation with anyone, always interested in others' stories and what he could learn from them. He made an impression of friendliness as well as confidence and competence. He was proud to represent Viet Nam veterans on a White House committee with President Carter. He also served in Carter's Energy Commission and continued to work in that field after Carter's presidency ended.

(continued on page 3)

Hometown Boy Comes Home

(continued from page 3)

Ted continued his life of accomplishment and adventure with Mary at his side. They traveled to all 50 states, as well as making trips to Europe and to Africa to share the adventure with Scott. Our extended family enjoyed visits to Ted and Mary's home, Wildfire Farm, where Mary followed the path she loved, working with horses and with people who loved horses. When we visited, I remember folks stopping by to have Ted (who was a CPA) do their taxes. I was told later that Ted did taxes for members of the CIA. He also continued to work with the public and private sectors to encourage the conservation of energy.

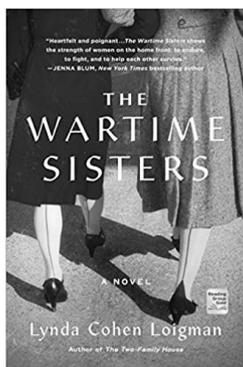
Ted recognized that his balance and health were deteriorating. He was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. Ted lived with, and fought that terrible disease for many years. Soldiering on, bravely continuing to be active, he would fall, get back up, smile and continue. When he would come to Phelps to visit our mother in her declining years, we could see his struggles as he fought to maintain his balance or reach for his coffee cup, explaining that he could no longer determine where it actually was. Mom reminisced "that's my boy who had so much energy; he would sit on the piano stool and spin until he would fly off, then do it again."

After many years, the government finally acknowledged that Viet Nam veterans' Parkinson's disease had been caused by Agent Orange. Ted never complained or lost his optimistic outlook. We, his 5 siblings, took turns traveling to West Virginia to be with him at the VA hospital/domiciliary where he spent the final year of his life. He was no longer able to communicate clearly, but greeted us from his wheelchair with a smile as we shared family stories and jokes together.

Ted requested that he would come back to Phelps to be buried in the town that meant so much to him. After a life of service, accomplishment and joy he now rests here where his journey began.

Wartime Sisters A Novel by Lynda Cohen Loigman

Book review by Marcia Maslyn



The author captures the dynamics that often haunt sisters: resentment, jealousy and feelings of inadequacy that creep in when comparisons are made. Ruth, the older of the two sisters we follow thru this historical fiction, is the smart but rather dowdy of the two. She spends her childhood listening to other people's appraisal of Millie's beauty and friendliness. It is not only Ruth who struggles with feelings of inadequacy.

Being seen as little more than a pretty face leaves Millie feeling unintelligent. Connecting with people comes easily, except where her sister is concerned. Ruth's stern nature and judgment are a constant in their relationship.

Forward to 1942 – Millie, alone with a young son to take care of, decides to reach out to her sister. It means moving from Brooklyn, New York to Springfield, Massachusetts where Ruth is an officer's wife at the armory. Having been estranged for five years neither sister is sure how the arrangement will work.

The Springfield armory provides the backdrop for much of this story. Lynda Loigman interweaves the real life accounts of those who worked there during the war. This is part of our history, and the story really shows the reader how the war impacted men and women left on the home front, and the role many played as workers that we come to know at the Springfield armory. Almost half of those working in the armory are on the manufacturing assembly lines, many for the first time find themselves head of

household with jobs, children their sole responsibility.

Interspersed between the sister's narratives are the stories of other women. Lillian is the wife of a commanding officer who tries to keep the women's spirits up, working to help ease the pressure of not knowing the welfare of their husbands, brothers, and fathers, and organizing childcare for those who need help. We also get to know Arietta, the cafeteria cook, who entertains with her singing. Interesting characters that are well fleshed out with their own pasts that make them who they are.

One day while Millie was visiting with Lillian, the Commander asked her opinion on how they can keep morale up in the factory because assembly lines were not moving well. Millie commented that doing the same job all day long, day after day was tedious. The Commander showed her the taking of a rifle apart piece by piece and reassembling it. Understanding the whole job and why each part is significant helped the workers be more efficient and faster.

There is much to appreciate about this book, Lynda Cohen Loigman does a fabulous job of depicting the time and creates characters that the reader comes to know in depth. It is an emotionally engrossing novel of a particular moment in history, that within it shows the impact of universal forces - withheld communications, lies, betrayal, assumptions, secrets, friendship, marriage, motherhood, sisterhood, patriotism, ambition. The book made me think of the war movie "We Band of Brothers", you could say that there at the armory we met a "Band of Sisters". All these women helped each other through a difficult time.

Phelps Soldiers & Sailors Memorial Corporation and Monument Part I

Sarah Landschoot Phelps Town Historian

Unique monuments stand in our communities years after being built. Years ago, group members worked hard to commemorate an important person or event for their community, but in recent times the public memory and meanings of these monuments was lost with younger generations. Their efforts embrace large and small pieces that include acquiring the land, the architect, a design and plan, acceptance from the community, the necessary materials, construction, dedication, and the meaning and usefulness for years to come. Most monuments proposed included some form of resistance or opposition, even those in a small town. In 1918 Phelps began planning a memorial to commemorate the men and women who served in The Great War, what we now call World War I. An association called the Phelps Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Corporation set out with an objective to “perpetrate the memory of boys from Phelps town who shall have rendered service in the war against Germany and her allies.” The unique Phelps World War Memorial still stands on Main Street today, 100 years after being built. It stands as a piece of public memory and public history for the town, families of those who served, and American war history, yet it is overlooked today both in means of a small town community and on a national scale.

The Phelps Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Corporation held its first annual meeting on June 7, 1919. They elected officers, including President William L. Crothers, whose son Oliver had fought in the Great War. The first meeting proposed and discussed different types of monuments to honor the men and decided that a memorial would be the best suitable monument. Yet, even at the first meeting problems had arisen, there was “considerable opposition” to the development of a monument and there was small interest. The same newspaper article makes clear that the board members “wish it to be understood” that “up to the present time no definite form of memorial has been adopted”. The board also wished to invite the larger community to assist in finding a suitable monument to honor the men of Phelps.

William L. Crothers was a lifelong and prominent resident of Phelps, New York. He was educated in Phelps before attending the Rochester Business College, graduating in 1883. In 1900 he served as the President of the Village, held the position as postmaster for two years, and was a member of

multiple county and town committees for a number of years. He helped to begin the Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Corporation in 1919, was elected as the corporation’s first president and was continuously reelected as president of the corporation until his death in 1937.

Another prominent member of the group was Earle S. Warner. Warner was born in Phelps and later became an attorney in Phelps and a New York State Senator. He was known in the small town for being part of different organizations like the Phelps Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Corporation, which he was a part of from the start in 1918. He even gave multiple addresses at the finished memorial for Memorial Day parades and other dedications. Leaders, even in small communities, tend to share a common goal in social unity which can be seen through public history and public memory. This monument was not only a way for the people of Phelps to say thank you to those from the town who served, but a bigger part of the town having pride and respect for those who served the community, and the nation.

The corner of Main Street and Ontario Street in Phelps meet to make a triangle shaped piece of property which has maintained a historical significance to Phelps. The triangle plot of land not only lies between two roads, but the third side looks over the large waterfall of Flint Creek. This specific plot of land has been used since the town was originally set up as the location of taverns which held many town meetings in the early 19th century. The land’s history indicates that it is a prime spot for a memorial, all coming through the village will see it. An 1874 map of the village shows two homes on the plot, one of J. M. Carr and one of H. Carfely. The residences would line up with two later newspaper articles indicating that the old Carey home occupied the mentioned park and that Carey’s Point, the triangular property, was to be converted into Memorial Park. The land was purchased by John Donnelly with the intention that the remaining home should be moved by the first of March 1921 in order to begin construction of the memorial.

In 1920, the board was pushing for a plan to get improvements like landscaping started for the memorial, but no plan was yet put in place to build. By 1921, the Phelps Soldier and Sailor Memorial was in progress. President William L. Crothers reported the

(continued on page 5)

Phelps Soldiers & Sailors Memorial Corporation and Monument

(continued from page 4)

memorial would be rustic, constructed of boulders, and not to exceed \$3,000. A boulder estimated to weigh 28 tons was to be moved to the site on Main Street from the Weston farm two miles east of Phelps. This is the first farm on the left side as you turn on to Preemption Road heading towards Oaks Corners. A bronze tablet would be included and contain all names of those from the town of Phelps who rendered their service to the military during World War I, and would be attached to the boulder. A flag and flag staff were to be added, shrubbery for the park and a lighting scheme were all planned out and soon to be put in place.

A well known landscape architect, specifically in the Canandaigua area, designed the Phelps World War Memorial. In early 1921, the Phelps Soldiers and Sailors Board of Directors instructed President William L. Crothers to request for John Handrahan to prepare plans, similar to two previous plans, for the memorial park. The plan had to include a bronze tablet that was to be placed in the center. Handrahan was well known in Canandaigua for other stone work pieces. He was known as a landscape architect who took on a similar style to renowned landscape architect Frederick Law Olmstead. Handrahan is known mostly today in our area for working under the direction of Mary Thompson. The many gardens and landscapes at her Sonnenberg home in Canandaigua contain flowers, flower beds set in designs, patio areas, bridges, a rock fort, and even some small buildings. As if that was not enough of a contribution to beautiful Canandaigua, Handrahan also rebuilt the water fountain downtown in 1909, built the stone bandstand in Canandaigua Park, the stone wall across the entrance to Woodlawn Cemetery, as well as designed

and built a stone arch bridge in the same cemetery, all of which are in Canandaigua.

The structure of the memorial in Phelps was completed in 1921. The Phelps Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Corporation set the unveiling of the bronze tablet and dedication for Memorial Day of 1922 (see photo below). The monument itself has multiple levels all built of stone. Walking up to the memorial from Main Street, stairs on each side of the monument give access to the first platform. The first platform is a large and wide space where the bronze plaque resides. The plaque reads: “to hold in grateful memory the sons and daughters of this town who faithfully served their country in the world war the Phelps Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Corporation here records their names.” There are stone benches on each side of the plaque. Another set of stairs on each side goes to the upper level, allowing a look down at the stone work. Then a few more stairs go to a walkway with shrubs and continue a few feet to meet up with Ontario Street on top of the hill. The bronze tablet is inscribed with names and gives one typical feature and one unique feature of the era. The top of the tablet has a large eagle, typical of that era, to show pride and nationalism. The tablet lists the names of all those who served in the war from the town of Phelps: this includes 114 soldiers and sailors, the five men who died in service, and two nurses. While there is some study of African American World War I memorials, there is little talked about women’s representation in World War I memorials. This makes the Phelps Memorial unique among others of the era, as it lists the names of the women from Phelps who also served during the war. **Sources and Part II - May Newsletter**

In Memoriam

Joan Ripley Graham

PCHS Member

May 30, 1944 - April 3, 2021

Alice Smith Sabin

PCHS Member

February 18, 1932 - April 13, 2021



The Schools of Phelps - A Series of Articles About Our Early Schools

Introduction by Dr. Ron Grube

Over the next few months, the Phelps Community Historical Society will highlight each of the 24 Phelps schools in our newsletters and on our website. We hope that our readers will offer information (pictures and stories) that we can add to our articles. The first school to be looked at next month will be School District # 1 in Oaks Corners.

The early American Republic promoted education as part of its liberal agenda. However, the earliest schools were affordable primarily to the children of the wealthy. This would not do for our first governor, George Clinton, who said: *"The erecting of public schools for teaching reading, writing and arithmetic is an object of very great importance which ought not to be left to the discretion of private men but be promoted by public authority."* (1) Governor Clinton promoted a law which would create a common school system throughout New York State.

On April 9, 1795 the New York State legislature passed an act to create a system of public education in the state. Each township of the state would elect a small school committee to supervise the schools and the appointed trustees for each school in the township. A fund from the state was divided among the towns and the schools. The original fund was raised by a lottery and the sale of state land. By 1798, New York had 1,352 schools serving 59,660 children. (2)

By 1812, a permanent system of common schools with school districts for each township was created by the state legislature. By 1825, New York had the most superior schools in the nation. The town of Phelps developed twenty-four districts. Each district had a school and a number. Some of the schools were also identified by a family name. These schools/districts can be found on the 1904 map on our website.

Most of the early rural schools were poorly lighted, cold in the winters and generally uncomfortable. The teachers were often quite young and usually poor. The teachers depended on the parents of their students to provide room and board. It might be a mistake, however, to imagine that the education was second rate to our modern system. Here are three math problems that are taken out of the one room school houses. Let's see if you can answer them. Remember, the students did not have calculators – maybe you shouldn't either. The answers will be posted elsewhere in this newsletter. (page 7)

1. "The forward wheels of a wagon are 14 feet 6 inches in circumference, and the hind wheels 15 feet 9 inches. How many more times will the forward wheels turn round than the hind wheels, in running from Boston to New York, it being 248 miles?"
2. "A hare starts 40 yards before a greyhound, and is not perceived by him till she has been up 40 seconds; she scuds away at the rate of ten miles an hour, and the dog, on view, makes after her at the rate of 18 miles an hour: How long will the course hold, and what space will be ran over, from the spot where the dog started?"
3. "There are two numbers, whose product is 1610, the greater is given 46; I demand the sum of their squares, the cube of their difference?"

Sources:

1. (*Minutes of the Board of Regents, February 16, 1787 in Proceedings of the Twelfth Anniversary of the University Convocation of the State of New York, Albany 1875, pp. 252-254*)
2. (Robert F. Seybolt, *The Act of 1795 for the Encouragement of Schools and the Practice in Westchester County. Albany: University of the State of New York, 1919*)



#15 Hopple District
School was near the southwest corner of Rtes 96 & 488
Later District #3 Now a private home

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If "Final Notice" is highlighted this will be your last newsletter if dues are not paid.*

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in memory of
Ruth Nayaert
03/09/1941 - 04/07/2020

Kathy Burnett
in memory of
Don Burnett
01/15/1937 - 11/22/2011

Barbara Rickard
in memory of
Marian Dunning Falkey
07/24/1919 - 03/31/2016

Jeanne Leonard
Kinderhook, NY

Welcome Back!

Thomas Filiatreau
Clifton Springs, NY

Membership Renewals

Paul & Jane Bree	Len Kataskas
Barbara Brennessel	Linda Nieskes
Kathy Burnett	John Parmelee
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Paul & Velma Crouch	Kathleen Quigley
Richard & Mary Ellen Darling	Barbara Rickard
Bob & Diane Goodman	J. Bruce Ruthven
Michael Goodman	Tom & Margie Stallman
Betty Howe	Calvin & Marlene Treese
Margaret Jolliff	Glen & Ann Webster

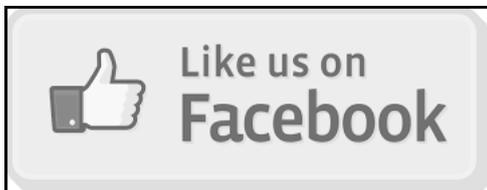
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3. The sum of their square is 3341 and cube of their difference is 1331</p> |
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Save the dates!

Special hours

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11am - 2pm

Howe House Museum

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Tours Antique cars

Gift Shoppe

Masks and social distancing required

Saturday July 31st
Alumni Association
Weekend

Saturday August 7
Sauerkraut Festival
Weekend

