



Phelps Community Historical Society

January 2023 Volume 31 Issue 269

**Howe House Museum**

66 Main Street
Phelps, NY 14532
(315) 548-4940

E-mail:

histsoc2@gmail.com

Website:

phelpsnyhistory.com

Find us on

Facebook

Museum Hours:

Currently Closed

Reopen:

March 15, 2023 or
by appointment

President

Mart VanKirk

Vice President

Ron Grube

Secretary

Nicole Fess

Treasurer

Tom Cheney

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Riegel

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Anna Lightfoote

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Diane Goodman

Administrative**Assistant**

Heather Olander

The Great Snow Storm of 1954 by Tom Cheney

Excerpt from *PHELPS Phacts, Phables and Pholklore*

In January or February of 1954, our area received a rather large amount of snow in a very short time, with more coming down. School buses were struggling to pick up students, and those of us who lived in the village had barely made it to school! All area schools, with the exception of Phelps, were closed due to weather. In our youthful wisdom, we Seniors decided to head downtown to the Milk Bar (*Main Street where the Waterside Winebar is now located*). Some of us would not let our girlfriends leave with us, as they were Juniors, and we didn't want them getting in trouble too. Besides, we didn't want to get in "Dutch" with their parents. While at the Milk Bar, a group of us decided to go to the Filiatreau's and hang out since we felt there shouldn't be school that day anyway. The Filiatreaus made hot chocolate, and we were in the basement playing pool and generally having a great time.

Suddenly, Mr. Filiatreau hollered down to us to be quiet because Mr. Nagel, the school Principal was at the door. We could hear Mr. Nagel demanding to know where the students were and informed Mr. Filiatreau that if they were not back in school by first lunch time they would be suspended. After much wavering, I decided to hightail it back to school, and arrived about five minutes late for lunch period. I quickly removed my boots, left them in the hallway, and went in the cafeteria and ate lunch, thinking I had gotten away with being five minutes late for the deadline. As soon as I got back to my classroom, I was summoned to the office and informed that I was suspended. You can imagine how terrified I was to go home and tell my parents what had happened. To my surprise, they half agreed that there certainly should not have been school that day, but gave me a stern lecture on my actions.



PCHS December 2022 Annual Appeal December Donations

Thanks to the generosity of PCHS members, Phelps community residents and businesses, the donation drive was a great success!

Visit our website phelpsnhistory.com for a complete list of donors.

Seeley B. Parish Post #457

Arlene Copeland
Charles & Deborah Dhalle
Betty Howe

Barry Lee
Frederick Kirch
Muriel "Nickie" Shannon

Eleanore Ridley
Nancy Caves & Woody Travis
Phelps Hometown Pharmacy

Phelps Community Historical Society 2023 Annual Report

PCHS Annual Meeting and Elections April 22, 2023 at 2:00PM Howe House

2023 Financials

INCOME

Membership Dues.....	\$5,746.00
Rental of Property.....	\$2,400.00
Merchandise Sales.....	\$471.00
NYS Sales Tax.....	\$27.00
Fund Raisers/Wreath Sale.....	\$1,285.00
Annual Fund Drive.....	\$9,405.00
Gifts & Donations	\$18,325.00
Memorial Donations.....	\$12,977.00
Government Support.....	\$14,000.00
Grant Income.....	\$13,250.00
Other (Transfers).....	\$24,563.00
Indirect Misc. Income.....	\$16,234.00
Interest Income	\$1.00
Total Income	\$118,684.00

INVESTMENTS

Decrease (2022)	\$42,100.00
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EXPENSES

Professional Contracted Services.....	\$2,272.00
Advertising.....	\$813.00
Website.....	\$155.00
NYS Sales Tax	\$77.00
Bulk Mail/Postage.....	\$888.00
Utilities.....	\$9,295.00
Printing/Copier Lease.....	\$3,794.00
Supplies/equipment.....	\$6,540.00
Maintenance/Repairs.....	\$39,916.00
Memberships/subscriptions.....	\$1,049.00
Insurance.....	\$4,381.00
Payroll Expenses.....	\$34,858.00
Special Projects.....	\$2,637.00
Fundraising Expense.....	\$2,078.00
Security System Monitoring.....	\$836.00
Indirect/Unbudgeted Expenses.....	\$3,826.00
Total Expenses	\$113,415.00

STAFF

Diane Goodman Director
Heather Olander Administrative Assistant
Robin Grube Caretaker
Sponsored by Ontario County Workforce

PROJECTS COMPLETED

Farmhouse kitchen exhibit completed

Stairlift Installed

Brick pointing and repair
Exterior painting /Woodworking repairs
Howe House/Carriage House/Country Lawyer Office

Outdoor information sign installed

Rust Dirt Separator installed in boiler system

MEMBERSHIP

27 New Individual/Family Total members 258

VOLUNTEERS

Recorded volunteer hours 965
Board of Trustees -meetings hours 139

CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

Midlakes 1st and 2nd Graders
December 15-21
224 Students 28 Adults

Tours and Research

Tours 75 with 143 visitors
Other visitors - approx. 112
Research Requests In person/online - 24

Gwen Kellerman lives a quiet life as a botanist. She largely ignores her status as part of a rich and well known family in New York City, circa 1900. Patrick O'Neill survived a hardscrabble youth to become a lawyer. He's proud of his work, even though he struggles to afford his law office. That changes when he accepts a case that is sure to emphasize the Blackstones' legacy by resurrecting a 30 year old mystery. Gwen is tasked with getting Patrick to drop the case, but the mystery takes a twist.

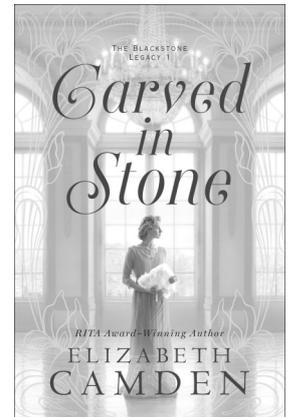
Gwen lives on the college campus, a secluded haven in the upper west side free of the congestion, noise and skyscrapers that clogged downtown. Her tension coiled tighter with each mile as the carriage rolled into the heart of Manhattan, with its chaotic mix of carriages, trams and automobiles all vying for dominance on the city streets. She never liked it here with towering buildings blotting out too much sky, it didn't feel natural. *This an interesting depiction of the city for this era.*

Patrick's law office is at The Five Points named after the intersection of five streets in the middle of urban squalor and ramshackle tenements. It was the most notorious slum in the city, ruled by rough Irish street gangs two decades earlier. In recent years reformed minded New Yorkers had torn down some of the worst tenements, renamed the streets and tried to give the area a new reputation.

Gwen and Patrick are on different sides of a legal issue

and from vastly different social classes; as the story unfolds these two each learn from the other. We read about the horrors of tetanus with no cure and the fact that professors at College are working on a serum not yet tested or certified for humans.

The fascinating history of rising power of banks and capitalism. Wonderful depiction of two different social groups and how best to work together and learn how one needs the other. There is also the mystery of what happened 30 years ago, finding the answer and moving forward from there. Ms. Camden has a way of painting little known facts during the Gilded Age into a full novel. She fuses the founding of a conglomerate steel corporation with advancements in science and medicine. We have the elite take a close look at the slums and tenements within the backdrop of 1900 New York City. This story has it all: history, deeply layered characters, intriguing suspense and a seamless faith thread. A good read that moved along smoothly with interesting characters that made you want to learn more about their futures and how the city continued to grow and prosper.



A Special Thank You...

Robin Grube joined us as our Museum Caretaker in February 2022. His last day with us was December 30. The position was sponsored through the Ontario County Workforce Program. Robin certainly added a smile to all who encountered him here and kept the museum in pristine condition. We are truly grateful for his excellent care of the Howe House Museum. Best wishes Robin!



Robin assisted Rosa Grube, Marilyn DeRuyter and Jane Pedersen with the Christmas tree decorating.



Robin dressed in period costume demonstrated the Victrola for the 1st & 2nd graders. He is seen with Ron and Rosa Grube.



Our Annual Christmas Program

In the month of December the PCHS invited the 1st and 2nd graders from Phelps-Clifton Springs School District for a visit to the Howe House Museum. After being welcomed to the Howe House, the students enjoyed learning about traditions of the past in the Oak Room with Marilyn DeRuyter, Ron, Rosa and Robin Grube. From there the students split into two groups to learn about model trains in the East Exhibit Room with Conductor Gary Jones and to the kitchen for a presentation with Nancy Denisi. Nanette Dixon and Jane Pedersen assisted.



In the Oak Room, Marilyn DeRuyter talked about Christmas traditions of the past .



Thank you notes from students

"Thank you for showing us around!"

-Norah

"I love the tree, thank you!"

-Chelsey

"I love the kitchen." "I love the stove."

-Allison

"I love the tree!"

-J.J



"My favorite thing was the train."

-Autumn



Conductor Gary Jones ran the model trains in the East Exhibit room.



Nancy Denisi talked about items in the kitchen and explained how butter was made.

Colonel Elias Cost 1777 – 1851

Elias Cost, of Frederick, Maryland, was an adventurer. At twenty-one, in 1799, he and two friends headed north on horseback through the thickly wooded frontier of Pennsylvania and New York State. Their destination was Sodus, New York. Along the way, the three stopped by Oak's Tavern. This brief stop in Oaks Corners must have left a positive impression on Elias. In the following year, Elias came back to Oaks Corners. He purchased land and lived in the community for the rest of his life. He built the beautiful brick house in Oaks Corners on Preemption Road just south of the gravel pit.

In June of 1813, Elias was briefly back at Sodus Point as a captain in the local militia during the War of 1812 to help defend Sodus against the British. He was also at an engagement against the British at Fort Erie. Cost remained in the militia and rose to the rank of colonel. He was referred to as Colonel Cost throughout most of his time in Oaks Corners.

Elias was married twice, first to the daughter of Captain Shekells. After her death, he married the widow of Thaddeus Oaks – Fanny Dickinson Bannister Oaks.

Colonel Cost was the first postmaster of Oaks Corners. He received his appointment from President Andrew Jackson. Cost was a member of the Whig Party and was elected to the New York State Assembly. Not only was he influential in Phelps business and political endeavors, he was also a major supporter of the Presbyterian Church in Oaks Corners.

"History of the Pioneer Settlement of Phelps and Gorham's Purchase" (1851) p. 228
Biographical Sketches from <http://www.burrcook.com/history/ontario/oaks.htm>

Fanny Oaks Cost 1786-1850

Fanny Dickinson Bannister Oaks Cost must have been an outstanding woman. Her personality is said to have been colorful, dynamic and interesting. Fanny, a daughter of Augustus and Submit Dickinson, was only four years old when her family moved here from Conway, Massachusetts. On September 16, 1828 Fanny married her third husband, widower Colonel Elias Cost. She was then over forty. The Colonel and Fanny had one daughter, Anne Cornelia. Fanny had seven children altogether with six of the children being from previous marriages (Theodore Bannister b.1775 d.1818 and Thaddeus Oaks b.1774 d.1824).

"A Branch of the Oaks Family" by Mabel Oaks p. 8

The Artist – Marshall Bannister

Marshall Bannister, born in 1816, was the young artist who painted Colonel Elias Cost and Fanny Cost (although her hair was red but Fanny asked the artist to paint it dark). You can see both paintings, donated by Ann Oaks, on exhibit at the Howe House Museum. Marshall was the son of Dr. Caleb Bannister. Elias Cost contracted with young Bannister to paint four portraits, including the two in our collection. Sadly, the artist Marshall Bannister died at the age of 28. He is buried in Resthaven Cemetery here in Phelps.



Membership Renewals

Thank you for your continued support!

Terry & Paula Atkinson
Debra Bennett
Bill & Irene Copper
Marilyn DeRuyter
James & Sherry Ebel
Denisi Flooring
Janet Fremouw
Joan Griswold
Linda Guest
Ramon & Charlotte Howard
Kevin Kelley
Lois Main
Richard & Josephine Marek
Edward McManus
Phelps Hometown Pharmacy
Dianne Prentice
Robert & Joan Pulver
Eleanore Ridley
Randolph & Kim Ridley
Gib & Cathy Scott

Time and Talent

Special thank you

Midlakes Christmas Program

Introduction: Marilyn DeRuyter,
Nanette Dixon, Jane Pedersen
Ron, Rosa & Robin Grube

Conductor: Gary Jones

Kitchen Program: Nancy Denisi

Billee Altman
Decorating and exhibit assistance

Barb Brennessel
Bonnie Dixon
Newsletter

Barb Gillespie
Scrapbooking and secretarial

Dana Mark
Handyman, Transfer Station

Alyssa Olander
Office helper

Finance and Development Committee

Tom Cheney
Cheryl Chester
Ron Grube
Len Kataskas
Gary Tyman

Personnel Committee

Tom Cheney
Ron Grube
Jane Pedersen
Cathy Scott
Mart VanKirk

Welcome New Members!

Jacqueline Darrow - Geneva, NY
Mark & Tracy Falkey - Phelps, NY

Christmas Gift Memberships

From Ron & Rosa Grube

Brian Flood - Oconomowac, WI
Paul Flood - Washougal, WA
Richard Flood - Champaign, IL
Thomas Flood - Phelps, NY
Stephen Grube - Monument, CO

In Memoriam

Barbara A. Edwards

PCHS Member
2/22/1929-12/21/2022

Stephanie Kelley

PCHS Member
10/6/1950-1/12/2023

Betty J. Taney

Phelps Croquet Club Member
7/19/1938-1/9/23

Memorial Donations

Eleanore Ridley
In memory
of
Floyd Ridley

Monetary Donations

Debra Bennett

Lois Main

John Pangburn
In honor of
Betty Meath

Exxon Mobil Grant

Doris Spink-Volunteer Hours

Item Donation

Brian Flood- *Books*

Ann Oaks- *Fire brigade buckets*

MEMBERSHIP and DONATION FORM

*If "Reminder" is highlighted please renew your membership.
If "Final Notice" is highlighted this will be your last newsletter if dues are not paid.
Dues may be paid by: check to PCHS or online at phelpsnyhistory.com*

Application: New _____ Renewal _____ Gift _____ Send membership card _____ For Office use:

Individual: \$20.00 _____ Family: \$30.00 _____ Business: \$50.00 _____ Member #: _____

Name: _____ Date Rcvd: _____

Address: _____ Check #: _____

Winter Address: (if different from above): _____ Amt. Rcvd: _____

_____ Exp. Date: _____

Dates Winter Address in effect: _____ Computer: _____

Phone: _____ E-Mail: _____ Index Card: _____

Member Card: _____

DONATION: Amount _____

_____ In memory of (Optional): _____

_____ In honor of (Optional): _____

_____ Allocate funds to (Optional): _____



THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEEDS YOUR HELP! VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY TRANSCRIBING THE PAST

Thanks to former Phelps Town Historian Mabel Oaks and her daughter-in-law, Ann Oaks who faithfully kept Mabel's records, we have several boxes of letters dating back to the very early 1800s. What we need is someone (or several individuals) who would be willing to transcribe some of these letters. It is a challenge and very satisfying to get so close to people from Phelps who wrote well over 150 years ago. In doing so, you would help us discover long hidden and personal histories. We, then, will digitize your transcription and add it to our website. You may contact the Historical Society office of your interest in joining in this project and to get more information. I will get you started.

Dr. Ronald R Grube



PHELPS COMMUNITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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