



Phelps Community Historical Society

June 2023 Volume 31 Issue 274



Howe House Museum
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Website:
phelpsnhistory.com

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Museum Hours:
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Thursday
Friday
10 AM-4 PM

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From the Director's Desk.....

by Diane Goodman

Summertime is here and plans are being made for several events happening over the next few months.

We are excited to announce the opening of the Country Lawyer Gallery of the Arts on July 1 (more info below and on page 2). A dedicated group of volunteers from both the PCHS and the gallery committee have been working tirelessly to refurbish the building at 7 Church Street as an exhibit room and art gallery.

The Waterloo Sportsman's Club (2654 Edwards Road) has invited us to include the 1924 Essex in their First Annual Classic Cars, Bikes and Rods show on Sunday, July 9.

On Saturday, August 5, the Howe House will be open to visitors from 2pm-4pm. Our front porch is an ideal spot to watch the Sauerkraut Festival parade that begins at 4pm.

The details for our historic program in September will be in a future newsletter. On Sunday, October 15, there will be a cemetery walk at Pioneer Cemetery.

Please note: There will not be an off site Excursion on July 15 as mentioned in the May newsletter.

Country Lawyer Gallery of the Arts

7 Church Street, Phelps, NY

Hours

Thursday 5-7pm

Friday 3-7pm

Saturday Noon -7pm



Country Lawyer Gallery of the Arts

Director's Message by Michael Nash

Here we are.....the Grand Opening of the Country Lawyer Gallery of the Arts is upon us. Thanks to a small but dedicated, committed and enthusiastic team of volunteers, we will be ready to open the doors at 7 Church Street in Phelps to the public on July 1, 2023 with our first exhibit called "Right Here, Right Now!" We will do this in style with a celebration featuring the whole team of gallery associates hosting tours, some great food, live music from the front porch, a garden walk with Janet Walpole and those who have renewed the gorgeous Quigley Memorial Garden and a collection of beautiful art from our Finger Lakes region.

Our celebration starts at noon on Saturday, July 1 and runs until 7:00 PM. Of course, the focus of the event is the art exhibits and the historic "Front Room" of the building, which was the office of the Country Lawyer, Samuel Selden Partridge. When you enter, you will be able to tour the exhibit room that has furniture and items from the lawyers who practiced there and other pieces of Phelps history. We will have people telling the story of the building and will provide material you can take with you to read.

After moving through the historic office, you will step out of the past and into a highly creative, contemporary and exciting space. You will find three rooms filled with artwork of all kinds by artists from the Finger Lakes region. The list is long, but here is a sampling: photography, oils and acrylics, textiles, woodworking, watercolor, jewelry and digital art. This diverse list is just a sampling of the kinds of art that will be found in our "Right Here, Right Now!" show

and in the many coming exhibits. As a viewer, you will be provided with not only knowledgeable volunteers to guide you through the space, but a complete list of artist statements and descriptions of their work for you to take with you. We are committed to providing an accessible and professional space for our regional artists to display their work and to allow the people in our village, town and region the opportunity to get to know these wonderful artists.

We will gladly host group tours both during regular hours and by appointment. Children accompanied by an adult are always encouraged to visit. We do not require entry fees for artists to submit work for shows and there is no admission fee for visitors, but donations are always appreciated. Donations can be made to the *Phelps Community Historical Society* (PCHS 66 Main St Phelps, NY 14532) and, if you wish, earmarked for the Country Lawyer Gallery of the Arts.

Look for our show calendar to be published soon and plan on taking in the exhibits as they open. Here are a few show titles... "Cabbage" - a lighthearted look at what put Phelps on the map, "Native American Art," "MidLakes Young Artists," "Garden," "Snowball," and more. We are planning to hold artist talks, demonstrations by the artists, workshops and classes (which we are currently running). Events are free and open to the public, modest fees will be charged for classes and workshops where money goes directly to the teachers and artists. And, if you are an artist of any sort, please contact me, Michael Nash, at 585-789-0017, regarding submitting work.

True to our Mission, we will open the door to our colorful past and, at the same time, purposefully create a history of our own for generations to come. *Please join us as we open the Country Lawyer Gallery of the Arts. It will amaze you!*

From Our Mailbox..... A letter received from PCHS member Emme Cortelyou

Dear Diane,

I enjoyed the May newsletter so much. Starting with the picture of the baseball team, Tim and I knew so many of the young men as adults, Stan Maines, Ken Conklin, Ken Overslaugh, etc. And Ollie Cook (story to follow). Then the story about Connolly's store. We didn't know the store but after Tim was hired to teach English at Phelps Junior High, Miss Mary "Lou" Connolly and Mrs. Christina Paulis (the other two English teachers) visited us in Oaks Corners. They came to welcome Tim to the faculty. It was the beginning of wonderful relationship with Christina and Roy Paulus. Then the painting of the Country Lawyer's Office. I remember the times sitting with John Britting in his office.

There was a Christmas party for the faculty of the Phelps schools at the Chanticleer in Geneva. We invited people to stop at our house on the way back. Ollie and Maxine came along with a few others. Tim lit the oil chandelier in the living room and we didn't turn on any other lights, the room was dark. Pretty soon under the sound of conversations there was the sound of soft snoring in the dark corner, in a very comfortable chair, Ollie had dozed off. The rest of us just continued our conversations.

Thank you all so much for bringing back fond memories of Phelps. *Emme*

Collecting the Stories of Phelps Series of interviews by Wendy Gaylord

Roland Penta - Life in Phelps (Information in Italics is for clarification)

Wendy Gaylord: Today is May 24th, 2023. I'm Wendy Gaylord, and I'm here talking with Roland Penta. Morning, Roland.

Roland Penta: Good morning.

Wendy: I was wondering if you could tell me a little bit about your life in Phelps, you're a longtime resident.

Roland: I spent my first 30 years in Phelps. My father, my mother and father, were involved in some local business here and I have a lot of fond memories of Phelps. My father first came to Phelps in the early 1920s, I believe, and started what was a battery business.

Wendy: Like car batteries?

Roland: Car batteries and what was typical in the 1910s and 1920s was you didn't use your car year round, you took it off the road in the winter. So he would remove your battery, maintain it and restore it come Spring and put it back in your car.

Wendy: So he took it to his shop.

Roland: He had a shop and it then became, it's on Exchange Street, it became the Flood paint shop (*Finger Lakes Paint*) and now it's a brewery (*Crafty Ale and Lagers*) I believe. And he had the mechanisms to recharge the batteries and he would rebuild the plates or whatever necessary. From that he eventually got into a basically hardware store. And then from the hardware store, he branched out into the electrical contracting and the propane gas business. My early years of the memory are working in the hardware store and the furniture store.

Wendy: And where were they?

Roland: The hardware store was on the corner of Main and Exchange across from the hotel. And the warehouse for that was on - okay, you cross the bridge on Main Street and turn right and there's a large, used to be yellow (*now red*), three story wooden building.

Wendy: Oh, the street before Banta Street (*Flint Street*).

Roland: 4 Flint Street. Originally it was a tin factory, tin manufacturing factory or tin working factory. Then he also eventually operated a television repair and sales store also, adjacent to the Town Hall just to the west of the Town Hall, which I believe is a beauty shop now (*Bonnie's Beauty Boutique*). We had three floors of furniture and appliances on Main Street and three floors of appliances and furniture at the warehouse, and my job from the age of five or six was to dust and clean those weekly. So to this day, I do not like to dust and clean very well.

Wendy: I don't blame you.

Roland: Eventually, as hardware stores and such wore down, I took over. My interest was laid in the electrical contracting and primarily the propane gas business.

Wendy: So you went through Phelps High School?

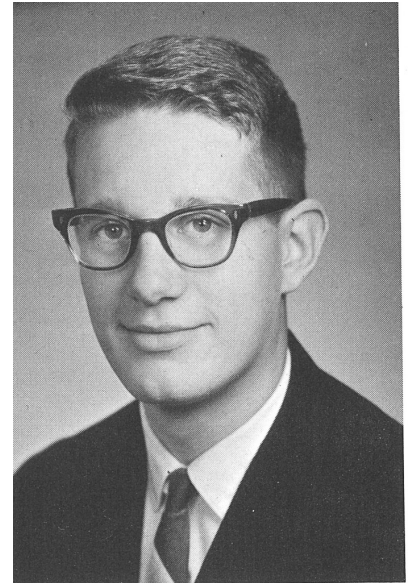
Roland: I went through Phelps High School. Next to the last or third from the last graduating class from Phelps before it became a joint school district. (*taxpayers of both districts- Phelps and Clifton Springs- approved a merger in 1967, the last class of Phelps Central School graduated in 1970*).

Wendy Gaylord: So what year did you graduate?

Roland Penta: Graduated in 1966. And again, my father had all kinds of stories because he pioneered appliances such as radios, televisions, washing machines, refrigerators.

Wendy: Did you get them all in your house first?

Roland: We didn't necessarily have them all in our house. I remember, like when Bonanza came out, it was on. It was when color TV's were just basically being introduced. And we didn't have a color TV in our home so we would go on Sundays to the store and watch Bonanza on the color TV at the store. But again, all kinds of stories of pioneering products as they became available. Like selling refrigerators? It was hard to sell refrigerators, and so you would offer to let the housewife have a refrigerator, washing machine or something for a week and once you got it in the house, they didn't want to you to take it back out. And eventually, with gas ranges, he became one of the larger sellers of gas ranges, but he was restricted by the natural gas lines which there weren't a whole lot of back in the 40s, the 30s and 40s. So he went into the propane gas business solely for the purpose so he could sell more gas ranges. Because they used to come in by the railcar and if he could buy a railcar load, he would have a better price. (continued on page 4)



Roland Patrick Penta
PCS Class of 1966

Roland Penta - Life in Phelps (continued from page 3)

Wendy: And so your father ran those businesses. Did your mother work with him?

Roland: My mother was from Pennsylvania originally. She moved here and went to the Rochester Business Institute and got a degree, and then her first job was with my father and eventually they married.

Wendy: And you have brothers and sisters.

Roland: I have one sister. She was never involved in the business, but she's moved back to the area and lives in Canandaigua now.

Wendy: OK. And so is the propane business- is that Phelps Sun Gas now?

Roland: Yes.

Wendy: Is that still you, your family?

Roland: No, I sold that four years ago to a Superior Gas Products and at the time we had five locations.

Wendy: What else do you remember about the streets here, since you had businesses and warehouses? Were there restaurants here?

Roland: My father lived in the Phelps Hotel and had a few stories about living there prior to his marriage. It was sometimes a rough and tumble atmosphere. The Firemen's Convention was sometimes held here for New York State. And again, I remember the Phelps Hotel growing up. We had Boy Scouts, either over what became Security Trust or in the basement of what eventually I think, became the Brass Lantern, or whatever, at the Phelps Hotel. After a meeting a bunch of us would get together, and if we could pull \$0.50 or whatever, we would go to the back door and the cook would give us a large grocery bag full of French fries for \$0.50. But just one of the memories from back then. One of the stories I heard - probably the closest family friend that I remember was Maynard and Catherine Lindquist, who operated a clothing store on Main Street, the first building past the hotel, west. And it was a general store as far as clothing, shoes and the like. And they were our next door neighbors when I was my first five years, and we would meet them in Florida for vacations because my father never took a vacation until he was about 48, 49 years old. He took a vacation, got so hooked on it, we went for a month every year after. And again we'd meet the Lindquists with some other people from the area in Florida. And I grew up knowing a lot of Florida because of that. But Maynard Lindquist would very often take me to see Judge Warner or one of the Griswolds or you know, other people in town that apparently he was related to, I believe. In one of the stories that he told me, and I have no idea how true it is, is that fireworks were illegal in New York because of an antic of Judge Warner and his friends. They apparently set off a rocket, is how the story goes, somewhere around the vicinity of the Church St. stop light and instead of going up, it came down Main Street and there used to be a divide in the street in front of what was called the Decker House. The rocket hit the divide and went up into the Decker house and exploded. And again, I have no idea how true that was. One of the stories I remember about early Phelps.

Special Thank You!

Matt Clark, Josh Colf, Phil Frere, Kyle
Tiffany and Mike Vienna

for

Transporting the voting machine
from the CLO to Vienna Gardens.

Vienna Gardens

for

Providing a site for storage

Dennis King

for

Making the arrangements

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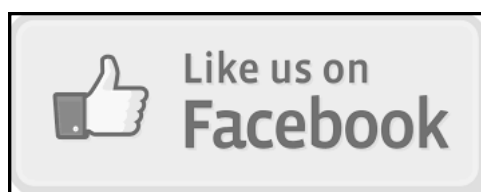
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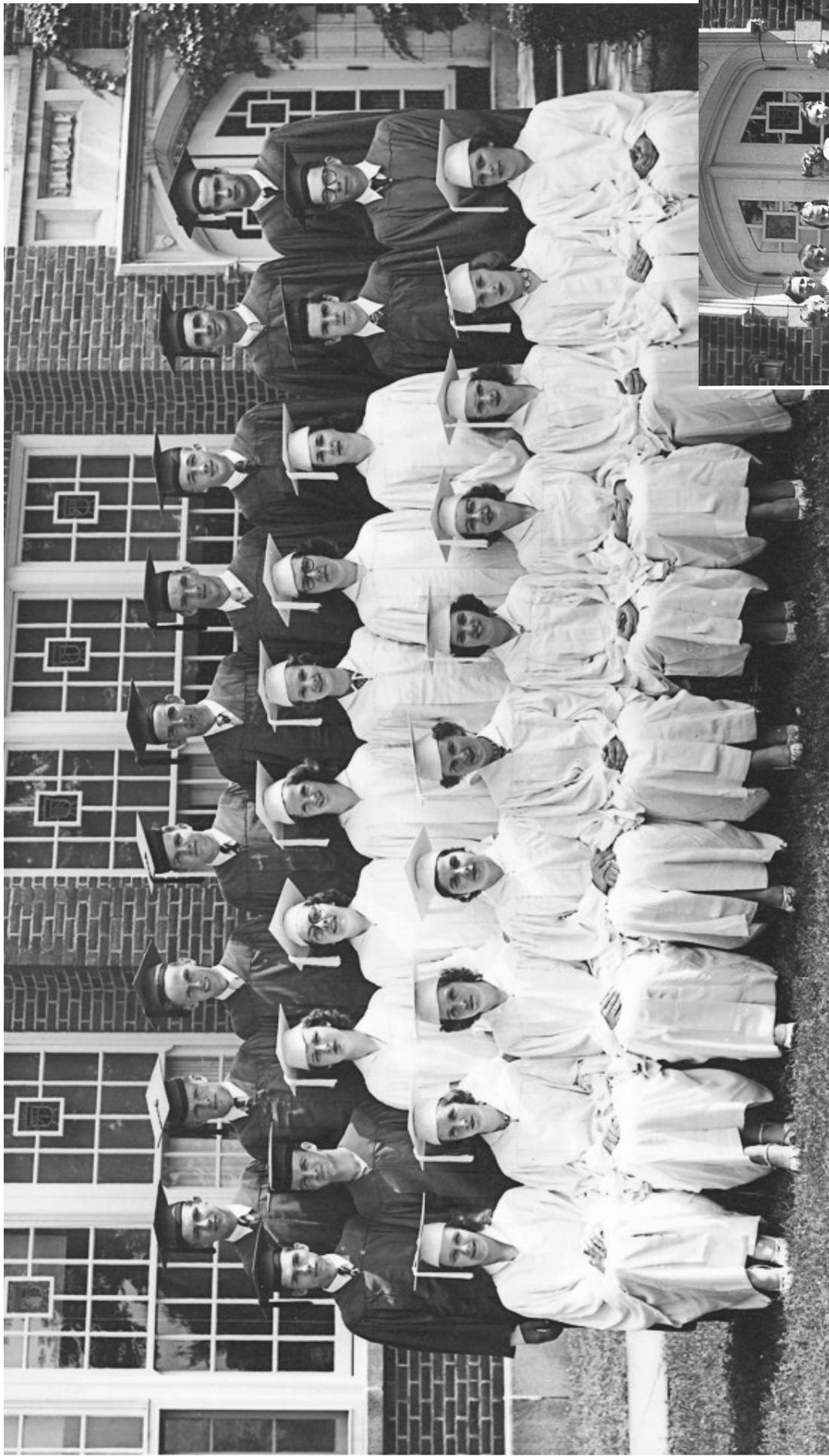
Phelps Community Historical Society –
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You are on our Facebook page. Enjoy!





Phelps Central School Class of 1953

Photo Right: 1945 Class of 1953 Fourth Grade

Photo Above: Front row: Barbara Enders, Beverly Hayes, Arlene Craig, Anita Tate-Treasurer, Dorothy Phillips, Jean Wheaton, Joanne Gifford, Alice DeCann-Secretary, Joyce Fair, Sharon Bliven

Second Row: Robert Haynes, Donovan Dersham, Marlene Dhallo, Barbara Cornell, Shirley Lyon, Marjorie Whitson, Mary Mouton, Joanne Scherbyn, Richard Davis, Paul Tillman

Back Row: Niels Pedersen, Gerald Yeckley, James Caves, Carl Conklin, Spencer Westfall, Richard Bement, Francis (Skip) Filiatreau-President, Robert Vingee, , Glenn Zaso

Thank you to everyone for your support of our organization.

Monetary donations are always appreciated as they make it possible for the PCHS to continue to operate as a historical society and museum. Volunteers are invaluable - the care and maintenance of our buildings and gardens is endless - thanks to all who make the Howe House and its grounds something we are proud to share with visitors. If your name has been omitted from one of the lists below please let us know!

Welcome New Members!

Shiela Burnett Hall
Lubbock, Texas

Lauri Clark
Phelps, NY
Gift membership from Shiela Hall

Time and Talent

Country Lawyer Gallery of the Arts

Ron and Rosa Grube
Gary Jones
Dennis King
Michael Nash
Janet Walpole
Mart VanKirk

Collections Committee

Sarah Landschoot
Barry Lee

Finance Committee

Tom Cheney
Cheryl Chester
Len Kataskas
Sarah Landschoot

PCHS Gardening

Billee Altman
Dorothy Colvin

Miscellaneous

Dennis King
Dana Mark

Newsletter

Bonnie Dixon
Marcia Maslyn

Telling Their Stories

Wendy Gaylord- Interviewer
Roland Penta Bob Spink

Transcribing the Past

Collette Barnard
Rayne Hammond - Benz
Cathy Scott

Memorial Donations

Tom and John Willson
In memory of
Joe Willson & Martha Willson Kelly

Membership Renewals

Henry Cyphert
Bonnie Dixon
Mary Ann Gier
Laura Howe Hintz
Marlene Jones
Body Kneads
Barry Lee
Stanley and Helen Maines
Leo Meath
Melvin & Marjorie Norsen
Bruce Ruthven
Larry Stivers
Diane Williams
Tom Willson

Monetary Donations

CLO Interior Painting
Marilyn DeRuyter
Ron and Rosa Grube

Paul and Jeanne Salisbury

Exxon Mobil Volunteer Program Grant
Volunteer Doris Spink

Picture framing
Diane Goodman

Item Donation

Ginny Bourke
Books Canner Cooker
Stereoscope w/photo cards

Carol Bunce
Charles Haers WWII Army uniform

Marilyn DeRuyter & Jane Pedersen
Ferns for Howe House

Midlakes Middle/High School
2023 Yearbooks

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: _____

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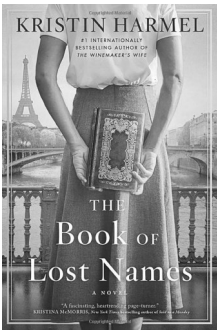
_____ In memory of (Optional): _____

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_____ Allocate funds to (Optional): _____

The Book of Lost Names by Kristin Harmel
Inspired by a true story from World War II

Book review by Marcia Maslyn



We start in 2005, Eva our story teller is working in a library in Florida. She sees a news article about a book she hasn't seen in 65 years and thought lost forever. The story continues from there, transporting the reader from present to past a dual time line that is very easy to follow, pulling the story together.

Eva and her parents were Polish Jews living in Paris. The Germans had already taken over France, Eva's family felt the pressure and learned the fear of being of the Jewish faith. When Eva's father is taken, she finds a way to escape with her mother to a small town in France near the Swiss border. While looking into how to get help for her father, Eva learns of the French Resistance groups and all that they are doing to get others to freedom, especially those of the Jewish faith. With her artistic abilities, she had forged documents for her mother and herself to travel to this small village and she was asked for help to forge more papers for others.

Eva's mother just wanted to get her husband to safety and all three of them to Switzerland. When Eva learned

that many of the people being helped were children whose parents had been taken, she felt she must do all she can. Working with other forgers they created hundreds of new identities, but Eva thought "I want to keep a list of the children we are falsifying documents for. They belong to someone, and someone should remember." Thus being in a Catholic Church library, they used a centuries old book, devising a code of dots and marks put in the children's names and their new identities. As Eva and others worked constantly to send as many to safety as they could, the Germans were moving ever closer, When told to close up and run, the book had to be left behind, taken from the church at the end of WWII and thought lost forever.

The novel is filled with tension and intrigue, a story about family, friendship, sacrifice, duty, honor and betrayal. While the characters are imagined, they represent some real people and their courageous acts to save the lives of so many. If you like to read historical WWII fiction with good and very true history, I recommend it. I like that subject of all the children being taken care of and helped.

PHELPS COMMUNITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Peace, Love, Kraut!

Phelps Sauerkraut Weekend

August 3 - 6, 2023

Howe House Open Saturday 2pm - 4pm

