



Phelps Community Historical Society

October 2023 Volume 31 Issue 278



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

E-mail:
histsoc2@gmail.com

Website:
phelpsnhistory.com

Museum Hours:
Wednesday
Thursday
Friday
10 AM-4 PM

It is always interesting to hear from someone who has a connection to Phelps and the Howe House. We recently received a call from Dr. William Augustus Howe MacLean in Birmingham, Alabama. His mother was Lee Selden Howe MacLean, daughter of Dr. William Augustus Howe who built the addition in 1899 and brought his medical practice here. Unknown to him at the time, Dr. MacLean graduated in 1965 from the same medical school his grandfather did in 1888—Columbia Physicians & Surgeons Medical School. A box found in his garage contained books, ledgers, tools and personal papers that belonged to his grandfather and are now part of our collection.

This issue of the PCHS newsletter includes an article “The Life of Bob Nagel” by Loren Gifford (page 4) . We appreciate the time and effort of all who contributed to the piece. The photos and information will be added to the Nagel family history in our genealogy records.

Our annual wreath sale is underway. There are 40 wreaths available and in the past they have sold out quickly! If you would like to place an order please see page 5.

We greatly appreciate the ongoing financial support of our members and donors. The 2023 Annual Appeal letter has been mailed. If you did not receive one please let us know!

To the PCHS Board of Trustees, members, volunteers and everyone at the CLGA -

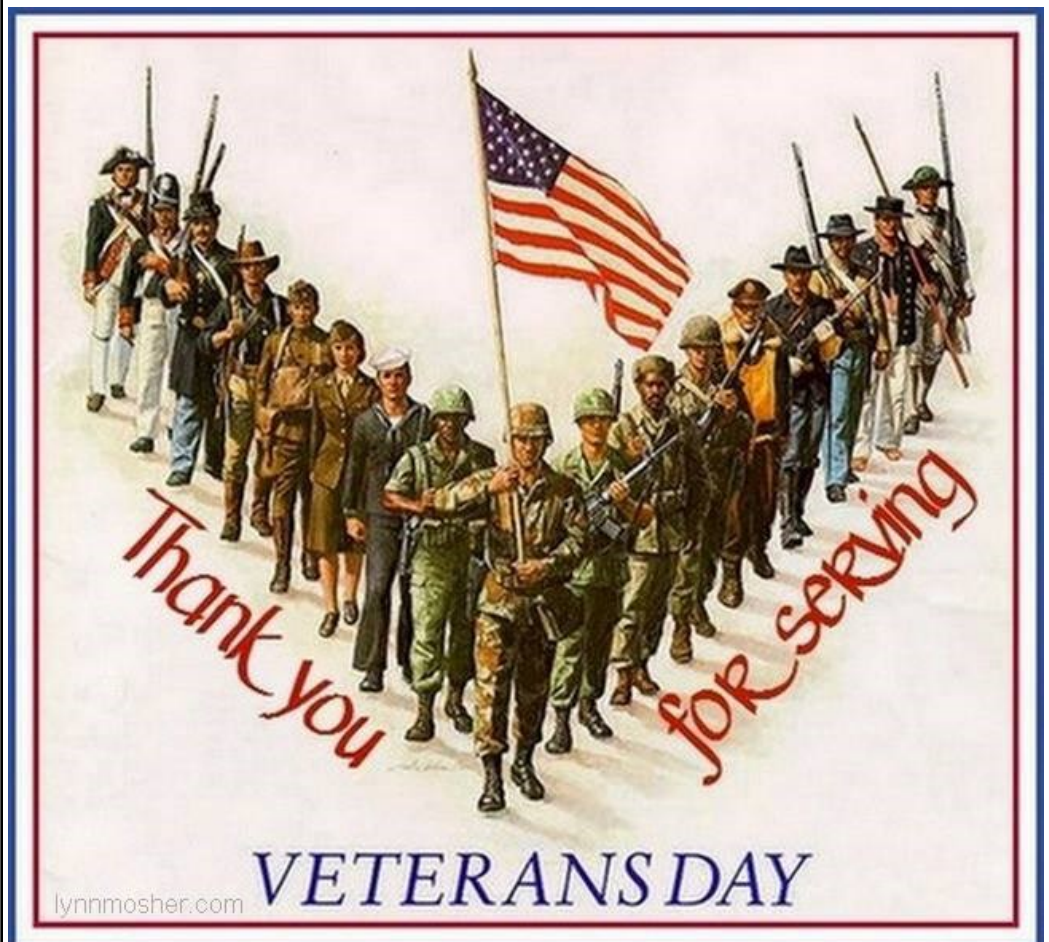


**Country Lawyer
Gallery of the Arts**
7 Church Street
Phelps, NY 14532

Director
Michael Nash
(585)-789-0017

Gallery Hours:
Thursday 5-7pm
Friday 3-7pm
Saturday noon-7pm
or by appointment

Happy Thanksgiving!
from Diane and Heather



Welcome New Members!

Rick Darrow - Victor, NY
Gift from Gary Tyman

Dr. William Augustus Howe MacLean
Birmingham, AL

Membership Renewals

June Avery
Robert & Sandra Bankert
John & Virginia Bourke
Brian & Carolyn Burke
Robert Hofer
Linda Homco
Sarah Landschoot Riegel
Kenny McLellan
Beth Newell
Dianne Prentice
Patricia Rittler
Eileen Ryan
Kathleen Quigley
Gary Tyman
Richard Verbridge
Shirley Wikiera
John & Helen Willson
Gary Yancey

Memorial Donations

John Harland
In memory of
*John & Hazel Harland,
Julia Harland Wells*

Donated Items

Judy Beechler

*Framed map of Phelps, serving dish and
mixing bowls for kitchen exhibit*

Dr. William A. H. MacLean

*Ledgers, medicine bottles, tools and books
owned by Dr. William A. Howe*

Barbara Smith

*Ontario County Abstract of Title includes
Last Will & Testament of John Q. Howe*

Judith VanKirk

*Two paintings by Alice W. Salisbury
Summer Rain Upon the Pond and
Sycamore Tree on DeRuyter Farm*

Monetary Donations

PCS Alumni Association
Robert & Sandy Bankert
Rebecca Bennett
Scott & Melissa Cannan
David & Audrey Cornwall
Barbara Rickard

Nancy Bellina
Chuck Parker and matching donation
from Johnson & Johnson
Linda VanArtsdalen
for the Country Lawyer Gallery of the Arts

Time and Talent

Audit Committee

Len Kataskas Sarah Landschoot Riegel

Driveway Extension

Ron Grube Patrick O'Neil
Terry Featherly & Town of Phelps Crew

Eagle Scout Shed Project

Boy Scout Troop 46
Bill Cannan
Scott, Melissa and Matt Cannan
Scott Fulmer
David Gruschow
Gary Jones Dennis King
Cliff & Heather Olander
Patrick O'Neill
Michelle Snadeker
Mart VanKirk

Gardens at PCHS

Billee Altman Nancy Turner

Interviews

Wendy Gaylord Lillian Horst
Carl and Boni Overslaugh

Newsletter

Barb Brennessel

Publicity Committee

Barry Lee Samantha Parish

Screen Door Restoration

Dennis King

Secretarial

Barb Gillespie

Transfer Station, Storm Windows

Dana Mark

Time and Talent
 The Country Lawyer
 Gallery of the Arts



Evie Dubois
 Kimberly Ferguson
 Ron, Rosa & Robin Grube
 Gary Jones
 Dennis King
 Lucia Marshall
 Michael Nash
 Cathy Roe
 Kim Sutter
 Sherry Ann Todd
 Mart VanKirk
 Janet Walpole

Thank you for your time and effort!

Excerpt from Director's Report by Michael Nash

When you visit the gallery, you can feel the energy throughout our shows coming from the distinct mix of art created by those who have been at it for a long time and art from those who might even be showing for the first time. Personally, I like to walk through our exhibits when we are not busy and just soak it all in. It's energizing, inspiring, humbling and satisfying all at once. A fine example of this is shown in our current exhibits - "Walk" and "Plein Air with a Twist". Come in and see what I mean!



Back garden entrance of the Country Lawyer Gallery of the Arts

PCHS Business Members
Thank you
for your support!

BODY KNEADS
WELLNESS SPA
 116 Main Street
 Phelps, NY 14532
 315-246-9022

DARLING'S TREE FARM
 2051 County Rd. 23
 Clifton Springs, NY 14432
 315-548-3419
 Darlingstreefarm.com

DEBOOVER
FAMILY FARMS, LLC
 1382 County Road 23
 Phelps, NY 14532
 315-548-3446

DENISI FLOORING

Vince, Nancy and Jeremy Denisi
 21 Kendall St. Clifton Springs, NY 14432
 315-462-6600
 denisiflooring@gmail.com

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1431 Route 5&20
 Geneva, NY 14456
 315-945-0470
 frank@framingbyfrank.com

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Ontario & Trumansburg Telephone Company
 75 Main St. Phelps, NY 14532
 866-353-7209
 Customerservice@ottctel.com

PHELPS HOMETOWN PHARMACY

110 Main St.
 Phelps, NY
 315-548-9454

The Life of Bob Nagel by Loren Gifford

Bob Nagel grew up in Phelps and graduated from PCS in 1952. He was the son of the school principal, Grove Nagel and Crissie Nagel the HS English teacher. Bob was the salutatorian of his class and participated in many activities such as band and drama, and especially sports including the baseball, basketball and football teams. He was by all accounts a friendly regular guy known for his politeness and exemplary behavior. I once heard Jack Loveless (former area school superintendent) say that Bob Nagel was the brightest student he had ever met. Bob went on to the University of Rochester where he was on the football team and in Air Force ROTC. He graduated in 1956 with a degree in Mechanical Engineering and an Air Force officer's commission. He was assigned to Edwards Air Force Base in southern California to work on the X-Plane program. This was where the famous X-1 plane had been tested & developed and where Chuck Yeager was the first person to fly faster than the speed of sound. (see The Right Stuff movie from 1983, or read the book by Tom Wolfe in 1979).

Bob was an outdoors guy and got to know his future wife, Ingeburg (Inge) while skiing in the mountains. She was a student at UCLA from Germany. After completing his military service, in 1960 Bob stayed on at Edwards as a civilian employee for the Air Force. He was the Lead Test Engineer for the engine for the X-15. The X-15 was a huge advance in aircraft design. The new Reaction Motors (Thiokol) XLR-99 rocket engine would eventually send the X-15 faster than any other aircraft on record and high above the atmosphere into the blackness of space where small rocket thrusters had to be developed to steer it. In the first test of much delayed new engine at Edwards on June 8, 1960, the X-15 was tied down to the ground on a test stand, and the pilot, Scott Crossfield operated the rocket engine from the cockpit. A faulty cockpit gauge did not reveal a damaged valve which caused a huge explosion. This destroyed most of the airplane. Crossfield surprisingly survived in the heat shielded cockpit. He narrates a short video of the event (on YouTube) where you can see the test crew scurry into a nearby bunker just before the blast. Inge says that last person in the door was probably Bob.



Bob and Ingeburg were married in 1962 and daughter Kirsten was born in 1963. Two years into their marriage Bob started feeling ill and was diagnosed with a benign but growing tumor in the center of his brain. This was known to probably be a fatal condition. A subsequent operation put him into a long coma from which he never recovered. Bob died in 1967 leaving his wife and very young daughter. Inge went back to college and became a teacher of history and geography. Kirsten grew up and graduated in 1988 from Cal Poly, Pomona with a B.S. in Aerospace Engineering. She now has an important job with NASA at the Ames Research Center in Silicon Valley.

Even though he only lived to the age of 33, Bob Nagel of Phelps, NY was able to make a significant contribution to our country's rapid progress into space. Every supersonic airplane flying today uses innovations from the X-15 project. Many of the X-15 pilots Bob worked with later became some of the first astronauts.



Many thanks to Ingeburg Nagel and Kirsten Nagel who provided most of the information and photos.

Thanks also to Class of '52 classmates, Jean Lundgard McDonald and Mary Rathbun Peake who shared their memories of Bob.

The Life of Bob Nagel (continued from page 4) About the X-15

The airplane was 50 feet long with a wingspan of just 22 feet. To save fuel it was launched at 45,000 feet from a B-52 "mother-ship". From launch it went as high as 354,000 ft. altitude or flew as fast as 4520 mph. or Mach 6.7. Those records were set in 1963 and not surpassed for over 40 years. Some of the X-15 pilots like Neil Armstrong later became famous,

A note about NASA (formerly NACA before 1958): The X-15 team was composed of U. S. government staff (NASA), U.S. military (Air Force enlisted and civilian), and private sector (North American Aviation, the X-15 manufacturer). This blended team structure was still the norm in NASA when I worked there in the 1990s. – Loren Gifford.

Video available on YouTube: "Scott Crossfield's X-15 Emergency" by Michael Lemmick, 2006. Narrated by Scott Crossfield, video duration 3 minutes and 56 seconds.

Phelps Community Historical Society **ANNUAL HOLIDAY WREATH SALE**

Howe House Museum
66 Main Street



Prepaid orders only - 40 WREATHS AVAILABLE

To place an order stop in or call the PCHS office
315-548-4940 before **November 17**
Pay by cash, check (payable to PCHS) or credit card

**Wreaths may be ordered to place on a local gravesite or
delivered to a home within the Village of Phelps**

Pricing

\$30 - Wreath with bow
red white silver blue

\$35 - Wreath fully decorated
(bow w/choice of pine cones or
ornaments)

**Pick up at
the Howe House
Carriage House**
Friday December 1
10AM-4PM
or
Saturday December 2
10AM-2PM

The Lost Art of Letter Writing... The cell phone and email have made it possible to instantly connect with people almost anywhere in the world, but calls are deleted and emails trashed. Found in our files the letter below, written 40 years ago in 1983, reminds us of the value of a personal letter that can be kept. Alfred and Edith Adams took the time to write their story, giving us not only a family history, but a look into life in the past. Diane Goodman

To: All our friends and loved ones.

From: Alfred and Edith Adams

We wish to express our sincere thanks for all you did to make Sunday November 13th one of the nicest days of our lives and one we will remember as long as we live. Our children were told not to have a party for us but they don't mind as well as they had to 20 years ago. We thank you for the beautiful cards, flowers, presents, and all the \$20 bills but mostly for taking the time to come and help us celebrate. We have been thinking of our life together and would like to share some of the memories with you.

We went together through most of our high school days and recall setting Bert and Ida up for a blind date because we needed a chauffeur to take us out. We had so many good times together and still do. We also remember how his one arm driving put us in the ditch one snowy night and we had to walk for the horses to pull the car out.

We graduated from Phelps High School, Edith in 1941 and Alfred in 1942. We were married in the Phelps Presbyterian Church, that we both attended, on November 12, 1943. It wasn't a big wedding, just our parents and our attendants Velma Adams, Alfred's sister and Kenneth Willson, Bert's brother. We suffered a great loss soon afterward when Kenneth was killed in a tragic truck-train accident on the Carter Road crossing in Geneva.

Edith's mother and sister Laura had a dinner for us after the wedding and we made it all the way to Cayuga Lake that first night. The next day we drove to Owego and stayed with a cousin of Edith's. On Monday we drove to Liberty, Pennsylvania to see some other cousins of Edith's. It was nice to have some of these folks come help us celebrate.

On returning home we needed a place to live and started looking for a place to rent. We had about 10 cents, a player piano and a \$90 Plymouth Coupe, black with red wheels and a rumble seat.

Mr. Taney, who was always very good to us, had charge of renting the C.L. Crothers farms. He told us we could have the north house rent free until April 1st if we would clean it up. We remember a large pile of ashes left on the living room floor by the last tenants.

We were able to rent a few acres on this farm the next year and with the help of our parents were started in farming.

Our first son Leland Kenneth was born on our first wedding anniversary. The others Lloyd Barry, Neil Lester and Marvin Keith followed by the girls Kathleen Ellen and Marjie Frances all came along in the next eighteen years. Alfred's aunt was a nurse at Clifton Springs and helped with all our children. She was as happy as we were when the girls blessed our happy home. This makes our oldest 39 and our baby 21.

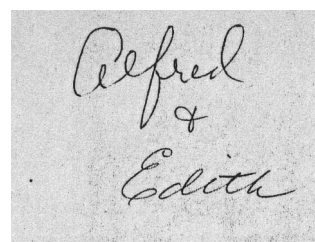
Lee and his wife Carol have 3 boys, Todd, Torey and Tad. Llyod and his wife Sue, who live in Massachusetts, have one boy Ross. This makes us 4 grandsons.

We moved once from the North Crothers farm to the South one, about a half a mile up the road. We purchased both these farms and remember how happy we were when the last mortgage payment was made. The interest rate in those days was 5 1/2 percent and we thought it was pretty high.

The operation has grown to include the two Taney farms on the East side of the road and Alfred's home farm, after his father retired. We were fortunate to be able to farm with Alfred's father and were fortunate to have our own kids farming with us now. We now have about 150 milk cows and another 50 younger animals.

We recall many things that happened to make our lives together happy. Western Square Dancing has become an important part of our happiness. We have gained so many friends we would never know without it.

Thanks for listening and thanks for
all you did for our 40th anniversary.

A photograph of a handwritten signature in cursive script. The signature reads "Alfred & Edith". The word "Alfred" is on the top line, followed by a small ampersand "&" on the second line, and "Edith" on the third line. The ink is dark and the background is a light, textured surface.

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): _____

From our Inbox...



Dear Diane,

In the latest issue of the PCHS news message there is reference to the Kraut Festival and the queens. This brought back some great memories of the events and how it all came about which I would like to share.

I was elected the president of the Phelps Chamber of Commerce. At the time I said we needed to do something to promote Phelps. We are famous for sauerkraut so let's promote our claim to fame as being the largest producer of kraut in the world. "Let's have a Kraut Festival". After talking to several business leaders it was decided to proceed with that idea. The whole idea was to promote Phelps and get the community working together on a project to enhance the community spirit.

We worked very hard for several months planning, reaching out for support which was amazing and getting organizations and people involved. Even Silver Floss Kraut Factory got involved using their connections for advertising. We even had an ad in a German newspaper.

The first Saturday in August came right on schedule. We honestly had no idea what would happen but the parade started, we looked down Main St which was lined with people from downtown to Eagle St. I honestly had tears in my eyes to see the way the town embraced this Festival. It was a very successful 1st year. I have many names going through my head of the great Phelps folks that made this all happen.

I chaired the Festival for the first 5 years and then moved to Arizona but never in my wildest dreams did I think it would go on for over 56 years and be the longest running festival in New York. What also amazes me is how other events take place around the same time which enhances the very propose of the festival to promote community spirit.

Phelps is a great village with lots of wonderful people. It will always be my hometown. I just don't like shoveling snow anymore.

Yours truly
Ed Maslyn

PHELPS COMMUNITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

66 Main Street
Phelps, NY 14532

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