



Phelps Community Historical Society

September 2022 Volume 30 Issue 266



Happy Fall!



Howe House Museum

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Phelps, NY 14532
(315) 548-4940

E-mail:

histsoc2@gmail.com

Website:

phelpsnyhistory.com

Find us on Facebook

Museum Hours:

Wednesday, Thursday
and Friday
10am-4pm
or by appointment

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Diane Goodman

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Heather Olander

From the Director's Desk

Diane Goodman

If you questioned the caption for the Main Street Phelps, NY photo on the front page of the July PCHS newsletter, you were correct! The photo was from the 1960s, not the 1950s. The automobiles were the clue: thank you Scott Gifford and Dana Mark for being observant and bringing the error to my attention.

The 1924 Essex did not appear in the Sauerkraut Festival Parade this year because it was out for much-needed mechanical repairs. The automobile is now road-worthy, thanks to Dan Burns, and has returned to the Carriage House where it is included in tours.

Visitors to the Howe House Museum this past month included a young man from Israel who is moving to Phelps with his family. Larry Howe, great grandson of John Q. Howe, had a reunion with six members of his family—see next month's newsletter for photos and more. We were especially pleased to have a visit from Don Tiffany's granddaughter Valerie who lives in Arizona and joined the PCHS while she was here. Homeowners new to the Village of Phelps and living in older homes, are taking an interest in the history of their houses. Our resources are usually able to provide them with some information.

A fellow PCHS member is working with Kirsten Nagel, daughter of Bob Nagel, on the beginning of a short story about her father. A 1952 Phelps Central School graduate, Bob's career included the United States Air Force and contracting work with NASA. He died in 1967. If there are any members of the PCS Class of 1952 who remember Bob Nagel and would like to contribute to his story please contact our office by email histsoc2@gmail.com.

Plans for our annual wreath sale are underway. This has become a popular fundraiser for the PCHS and sells out quickly! Please see page 5 for more details.

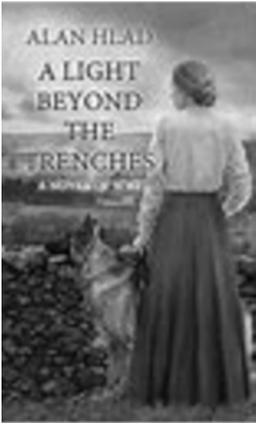
The maintenance of our buildings is ongoing. The carriage house brick repair is complete and the house brick pointing is almost done. The next project involves repairs to the exterior of the Howe House and the porch at the Country Lawyers Office. Painting of both buildings is scheduled to be done before the snow flies!

The Phelps Community Historical Society 2022 Annual Appeal for operations funding is being mailed in mid-October. Please take a moment to read the letter and consider what you may be able to contribute to our mission of collecting and telling the stories of Phelps. Every donation, no matter the amount, is greatly appreciated!

Snowbirds - next newsletter will be mailed October 28. If your schedule has changed since last year, or you are not sure what we have on record, please notify our office.

A Light Beyond The Trenches A novel by Alan Hlad

Book review by Marcia Maslyn



A new book that looked interesting to me because it has to do with World War I. In reading the cover, I learned the story also had dogs as helpers, so I just had to borrow it from the library. Marcia

By spring of 1916 the war had been going on for several months, with men doing the fighting and women doing all they could to help. Anna Zeller is working as a nurse in a hospital which is overcrowded with all the injured and sick coming in from the trenches. She witnesses a rare spark of optimism as a German Shepherd guides a battle-blinded soldier over a garden path. Dr. Stalling, the Director of the Red Cross Ambulance Dogs Association, thought he could train dogs as companions for sightless veterans.

Anna, not the most skilled nurse, convinced Dr. Stalling to let her work at the guide dog training school. She meets the trainer, who is not excited about having a woman training, but tells her she can if she gets another volunteer and is willing to house a veteran and his dog while training at the school. Plus, her pay would be less than what she is earning at the hospital.

Nia is an ambulance dog who is injured and needs care. The veterinarian wants to put her down, but Anna said they will need all the dogs possible, so she convinces him that she can make Nia well. Nia suffers from trench foot, a condition that many of the soldiers Anna cared for in the hospital had, so she knows the type of care Nia requires.

Max is a talented pianist who is blinded, and feels the war ended his dreams to be a composer. His lungs and hearing are damaged, and he is struggling to do everyday tasks. He is summoned to train for eight weeks at the new guide dog school, and not at all hopeful he will be able to help.

Bruno, a soldier Anna met in the hospital while he recovered from his injuries, is still corresponding with Anna, although their letters sometime take forever to reach each other. He battles with his own feelings of what he is expected to do during this war, and how his family is involved with making military armaments.

Author Alan Hlad makes you feel like you are living at the time and looking at the Great War from the characters' points of view: the overrun hospitals full of broken bodies, soldiers having to fight and kill to survive, the horrendous conditions they endured in the trenches, plus the terrible "turnip" winter of 1916. He touches on religious bigotry, how women had few rights, and a community working together to improve their conditions. Finding a way to make life better for wounded soldiers is what captured my interest in this book.



Round jug schoolhouse

#20 Dimock District

The original school building was round and built of cobblestone. It was known as the round jug schoolhouse. Due to a fire, the building was torn down and a two-story wooden structure was erected in the same location. It is now a private home on McIvor Road.



District #20
After the fire

In Memoriam

Betty Bankert

May 20, 1927-August 23, 2022



#21 Coxsackie District.

The brick schoolhouse was converted to a dwelling. The building is located on White Road at the south end of Mott Road. This district was later renumbered District #10.

Memories of the Coxsackie School House Days 1932-1940 As Told by Geraldine Carroll

Gerry Carroll describes the daily routine at the one-room school and how difficult it must have been for the teacher who had students in grades 1-8. She remembers a special teacher, Geraldine (Judy) Pease Phelps, who taught in the district school house she attended from 1932-1940.

The teacher had many janitorial duties besides maintaining discipline and teaching all subjects to children ages 5/6 on up. There was no kindergarten, so some students started school at the age of 5 and some skipped a grade if they were doing well.

As you entered the school, the boys' toilet was on one side and the girls' toilet on the other (similar to an outhouse). Then you would walk into the main classroom.

There was no school nurse to call upon, so it was the teacher's responsibility to take care of any emergencies that might come along. A student with epilepsy attended Coxsackie school during this time and Judy provided care when seizures would occur. She designated an older student to ride a bicycle, which was provided, and go to get the student's father when needed.

Geraldine remembers all the things that Judy Phelps did to make school more fun. She made a little library out of orange crates in the back of the school room. At Christmas time, she made curtains out of sheets for plays or recitations. Chores also had to be done. Judy appointed two children every day to go for water. There was no running water, so a couple of students would be assigned to go up the road to fetch water from the Mott Farm. Coal was provided by students' fathers and Judy maintained the fire in a pot belly stove during the day.

She encouraged her students to bring potatoes to bake on top of the stove in the winter time.

Recess was a time to play, and the children knew when it was time when Judy rang the school bell. Students were allowed to go outside and play hide and seek or to play ball. "Annie-I-Over" was also popular. Players were divided into two teams, one on each side of the school house. They would then take turns yelling "Annie-I-Over" and would throw the ball over the roof. If the other team caught it, they would run around the school house and try to tag the members of the "throwing team". If you got tagged, you were then on the other team. The object was to get everyone on your team.



June 16, 1939

Left to right

1st Row: Carol Fridley, Arloa Pollot, William Scherbbyn, Peter Tillman, Carl Backus, ? Anstee

2nd Row: Jim Pollot, Charles Tillman, ? Anstee, ? Anstee, Herbert Pollot, Richard Tillman, Gerald Goodman, Shirley Eighmey, Unknown.

Third Row: Geraldine Pease Phelps (Teacher), Bernice Backus, George Cooper, Geraldine Scherbbyn

Phelps Central School Reunion

The second reunion of Phelps Central School Alumni was held Thursday, August 4 at Club 86 in Geneva with 140 in attendance .

Robert Quigley, reunion committee chairperson, reports that a good time was had by all. Memories were shared and the food was good!



Robert Quigley PCS Class of 1968 & his sister Kathleen Quigley PCS Class of 1966



2022 Croquet Club

Playing field at the
American Legion
Post #457

Champion
Betty Raes

President
Billee Altman

Vice President:
Donna Nellis

Secretary/Treasurer:
Pam Whyte

Left to Right Seated: Irene Copper, Barb Wilson

First Row: Billee Altman, Pat Hart, Marge Norsen, Bonnie Dixon

Second Row: Cathy Thomas, Nancy Denisi, **Pam Whyte**, Dora Burns, Laura Tierson

Third Row: Terry Allen, **Betty Raes**, Sally Verno, Sue Dattbyn, Jo Gifford

Forth Row: Barb Brennessel, Sandy Snyder, Audrey Phelps, Nancy Turner, Barb Kesel

Back Row: **Donna Nellis**, Carol Conklin, Pat Adams, Betty Lannon, Doreen Hartranft, Marlene Treese

Absent: Cathy Young, Cindy Atkinson, Lori Sielawa, Lisa Smolinski





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

Howe House Museum
66 Main Street, Phelps, NY

Prepaid orders only - 40 wreaths available

To place an order stop in or call the PCHS office
(315-548-4940) before **November 18**

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

\$25 - Wreath w/bow (choose one)

red white silver blue

\$30 - Wreath fully decorated

**(bow w/choice of pine cones
or ornaments)**

Pick Up at the

Howe House

Carriage House

Friday December 2

10a.m. - 4p.m.

or

Saturday December 3

10 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Phelps—letters and the law

by Allan A. Kuusisto

This article was published in the newspaper column Kuusisto's Komments April 21, 1983.
Dr. Allan Kussisto was president of Hobart and William Smith Colleges from 1970-1982.

In this day of computers and word processors, it is interesting to reflect that it was only around the turn of the century that the typewriter arrived on the scene. In "County Lawyer" Bellamy Partridge describes the coming of this modern contraption to his father's office, the first typewriter in Phelps, and if Partridge is correct, also the first in the county.

It was a Hall typewriter and apparently it did not look much like the typewriters of later generations. The keyboard was a plate of metal about three inches by four. It was full of holes, about the diameter of a straw, with a letter of the alphabet at the bottom of each.

It was operated by taking a wooden arm between the thumb and forefinger and pushing it down into the hole in which the desired letter appeared. The machine would produce the image of the letter on a sheet of paper below the keyboard. Not a speedy proposition, the machine did not produce a page copy as fast as clerks writing by hand, but it did produce three copies at once. This represented some gain.

For the six children in the Partridge family, the arrival of the typewriter promised relief from the menial task of writing legal papers for Father. Almost every evening, the country lawyer had his children copying papers for him and his clients. This was exasperating work but necessary under the circumstances. Probably the optimal size of a lawyer's family correlated with the magnitude of his practice and the amount of paper work it engendered.

The Hall typewriter was a curiosity. Lawyers and bankers from Canandaigua and Geneva drove to Phelps to see it in operation. Partridge notes that S.H Verplanck, the Geneva banker, decided that the machine would not be practical for his business. He felt that bank letters and papers might be too easily tampered with if reduced to print.

The Hall typewriter gave way to a Hammond machine which was considerably bigger and noisier. Its keyboard was built around a semicircle with some of the letters almost at arms length distance. The type was on a central sleeve which spun around while the machine was in operation. It was a speedier machine and could make five copies. This might not have been high technology but it represented significant progress.

Soon thereafter came the Smith typewriter—The Smith Premier—which was the first to look like the typewriters we recognize today. It had a universal keyboard, one for capital letters and one for lower case. And it was inked by ribbon.

Partridge tells the amusing story of how his father tried to change the ribbon for the first time and ultimately had to give up in sheer frustration and exasperation. This mood was not particularly lightened by the fact that a regular office woman, who did not approve of the new machines, took over the task and quickly and efficiently changed ribbons.

At the time lawyers did not usually employ much help. In Partridge's case, the office worker was mostly a copier and receptionist. Lawyers relied on constables to run errands, to get papers served, and summons issued. The constable rounded up witnesses and acted as messenger during a trial. Payment of the

constable was by a fee system. The term of office was two years. Although it produced scant income, the position was one of the most sought after in every election. It provided the incumbent a certain status in society and importance that was not otherwise easy to attain.

With A Little Muscle

Partridge describes some of the scores of Phelps' constables during his father's time. There was Red Cloud, nearly seven feet tall, who once arrested 20 men at once after a barroom squabble and put them in the tiny lockup overnight. The resulting confusion probably set back the cause of law and order in the community for some time.

Then there was Philo B. Navis who apprehended and arrested three armed safecrackers in the Cedar Swamp area along the New York Central tracks on the road to Newark. He accomplished this task with only a pair of handcuffs as a weapon, brandishing them to maximal effect. It didn't hurt to have the robber, who refused to lay down his firearm at Philo's command, fail to have his pistol fire.

Finally, there was Si Peckham, the only constable who became County Sheriff. Peckham was pretty much of a nonentity to others but he took himself seriously and the authority of his office gave him somewhat of a magnified impression of himself.

Peckham had a problem though; he couldn't get his neighbor Tully to give him the respect he thought he deserved. They were enemies constantly trying to outdo one another.

This game of one-upmanship reached a crisis one day in a horse race in town. Any attempt on the part of either to pass the other would stimulate a furious effort to stay ahead. Finally, the Sheriff's horse collapsed and died.

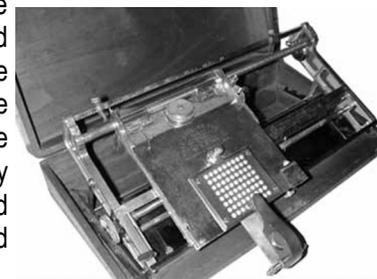
A few days later Tully met the Sheriff in the post office and gloated over the outcome of the race. The Sheriff grabbed Tully's hand, shut down on it like a vise and squeezed it so hard that Tully could hear bones crushing. It almost knocked Tully out, reeling from the pain, but he rose to the occasion. He grabbed onto Peckham's whiskers and pulled so hard that he began to draw the hairs out by their roots.

There they were in a stalemate of agonizing pain with neither willing to withdraw. Finally, the postmaster and others intervened and the mighty confrontation ended.

Partridge doesn't tell his readers whether Peckham's political career was affected by his feud with Tully. It took some time for the badly mangled whiskers to grow in again.

Hall Typewriter

Excellently built and designed, the Hall was the first relatively cheap alternative for the expensive keyboard typewriters that were on the market in 1881, notably the Sholes and Glidden and the Caligraph. It was a very successful design that would stay in production until the end of the century.



Welcome New Members!

Violet Easton-Woodinville, WA
Valerie Galante-Gilbert, AZ
David Johnson-Phelps, NY
Joseph & Kathryn Scibona-Phelps, NY

Memorial Donation

Marty & Maggie Weigel
In memory of
Florence Peck

Membership Renewals

Janice Blackman
Mary Ann Gier
Marcia Maslyn
Jim Maslyn
Kenny McLellan
Beth Newell
Maureen Quigley
Rose Smith
Nancy Stark

Time and Talent

Billee Altman-Gardening
Barb Brennessel-Newsletter
Bonnie Dixon-Newsletter
Dorothy Colvin-Gardening
Barb Gillespie-Scrapbooking, Secretarial
Mart VanKirk-PHSAA Host

Personnel Committee

Tom Cheney Ron Grube
Jane Pedersen Cathy Scott
Mart VanKirk



Monetary Donations

Phelps Central School Alumni

Item Donations

Business Development and Tourism Council
Sauerkraut Festival T-shirts
and cabbage picker

Special Thank You

1924 Essex Repairs

Dan Burns—Mechanic
Gary Jones –Coordinator
John Salisbury—Funding

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 phelpsnhistory.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): _____

PHELPS COMMUNITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

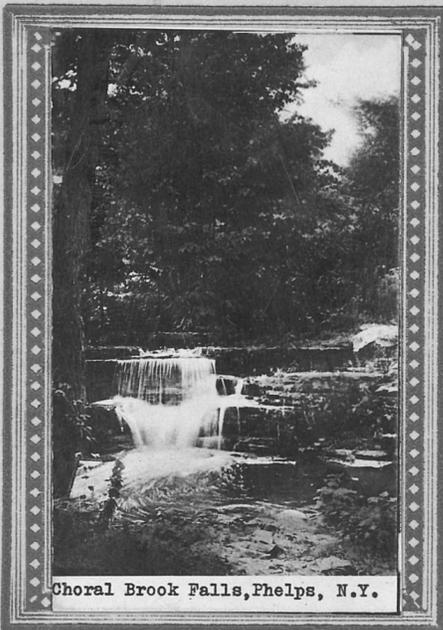
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1913



Choral Brook Falls, Phelps, N.Y.

I've roamed this old
globe, for many a
year,
I've been from sea
to sea,
But of all the towns
I've visited,
This is the place for
me.