

Avon Preservation & Historical Society

Newsletter

VOLUME 20, No. 2

www.avonhistorical.org

SPRING 2008

Annual Meeting Report

By Jean Batzing

The AP&HS Annual Meeting was held at the Avon Village Hall, Sunday afternoon, January 27. Forty two people attended participating in a new format. Refreshments were served first at which time they could renew Memberships, peruse AP&HS sale items and chat with one another. At 2PM Bruce Burritt presented a very colorful and interesting "Tanzania Safari." Bruce had been on the Safari with Bob French who was ill and could not make the presentation. The business meeting was held at 3PM. Agenda included the adoption of the Secretary's Minutes for the 2007 Annual Meeting, the 2007 President's Report (see page 5) and the voting in of members for the Board of Trustees, term expiring 12/31/10; Richard Burke, Thomas Ippolito, Mary Liz Stanton, John DuBois, J. Michael Rink, and Joan Reid. Filling in for one year terms are Mary Ann Margiotta and Beverly Dziekonski. The new By-Laws, Treasurer's Report and other information was also available.

New 2008 Officers:

Elected at the February 4, 2008 meeting were Richard Burke, President; Robert Westfall, Vice President; Treasurer, Lori Gunther and Joan Reid, Secretary.

2008 Programs

By Joan Reid

Free Lecture on March 9th at 2pm at the Avon Village Hall. Lenora Brown talking about William Pryor Letchworth.

Also... look for *Rails to Trails* in April.

The AP&HS is as its title indicates -
to Preserve Avon's History.

The Board of Directors would like to hear your thoughts and suggestions. You can do this by writing
Membership Chairman AP&HS,
27 Genesee St. Avon, NY 14414



*From the T & C Hardware to the Livingston Hotel:
Genesee St. Avon c. 1950*

PAST NEWS EVENTS

Exactly One Hundred Years Ago - What Made the Journal kept by Will Leighton In 1908

- April 13 - Henry Chase died this evening.
- 15 - The Sanitarium was sold at foreclosure sale this A.M. Mrs. Allen bid is in.
- May 22 - De Rue Bros. Minstrel Co. is in town.
- 30 - Some canoeists (sic) found a body in the river this afternoon.
- June 16 - Ken McVean left for Alaska.
- 18 - They are constructing a macadam road between Avon and Mt. Morris - Mr. Weed and Frank Kellogg went to Rochester and brought back Frank's new Stoddard-Dayton touring car.
- 20 - They are laying the foundation for a new building down at Ishams (J. D. Pasqualie grocery when I was young- gone now) (sic).
- 25 - Alumni Banquet held in new school.

Correction from last issue; *Avon's Library* is the Avon Free Library and the editor (of all people) is deeply chagrined to having called it incorrectly. (Sorry, Mother)

North Avon Railroad Stops

By Carolyn Swanton



*“Main Street” West Rush (inset the old Post Office)
Photos by Delos H. Wray Sr.*

“Golah”

Before cars were parked in most people’s driveways, the popular mode of public transportation was railroad. “Autos” were not reliable at first, and trains offered comfortable and dependable travel. While that still may be true, most people want their own vehicle once they have reached their destination. We have grown accustomed to our conveniences. At the turn of the last century, however, the Erie Railroad provided Avon with many stops to accommodate daily traveling to and from Rochester. Avon was an important center for the railroads.

The first road south of West Rush on the East River Road is Golah Road, heading west towards the railroad tracks to what was once Stull Family farm lands. It was there that Avon’s electrical power source was built. From this road south, even though technically in Monroe County, property has always been a part of Avon Township for telephone and mail services. Schools have been a matter of choice.

Several former tenant farms were built on Golah Road, but the bustle of train travel has long since subsided and the stop was removed. The train track lines run parallel to the Genesee River into Avon.

“Meadow-wood”

The next railroad stop coming south along the Erie Line was built for an estate of three houses designed by Claude Bragdon of Rochester for the Henry Wray Jr. Family. It was primarily used by the servants and visitors who came out from the city, and the Wray children who went to private schools in Rochester.



Family. It was primarily used by the servants and visitors who came out from the city, and the Wray children who went to private schools in Rochester.

The two main houses at Meadow-wood were a part of the Avon AFS House Tour in 1977 courtesy of the owners; Mr. & Mrs. Vincent Mayoue (main house) and the former owners, Mr. & Mrs. Walter Swanton (house on the right). Irene Wray Swanton was the great-granddaughter of the original owner of the property and is in the photo as a little girl in the summer photo of the station, looking towards the camera.)



The Erie Passenger Station at Meadow-wood in Winter (with Mr. & Mrs. William Pitkin (of Chase-Pitkin landscaping) and Mr. and Mrs. John Stull **and in upper right corner - in Summer** from left: Ernie Knopf, and members of the Wray family. Photos by Delos H. Wray Sr.

“Elm Place”

The Erie’s next stop was the 18th century style farmhouse known as Elm Place. “In 1764 William Markham, father of Colonel William Markham, early settler of Avon, was a member of the party sent by General Braddock from Oswego to Irondequoit Bay, then overland to Genesee Castle to effect the release of two white captives. In 1790 Col. William Markham came to Avon and built ‘Elm Place’ on the East River Road.” (From the Chronology of “Avon, Heart of the Genesee Country” by Marie C. Preston)

Elm Place was named for a very large elm tree. The Markham Elm’s branches spread over an entire acre of land. “In 1922, a reproduction of the original home was constructed on the exact site. The pioneer cabin is complete to the last detail.” (p 292 Rochester and Monroe County; a History and Guide) The log cabin was one of the first structures to be obtained in the formation of The Genesee Country Museum.

Living over 100 years, Miss Linda Dana Puffer, a graduate of Wellesley, bridged the gap between several generations and earned great admiration in this area. After college Miss Puffer (her mother was Susan Emma Markham) worked with Melvin Dewey, inventor of the Dewey Decimal Classification. (11/10/1969 Ruth B. Chamberlain “About the Town” Times-Union) She was a great patron of the arts working with the Herdle sisters to save the Memorial Art Gallery in lean years.

Besides the large dairy farm they lived on, the family also had major positions in various Rochester industries including the founding of the Pfaudler Co. which later became Sybron Corp. Pfaudler was engaged in many activities with their glass-lined steel tanks, one of their largest clients being Budweiser beer. The family was also active in the support of the arts and Avon and Livingston County Historical Society.

After her father, Charles C. Puffer, was lost in the Titanic disaster in 1912, she continued running the dairy where Markham and Puffer certified milk was produced. It was then in operation as a Black Angus Farm after the transfer to the Selden Family.

*Stopper from an old milk bottle
from M & P Dairy*



Miss Puffer was such a fan of live classical music, she tried in vain to get Strong Memorial Hospital to lend her an ambulance to take her to and from the Eastman Theater while she was hospitalized for pneumonia. She had promised she would come right back, but they didn't approve. Everyone who knew her had a story to tell about her courage and practicality.

On August 19, 1915 Elm Place was the setting for the annual meeting of the Livingston County Historical society presided over by Mr. Herman W. DeLong of Dansville. Those elected to office from Avon at that meeting were Miss Jane Brewster, Miss Anne Pierpont, Mr. & Mrs. James D. Carson, Mr. & Mrs. Herman A. Doer, Mr. & Mrs. Alexander Russell, Mr. Frank E. Hovey, Mr. & Mrs. James D. Sheldon. The Recording Secretary described Elm Place in the annual report as:

"In all the beautiful valley of the Genesee, there is no fairer spot, no place so appropriate, as Elm Place, in which to bring together an organization of historians. While the Livingston County Historical Society are collecting and writing the present history of Livingston County, yet their purpose is to gather more completely the earlier history of the valley-history that is hard

to obtain, because there were not the numerous opportunities of writing it in those history making days, as there is today. Perhaps never before in the history of the Livingston County Historical Society has a meeting been held at a place more closely connected with the early history of Livingston County, than that section of territory which surrounds Elm Place. It is historical ground. Underneath the spreading branches of the "Markham Elm" famed in prose and song, the Indian chiefs of seven nations of the Iroquois gathered to discuss "affairs of state" and as they decided, so the early history of the Genesee country went. Rich, indeed, in Indian lore, is the country around Elm Place, and one has only to turn the pages, back, back, back, to see the influence that Elm Place had upon the Western New York civilization and history."

(1916 Livingston County Historical Society Report)

President's Annual Report - 2007

By Jean Batzing

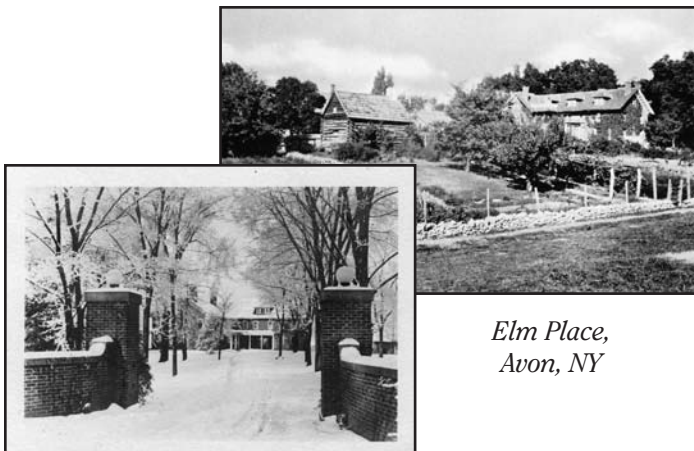
The Board of Trustees held the January Annual Meeting and nine monthly meeting in 2007. A severe snowstorm necessitated canceling the February 5th Meeting.

The AP&HS actively participated in community events. At the 11th Rotary Corn Festival the tent was set up on Genesee St. with a new book "Coming Home," and other sale items and artifacts on display. A committee promoted a "yes" vote through a variety of advertising media to "Save the Opera Block." Members set up a display at Avon Market Days. Following the May 28th Memorial Services in the Park, an Open House was held in the AP&HS facility in the basement of the present Town Hall. Sixty adults and children visited, most unaware of our being there. How important visibility is!

Three programs were done during the year: Carolyn Swanton gave a talk with slides on **Claude Bragdon in Livingston County, Stained Glass Windows** was a lecture/slide presentation by Valerie O'Hara and James Bartholomew had a display and talk on **Glass Bottles in Avon.**

Four Newsletters included topics as the Part Monument, the White Horse, Memberships and various committee activities.

Two other notes of interest: Another file has been added to the archives with the coming of Barilla to Avon; Trustees were among those attending the Open House in October. The AP&HS was also given a house from this



*Elm Place,
Avon, NY*

venture. Land is needed on which to locate it and this is being researched. Most towns in Livingston County have their own building from which to operate, giving them room to set up vintage displays, etc. This would be in addition to the space which will be provided in the Opera House when completed.

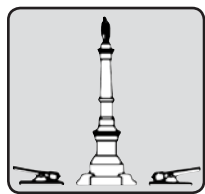
Avon lost two very prominent women in 2007, both having made valuable contributions to the AP&HS. Jean Weinrich served on the Board of Trustees specializing in accessioning artifacts. Jo Ann Streb created artworks from various scenes in Avon and donating them to the AP&HS. Their interest and help in the Society will always be remembered.

Committee reports for the year are on file and available on request. Meetings are held at 7PM the first Monday of each month (except July) and are open, visitors welcomed.

It was a successful year and I would like to thank all members of the Board of Trustees for their interest in Avon, the Society and doing things many times above and beyond the call of duty.

Bicentennial Reminder

Avon does not have an emblem or flag with personalized representation. From the Five Arch Bridge to the White Horse by way of our beautiful Circle Park, there are many choices. Either Cornplanter or Handsome Lake would also make appropriate symbols for our past. It might be something to think about during this special year.



Avon Preservation and Historical Society

Avon Town Hall • 27 Genesee Street
Avon, New York 14414

“Voices From the Past” - Jean Batzing

Fifty tapes of Oral History interviews have been made. Each individual has made a contribution to Avon through giving a history of what it was like to live in Avon during their time. Several have died and not only is their story interesting but also is now valuable history. The first tape was made in 1983. There have been other people from the past who added to Avon’s history before taping was done; such as Minnie Mehlenbacher, Dr. Timothy Hosmer, Sam Harmon, and Marie Preston. Several people from the “past” will be included in the 2008 publication done by the AP&HS with the Town Historian. Look for the booklet this summer.

Memberships continue to exceed 200. Thank you from California to New Hampshire and in between. How is your money used? The Treasurer has a monthly report that includes receipts and expenditures as rent, newsletter, postage, purchase of items for sale as collectibles and publications.

Moving: Restoration on the Opera Block will begin this Spring. The AP&HS has rented space in the basement of the former Ernie Wiard building on Genesee St. All objects in the Museum have been carefully accounted for in the Accession Book, packed and moved along with furniture, etc. that can’t be packed.

Cushing’s Gas Station on West Main Street (wonder how much to fill up?) Photo courtesy of Mrs. Vicki Rose.



Non-Profit Org.
US POSTAGE
PAID
Avon, NY 14414
Permit #7