



Binghamton Township Historical Society NEWSLETTER

Serving Past and Present Residents of the Town of Binghamton, NY
and its Neighboring Towns

Logo by Doug Webb

Vol. 10 No. 4

OCT—NOV—DEC 2013

The Binghamton Township Historical Society is dedicated to the preservation of the history of the region and its inhabitants. It meets four times each month, April through October. The 2014 schedule will be **first*** and **third Monday @ 1:00 pm**, and **second** and **fourth Tuesday @ 6:30 pm** each month. Our **business meeting** is the ***first Monday** of the month, and all others are **workshops**. All meetings are in the old Hawleyton Methodist Church's Fellowship Hall located at the junction of Hawleyton Road (an extension of Pennsylvania Avenue) and Saddlemire Road just after the Hawleyton Rd./Park Ave. junction. Visitors are always welcome. Annual dues are \$10.00 for individuals, \$15.00 for families (due by September, the start of our fiscal year) and includes the Newsletter. The Newsletter in color may be viewed free on www.townofbinghamton.com.

President's Corner

Esther Pettengill

A Heads Up – Notice that the header paragraph above has **changed**. **To make meetings more convenient for everyone, especially those who work** but would like to be more involved, we will meet four times each month, April through October. The **first** meeting of the month is our **business meeting**, and the **other three** are **workshops**. Everyone is welcome to attend **any** meeting.

Dues and the Newsletter – A big THANK YOU to all who have renewed your memberships (our annual year is September 1 to August 31). Quarterly newsletter expenses are earmarked for part of your BTHS, tax-deductible dues. The rest helps us pay the bills, including electricity, annual lease, and required liability insurance. That leaves little money for protecting our collections of books and paper archives, as well as unexpected expenditures (such as raccoon damage) together with paint and materials for building upkeep and repairs. We appreciate all your generous donations to help with these unbudgeted items. Every penny is used for the care and upkeep of the museum. Thankfully, unpaid volunteers do most of the labor.

The Cookbooks are all sold. A big thank you to everyone for making this project a success!

The Annual Meeting on September 21 was well attended. Town native Rev. James Cline, 4th gave an interesting presentation on the Civil War from the perspective of Ephraim Cline, a local ancestor who served. We enjoyed seeing Jim dressed in the uniform of a Civil War soldier. Maps he handed out helped us follow his narrative on Ephraim's extended military journey.



Following the sumptuous lunch, reports on some of BTHS accomplishments in 2013 included:

- the prestigious Citizens of the Year awarded to BTHS by Town of Binghamton;
- roof leak repaired (yes, the new roof!);
- excessive raccoon damage cleaned up by Rick Keiser after officers' start on it last season;
- repeated sweeping and cleaning of upstairs floors;
- temporary displays installed upstairs;
- tables, chairs, floor cleaned in Fellowship Hall;
- paper artifacts sorting continued;
- new acquisitions logged in;
- farms and businesses on two large maps located for finalizing and laminating for display;
- funds raised for nine new windows in the Fellowship Hall.*

Continued on Page 2.

President's Corner cont'd.

Whew! That is a long list for 3 determined officers with help from a few others. Just think what more we could do if we had even 4 more people who could help us once a month. (It makes me giddy to think of the possibilities!) *Editor's note: Go thru this paragraph again and think if there was some chore you might have been able to help with. When the Museum opens next Spring, will you consider lending a hand at some of the work meetings? (see p.1 for 2014 schedule)*

Recipes from September's Annual Meeting – A reminder to those fine cooks who brought a dish to pass to the meeting. Everything was delicious! We have received requests for your recipes and we plan to include at least one in each newsletter. Please remember to send yours to Esther Pettengill 3639 Saddlehire Rd. Binghamton, NY 13903.

***New Windows.** For now, we have all nine new windows installed—seven just a week before the annual meeting-- or on order. Thank you to the donors: Marie Buckley, Theresa & Bridget Buckley, Tim VanVorce & Laurie Harrison, Marie Pennington, Frances Hibbard, Phyllis Merriam & Gary Sternberg, Esther & Ed Pettengill, Eleanor Maxian Haines & family, and Carol Stankevich. A permanent plaque naming donors and their loved ones will be hung in Fellowship Hall.

Mannequins – Thanks to the efforts of Esther Griffin and Kathy Coleman Murphy, we now have 10 mannequins on which we can display the period clothing that is part of our Museum collection.

Looking ahead to next season, we plan to schedule **an activity or open house** of some kind each month, May through September. May and September are planned, but we are open to ideas for June, July and August. If there is something you would like to see happening in your Museum, let us know and we will try to accommodate.

Please see Page 8 for Society Officer and Staff contact information.

Shades of the Past

Eleanor Maxian Haines

From the BTHS Museum collection of oral histories.

Prior to his many years as a Town of Binghamton resident, Harry Sternberg's early school years were spent in Fuller Hollow school, District #15 on Powderhouse Road in Vestal. Harry and his brother, Walt, were school mates there along with Floyd, Francis and Fred Gardner. "I was four years old when they took me to school for the first time. There would only be three or four of us in the school. One year I was the only one. My sister was the teacher."

Stephie Dubrava Donalek, during her 1988 interview with sister Ann Dubrava Samson, spoke of her days at Grove School at the corner of Tannery (now Maxian) and Hawleyton Roads. "We'd hang our winter clothes in the front of the school when we came in. If they were wet, we'd hang them inside behind the pot belly stove which Mr. Shurtleff started every morning. Either the teacher or the bigger kids would put in wood when it was needed." Stephie remembered the students, many more than at Harry Sternberg's Fuller Hollow school. "Olympia, Harry and William Gage...there was Sam, Bob and Oliver Shurtleff, Marion and Vernon Coon, Viola Moses and Ethel Webb. All the Webbs on Hance Road and on Webb Road, Mark Dvorsky and Frank Maxian. We used to go outside and play ball or skip the rope, or run and hide, hide and seek or we'd be in the school playing tic tac toe on a board."

A few of us now in our ripe old years remember similar, one room school house days. But all that was to become history some forty years later when Binghamton Township's schools were merged into the centralized Susquehanna Valley District.



Fuller Hollow School
District #15 on
Powderhouse Road.

A Bit of History about “Grandma Gage”

Author Unknown



1860-1953

Mary Moses Lee Gage
at Christmas 1952

She was born Mary Moses to Mary and John Moses, a Civil War veteran. There is a story that he returned from the war unannounced, with oranges in his pockets. Oranges were a rare item at that time in Hawleyton, and the Moses’ had a pin cushion in the likeness of one. John entered the house without knocking and rolled an orange through a

doorway into the room where his wife was working. She thought the cat was playing with the pin-cushion. Then he rolled another!

Mary Moses (their daughter) married Aaron Lee and had four children—Orpha, Delbert A., Nellie, and Richard. Aaron died and Mary remarried Herbert Gage, a widower. His only daughter Carrie was the matriarch of the Hawleyton VanVorce clan—Esther, Herbert, Lowell, Don, Fred, Leon and Arthur. Together, Mary and Herbert Gage had one child, Monroe.

This article ends with “Thanks to Mom for her historical assistance.” Does anyone know the author or ‘Mom’?”

The End of an Era (But Still Smokin)

Bill Cline

We didn’t realize the significance of the cultural shift we were about to be part of. For the Class of 1967 third grade would be the end of small one or two-room schools. Brookside would await in 4th grade. A “central” district has little meaning to an eight year old. What I did notice was the long bus ride all the way to Park Terrace. Upon arrival we were confronted with an imposing brick building (now the town office building). Our class was assigned to what seemed to be a small auditorium with a stage on one end. The big surprise was the number of classmates we now had – over fifty! A second surprise was seeing two teachers sharing control. One was Mrs. Shapley, our kindergarten teacher from the fire station in Hawleyton. The other was Mrs. DeLamarter, who was a new face to us and seemed very old. These two veterans managed this large class very well and it was possibly my favorite year so far.

Two aspects stand out. One was our mass introduction to Laura Ingalls Wilder and her “Little House” series. Each day during rest period a segment of the books was read to us. Not only did I gain a love for Wilder’s books, but it ignited my love affair with literature in general. It was quite incredible, years later, for the T.V. series to rekindle that love

for this American treasure. A second “specialty of the house” was eraser tag. “It”, with a chalkboard eraser balanced on his or her head, would chase another kid (also balancing an eraser). You may not know this, but some heads are flatter on top than others. The “flat heads” could practically run around the room. “Roundheads”, like me, were lucky to go a few feet. It was special to chase each other with an audience of 50 looking on. It was also neat to have the ball field and some playground toys on the grounds. It was a great learning environment. Little did we realize the next year would change everything. From here on we would share buildings with two or three dozen rooms and teachers. Cafeterias and gyms would be available, and the student population would be measured in hundreds – including the Pierce Creek crowd.

Still, I treasure the first four years in small, make-shift settings. We expanded our friends list in later years, but our core friends tended to remain those we started with for a long time. Little league rivals were now going to be integrated with us. They had been our mortal enemies. As the last of the one-room breed, I am grateful for that start. Next time we will examine the impact of being the swing generation.

“Cheesing the Centennial”

Margaret Hadsell

...read the 1875 Broome Republican headline reporting that William Blanding Esq., of Hawleyton had submitted the plans that were chosen for the butter and cheese factory building at the 1876 Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia. The country's first exposition was held on a 285-acre tract in Fairmont Park from May 10 to November 10, 1876. There were five major buildings and approximately 250 smaller structures. Thirty-seven nations participated. Almost ten million people, 20% of the U.S. population, attended during the six-month period. Only one building survives today.

William Blanding, born in 1829, was the proprietor of a Hawleyton cheese factory, Vice President of the New York State Dairymen's Association, and postmaster. He was one of the “Blanding Brothers”, sons of E.M. and Eliza Blanding. The brothers owned a total of six large, well-kept factories in what was described as one of the finest dairy areas of the State...Broome, Chenango and Madison counties.

William wrote extensively on his innovative techniques in cheese making and was a sought after speaker by numerous Dairymen's Associations. He was widely known as being identified with the dairy industry in Broome County from its inception.

Blanding's design for the Butter and Cheese Factory building was chosen by the Centennial

Commission to represent the dairy interests of the country. The large wooden building, located at the northeastern end of the Exhibition grounds and east of the Brewer's Building was 108 feet by 100 feet in size and two stories high, at a cost of \$15,000.

Expenses were apportioned among the cheese-producing states with 15% of the profits going to the Commission and the remainder apportioned among the stockholders.

The U-shaped design with open court in the center was encircled on three sides of the first story by an 8 foot wide veranda. Both stories had interior verandas as well. During one week eighty thousand feet of lumber from Hawleyton was delivered to the construction site. Alderman Roberson supplied the sash and doors plus a large sum of cash to pay for labor. It was described as a model factory fitted with the highest quality equipment for making butter and cheese.

One of the Commission's regulations for selecting the building's equipment demonstrates the quality requirements: “No implement, machine or apparatus will be permitted to be put into the factory outfit, except it be

first-class, and such as shall be the best adapted for general use in cheese and butter manufacture.”

William's successful career ended on February 25, 1889 when the prominent Hawleyton citizen died of consumption

(pulmonary tuberculosis) at the age of 60. Son Lavelle, known as L.M., took over the cheese factory after his father's death but sold it a mere three years later to C.S. Gaige before moving to Binghamton.



The small hamlet of Hawleyton really was a big cheese at the Centennial!

1800's Shuart/Stevens Families in the Town of Binghamton

Eleanor Haines & Esther Griffin, 2010

The Town of Binghamton's official Atlas map of 1855 is the first to locate D(aniel) Stevens property at the southeast intersection of two unnamed roads, today's Stevens and Morgan roads. D. Stevens' land is shown on Lot #27 within Cooper's Patent. This map also shows John Shuart on the adjacent easterly land. As historian Bob Barber wrote in the February 2000 issue of this BTHS Newsletter, "Daniel married the next door neighbor, Elizabeth Shuart."

The next county map some 11 years later in 1866 shows Daniel Stevens still on Lot #27 while the former Shuart land (Lot #28) was subdivided into two properties owned by Wheten and C. Thompson. Checking Town residents in Child's Gazetteer of 1872, we found Daniel Stephens (sp.) remaining on Lot #27. No Shuart was found in this 1872 Gazetteer nor on any later maps through 1908. However, the 1908 map shows Daniel Steven's son George on that property, and then current owner of the formerly Shuart property next door identified as Marcus Bedell. Interestingly, this 1908 map, though no Shuart land is shown, is the first map to name the road Shuart Road. Later maps up to today call it Stevens Road.

George Stevens was grandfather of Bernice Stevens (Mrs. Curtis) Nickerson. He has many other Vosburg descendants beginning with Bernice's mother, Nellie and Nellie's brothers Rexford and Scott. In his first book of diaries compiled in 1937, George states the (Shuart) farm, 'now owned by Gus

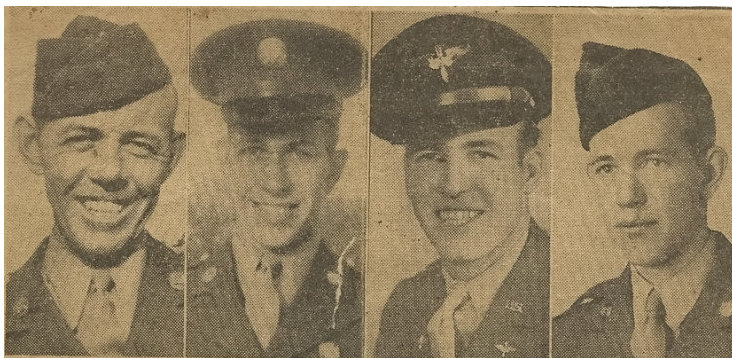
Heggelke', was cleared by my maternal grandfather, James Shuart, who came here from Orange County about 1848. The adjacent Stevens farm now owned by Nick Maga was cleared by my father Daniel who came from Schenectady County about 1838." Note: George's grandfather was named James Shuart, not John as shown on the 1855 map.

In his second book of diaries, George Stevens speaks out about Shuart Road when the Stevens and Shuart families no longer lived on the old premises.

"In October 1879, fire had burned over all the land north of the Shuart Road." In 1881 he bought "56 acres of that northerly burned land for \$850, cleared it for farming with hired help and realized a profitable oat and wheat harvest."

George made a few more references to the Shuart farm in the 1890's. In "1895 I think, I leased the grandfather Shuart farm (from) John LaGrange, a real estate dealer." He and his wife Sarah farmed there, growing oats and hay "without hiring. In 1896 I leased the grandfather Shuart farm a second time." Finally in 1923: "I think Peter Allan bought the Shuart farm this year or the next."

Note: The only Heggelke family of record in this area were German immigrants Augustus and Gussie in the 1910 census with four children living in the City of Binghamton. Gus Heggelke mentioned by George in his diary could not be found in Town of



Aton Brothers in Service

Binghamton Press 5 Feb 1945

Four sons of Mr. & Mrs. William Aton of Binghamton R.D. 2 are serving their country as members of the U.S. Army. Left to right: Pfc. Robert Aton, 29, who now is serving "somewhere in France" with an engineer combat battalion. He has been in the army since Nov. 5, 1942. Sergt. Roger Aton, 23, who has been in service since March, 1943, and is serving with a military police unit, also in France. His wife, Virginia, lives at 412 Adams Avenue, Endicott. Lieut. Allison L. Aton, 25, who is a Binghamton Central High School graduate, is serving as a bombardier instructor at Big Springs, Tex. He entered the service in July, 1941. Corp. William Aton, 19, who entered the army last March, and is training with a field artillery unit at Fort Gruber, Okla. He is a former Vestal Central School student.

What's a?

Esther McNeil Griffin

I am forever explaining old terms to the younger generation. When a news article reported a man was stabbed with an ice pick, my kids, in unison asked, "What's an ice pick?" And I explained about the iceman delivering huge cubes of ice for our non-electric "iceboxes". One had to chip pieces of ice off for drinks as there were no ice cubes. Now I mention being injured in a wash tub and as all they know is a bathtub or shower, I have to explain "What's a wash tub?" Here are some recollections of my childhood from the 1930's.



Before I became a Griffin, I was a McNeil and was knocked out three times as a child which may explain my oddities. Maneuvering tight rope style walk on a porch railing overlooking a concrete sidewalk caused my first fall and possible concussion. If there were Emergency rooms when I was a kid, I never saw one nor heard of any of my friends going there. Unless something was obviously broken, one did not visit a doctor let alone a hospital. I was carried home and laced on the couch with cold cloths on my head until I revived and then allowed to suck my thumb which I did a lot!

The second KO was standing in a wash tub under the eaves in the winter knocking down the icicles. (As noted before, I need to explain the wash tub as some of today's readers may not know what one was.) It was a round, galvanized tub that was filled with water on wash day. Actually two of them, one



walk on a porch railing overlooking a concrete sidewalk caused my first fall and possible concussion. If there were Emergency rooms when I was a kid, I never saw one nor heard of any of my friends going there. Unless something was obviously broken, one did not visit a doctor let alone a hospital.



for the first warm water rinse as the clothes were rung out of the washer and then, as the wringer, (Whoops, here we go again, "What's a wringer?")

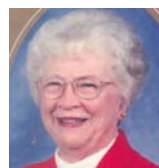


was swung around, the second cold water rinse with bluing coloring to make the whites look whiter. My aunt kept an extra tub under the eaves to catch the rain run-off to water her peonies. When I looked down for a bigger stick to tackle the big base of the frozen drips, stretching the length of the house, someone else beat me to it and knocked the whole ice buildup on the roof down on my head. Again I was carried home unconscious, cold cloths applied, same routine.

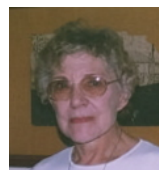
The third time we were playing King on the Mountain city kid style, standing precariously on the very top hex nut of a fire hydrant, being shoved meant simply jumping clear. Then I suggested letting the two smaller kids in the gang have a chance. Unfortunately they could only reach my feet and unexpectedly pushing the shoes back left me suddenly coming down, chin on the hex nut, with a Joe Louis punch. Unconscious, carried home, same results.

In Memoriam

It is with deepest sympathy that we acknowledge the death of two Binghamton Township Historical Society Members.



Lenora Moses Jaycox Clark of Chenango Forks, a former Town of Binghamton native, passed away on August 18 at the age of 93. Her survivors include brother and sister-in-law Leland and Marguerite Moses of Hawleyton.



Joan Kenesky Moseng was a long time supporter of the Binghamton Township Historical Society. Her death is a special loss to our newsletter staff to which she contributed articles until recently. Joan was predeceased by her husband Robert. She is survived by sons Scott and Mark Thiele.

Binghamton Township Historical Society Membership / Donation Form

Membership is from September 1 through August 31.

Please circle one membership level: \$10 Individual \$15 Family

- My employer provides a matching grant (please enclose completed form)
- I wish to make an additional tax deductible donation of \$ _____
- This is a gift membership for the person whose name and address is below.

Your Name or Gift Recipient: _____

Address _____

City: _____ ST _____ Zip _____

Phone: _____ email: _____

Please make your check payable to the BTHS and mail to:
Phyllis Merriam, Treasurer, 3940 Roberts Road, Binghamton, NY 13903

Thank you for your support!

Bring Back the Hi-Top Boot

Esther Griffin

Everything from my childhood has sooner or later come back in style. Secret code rings, big-little books, long skirts, short shirts, broomstick skirts, high waists, low waists, slim pants, elephant pants, saddle shoes, huaraches, round toes, square toes, pointed toes, they all return in fashion again and again. The one thing I am waiting for is the triumphant return of the hi-top boot.

Hi-top boots were wondrous things. Imagine, a little pocket on the side with a small pen knife inside. I suppose today they would be banned, although I seem to remember they were used for numbly peg and not for hurting anyone. A boy could feel important with a shiny jack knife snapped in the pocket of his boot, even if he weren't allowed to use it!

Hi-tops weren't shiny, weren't meant to look pretty, never needed to be shined or polished. Soaked in a mysterious mixture of maybe beeswax, crude oil and bear grease, they were impervious to water. You never had to bother with rubbers or galoshes or arctic boots when you were wearing hi-tops. Nor did one have to change from school shoes to play shoes. Hi-tops were all purpose foot attire.

A boy could click along with pride on an important errand to the principal's office in hi-tops, or drag with defiance and bravado if sent there on a shameful

mission. One could shuffle restlessly or scuff sullenly in hi-tops, infuriating the most patient school marm. They were unsurpassed for tripping stuck-up girls, or kicking bullies. A satisfying amount of mud could be tracked in and ground to a crunchy pile under the stationary school desks.



With hi-tops, one could run and slide the entire length of an oiled-floor school house hall. And on ice, who needed skates? Hi-tops were efficient sports equipment. They didn't

wrinkle pant legs as the pants were knickers, tucked into the tops. The corduroy knee pants made an important swishing sound when walking. No one complained of flat feet, fallen arches or weak ankles when wearing hi-tops. The weakest could stand along in them.

There was no confusion of sexual identity. Girls did not wear them. Boys and men did. It was as simple as that. A boy in hi-tops stood apart, a thoroughly masculine being. Perhaps a man today in sneakers or hush-puppy suede would be a better breed of man in hi-tops. You couldn't sneak up on anyone, or tattle on anyone for that matter. I doubt you could burn a flag in them.

For fun and pleasure, for wear and use, for man and country, I say, "Let's bring back the hi-tops!"

BTHSNL
Carol Stankevich
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The officers and staff of your Society wish you and yours a
Happy Halloween and a Bountiful Thanksgiving!