



Binghamton Township Historical Society NEWSLETTER

Serving Past and Present Residents of the Town of
Binghamton, N.Y. and its Neighboring Towns

Logo by Doug Webb

Vol. 10 No 1

JAN – FEB – MAR 2013

The Binghamton Township Historical Society is dedicated to the preservation of the history of the region and its inhabitants. It meets on the first Tuesday of every month at 1:30 PM. from April through October in the Museum-Fellowship Hall in the rear entrance behind the old Hawleyton Methodist Church located at the junction of Hawleyton Road (an extension of Pennsylvania Avenue) and Saddlemire Rd. just after the Park Ave./Hawleyton Rd. Junction. Visitors are welcome. Annual dues are \$10.00 for individuals \$15.00 for families (due by September – start of our fiscal year) and includes the Newsletter. Non members may receive a subscription to newsletter for \$5.00 a year. Newsletter in color may be viewed free on www.townofbinghamton.com.



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IN MEMORIAM

This has been a really sad time with our
losing many folks:

1. **Carpenter, Margaret Rita** June 16, 1921 -
December 19, 2012, predeceased by her husband
Paul Myron Carpenter (4/8/1916 - 5/22/2002),
Survived by her son, Paul A. Carpenter;
daughter-in-law, Cathy Carpenter; and a
granddaughter.

2. **Phelps, Violet A. (Kellett)** 100, died on
December 4, 2012. Born on September 10, 1912.
she was predeceased by her husband, Tom, in
1972. Violet is survived by her daughter,
Marilyn and Bob Ahearn of Binghamton; son,
Richard and Kathleen Phelps, and their children,
Violet ended her teaching career in Brookside
Elementary School from which she retired in
1976.

3 **Blakeslee, Cynthia E.** 72 died November 18,
2012 and is survived by husband Robert of 52
years. She is survived by children, Cindy and
Karl Glass, Kathy and Ron Merril, Robert III,
Richard and Kristie, and Wesley and Bridgette;
and grandchildren. She was past president and
secretary and lifetime member of Brookside
P.T.A.

4. Gable, James D. 54, of Johnson City, died November 10, 2012, after a long courageous battle with cancer. He was predeceased by his grandparents. He worked at Brookside School where he enjoyed the company of all his fellow co-workers and the school's students until his retirement in 2011.

5. Norman E. French, 67 of Vestal, died Sunday, October 21, 2012, after a 4 1/2 year courageous battle with ALS. He grew up in Conklin and later raised his family there.

6. Lynn B. Carpenter, 90, Town Of Binghamton, passed away Sunday, October 28, 2012.. He was predeceased by his wife Mary, sister June and great-granddaughter Shontae. Survived by his children, Terry (Marilyn Clark), Linda Caviness, Dale (Ani), Wayne (Patty), Debbie (Greg) Martinez, Nancy (David) Minster, Cheryl (Mike Lanuti), Jill (Dave) Francis; grand-children and great-grand-children. Lynn was a decorated [Army](#) veteran of [WWII](#) in the European Theatre as a member of the 18th Infantry Regiment of The Infantry Division. He was honored to be part of the Big Red 1. He was a Boy Scout Leader, founding member of the Town Of Binghamton Rifle and Pistol Club, Pierce Creek Community Association; Town Of Binghamton Volunteer Fire Company, Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1611; and Broome County Veterans Memorial Association.



7. Quick, Charlotte "Chuck"

Charlotte "Chuck" Quick, 83, died , November 5, 2012. A person who could not sit still, Charlotte was always gardening out in

her yard, running to bingo or holding her perpetual garage sales. She was born on March 12, 1929 to Floyd and Esther Hadley. Charlotte was married to Barney until his death in October 2007. Charlotte is survived by her children; Earl Quick, Utica, Polly and Tim Bunsic, Waxhaw, NC, Terry Quick, Sedalia, MO, Jill and Dr. Mark Haney, Sedalia, MO and "her baby", Barry and Karen Quick, Fort Meyers, FL. She leaves

behind 12 grandchildren and 16 great-grandchildren.



8. Gardner, Donald E. 86, died November 19, 2012. He was predeceased by his parents, Floyd and Althea Gardner, brothers, F. William, Harold, Charles and Harry Gardner. Donald is

survived by his wife, Edith Gardner; children, Donna and Alan Turnbull, Endicott, Laurie McDaniel and Gary Clark, Binghamton and Wayne McDaniel and Mary Goetz, Binghamton. He leaves behind James, Shelly and Mitchell Crane, Whitney Point, Grace Correll, Binghamton, Henry and Sheila Gardner, Binghamton, and Duane and Jeannine Gardner.

9. Clinton Sartell, 90, died November 20, 2012. He was predeceased by his wife of 67 years, Anita. Clinton is survived by his children, Jean and Gerald Bayne, Brackney, PA, Maxine and Peter Scarantino, Binghamton and Joyce Sartell, Binghamton; grandchildren, Rachel and Sami Bourizk, Rebecca and Tom Blazejowski and Michael Scarantino; and great-grandchildren, Melissa, Allison and Sara .



10. Knight, Gladys J.

Predeceased by her parents, Harrie and Lelah Merrihew; brother, Fred; and sister, DeDe.

Survived by her son, David, grand children and great grandchildren.



Meet the Man behind the LaFrance Pet Cemetery

By Margaret Hadsell

Morgan Road slips past the Ross Park Zoo and out of the city limits before intersecting with Gardner Road which curves toward the east. Close to the curve, on the south side of Gardner, is an eleven acre parcel where beloved pets rest for all eternity.



When the LaFrance Pet Cemetery was established in the Town of Binghamton in approximately 1934, it was one of only a few pet cemeteries across New York State. By 1949 more than 700 pets were interred there including one parrot, two national champion dogs, and two of Willis Sharpe Kilmer's finest racehorses...Exterminator and Sun Briar. In addition to the more common names, you'll find markers for Zipp, Lover Dog, Mudsy, Wheezer, Whoopy, and Lady Monocle.

But let's start at the beginning to learn about the man behind the cemetery.

Two of William and Mary LaFrance's five Ithaca-born sons, John and William, were both graduates of Cornell University's School of Veterinary Medicine. Following his graduation in 1922, Dr. John LaFrance

was associated for several years with the Markham Animal Hospital before founding the LaFrance Small Animal Hospital at 231 Water Street in 1930.

After younger brother Dr. William LaFrance graduated, he joined John at the clinic where they practiced together until William's death. Both LaFrance brothers were active in the community...John in Town of Binghamton planning and zoning matters and William as executive assistant to Mayor Donald W. Kramer. Once considered by many to be a potential Democratic nominee for mayor, William's declining health and death in 1953 at the age of 43 ended his dual careers.

The young Dr. John LaFrance married Doris Gaines Thurber, a nurse, who assisted him at the veterinary clinic. She and John had two sons, John and Gary. His interests included bowling, showing his dogs, and judging dog shows. Dr. John's own dog Sunny Sal, won first place in the under 15 lbs. category at the annual dog show held at the Fair.

Newspaper articles chronicle some of the Dr. LaFrance's opinions and unusual "patients". Early in his career, Dr. LaFrance was called to the scene of a badly injured horse who would not survive a collision with a street car. In December of 1948 Dr. LaFrance treated a "Grade B Rhesus" monkey who developed pneumonia aboard a train enroute to Las Cruces, NM. Another time, he was called to the Capital Theatre to fill a chimp's tooth so the show could go on. When in 1957 he was asked his opinion of placing a dog aboard a Russian space vehicle, he replied, "They might better put Khrushchev in a Sputnik with a bottle of vodka."

The LaFrance Pet Cemetery was an important part of Dr. John LaFrance's life and in a 1949 interview he explained that some

of the pets in the cemetery were those of servicemen who never returned from WWII. He relayed the heartbreak of families when they lost the final link to their deceased sons.

A widower since 1959, his death occurred August 25, 1962 at the age of 61. His well-kept cemetery soon began to decline. A Binghamton Press article in September of 1966 lamented at the poor condition of the cemetery. Two Binghamton area Girl Scout troops, #50 and #36, chose as their community service project the job of trimming trees, cutting grass, and generally restoring the cemetery to a place of respect and beauty once more.

Broome County foreclosed on the property for delinquent taxes and in July 1999 sold it to Wayne McMichael. Nine years later, in 2008, the LaFrance Pet Cemetery was sold by Mr. McMichael to the Faithful Companions Pet Cemetery, Inc. of Pennsylvania who renamed it the Whispering Pines Pet Cemetery. Today the well-kept cemetery is once again a tribute to Dr. John LaFrance who would be proud of his legacy to the community.



Dr. John Joseph & Doris Thurber LaFrance



Our President's Corner

By Esther Pettengill

Happy New Year! We look forward to a productive year at the Historical Society Museum. We will be asking for student volunteers through the Susquehanna Valley High School history department and also from Honor Society students, to help achieve our goal of making our collections available for research, as well as opening the museum on a more regular basis.

We are still refining our financial procedures. To this end, and to help us avoid duplication of effort or confusion, please be sure to send any dues and contributions to our Treasurer, Phyllis Merriam, at 3940 Roberts Road, Binghamton, NY 13903. Phyllis has the financial books and will make sure checks are entered correctly and deposited in a timely manner.

From time to time I receive queries and other communications from people all over the world. 2013 was barely a week old when I received a letter from Marcello D'Aleo, director of the Southern Italy Genealogical Center. He says they specialize in the reconstruction of "genealogical trees of families that have their origin in Sicily and in the other Regions of Southern Italy: Abruzzo, Molise, Puglia, Basilicata, and Calabria." They search all available information using original documents. If anyone has ancestors from that part of the world and is interested in pursuing this through this society, you can contact them directly at:
Marcello D'Aleo, Director
Centro Meridionale Ricerche Genealogiche
Via Aragona, 7
90011 Bagheria (Palermo)
Italy

Their website address:

www.sicilygenealogy.com

Enjoy your warm homes during these cold months. We open our doors at the beginning of April. We hope to see many of you when warmer weather returns.

Winter in Hawleyton

By Janice Brooks Headley

Winter in Hawleyton seems like tall tales. What our folk think is normal, just doin' what we do, is like telling about Paul Bunyan or Pecos Bill.

I was born in winter, February, and my first visitor was my cousin, JoAnne Seidel, who with her mother, Letha Webb Seidel, came via sleigh from General Hospital on Binghamton's south side, up Pennsylvania Ave. There was no auto traffic. There were several feet of snow. So her folks hitched up the horses to fetch the wrapped up mother and baby. They stopped at our house to compare babies. They probably got warm and fed, too.



Going to school was not an option. When it snowed, unless you measured snowfall in yards, you went to school. It was said that Mr. Spaulding, bus superintendant, had a 4 wheel drive jeep he'd run through fields, testing to see if it was too dangerous to drive school buses on icy, snow covered roads. On Bus 12, Sonny Light driving, we got stuck once on Webb Road, where the Golf Course is now. Snow was piled up to the bus windows. Another time, on the curves at the bottom of Penn Ave., it was a sheet of ice. The big boys got out of the bus and slid on their boots down the road. But not up. We were stopped there a long time, and it did get cold. (I can't remember the name of those snake like turns.) We called them after a friend, who was driving his daddy's corvette. He didn't make the curve. He worked for several years to pay off the debt. When the big news was that kids in other parts of the country were going to have to be bussed across town, I couldn't figure out what they were fussing about. I rode 45 minutes, EACH WAY, every day.

For outside winter recreation, we had sleds, skates and toboggans. We also had

cardboard boxes. A gang of us kids from Gillespie Rd. gathered and slid down the road when school was closed. There were four Williams girls, Billy Kelly, four Kinsmans, and up to six Brooks kids. Sometimes kids from Reynolds Circle joined us. Sometimes we skated on their pond. (EDITOR: Can't remember name of pond.)

Vosburg's pond skating was a community event. Someone had to shovel off the snow. Then, even the grownups would go skating. Sledding on Hance Rd, once Daddy let me ride down on his back. My face got frostbite. Someone at each end of the run watched for cars, since anybody with any sense was staying home, and there wasn't much traffic. I heard tell that the record speed for a hand sled, with metal runners, was clocked at 35 MPH. Toboggans were long, runner less sleds, curled up at one end.

We packed down snow in meadows on Lucky Hill, and 4 to 6 rode at one time. They didn't steer very well. Avoiding trees was a big problem. (Here in Tennessee, toboggans are what they call knit hats. Strange visual image.)

In 1957, when I was in 5th grade, the snowbank was pushed so high that I could reach the power lines. We made igloos and snow tunnels. We made snow cream with second snowfall and real maple syrup. We drove our mothers nuts. That year, Uncle



Ed Shimer was driving the snowplow. Mom and Grandma Shimer took me to go visit him at work. They let me climb up the snow bank, piled so high, I looked down into the cab of the monstrous huge plow. It must have been 15 ft down.

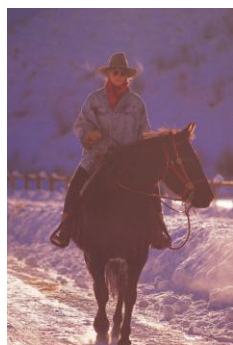
Mom, Eleanor Brooks, told me that when she went to Grove School, students would bring their sleds and ride Maxian Road. She said that her cousin, Leatha Webb would lay down, Hazel Webb would sit on Leatha's back, and Eleanor would push off, and jump on the back. Once, Leatha couldn't steer around the corner, the sled jumped the snow bank, crashed through the barbed wire fence, and dumped them into the snow. She didn't tell about cuts, bruises or sled damage. She remembered the fun.

Eleanor also told me about brother Ed and his wife, Alice, driving home from Florida, into a blizzard. They were half a mile from their home. They parked their '53 Green Buick Convertible on our front lawn, and spent the night. It wasn't unusual for our front yard to look like a used car lot, as neighbors often parked there. It was simpler than trying to get back up and out Gillespie Rd.

The last winter I lived in NY, my house was in Endwell. It snowed two feet of snow every Friday. We shoveled out, got back to work on Monday. Every Friday for six weeks. In February, it got below Zero for 19 days straight. It started snowing on Sept. 15. In May, I moved. It was still snowing. The snow was again piled up to the electric wires.

I miss the community spirit of neighbor helping neighbor, each doing their part to make the long winter bearable, the group thinking of others in need. I do not miss the snow, but I miss you all.

I've added an insert from Donald Webb with his permission:



and rode him down to get our milk!"

"I can remember back when we were kids one particular winter we had a bad snowstorm. We bought milk from the Howards down the road. Wouldn't you know we needed milk and our road was not drive able, so our Dad saddled up our horse



FEBRUARY
By Claude R. Howard, Jr.
**THESE THINGS ARE
FEBRUARY.**

-A bright sun with a new slant to it, high and bright as last October.

-Snow drifts, smooth and deep,
crouching behind hedge and tree.

-Sudden warm days with the drip, gurgle
and splash of melt water.

-Blushing soft maples, no longer like
gray-white smoke, beginning to show
why they are called red maples...and

-Willow trees with a new bronze glow.

From Four Seasons Afield by Claude R. Howard, Jr. Published by Naturalists Club of Binghamton, Inc. Binghamton, 1968.

Used with permission of former BTHS member, Silva Howard. (The Claude and Silva Howard Family lived on Ingraham Hill Road.)

**LAST ISSUE'S DELIVERY
PROBLEMS**

Some members received their newsletters up to a month late, some never received theirs, some came back to us although correctly addressed. This Editor froze through two hours at a P O seminar trying to ask about this or to register a complaint to no avail. (Our registered letters of concern to local and Syracuse Postmasters were delivered, but not answered.) As many were notified that it was their last newsletter unless they resubscribed, we are labeling this quarter's newsletter again. If you have paid in the meantime, please disregard the notice.

Binghamton Township Historical Society Membership / Donation Form

Annual Membership is from October 1 through Sept 30. Please check the date above your name on the address label of this newsletter. If your membership has expired, please consider renewing now so you won't miss an issue of our quarterly newsletter.

Single \$10 I wish to make a tax deductible donation of \$ _____
 Family \$15 This is a gift membership (enter name & address below)
 Newsletter Only \$5 My employer provides a matching grant (please enclose completed form)

Your Name _____ Street _____ City _____
State/Zip _____ Phone Number _____ email Address _____

Any comments/instructions
*Please make checks payable to the BTHS and mail to:
Phyllis Merriam, Treasurer, 3940 Roberts Road, Binghamton, NY 13903*
We are very grateful for your support. Thank you.

**FRIENDSHIP SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS
SUMMER 1979**



BACK ROW: Gertrude Lee, Mary Petro, Doris Rought, Wilma Huebner, Retha Milks, Marion Cline, Esther Meeker

MIDDLE ROW: Vera Moses, Harriett Haskell, Mary Shapley, Cathryn Gage, Mildred Jones

FRONT ROW: Frances Cafferty, Marion Shupp, Helen Webb

NOTE on PICTURE: Our Friendship Class, with a couple of guests met this day at a farewell party for Mary Shapley. Doris Rought and Mary Petro made blocks for Mary's quilt.

Editor's Note: Sadly, none of these fine ladies is still living today.

Esther Pettengill, President
Binghamton Twnshp. Historical Soc.
3639 Saddlemire Rd.
Binghamton, NY 13903



January



February



March

BTHS Awarded Town of Binghamton Citizen of 2013

In *Town Talk Winter 2013* (Town of Binghamton newsletter), Supervisor Tim Whitesell announced that the Town Board and he had unanimously chosen the Binghamton Township Historical Society as Citizen of the Year 2013. Although usually naming an individual for this annual award, they unanimously chose the Historical Society in recognition of its countless hours of preserving not only Town history but the Historical Society Museum itself. “While

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the building is old, it serves as our own piece of history and is a jewel within our community.” according to Supervisor Whitesell. This award honors not only those directly involved in BTHS’ every day workings, but all BTHS members who support the Historical Society with dues and other donations, particularly toward the roof last year.

Thank YOU for your support and thank the Town of Binghamton for this wonderful recognition.

