

The Town of Gorham Historical Society

New Age Newsletter

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Town of Gorham Historian: George Henry

Membership – 109

President's Report

Greetings! This newsletter is honoring two local men who gave their lives while serving in Viet Nam. Any words that I could come up with would be petty. Their actions say everything about the sacrifices that so many families have made for this country. We are so fortunate. It was an honor to know them both.

On a lighter note, on August 10th, there was a nice ceremony at the gravesite of Edgar Stanley Martin attended by Boy Scout Troup 63, parents, a Scout exec from DC, Town of Gorham officials, as well as historical society "dignitaries." Edgar was born in Gorham in 1873 and is buried in the new cemetery along with his parents and his wife. He had a remarkable career as the first paid executive of the Boy Scouts of America. During his tenure he initiated many programs including the merit badge system and Cub Scouts.

Over the last year we've been gradually learning about Edgar. I'm glad his family chose Gorham as their final destination, but I don't understand WHY they did that. In the 1875 census, the Martins lived on a farm on Kearney Road near Lake To Lake. By 1880, seven year old Edgar and his family lived in the Town of Seneca and probably never lived in Gorham again. WHY did they choose to be buried in a town they lived in for only about five years early in their lives? There is probably a simple explanation, but so far it is lost in the years.

If you ever have questions or suggestions, please call me or send an email to dennishogan@yahoo.com.

Upcoming Meetings and Programs

The Museum is open every Wednesday from noon until 4. Stop in for a visit. Now is the time to be visiting to see the inside of the Aerial Observation Building and the inside of the Old Post Office Buildings. Because these lack heat, they are not open in the winter months.

Saturday, September 1st – Middlesex Heritage Group will host an event at Overackers Schoolhouse at the intersection of 364 and North Vine Valley Road. At 1:30 Ronnie Reiter a Native American Storyteller will perform. (for children and adult enjoyment) At 2:00 Peter Jemison, site manager at Ganondagan State Historic Site and other Iroquois leaders will present a historical reenactment of the Native American deliberations leading up to the participation in the War of 1812.
2:00 p.m. Children's crafts in the schoolhouse.
3:00 p.m. Music by Larry Laursen.
Bring your own lawn chairs – food will be available.
9:00 p.m. Bonfire on Bare Hill – Ring of Fire.

Tuesday, September 18th at 7 p.m. sharp - Monthly business meeting of the Town of Gorham Historical Society in the Hazel McNamara room.

Saturday, October 13th – Ontario County Historical Society's Biannual Tour of Barns. This year the tour will be the "Sandy Schlenker Memorial Agricultural Fair and Tour of Barns" in West Bloomfield. Enjoy a day of old time agricultural demonstrations as well as early barn models and antique equipment at the Ionia Fire Department Carnival Grounds. Contact www.ochs.org for more information.

Tuesday, October 16th at 7 p.m. sharp – Monthly business meeting of the Town of Gorham Historical Society in the Hazel McNamara room.

Sunday, October 21st at 2:00 the Naples Historical Society will host a program by Nancy Lynch on her book entitled Vietnam Mailbag. It will be held at The Naples Public Library. Nancy was a young reporter when the war started in Vietnam. Her book has become the voice for all the Vietnam War Veterans. This is a fascinating book and I believe everyone will be interested in how she created this book. You may tour the Morgan Hose Building at 1:00 before the program at the Library.

Sunday, October 28th at 2:00 p.m. Ontario Yates Small Historical Societies will host a program on the Nundawaga Society of History and Folklore and the Pageants (plays) that it performed. The program will be held at the United Methodist Church in Rushville (handicapped accessible) and the program will be free and open to the public. (see more information about this society later in the newsletter.

Volunteer Needed - Have Machine will train!

Are you sitting home on Wednesday afternoons wondering what you could be doing that would be interesting and productive? Our Historical Society might just have the job for you. We are in need of a person with computer skills that is willing to scan slides into the computer. We have all the necessary equipment ...except the person to sit in the chair and complete the task. If you are interested please call Sharon or Dennis. (see phone no. above) We also need more volunteers for indexing our records. No computer skills necessary.

Vietnam Era Veteran Records Needed!

At the museum we have books filled with information on soldiers from the Town of Gorham who served their country. As the 40th Anniversary of the signing of the Peace Agreement to end of the Vietnam War draws near we would like to be sure that we have all servicemen's records and pictures from this era. If you need an information sheet to fill out, please email Sharon at shcornelius@frontier.com or call her at 554-6268. Thank you.

Learning about Life during the Civil War

By Barbara Lippincott

With the strains of such famous Civil War songs as, "When Johnny Comes Marching Home" and "John

Brown's Body" resounding in their ears from the "Merry Mischief" concert, 100 Marcus Whitman fifth graders walked to the grounds of the Town of Gorham Historical Society on May 24th. Students were greeted by women dressed in hoop skirts and matching bonnets, workmen clad in white billowing shirts, Union soldiers donning cappies and black vests and even gray clothed bare foot Confederate soldiers. The second annual "Life During the Civil War Day" had begun and over thirty volunteers were ready to have the children participate, "I can't hear you", "Louder," "Yes, Sir", "No, Sir", "Forward", were but a few of the commands learned by the children as Drill Sgt. Tom Bowers of Fairport put them thru their paces. The field by the Historical Society had become his School of Soldiering.

Numerous pieces of Civil War era women's clothing hung from the Historical Society's walls as groups of girls learned about the multi layers of clothing worn by women. At the same time, the boys learned about farming implements and felt the push and pull of the saw. These were two of the six sessions all children attended. Others included guessing what Civil War gadgets were used for and who might have used them. Kids spun whirligigs, tossed hoops in a game of Graces, twisted wrists with Jacob's Ladder and tried to land the ball in the cup while playing Civil War era games. Listening to Dr. Bell, from Penn Yan, the children learned about Civil War medicine. As one student put it, "If I lived back then, I probably would be missing an arm and a leg." A Union soldier's mess kit, bullets, and a uniform were but a few things a Union soldier re-enactor shared.

As the morning drew to a close, the aroma of beef stew and Johnny cakes permeated the grounds. As all participants ate their lunch (prepared by the Marcus Whitman cafeteria), the Historical Society's curator set the solemn tone for the afternoon's activities. The fifth graders were reminded of the realities of war as they lined up behind a horse drawn wagon carrying the coffin of Charles Freshour, a Gorham native killed in battle. Slowly and quietly the children and volunteers (acting as the soldiers' families) walked to nearby Pioneer Cemetery. A brief funeral service was held and Charles' parents spoke of their loss. The families of two other native sons, Asa Mott, and Martin Swart each spoke of the loss of their son. The children met a wounded soldier on their way out of the cemetery whose brother was killed at the Battle of Gettysburg. He spoke of the hours he and his brother had spent swimming in nearby Flint Creek and how they never would be able to do it again. Taps were played and the day was over.

The quietness stayed with the children as they walked back to school. You could feel the thinking. Hopefully one of them will find an alternative to war.

The above article was published on the e-newsletter of Life in the Finger Lakes Magazine on June 28, 2012.

Visiting Lyons By Barbara Lippincott

You too may stand inside an 1854 jail cell (9'x4'x7') and appreciate the artwork done by previous inmates or view a brilliant red, blue, and gold War of 1812 military jacket. These are two "artifacts" that can be found at The Museum of Wayne County in Lyons. A group of our Wednesday afternoon regulars, museum volunteer, visited the museum in the spirit of good neighbors.

The three floor museum is housed in the 1854 Wayne County Jail and sheriff's residence which was used until 1961. Our tour guide led us thru three floors of artifacts which included the 24 celled jail (along with stories of the infamous occupants), an exhibit of Lyons Pottery, a military room covering the War of 1812 to the Vietnam War, an 1854 child's room plus much more. Being summer we were able to visit the Carriage House which has displays concerning Wayne County farming implements relating to the fruit industry, carriages, sleighs and even a part of the Erie Canal that led the mules onto the towpath. We were very impressed with their collection and their delight in showing us. You could even purchase jewelry from their Jailhouse Collection in the gift shop!

While we were in Lyons, the former Peppermint Capital of the World, we decided to see where that nickname originated. The H.G. Hotchkiss International Prize Medal Essential Oil Co. building is now owned by The Lyons Heritage Society and is open for tours which explain the bottling of peppermint. Our tour was led by Patricia Alena (Peppermint Patty) Heritage Society President and guide extraordinaire!!! We thoroughly enjoyed every nook and cranny of the building while the aroma of peppermint filled the air.

We had a great day and recommend visiting The Museum of Wayne County and the H.G. Hotchkiss building.

Museum of Wayne County: info@waynehistory.com
Lyons Heritage Society: <http://lyonshs.angelfire.com/>

The Nundawaga Society of History and Folklore

The Nundawaga was founded in 1954 to rekindle interest in the history of the Seneca Indians. The formation of the society was spearheaded by Dr. Arthur C. Parker of Naples. The charter was granted June 28, 1954. The charter officers were: Robert E. Moody of Rushville, president; George E. King of Middlesex, vice-president; Jay D. Barnes of Penn Yan, vice-president; Honorable Joseph W. Cribbs, Ontario Co. vice-president; W. Glenn Rogers of Geneva, vice-

president, Charles E. Briglin of North Cohocton, vice-president; Mabel Blodgett of Rushville, recording secretary; Paul V. Miller of Naples, membership secretary; and Edgar J. Haynes of Naples, treasurer. The society existed for 5 years. It produced four Seneca Indian pageants near the mouth of Clark's Gully which is the legendary birthplace of the Seneca Nation. These events were held in early September and crowds of 5,000 attended many performances. Most of the pageants were directed by Professor and Mrs. W. Gordon Dustan of Keuka College. The cast of around 50 people were made up of local amateur actors and many prominent Indians from the St. Regis and Tonawanda Reservations. Volunteers make exact replicas of Seneca Clothing, jewelry and headdresses.

Dr. Arthur Parker wrote the first pageant "Genundowa, the coming of the Senecas." He died the following January, but the play was performed again in September of 1955. Robert Moody wrote the last three pageants that were performed. They are 1956, "Hiawatha", 1957, "Dekanawida," and 1958, "Strangers Come to Nundawae." In 1959 the society dissolved.

Please join us for this interesting program on Sunday, October 28th at 2:00 p.m.

Who is Arthur C. Parker?

Arthur C. Parker was an archaeologist and ethnologist. He was a man of mixed heritage, as he was of Seneca Indian and Scots/English descent. He traced his Seneca heritage back to Nicholson Henry Parker (his grandfather) who was a brother of Ely S. Parker. Ely Parker was a Brigadier General and Secretary to Ulysses S. Grant during the Civil War. When Grant became President, Ely Parker was the First Commissioner of Indian Affairs. Nicholson and Ely Parker were sons of William Parker and descendants of the Seneca prophet Handsome Lake. He had an interesting education as he grew up on his grandfather's farm until his family moved. When graduated, he studied to be in the ministry for 3 years. He left college and combined an interest in anthropology and a talent for writing. His further accomplishments included: 1915 – 1920, editor of the Society of American Indian; *American Indian* magazine 1925 - Director of the Rochester Museum and Science Center

1930s through the Depression - Director of WPA funded Indian Arts Project
1935 – 1st President of the Society for American Archaeology
1944 – He helped found the National Congress of American Indians
1946 – Retired to Middlesex and died in 1955. He had many accomplishments in his 73 years.

While doing the above, he also found time to author and edit books and articles. Among them was the first pageant that was presented in the Naples Valley.

Some films that were taken during the pageants were recently discovered in the Morgan Hose Building. Blanche Warner has put them on a DVD. Beth Flory is going to give us a presentation on the pageants while viewing the DVD. If you were a member of the original cast, love to learn about our rich local history or just want a night out, come and join us!

Information about Arthur Parker and photograph from Naples Historical Society.



Arthur Parker

Remembering our Fallen Vietnam Soldiers

The Town of Gorham lost two soldiers in the War in Vietnam. We are honored to be able to salute these young men in this newsletter. Arthur Herod was a graduate of Gorham Central School and Joseph Valesko Jr. was a graduate of Middlesex Valley Central School.

We would like to encourage classmates, friends, neighbors and other relatives to submit stories about these soldiers for their files at the historical society.

A tribute to a home town hero Arthur W. Herod, killed in Vietnam February 27, 1968 as written by brother, Gordy Herod

Arthur Weinmann Herod was born June 7, 1943 in New Berlin, New York. He was the son of Milford N. Herod, and Inez Gray Herod. Milford (Milt) traveled extensively in his job as a manufacturer's representative for Massey Ferguson, and later with Triumph Machinery Company. Typical of the times, Inez was a stay at home mom, raising six children, and taking care of the farm chores.

Artie was the third oldest in the family, with two brothers and three sisters. Siblings names are as follows: Walter (Walt), Alma, Alicia (Jeanne), Gordon (Gordy), and Anita. Artie was ten years old when the family moved to an 80 acre farm in Stanley, NY. He enjoyed the outdoors, and like the rest of his siblings, he learned to work at an early age.

Artie attended Gorham Central School, and started working on the family farm, and for other farmers in the area. Specifically, he worked for the Hathorn and Hansen families. Before he could drive a car, he rode his bike to work. Artie was well liked by many people, and he had several good friends in the area. Friends that come to mind are: Gary Kretchmer, Jennifer Nielsen, Tony Capozzi, and Anthony Capozzi. Artie went to Nino's (the restaurant in Gorham owned by the Capozzi's) the night before he left for Vietnam. He visited with Anthony Capozzi and a member of their family, David Helfer. Prior to being drafted into the U.S. Army, Artie worked at Mobil Chemical in Macedon. He was separated from his wife and had two young daughters, Julie and Joanne.

In the late 60's the fighting between the North and South Vietnamese was intense, and as a result the government invoked a draft. Artie was drafted in the summer of 1967, and headed for basic training, Fort Knox Kentucky July 17, 1967. He completed basic training September 22, 1967, and began Advanced Infantry Training at Fort McClellan Alabama September 25, 1967. Artie graduated from Advanced Infantry Training November 15, 1967.

Following a four week leave, Artie left for Vietnam December 15, 1967. In Vietnam, he was assigned to

the U.S. Army 35th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Battalion, C (Charlie) Company, 2nd Platoon. Although Artie never complained, it was evident by his letters, the conditions were extremely adverse for him and his fellow soldiers.

A couple of years ago I attended a reunion in Melbourne, Florida. I met four of the men from Artie's platoon, and I learned a lot about the conditions in Vietnam. The soldiers carried a lot of weight on their backs (70 – 80 lbs.), and it was very warm during the day, often exceeding 100 degrees F. At night it was very cool, and it rained a lot, so the soldiers were rarely dry. They also hiked many miles a day, and often in the mountains. It was likely many days before they received a clean change of clothes. In addition, the fighting was very intense January and February 1968. Artie became good friends with a soldier by name of Michael Kravchak, from Roselle, N.J. It is unfortunate both Artie, and Mike were killed on the same day, February 27, 1968. Artie and Mike were walking on point (out in front of the rest of the squad) at the time of their death. The men who served with Artie, told me Artie was well liked by all, and that he and Mike saved their lives February 27, 1968.

Artie received the following awards for his service: the Silver Star, Purple Heart, Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Expert Badge, with machine gun bar, and Marksman Badge with auto rifle bar.

Artie was well liked by many people, and he was a very kind person. When faced with significant adversity, he did not complain. Arthur W. Herod is a true hero. Respectfully, Gordon E. Herod [Thank you, Gordy.]



Senior Class Picture of Arthur W. Herod
Gorham Central School 1962

From Our Archives ...

The Geneva Times
Wednesday, March 13, 1968
Pfc. Arthur W. Herod

Gorham – Funeral services for Pfc. Arthur W. Herod who died in Vietnam on February 27 were this morning at the Crisfield Funeral home with the Rev. T. Paul Murley of St. Theresa's Catholic Church, Stanley, officiating, followed by committal service at the grave (Gorham Cemetery) with Rev. Fred Jackson of Seneca Castle Methodist Church. Military personnel included the Survivors Assistance Officer Second Lt. Newcomb and pall bearers of the Headquarters Co. Ssg. Bucci, Sp5 Abrams, Sp5 Nottelman, Sp4 Stout, Pvt. Agnew, and Pvt. Easley, all of the Seneca Army Depot.

The ceremonial firing party from the First Army Escort Guard 1327th Detachment, Seneca Army Depot, included Sgt. Molinary, Cpl. Perry, Cpl. Stevens, Sp4 Adair, Sp4 Alexander, Sp4 Allen, Sp4 Macguire, Sp4 Smith, Sp4 Zukaitis.

The flag was presented to the widow, Mrs. Mary Herod, by the body escort, Sp. Smkia. The American Legion was represented at the service by Harold Dinsmor of Rushville and the VFW by a group from Geneva.

Pfc. Herod was the son of Mr. and Mrs. Milford Herod of the Town of Seneca. He had been in Vietnam since Dec. 15th 1967 with C Company, Second Battalion, 35th Infantry, 4th Infantry Division.

Joseph Valesko Jr.

Joe was born October 20, 1945 to Joseph E. Valesko Sr. and Pauline (Polly) Roach Valesko. At the time of his birth his father was serving with the U.S. Navy, where he saw action in the South Pacific in World War II. Joe graduated from Middlesex Valley Central School in June, 1963. His great love was baseball, his favorite team being the Chicago Cubs, and from the Genundagan 1963 Yearbook, we learn he played baseball in 10th, 11th and 12th grades. He was a Boy's State Representative. After high school Joe attended the University of Buffalo where he received a bachelor's degree in 1967.

Joe was against the war in Vietnam and the family in general did not consider the war a serious threat to our

national security. However, Joe's father, a combat naval veteran, made it clear to his son that if his country calls, his country surely needs him and he must answer his call to duty.

Joe was drafted and attended basic training at Fort Dix, N.J and continued his training at Fort Gordon, Georgia. He commenced a tour in Vietnam November 21, 1968. Joe was in Company A, 3rd Battalion, 22nd Infantry. In May of 1969 he writes to his parents that he is now Squad leader and should be a sergeant by next month. He tells them "Nothing new is happening here except that it is getting hotter and beginning to rain more. Last night we went out on an ambush so I didn't get much sleep. Especially since there were so many mosquitoes out last night." Joe also wanted to be sure his parents were receiving the money and savings bonds that he was sending home – saving for his future. At the time of his death he was Specialist Fourth Class.

Joe was killed in action in Vietnam on June 6, 1969. A letter to his parents from William J. Ervin, Commanding Infantry Captain states: He died in the service of his country in Tay Ninh Province, Republic of Vietnam." "On June 6, 1969, Joseph was engaged in a sweep mission. At approximately 12:00 noon, intense enemy small arms, automatic weapons, and rocket propelled grenade fire was encountered, causing him to sustain penetrating missile wounds to his abdomen. He died instantly, and I hope you will find consolation in knowing that he was spared prolonged suffering." He continues: "Throughout his assignment to this company, I had observed Joseph to be an exemplary soldier. His integrity and devotion to duty earned him the respect of all with whom he came in contact. His loss is keenly felt by the members of this unit." In a letter to Joe's parents on June 18, 1969, President Richard Nixon wrote: "I pray for a day when peace can be restored. I wish that your son could have lived to see that day. But when it comes, there will be a special place in the hearts of his countrymen for those whose sacrifice made it possible, and for those others who have borne the burdens of their loss."

A Western Union Telegram sent to Joe Sr. informs him of the arrival of his son's remains on June 14 at Rochester arriving from Dover AFB. Among the possessions that would later arrive were his dog tags, his St. Christopher's medal, a book, A Soldier Prays in Vietnam, and bundles of letters and photos.

Kathy Meredith, writer for the Daily Messenger covered Joe's funeral and states "Simple Rites for War Victim." "Eight soldiers wearing white helmets and gloves and green uniforms, face one another as a flag-draped casket is carried from the funeral home and slowly, almost delicately, placed into a hearse. They stand again at attention at St. Mary's Church, (Rushville) forming a path for the six pallbearers." After the funeral mass she continues with the burial procession. "The cars begin the slow procession to the cemetery...past houses and deserted buildings, past 30 mile-an-hour speed limit signs, past two small children standing under the shade of a large tree, past a farmer who sits on his tractor in the middle of a field and rests his head on the wheel as he silently watches the procession. Moving uphill the cars approach a cemetery and are driven to the side of the road. The engines are quiet, the headlights extinguished. People move out of the cars and up a gravel and dirt road entrance to the grounds identified by a small white sign as Overakers Cemetery. They pass a fence where the eight soldiers are lined up in a row. Farther up the hill rests the casket. Surrounding it are the pallbearers, each grasping a section of the flag, their eyes on the familiar strips. The priest begins to speak. The dull roar of farm machinery is heard faintly in the distance. Overhead the sun continues to shine down on the people. The sky is a vivid blue, occasionally interrupted by wisps of white, ragged clouds. As the priest's words end, silence moves in. Suddenly, from the far end of the cemetery, there is movement. Eight guns are aimed and at a command, they are fired. Three times the shots are heard. It is mid-morning on Tuesday but "Taps," the military song which tells that "day is done, gone the sun," echoes over the hillside. The last note is played and two soldiers take the flag from the casket. They move quietly as they fold the material, smoothing out the wrinkles. A mother rises and faces one of the soldiers-the oldest one. In his hands rest the flag. He looks at the woman, then glances at the object he holds. His eyes remain downcast. The man speaks softly in a halting voice "...let it be a symbol of the gratitude and appreciation of the United States..." The soldier moves forward, offering the flag. Clasp the folded flag in her arms, the woman, followed by her family, turns and walks away from the casket. And on the hillside, a soldier is buried."

A letter to Mr. and Mrs. Valesko from Herb (F?) written June 24, says "I was a close friend of your son and was with him on June 6th when we got hit. I know I

can't say anything to make your burden and sorrow lighter – but I just had to write and say that I – and all of Joe's friends are with you and share in your heart ache." "I will always remember Joe – I called him "Vel" – he made a fine impression on my life and was a man who I admired and loved." "We lost three other men on June 6th too – and it was at Joe's and their sacrifice that we are still here today – someday I want to thank "Vel" for it – but until then I thank you and in all sincerity share your grief. Joe always liked people to be happy and I know he still does."

Beside his parents Joe left behind four siblings. Diann Valesko Detro, Thomas, Paula, and Stephen. He also left behind a special sweetheart, Linda Monahan who at the time of his death was a biology teacher in the Geneva School District.

Joe earned the following Awards in proficiency: Rifle, sharpshooter, Machine gun, Automatic Rifle, National Defense, Citations presented posthumously to Joe and accepted by his parents were: Bronze Star, Silver Star, Purple Heart, New York State Conspicuous Service Cross. The Military Merit Medal and Gallantry Cross with Palm were awarded to him by the Government of the Republic of Vietnam. (South Vietnam)

July 5, 1980 the Crystal Beach Betterment Association dedicated the park in memory of Joe. "We're dedicating the park to him so that area children can enjoy sports as he did," said Samuel Catallo of the Association. The flag that will fly at the park was the burial flag presented to the family by the U.S. Army at the time of his death. The park is 2 ½ acres and includes a picnic area and baseball diamond.

The sign at the entrance to the park proclaims:

Joseph Valesko Jr.
Memorial Park
May the Boys and Girls of our Community
enjoy this park as much as "Joey" did.
Dedication July 5, 1980

His parents established a scholarship in his memory at Marcus Whitman Central School.

"We, the family members of Joseph Valesko, remember him as an excellent athlete, a superb student and a brother who aspired to become a dentist. Marriage, children and the proverbial house with a white picket fence was in his dreams."

"Now, we can add to this picture of "Joey", honor, fidelity, and courage to uphold his country's call to duty," writes his sister Diann Valesko Detro.

Written by Sharon Cornelius from documents supplied by Diann Valesko Detro. Thank you, Diann.



Senior Class Picture of Joseph Valesko Jr.
Middlesex Valley Central School 1963

Membership Application

Membership is \$8.00 per person per year and renewable on the first day of each new year. For membership please send your check made payable to The Town of Gorham Historical Society, P.O. Box 90, Gorham, New York 14461. Please send your donations to the same address.

Name _____

Address _____

Email address _____

Phone _____

Town of Gorham Historical Society
P.O. Box 90
Gorham, NY 14461

HONORING OUR VIETNAM HEROS.



Arthur W. Herod
June 7, 1943 - February 27, 1968



Joseph Valesko Jr.
October 20, 1945 – June 5, 1969