

The Bulletin

Cortland County Historical Society



Volume 5, Issue 2 May 2012

Inside this issue:

Working Book	Z
Attic Treasures Sale	2
Bob Ellis Book Signing	2
Events in the Works	3
Program Review	3
Membership Renewal	4
When Cortland Danced	4-5

Dates to Remember:

- May 19, 2012 Bob Ellis Booksigning
- July 21, Holiday in Homer
- August 11, Brockway Truck Show

Mindy's Musings

"Can you remember Back to a simpler time Back to the watercolor days That still run through your mind Oh, I remember just my old friend and me Runnin' through an open field The way it used to be The feeling that our hearts could just take wings We could live out all our dreams The journey there was never far away But like a dream come true

But like a dream come true That's still inside of you The secret of tomorrow is To live your dreams today"

Brian McKnight – *Remember* the Magic

In 1997, Walt Disney World used this song to celebrate their 25th Anniversary. Even today the lyrics take me back to a simpler time. Recently a submission by a member for inclusion in this newsletter came in the mail, and much like this song took me back to a simpler time.

In 1987, I enrolled in ballet for the first time. I can not remember why I wanted to take ballet, or if it was something my parents felt would make me graceful, but from the fall of 1987 until the spring of 1992 I was enrolled in ballet lessons. During those

five years, I also managed three years of tap, and one year of jazz. I remember having to leave school early on Wednesday afternoons to attend lessons in the next town over, which would keep me from getting perfect attendance, something I strived for throughout my elementary school days, but never could quite achieve.

All these years later, I don't remember any of the dances. I remember a few of the costumes. My last year as a ballerina, I was Humpty Dumpty. I remember the lessons that took place in the meeting room at our local American Legion. I remember my brother and I wanting to have fifty cents to go downstairs to the bar and buy bags of M&Ms. I remember running down the street to our grandparent's home for dinner after classes. I even remember some of the crazy costumes we had. While my story takes place less then thirty years ago, many of my readers can share similar stories of their dance classes. Special memories of what it was like to train no matter how skilled for a special performance.

Five years of dance lessons taught important life skills.



Preparing for a dance recital as a balloon. Spring 1989.

Perseverance, dedication, passion, practice makes perfect, and most of all make time to have a little fun in your life. While I will never be a professional dancer, I still enjoy the chance to cut a rug, and thank Mr. Gordon Bowker for giving me the inspiration to look back on dancing in my home area and how that shaped my life today.

I encourage each of you to look back to the watercolor days of your youth. Share these memories with your family, friends, and even with Cortland County Historical Society.

If you have something you would like shared in our newsletter please do not hesitate to send it to me, and I will be glad to find a way to get it into a future publication.

Page 2 The Bulletin

 $McGraw\ Historical\ Society\ news:$

□ Thurs., June 14, 7 pm. John
□ Hoeschel, Cortland resident
□ and cemetery "buff" will present
□ a program on the history of
□ the South Cortland Cemetery
□ located on Route 13 across
□ from WalMart.

п

П

Thurs., July 12, 7 pm - Randy Hopkins, historian, Town of Freetown will tell us how the community got its name and share history of some of the early settlers, the cemeteries and the Freetown church.

п

Our programs are held at the McGraw Community Center on Clinton Street. All programs are free and open to the public.

Parking is available at the center and the building is handicap accessible.

The Local History Room is located at the Lamont Memorial Library through the rear entrance of the library.

You can contact us at <u>mcgrawhistoricalsociety@yahoo</u> .com

Our website is mcgrawhistoricalsociety.com

Working Book

Rub-a-dub-dub,

Three men in a tub,

And who do you think they be?

The butcher, the baker,

The candlestick-maker

So maybe you weren't a butcher, or baker, or even candle-stick maker, we are still looking for your stories. In our effort to preserve and collect the history of Cortland County we are looking for more stories to include in our next publication.

The Publications Committee of Cortland County Historical Society having taken a brief moment to catch their breath, is back to work, on our anticipated 2013 publication Working Volume 2.

Stories can be mailed (or dropped off) to 25 Homer Avenue, Cortland, NY 13045. We also accept stories submitted electronically to: info@cortlandhistory.com

The committee is interested in more then just the history of the place where you worked, but the personal connections with these employers and your co-workers.

If you have a picture you would like to share we will be glad to scan and return these to you.

Please share this information with your friends and encourage them to participate.

Attic Treasures Sale

A tisket, a tasket, a green and yellow basket.

As your spring cleaning takes place, if you find any of these items that are looking for a new home Cortland County Historical Society is preparing for our annual Attic Treasures Sale and would be glad to take them off your hands.

The only items we ask that

you find other homes for are clothing and used books.

Many great charities can make use of these items, but we often find them unsalable here.

Items for donation may be dropped off at Cortland County Historical Society Tuesday—Saturday between 9:30 am and 5:00 pm.

If you are interested in helping set up for our sale, or to work during the sale, please contact CCHS at info@cortlandhistory.com or (607)756-6071 and we will put you in touch with the proper person to assist.

All proceeds from sales directly benefit YOUR Cortland County Historical Society!

Bob Ellis Book Signing

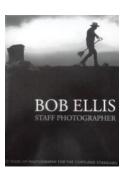
Join us May 19, from 10 am to 12 pm for a Book Signing. Bob Ellis, author of Bob Ellis: Staff photographer will be on hand to sign copies of his recent book.

Bob Ellis: Staff Photographer, 25 Years of Photography for the Cortland Standard looks back at the photographs that cover the history of Cortland County during the last 25 years.

The book is currently available for sale at CCHS for \$23.75 (including tax). Copies will be available for sale on May 19th, or you may bring your previously

purchased copy to be signed.

We hope that you will join us in celebrating the hard work of Bob Ellis and his artistic talent on the 19th. Refreshments will be served.



Volume 5, Issue 2 Page 3

Events in the works

Besides new publications and a 2013 calendar. The staff, trustees and volunteers at Cortland County Historical Society are busily working on exciting new opportunities for our members and supporters.

Diane Pellicciotti Kone was born in Cortland in 1947. Her grandparents were Italian immigrants, who fostered her love for story telling. Diane has parlayed this love into several publications, and we are in the process of planning a speech and book signing with her

during her next visit up.

We were recently contacted by Chris Meister who has published a book on courthouses designed by James Reily Gordon, which the Cortland County Courthouse was one of. We are hoping to be able to work into Mr. Meister's schedule and have an exciting look at the history of our own Cortland County Courthouse.

Those who have travelled on our bus trips before know how much fun we have on our

various exploits. We are currently looking into two bus trips. Betsy Kreig Salm's anticipated last show will be at the Bedminster Traditional Artisan Show in Bedminster PA this fall and we hope to get together a bus group to attend this show. Our second proposed trip is to New York City right before Thanksgiving for a one day sight-seeing tour capped off with the Radio City Christmas Spectacular. More details will be

available soon.

Program Review-contributed by Marti Dumas

"Women's Painted Furniture, Early American Schoolgirls Art", a program sponsored by Cortland County Historical Society on Wednesday, April 25th, helped those attending learn from noted Trumansburg artist, Betsy Krieg Salm, about young girls' artwork produced from 1790 to 1830.

Almost 30 years ago Betsy Krieg Salm was fascinated with a piece of water-colored painted furniture that she saw in a museum. That began a journey that led her to explore how Early American girls attending female seminaries, their schools at the time, learned to paint beautiful wooden boxes, face screens (fans) and furniture. To an audience of 25 people, Ms. Salm described the painting methods that the girls were taught to use. They were shown examples from her collection and pictures taken in a variety of museums

throughout the United States.

In her personal research journey, Betsy explained that she had a professional chemical analysis done of paint from ten items in her own collection of furniture pieces to ascertain how watercolor painting done during that time period would have been preserved and protected. She learned that young girls who did not have access to Boston and the metropolitan areas of the New England area had to be amazingly creative to preserve their intricate artwork. Sometimes, household items including honey were mixed with paints to make their creations stick to the fine pieces of wood that the girls painted.

As an artist, Betsy's journey led her to painting on woods like tiger maple and bird's eye maple in order to make authentic reproductions of work done by Early American young women. Her mission is to make known what young women accomplished during that time period as our country was being settled. To that end, Betsy wrote a beautiful book, Women's Painted Furniture, 1790-1830, American Schoolgirl Art, which is available on Amazon. She generously donated a copy of her book to the Cortland Free Library. This September, the Historical Society will provide a follow-up to the lecture.

Besides items Betsy brought from her own collection, audience members were able to see a piece of artwork done by a Cortland County resident in 1825, Sally Olmstead, at a female seminary located on West Court Street. That artwork and several needlework pieces done by Cortland County residents are part of the collections housed at the Historical Society.

* Ed Hart–President **************** Mary Alice Bellardini-Vice Pres. F. Michael Stapleton-Treasurer Joseph Compagni-Secretary Trustees: 米 Diane Ames Kathy Beardsley Charles Bernheim Marti Dumas Toni Gallagher Mary Kimberly Paul Lorenzo Dr. Jim Miller Kaaren Pierce Dr. Kevin Sheets Charles Sheridan Ronald VanDee Staff: Mindy Leisenring Director Anita Wright Research Associate ****

米

**** CCHS Trustees

Officers:



Betsy Kreig Salm signs books after her successful program.

Page 4 The Bulletin

Membership Renewal January-March 2012

Thank you to our new and renewing members.

Rick and Kathie Arnold and

Family

Sandra Attleson Mr. and Mrs. Ball

Irvin and Nel Lo Bassett

David Beale Marjorie Beard

G. Fred Beaudry III

Charles B. Bernheim

Catherine Bertini

Mary Bickford

Herbert and Virginia Booth

Betsy Brewer Valerie Brown

John and Christine Buck

Karin Burgess

Seth and Carolyn Burgess

James Burke

James Carrington

Dixie Lee Christenson

Randel Mott Cobb

Donald Colongeli

Althea A. Connolly

Iames Cornwall

Patricia Davis

Yvonne Deligato

James and Jan Dempsey

Mary Louise Dexter

Maria Dillingham Purcell

Yvonne Divak Mary Donovan

Jean Edwards

Catherine Frail

Robert and Jean Fryer

Tom and Toni Gallagher

W. Sanford and Luella Gay

Mary Giamei

Doyle Glover Elsie Gutchess

William J. Haight

Robert Hall

John Hamel

Jaffrey and Nadyne Harris

Edward and Patricia Harrison

Cathy Hash

Douglas and Nancy Hatch

Peter and Doris Hoffmann

Kevin and Ann Howe

Robin Jackson

Rhoda Jones

Margarette Kabanuk

Carl and Mary Kimberly

James and Lucille Kinsella

Kent and Sharon Klanderman Carl and Gayle Ann Livecchia

W. Hampton and Lauren

Scott Mallory

Iames Mathews

Thomas and Lynn Meldrim

Sylvia Mitchell

John Morton

Patricia O'Mara

John Oxford

Keith Pace

John and Barbara Palmer

Kav C. Pease

Kaaren Pierce

Margaret Race

Leonard and Eleanor Ralston

Barbara Reagan

Joan Robinson

Stephen Robinson

Russell and Linda Ruthig

Barbara Ryan

Roger Sager

Merton Sarvay

Cecile Scott

Charlotte Smith Sheldon

Lorraine Sherry

Richard Sickmon

Charles and Stephanie

Spina

Donald and Connie Steger

Sharon Stevans

Sweeney

David and Margaret Taylor

Rosemary Theisz

Don and Barbara Tisdale

Dorothy Troike

Linda Underwood

Lilida Olideiwood

Philip Underwood Deborah Vanauken

Lawrence Wales

Ruth Whiting

Kevin and Carrie Whitney

Katherine Wickwire

Dale and Barbara

Wightman

Roger and Kathy Williams

Janice Young

When Cortland Danced

America emerged from the 1930's into the 1940's with a generous parcel of songs from Broadway, Big Band dance music and the start of WWII. Although, many Cortland musicians performed in the military and then continued playing once home, dance music went on un-interrupted through the war years.

Dancing was the entertainment for weekend nights. Square Dances were regular events at the Grange Hall, the Odd Fellows Hall, and the Buckingham Pavilion on Route 11, North of Homer. Of the local square dance bands George Fuller was the best known. The popular Woodhull Boys from the Elmira area, dressed in hillbilly costumes were featured several times a year at the Buckingham.

For the high school group, the feature was Friday night Mixers at the YWCA with Spiegle Willcox's ten-piece band. It was there between eight and ten pm, the boys learned to dance and socialize with girls. Spiegle Willcox was a multi-generation icon and one of the leaders who framed Cortland social life.

Continued on page 5

Volume 5, Issue 2 Page 5

Continued from page 4

Dancing in Cortland was stimulated by Big Band influence. Larry and Reg Harrington, with their store, Harrington Brothers Music, held rein on the record business and provided the source of the latest in jazz innovation and Big Band inspiration. Periodically, the Endicott-Johnson Pavilion in Johnson City brought in the big name headliner bands from the national circuit.

Whether in a Bar and Grill, a Tavern, a Club, a Saloon, a Lounge or a Restaurant, Friday and Saturday night dance music could be found in most Cortland neighborhoods. The King Cole, the Greyhound, the Commando, the Hollywood, the Palm Garden, the Lido, the Green Arch, and the Moose Club were among the best known. Not all venues had music every weekend and the bands varied.

Musicians were influenced by the jazz components of the Big Bands. The music was in today's terms; acoustic. It pre-dated electronic amplification. A single microphone for vocals and small amplifiers for guitar solos made the volume suitable for the small rooms and allowed patrons to have conversations around the music.

With the exception of the Cosmo Brothers who divided time between Cortland and Florida, the bands are best described as pick up groups with three to five players. WWII, made the musician pool fluid depending on day jobs and military demands. Printed arrangements of new tunes were available for big dance bands, but it was rare for small bands to use printed music. The repertoire consisted of popular songs from the twenties and thirties many of which have lasted through the decades as standards.

The piano player was the key in the rhythm section and often the informal leader. Innovation in the jazz idiom was expected from the lead instruments; trumpet, trombone and saxophone or some combination. It was unspoken, but to become a regular, the lead players needed to learn and innovate on the songs considered standard. Some new players used a "fake book" with the chord changes for each song that became rote with repetition.

Each player brought talent and individual style. Several went on to be professional musicians, teachers and entrepreneurs in the music business. And a few players had limitations. One piano man only played in the key of F. This was a challenge to the lead players, since the groups tended to use a standard key for each tune. For instance, "Stardust" and "Body and Soul" were played in D flat; "Blue moon" and "It had to be You" in E flat, "Once in a While" in F and so on through thirty or forty standards.

The saxophone/clarinet players included: Jim Darby, Larry Harrington, Bill Dwyer, Charlie Lines, Sam Focucci, and Dick Morris. Reg Harrington, Lee Reitano, Tony Dovi, Leo Chapman, Bob Reitano, Phil Natoli, Dick Meddaugh and Joe Haskell were the working horn players.

The most popular piano men were; John McNeil, Chet Mead, Phil Foote, Wilbur Webster, Gordon Huntington and Sam Adams. The drummers were: Bob Murphy, Dan McNeil, Ted Hicks, Bob Gardner and Hal Rogers. On guitar it was Ernie Reitano, Don Kane or Chet Mead. Harold (Chink) Allen was the foremost bass man.

Most Cortland musicians were members of The American Federation of Musicians, Local 528. The Union had sixty or seventy members. Was the union strong? The answer can be debated, but it provided a modest pay platform and a source of capable players and contacts among the members. The Cortland Local has since disbanded.

Popular music has evolved with new sounds, and amplification. The emphasis on guitars and keyboards has replaced the traditional dance band format. Yet many of the songs of the 1940's are with us sixty plus years later. The good times rolled and much of the best remains.

Submitted by: Gordon R. Bowker, CHS Class of 1945



Spiegle Willcox and others at a SUNY Cortland event. From the CCHS photo collection.



Spiegle Willcox was a multi-generation icon and one of the leaders who framed Cortland social life.



From Left to Right, Tommy Consroe (trombone), Harold Mott (drums), Ken. Hollister (trombone), Carrol (Stub.) Mynard (alto sax), Larry Harrington (alto sax), John Butler (tenor sax), Dwight Shattuck (guitar), Howard Brockway (trumpet) Norm Meservey (piano)
From the CCHS photo collection.



25 Homer Avenue Cortland, NY 13045



Your primary source for Cortland County History

Phone: (607)756-6071 E-mail: info@cortlandhistory.com

WE'RE ON THE WEB!

WWW.CORTLANDHISTORY.COM

Membership Form for New Members

Senior (optional 65 years & older)	\$20.00	For "Family" Category please list
Individual	\$30.00	names of family living at this
Family	\$40.00	address.
Supporting	\$75.00	
Sustaining (Cody Higgins Club)	\$150.00	
Sponsor (Charles Jones Club)	\$300.00	
Curator (Mary Ann Kane Club)	\$500.00	
Benefactor (Joan Siedenburg Club)	\$1,200.00	
Life Member	\$10,000.00	



U.S. POSTAGE PAID

Non-Profit Org.

Cortland, N.Y.

Permit No. 50

Return Service Requested

Suggett House, Home of Cortland County Historical Society

Name:	
Address:	
Phone:	E-mail:

Return to: Cortland County Historical Society; 25 Homer Avenue, Cortland, NY 13045