



THE BULLETIN

Cortland County Historical Society



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Attic Treasure Sale will be April 15 (9:30 to 4 pm) and 16 (9:30 to 1 pm), 2011 at Cortland County Historical Society.

We accept donations year round, so no matter what type of cleaning you do feel free to stop in (or contact us to arrange pick up) and leave the items for our sale.

Mindy's Musings

Many little girls dream of their wedding day. They dream big. Fairy tales like Cinderella, The Little Mermaid, Sleeping Beauty and Beauty and the Beast feed into these dreams. The beautiful princess is whisked away by her prince charming. They marry in gorgeous ball gowns at the castle, and live happily ever after. Today a famous designer has designed dresses based on the gowns that these princesses wore. I don't remember being a little girl with a dream wedding, though I did always hope for prince charming.



From my friend's 2007 Wedding where I served as Maid of Honor.

Weddings today are a multi-million dollar market. Shows like Say Yes to the Dress, Platinum Weddings, Rich Bride Poor Bride, Bridezillas, and My Fair Wedding with David Tutera feed into this frenzy. There is even an entire channel devoted to wedding related shows.

Weddings have not always historically been the same way we picture today. Traditions have changed over time. As we prepare for our upcoming bridal show: "Here Comes the Bride: A Century of Bridal Fashions," it is the perfect time to explore some of the most common wedding traditions.

White Bridal Gowns - White gowns were not always the norm for weddings. Prior to the Victorian Era (1837-1901) wedding gowns traditionally were the best gown that the bride already had. When Queen Victoria married she bucked the royal tradition of wearing a silver wedding gown, and kicked off a trend that would endure. While today brides traditionally believe that they wear white as a symbol of purity the roots run much deeper.

"Something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue" – I have heard this saying numerous times in relation to weddings. This saying is yet another Victorian Era addition to wedding customs. Something old was meant to symbolize the bond between the bride, her family, and her old life. Something new symbolizes the new life of the bride and groom together and is seen to show their hope for a future of happiness, prosperity and success. Something borrowed is to come from a happily married friend and is meant to wish that same happiness to the new couple. The something blue is to symbolize fidelity and constancy, important keys to a successful marriage.

Sharing the first piece of wedding cake – This is a tradition with Roman roots. This ritual was to create a special bond between the bride and the groom. The wheat

(Continued on page 2)



The UPC, "Trope Troupe," acting company, will perform on Saturday, March 26th at 7:30 PM at the United Presbyterian Church (the gray stone church at the corner of Church St. and Central Ave.), in Bill Whiting's one-hour play, "Tioughnioga River Anthology," directed by Scott Gay. In this play, reminiscent of "Our Town" (also in the Troupe's repertory), distinguished people from Cortland County's illustrious past come to life for a few moments to tell us about their lives. Sue Bonné is the Stage Manager who introduces each character (and also plays the piano!). Among the many personalities, the musician Spiegel Wilcox is played by Tom Corey (you didn't know Tom could play the trombone?), suffragist Amelia Bloomer, portrayed by, and singing music from the Broadway hit, "Bloomer Girl," is Pamela Poulin, William Shakespeare (!) is played by Tom Bonné, David Hannum (aka David Harum) by Scott Gay, and the Orioles & Giants distinguished ball player & manager (2,763 victories) John J. McGraw by Chuck Buck. Also featuring the actors Sandy Tuthill, Judy Van Buskirk, Nolan McLaughlin and Tom Ardis. All in all, it should be a lot of fun! Plus, you might learn something! No admission charge. Park in UPC lot on Central Avenue. Good-will offering.

(Continued from page 1)

used in the cake was to symbolize fertility and a fruitful union. The sweetness was meant to spread to all areas of the couple's life together.

Ceremonial Kiss – The ceremonial kiss is said to date back to Roman times, where the kiss sealed the couple's agreement to spend a lifetime together.

Groom's Boutonniere – this custom is said to date back to medieval times when the Knight would wear his ladies colors as a symbol of his love. The colors would be worn through flowers, and this continues today as the groom wears his brides colors down the aisle.

Googling the term wedding traditions found this information and many more wedding customs then would be prudent to print here. I hope that this article has sparked your interest in bridal traditions and to see you at our show in May (see below for more information regarding our bridal show).

“Here Comes the Bride: A Century of Bridal Fashion”

Join us Sunday May 1, 2011 for “Here Comes the Bride: A Century of Bridal Fashion.” Bridal gowns of years past will be on display and modeled for your viewing pleasure.

We will be featuring on display the 1907 wedding dress of Carlotta Baker, from her October 27, 1907 wedding to William Owen. In 1916, after her husband's death she moved to Kinney Settlement and then in 1922 to Homer, where she lived, and brought up her children. The dress was donated to us by the family, and we are excited for this chance to show it off. Due to the fragile nature of the dress it will only be on display and not modeled.

The show will take place at the Center for the Arts in Homer from 2 to 4 pm. Tickets are \$15 for adult non-members, \$10 for members and \$5 for children. Tickets will be available at CCHS and other locations.

Cortland County Historical Society needs YOU!

Where you married over 35 years ago? Do you have your mother or grandmother's wedding gown? As we prepare for our bridal show we are looking for gowns that can be worn during our bridal show. While Cortland County Historical Society has a collection of beautiful bridal gowns that can be displayed they are unable to be worn. If you are willing to loan us your dress for this show, please contact us (607)756-6071 or info@cortlandhistory.com and we will answer all of your questions, and make arrangements regarding your dress. Bridal gowns as well as attendants' gowns are all welcome.

Check your label

We are now including the month and year that your membership comes due on your mailing label. This will allow you to stay up to date in your membership. If your date is past due, please consider renewing. After a brief period you will be dropped from our mailing list. Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

New Membership Category—Joan Siedenburg Club

The Board of the Historical Society is thrilled to have our benefactor membership level of \$1000 entitled the Joan Siedenburg Club!

For those of you who may not know Joan or may be acquainted but don't know her background with the Society, there is no question about her dedication to the organization.

Joan was born in Buffalo but the family moved to Saranac Lake when she was a tot. She graduated from Cornell and married David Siedenburg, a mechanical engineer, and in 1952 the couple moved to the Cortland area. David's relatives had had a cottage on Skaneateles Lake, and the family grew to love the Central NY area, so it was a natural that David would take a job here. The couple have three children: Karen who resides in Arizona; Gretchen, in Maryland; and Bill, a Homer resident.

The CCHS had offices in the County Court House in earlier years, but once they had the gift of the house at our present location in 1966, the operation changed significantly. Joan said that she and the late Carolyn Ibbotson were asked to take on the Exhibits Committee. She said that neither of them knew what that would mean as they happily accepted the appointments. Joan's children were still young but not little at that point, so she felt able to contribute time to this worthy cause. Little did the two of them know what lay ahead.

With items of local interest located at sites around the Cortland area, one of their major tasks became locating them and then figuring out what to do with it all. Joan said the two of them worked day in and day out and week after week in what amounted to full-time employment (without pay). They didn't know about cataloging, conservation, or even exhibits set-ups. Help eventually arrived via the NYS Arts Council which engaged help from the Munson Williams Proctor museum in the Utica area, which helped them with the myriad of tasks in getting things organized.

They continued in their posts until in the late '60s or early 70's. At that point the Board hired Lesley O'Malley as the first paid Director of the Society. Even then, Joan continued to work in the collections area during both Lesley's and then Mary Ann Kane's years in the position though not so many hours.

One of Joan's tasks once the Director was hired was to organize publicity for the major fund raising drive to build an addition to the Suggett house, the addition that now houses quantities of books, periodicals, photos, articles.

There is no question about the importance of Joan Siedenburg's contribution to Cortland County Historical Society, and we are pleased to honor her years of dedication with this category.

Thank You Wilkins Foundation

In November of 2010 The Wilkins Foundation generously donated the money to Cortland County Historical Society to allow us to purchase a new copier. The new copier has allowed us to make copies in a more efficient manner, as well as provide our researchers with higher quality copies than were previously available. We are grateful for this money and the benefit the new copier has made to the staff daily.

"New York State writer Chuck D'Imperio's latest book is entitled UPSTATE NEW YORK: HISTORY HAPPENED HERE, This new book takes a look at 25 different people, places and events that have helped to make our region a place where history happens! From the invention of Jell-O, to the first U.S. Army cavalry charge, to Lockport's famous "Flight of Five" and to the first female to run for president (no, not Hillary Clinton!)...the stories are always fascinating and fun."

Cortland County Historical Society is pleased to welcome Chuck D'Imperio on March 30, 2011 at 7 pm. Due to ongoing events at Cortland County Historical Society we will be having this presentation off site at the Beard Building (9 Main Street) in classroom 203 at 7 pm.

Amanda Harrison—Keuka Intern

During the month of January, Cortland County Historical Society had the pleasure of hosting Amanda Harrison during her field period from Keuka College. Amanda was able to help create our development folder of information for grant writing, work on research, assist in reorganization of storage areas, create an exhibit and participate in numerous activities that are part of the daily work at Cortland County Historical Society.



In conjunction with her exhibit, I had her write an article about the exhibit. I have included the article below as well as pictures of her hard work.

As an alumna of Keuka College I can attest to the value of field periods as educational tools for the student. Now being on the opposite end of the paper work, I can attest to the value of having a trained student provide service to the organization. Amanda's work will continue to benefit Cortland County Historical Society after her return to college. We wish her the best of luck in her studies.

Be My Valentine

As we are quickly approaching Valentine's Day, people are wondering what to get their loved ones, and picking out that perfect card for their special someone. But what exactly is the history of Valentine's Day cards?

Paper Valentines began being exchanged in the 1500's in Europe. Previous to that, Valentines greetings were either said or sung to prospective lovers. According to history, the first written valentine, which was formerly known as "poetical or amorous addresses" was given from Charles, Duke of Orleans, in 1415, while he was confined in the Tower of London after the Battle of Agincourt. He wrote romantic verses for his first wife in France. Roughly sixty of his poems are on display in the British Museum. By the 1600's, the exchange of Valentine's Day cards was a common tradition in England and Western countries, not only for couples, but for peers as well. After 1723, Valentine's Day cards became even more popular in America due to booklets brought over from England called "writers". Writers were booklets that contained a plethora of verses and messages that were able to be copied onto fancy paper. Some of these verses also contained a section for an answer from the person receiving the card. Later, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Valentine's Day cards became more religious in nature. By the early 1800's valentines were beginning to be assembled in factories. These valentines were rather simple in nature, and usually composed of black and white images which were painted by factory workers. In 1840, Esther Rowland decided to mass produce printed Valentine's Day cards. Her first printing consisted of five thousand Valentines and all sold out nearly overnight. Fancier valentines consisted of lace and ribbon, and were introduced in the mid 1800's. In America however, the tradition of sending Valentine's Day cards didn't become a widespread occurrence until the Civil War period. These Valentine's often centered on the idea of couples parting or images of soldiers.

Currently, there is an exhibit of Valentine's Day cards at the Cortland County Historical Society. These cards are dated from the 1920's through the 1940's. They were all sent to the same person, Miss Elizabeth Baldwin, a lifelong resident of Homer. Miss Baldwin was born in 1916, and died in 1993. She was well known around the community, as she was the Director of the Homer Phillips Free Library and a member of the Homer Congressional Church. One card in particular that Miss Baldwin received was from Genevieve Rumsey in 1928, when Elizabeth was 12. The card contains an image of a young girl wearing a dress and hat who is winking and holding on to 4 balloons that fold out. The phrases on the balloons consist of "I'm crazy 'bout you", "You took my eye", "An' Oh! So shy" and "STOP!" On the card is also a sign bearing the message "Valentine Greetings". The card was made in Germany. To see this card and others from the collection, visit during regular hours.



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Bolded trustee names are the new trustees for 2011.

Membership Renewal October–December 2010

Thank you to these new and renewing members for their support of Cortland County Historical Society.

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2011 Membership Rates

The board of trustees of Cortland County Historical Society has voted on the following membership rates for 2011. Prices will be reflected in your next billing.

Senior \$20.00

Individual \$30.00

Family \$40

Supporting \$75

Sustaining (Cody Higgins Club) \$125

Sponsor (Charles Jones Club) \$300

Curator (Mary Ann Kane Club) \$500

Benefactor (Joan Siedenbug Club) \$1,000

Life Membership \$10,000—all membership benefits for this one time fee

CORTLAND COUNTY
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