



# Historical Highlights

Official Publication of the Sand Lake Historical Society

Volume 30, Number 3

Spring 2004

## APCSD turns 75!

The Averill Park Central School District is celebrating its 75th anniversary this school year. Monthly theme displays, of photos and memorabilia provided by interested residents have been located in the main lobby at the Averill Park High School (APHS) since September. The April theme is "Proms"; May will feature the Gala. School officials cordially invite the public to visit the showcase and bulletin board displays Monday through Friday from 3:00-5:00 p.m., or whenever the building is open.

The Steering Committee comprised of Chairperson Judy Long, Grace Briscoe, Karen Henchey and Ginny McGreevy has planned to end the year-long celebration with a Gala. It will be held at the high school on Friday, May 14, 2004. A video starring 75 years of APCSD students, staff and events will be shown and is available for purchase. There will be a video preview at 3:00 p.m. to accommodate senior citizens and those with special needs.

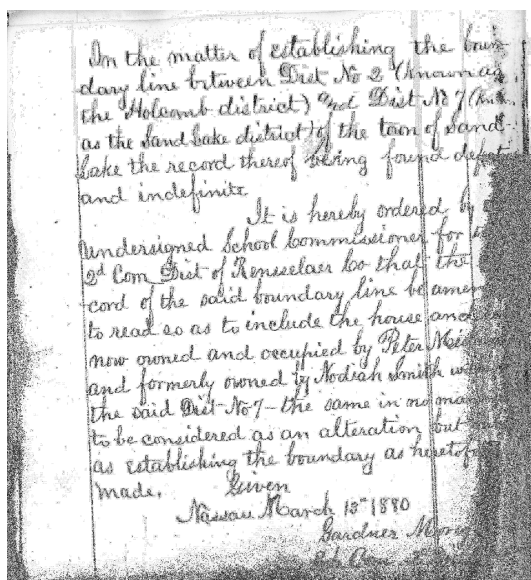
The evening celebration will begin at 6:00 p.m. with a concert by Gerry Zaffuts and the APHS Jazz Band. Student tour guides will be available to direct visitors on their trips down memory lane to the seven decade-specific showcase displays of APCSD "school daze" pictures and memorabilia. At 7:00 p.m., a program and the video will be presented in the auditorium. That will be followed by refreshments, served by student volunteers, in the cafeteria. A teacher-chaperoned "Oldies Alumni Dance" with DJ Bray Engel will be held in the Gym from 9:00-11:00 p.m. Photographer Mark Merritt will be on hand to take portraits, Commemorative T-shirts will be sold by the APHS Student Government, and the Sand Lake Historical Society (SLHS) will sell its book *Images of America SAND LAKE* during the events.

Admission to the video is free, by ticket only, on a first-come, first-served basis as seating is limited. Tickets are available to SLHS members from Linda Ormsby by calling at 674-3624. The general public should send a self-addressed stamped envelope to Video Tickets, c/o Judy Long, PO Box 627, Averill Park, NY 12018, or take their chances at the door.

Tickets for the "Oldies Alumni Dance" are \$5.00 each, and are also available on a first-come, first-served basis. They may be purchased on April 30 from 5:00-7:00 p.m. in the high school lobby or at the door during the Gala. All proceeds will be used toward the purchase of new equipment for the APHS weight room.

Circle the date, reserve your tickets and plan on having a wonderful time making new memories with old friends, celebrating APCSD's 75th Anniversary. See you there! — *Grace Briscoe*

[L] A Town of Sand Lake School Record Book delineates 13 School Districts in July 1813 and further denotes changes in boundary lines as noted in this entry of 1880. Peter Midnight property was the last house on Johnnycake Lane. Inside this issue we take a look back at "school life" in the Town before the formation of the Central School District in 1929.... →



## Town of Sand Lake Schools prior to 1929

With the Averill Park Central School District (APCSD) celebrating its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary, it was thought appropriate to describe school life prior to 1929 or “You’ve come a long way, Baby.”

As was common throughout rural New York State, most towns had one-room schools with very few offering high school programs. High schools operated in cities and large villages, and the majority of rural pupils were denied an opportunity for secondary education because of lack of money or transportation.

Also prevalent were private schools. Among those in the Town of Sand Lake were:

- Select School known as Gregory’s noted to be “nearly opposite E. Renderts” in 1825
- Select School at Sliter’s Corners (present hamlet of Sand Lake) noted to be “by Dr. Elmore’s” in 1854
- Select School in basement of Second Lutheran Church (on Route 43) in 1854
- Sand Lake Academy in Gabler Hotel (Lakeview Hotel) in 1843
- Brookside Institute in 1860’s located next to the Fox Mansion
- Sand Lake Female Seminary - a boarding school in 1880’s (Lakeview Hotel)
- Scram’s Institute - a boarding school for boys located on site of Church of the Covenant from 1852-75
- A private school opened by Miss Nellie Clark noted to be “where Boarer’s Hotel is”
- Miss Fannie Howard conducted a private Day School in Averill Park (in a building behind the first house on Johnnycake Lane) in 1889

Does anyone know the location of any of the places in quotes?



**District No.1 was located on the west side of Burden Lake at the northwest corner of Sheer and Bittiig Roads.**



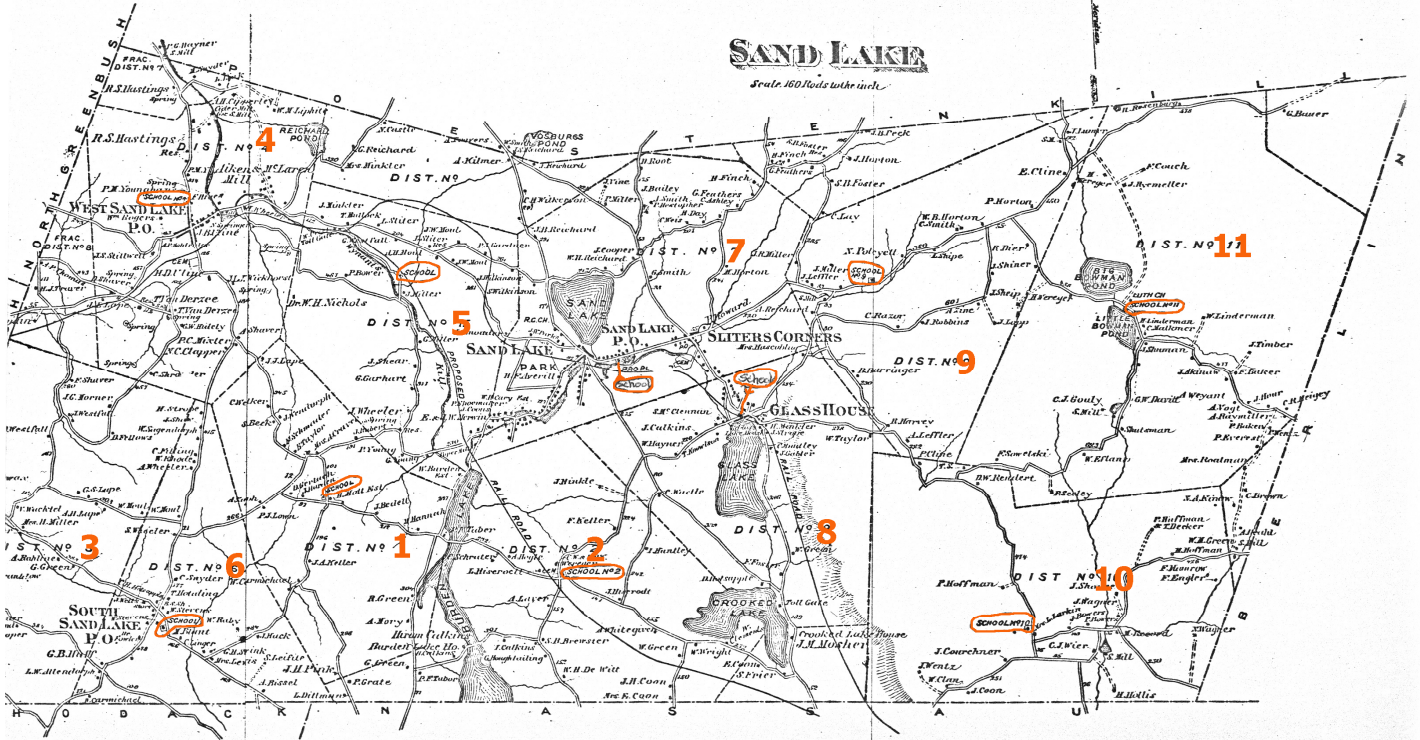
**District No. 2 was on the east side of Burden Lake at the northeast corner of Holcomb and Methodist Farm Roads. No mention is made of its joining the district.**



**District No. 3 was located in the southwest corner of town. No mention is made of its joining the district.**



**District No. 4 for the West Sand Lake area was next to the Salem United Brethren Church on Route 150. Class pictures were often taken on the steps of the church. Today, with its second story, it is an apartment house.**



District No. 5, Miller District School was on Thais Road. No mention is made of its joining the APCSD.



District No. 7 (above) was a two-room school at what is now American Legion Sergeant Walter Adams Post No. 1021. Eighth grade graduation was begun at this school. Mrs. Ida Wendell Butler remembered her graduation in 1912 in the ballroom of the Gabler (Lakeview) Hotel. District No. 8 (below), Glass Lake School was on the corner of Glass Lake Road and Routes 43 & 66. It still stands and is the home of Mrs. Terry Rutherford. Behind the house are the boys' and girls' outhouses, now used as storage.



District No. 6, Sliter's Corner School is near NYS Route 150 on County Route 50. This school has been converted into a house. Black marks left by the old school desks are still visible on the pine floor.





**District No. 9, Miller District School on Taborton Road has also been converted to a home and is the residence of Wayne Schulz.**



**District No. 10 (above), Larkin School was on Momrow Road. (Below) Larkin School pupils in front row, l to r, are: Florence Rendert, John Garrabrant, Eric Muellecker, Lester Rendert, Lester Sowalsky. Back row, l to r, are: Margaret Deckett, Hazel Deckett, Ruby Coon, teacher, and Esther Kirchner.**



Iona Mosher remembered that there were 20-35 pupils in grades 1-8 at the Miller District No. 9 School on Taborton Road. English, Arithmetic, Geography, History and Spelling were taught daily. Reading

Writing, Drawing and Physiology were taught once or twice a week. Two toilets were provided beyond the building, one for girls and one for boys. Sears Roebuck catalogues were used for toilet paper. There was no facility for washing your hands – no towel, no basin. Among the teachers who taught there were: Ruby Coons, Fannie Coons, Octa Peck Houser who came to school by horse and buggy from Poestenkill, and Emma (Shier) Brown. [see *Historical Highlights*, Spring 1996]

Judy Rowe's mother-in-law, Harriet Moses, remembered her first job after she had finished high school at Berlin was completing a term for the teacher at the Larkin School, District No. 10, who was sick (actually pregnant, but one didn't say that). She boarded at Crist Crapes Hotel. There was no janitor. Teacher and pupils were responsible for splitting logs if necessary, bringing them in and carrying out the ashes. They had to clean the pail and dipper and provide fresh water twice a day. Sweeping the floor and cleaning the windows and desks were also their responsibility. She remembered buying cans of lye for the outhouse and being sure there were corn husks to be used as toilet paper. She was 18 years of age and went from the role of being a young girl to an adult who "read the Handbook for the thousandth time" and was responsible for teaching some boys taller than she was.



**District No. 11, Taborton School was located on the shores of Little Bowman's Pond. There is a house on the site of this school.**

School Districts No.'s 1,7, 8 and 9 of the Town of Sand Lake and District No. 1 of the Town of Poestenkill formed the original Averill Park Central School District in 1929. Other Sand Lake districts were annexed as follows: District No. 11 (1934), District No. 4 (1934), District No. 10 (1938), District No. 6 (1939). Would persons in 1929 ever have envisioned the magnitude of the outstanding buildings and quality of education available 75 years later? Congratulations Averill Park Central School District; you have given us a proud legacy!



**District No. 1,  
Round Top  
School of  
Poestenkill.  
Shown below are  
Mary Traver di  
Domenica, Edna  
Pierce's mother,  
with her teacher  
Ruby Coon at  
Round Top  
School. This  
school became  
part of the  
APCSD in 1929.**

### **SLHS "Antiques Roadshow"**

On Saturday, May 22, 2004, SLHS will host an antiques appraisal fund raiser at the Sand Lake Town Hall from 10am -2pm. Professional antique appraisals, by Charles L. Flint of ART & ANTIQUES, Inc. Lenox, MA will be available for a donation of \$5 for each appraisal or 3 appraisals for \$10. Mr. Flint is a respected antiques authority, and is donating his time to SLHS.

Participants will be able to purchase snacks, sandwiches and beverages during the event.

Everyone is encouraged to support this fundraiser.

SLHS has a very active community outreach agenda. In the past two years our donations have supported Sand Lake Center for the Arts, Averill Park High School Scholarship Programs, purchase of Glass Lake historical marker and the Sand Lake Veterans' Memorial Park. We have been able to make these contributions as a result of funds earned primarily through the sale of *Images of America SAND LAKE*. These projects exemplify SLHS's mission of "preserving the past; enriching the future." You can help us to continue our generous support of worthy local projects by coming to the "Roadshow" with your friends, antiques, and empty stomachs!!!

For more information please contact Grace Briscoe at 674-0982.

### **Membership renewal**

The numbers after you name on this issue of *Historical Highlights* are your membership dates. Dues are for the year June1 – May 31. If the numbers are 03-04 or before you're due, and we thank you for renewing your membership by completing the form below. **Due to the increased mailing costs, the trustees have decided it was necessary to remove from the *Highlights* mailing list the names of persons whose dues are not renewed.**

### **Annual Dinner/ Meeting May 12**

The Annual Meeting will be held on **Wednesday, May 12, 2004**, at the Averill Park and Sand Lake Fire House. Following a social hour from 6:00 – 7:00 p.m., a roast beef dinner with potato, vegetable, tossed salad, rolls, beverage and dessert will be served. Cost of the dinner is \$15.00. **Please return the form below by May1, 2004.** Program for the evening will be Kathy Sheehan, Rensselaer County Historical Society registrar, who will present an illustrated talk with slides and anecdotes, "Did George Washington Sleep Here? Inns of Rensselaer County" Enjoy the highlights of adventures travelers often encountered, while traveling in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

### **Nominating Committee**

The Nominating Committee of Grace Briscoe, Nancy Davis and Ruth Bordt present the following slate of trustees to be voted on at the May 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting: **Alan Fuess** (2007, first term); **Elwin (Rich) Castle** (2007, first term); **Andrew (Andy) Mace** (2007, first term); and **Marion Hacker** (2007, first term). This will maintain the number of trustees at 15.

### **President's Notes**

What a gala Christmas party we had in Ron Berti and Barbara Neu's ballroom at their home aka the Knowlson House. And we carried out our surprise honor of Robert (Bob) Lilly for his many years of research and labor on behalf of historical initiatives within our Town of Sand Lake. Commendations were presented by the Historical Society, the Town of Sand Lake and Rensselaer County.

In our last *Highlights* we featured reminiscences of World War II and Viet Nam casualty Major George Quamo. To further honor our veterans the Trustees voted make a donation of \$1000 to the Veterans' Memorial Park and presented the check to chairman William Hoffay at our March meeting. We stated the Historical Society "recognizes that the consolidation of the veterans' memorial plaques scattered throughout the town is an important project which is in keeping with our mission statement, "Preserving the past; enriching the future." Further, the Society appreciates that all who served in the military deserve recognition. We applaud the fine job you and your committee are doing toward that end."

Be sure to put the following events covered in detail elsewhere in this issue on your calendar: **Annual Meeting**, May 12; **Averill Park Central School District 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary GALA**, May 14; **The Sand Lake Antiques Roadshow**, May 22 Watch for further publicity on the event we will sponsor for Rensselaer County Historical Society's History Day on July 24<sup>th</sup>. —  
*Mary French*

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### Sand Lake Historical Society

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Dinners (\$15.00 each) \_\_\_\_\_ Dinner Subtotal \$ \_\_\_\_\_

#### Membership: Join / Renew

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

\$5 per individual \_\_\_\_\_ \$8 per family \_\_\_\_\_

**Grand Total enclosed:** .....

Please make checks payable to *Sand Lake Historical Society*. Mail to: Sand Lake Historical Society, Post Office Box 492, West Sand Lake, New York 12196



#### FORWARDING/ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

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