

DRYDEN HISTORY HOUSE AT SOUTHWORTH HOMESTEAD

April, May, June, July
Volume 41 (2018)

Dryden Town Historical Society
14 North Street, Dryden, NY 13053
607-844-9209

HOURS Saturdays, 10am – 1pm
Tuesdays, 10am – 12pm
and always by appointment 844-9209

DRIVEWAY REALIGNMENT AND ENTRANCE COLUMNS RECONSTRUCTION

The driveway re-alignment project and the reconstruction of the entrance columns (pictures below) has been completed. Both projects were underwritten by the Dryden Village and private donors and resulted in no cost to society. Much of the labor was donated by Jeff Waldon, Al Avery and Dick and Albert (Skeeter) Heidt.



Gary Denman, Al Avery, Dick and Skeeter Heidt and Bob Watros working on the entrance columns.



EXHIBIT: DRYDEN FOOTLIGHTERS A Real Love For Community Theater, 1966 – 1999

In 1966, Dryden High School was brand new with a fine auditorium. Friends and neighbors, Joyce Perkins, Sue Cardwell, Ginny Stevens and Jean Van Alstine thought it might be a good idea to start a community theater that could use the new auditorium. Over three decades, the Footlighters used the auditorium for their productions and gave much support to Dryden High School annual theater productions.

35 people signed the Dryden Footlighters charter. The first production, "The Long Christmas Dinner" was done at a meeting for the general public in the fall of 1966. The first full-length show was "You Can't Take it with You" performed in the spring of 1967. Musicals joined the Footlighters' repertoire in the spring of 1971 with "Oklahoma." "Brigadoon" followed in 1973 and after "Music Man" in 1976, a musical was performed every year.

Dryden Footlighters drew volunteers from Tompkins and Cortland counties and the surrounding area, all dedicated to performing quality productions appealing to the whole community. During the amazing life of this local theater group more than 60 productions were performed. DTTHS has a number of videos of "Footlighters" productions. Pull up a chair and watch a tape of "My Fair Lady"!



Set design model by Peg Hill for "Footlighters" play The Golden Grotto, 1973

Local Theater, A Tradition: Dryden Opera House and Freeville Lyceum

Mini exhibit in the Ken and Libbie Brown case in DTHS exhibit room.

The support for local theater and the arts was popular in the town of Dryden from the late 19th century. Dryden Opera House and Freeville Lyceum drew performers from the local area and professionals from the northeast.



In the Ken and Libbie Brown case. These beautiful fans in original boxes are part of the Southworth Homestead collection.

DTHS Exhibit Room is filled with all sorts of interesting items!



Exhibit Room



Mason at work on the Southworth Homestead entrance piers.

NOTE

**July 14, 2018 Open Gate Garden Tour
Saturday 9 AM – 2 PM**

DTHS joins with Dryden Beautification Brigade
DTHS will be participating with a display and historical information.

The 2018 OP Sale was a success.

Once again, our members and friends came through with a terrific array of sale-worthy donations. From the first hot, humid day through the second chilly, damp day, eager shoppers bought: camping gear, china, linens, furniture, toys, books, jewelry, sewing notions, vintage clothing, sport memorabilia, and well, the list goes on and on. Several people mentioned that they looked forward to our sale each year. Our prices were very reasonable and our customers went away happy.

This year we moved the sales tent to the back of the south parking lot to avoid damaging the newly seeded lawn. The location had the advantage of being on dry, level ground and received positive feedback.

We want to acknowledge with heartfelt gratitude, the people who came out to help with setting up, selling, and packing up: Ken Carnes, Bill Hornbuckle, John Kiefer, Sue and Sam Morrie, Mike Murphy, Gina Prentiss, Joan and Bob Watros, Missy, Isaac and Christian Young.

At the end of the day, our efforts brought in \$1,812.10. Thank you, all!

Shirley Price and Mary Hornbuckle



June 2 Successful 2018 Opportunity Sale



New Welcome Garden

There is a new welcome garden by the Southworth east entrance with astilbes, hellebore and ferns. Put in with the help of Stevie Lazenby, on left; Mary Hornbuckle, on right, Bob Watros, Janice Williams, James Kirkwyland and Gina Prentiss helped. May it prosper.



Setting the bases for the reconstructed entrance columns

Over the past few years, we have included excerpts from Bob Watros' Life Story. We hope you have enjoyed reading these stories about growing up and raising a family in Dryden. The stories have been about his move to Dryden in 1946, his school years, and his first car. Following is his story about his first career.

A CAREER IN TELECOMMUNICATIONS

In September of 1954, I started my senior year in high school. Due to the school fire earlier in the year, classes were still scheduled for half-day sessions. My stepfather, Harold, was working at the Dryden Telephone Corporation at that time. That firm was one of the many "independent" phone companies throughout the country providing telephone service in rural areas. Most people thought of the Bell System as the only provider of telephone service. They did serve just about all the population centers in the U.S. However, small companies that were "independent" of that system provided telephone service for many rural communities. The Dryden firm was owned by local stockholders. The principal owner was William B Harrison. His son W. Bradford Harrison managed the Dryden operations. Brad knew of my mechanical interest and asked Harold to have me see him about a job.

On the next day, September 20th, I stopped in at the company office on South Street to see Brad. He informed me the company had a pole hole digging machine that was in need of repair and asked me to work on it in my free time. At the time the regular workers worked five and one half days per week. He said the job would last about two weeks and would be only temporary. I accepted the job offer and started the next day at one dollar per hour. Those men working at the telephone company at the time were: Brad Harrison, Ernest Patz, Frank Migilis and Harold. Brad came from Alfred to manage the Dryden area when his father bought the company in 1952. Ernie left New Jersey Bell and moved to Dryden, to be the working foreman. Frank came to the company as a Cable Splicer from the New York Telephone Co. in New York City.

The equipment I was assigned to work on was a modified army WWII Scout Car on a chassis made by the White Motor Car Company. Mounted on the rear was a large gear-driven power digger powered by a Ford Model A engine. Brad had purchased another digger unit for parts, as the machine was obsolete. It was a

complicated piece of equipment, which included a Model T type transmission and a large final drive assembly. There were no maintenance manuals or other information to assist in repairs. I carefully observed each part as I disassembled it, in order to put it back together. At the end of about two weeks, I had completely rehabilitated the unit by replacing worn parts. After final adjustments the men drove it over to Lewis Street and proceeded to dig a pole hole. The machine worked almost as good a new.

I guess Brad was impressed with my work as he assigned me a second project. The Dryden exchange was converted to dial service that summer. Many of the telephones without dials had been recovered to rehabilitate and reuse. Brad set me to installing dials in each one, refurbishing and testing it, to make it ready for reinstallation.

A few weeks into that project, hurricane Hazel hit Dryden. There was wide spread destruction and telephone lines were down everywhere. I was sent into the field to help

Career, continued on page 5



April 24, 2018 Early spring and Bob Watros is seeding the front lawn of the Southworth Homestead

Career, continued from page 4

with the restoration of service, which took several weeks. Service was restored to the area only a few weeks when we were hit with a wet, heavy snowstorm on Election Day. Many more wires came down. Again I was sent out to help on repairing the facilities. When I finally returned to my telephone repair project and completed it, I was about to graduate from high school. Brad asked me to consider working at the telephone company full time as soon as school was over. I eagerly accepted his offer.

Over the next year, I learned much about telephony including climbing poles. In the spring of 1956, Brad asked me if I was interested in attending a training school in Rochester covering the maintenance of the dial switching equipment. The training was to last six weeks and I would have to pay my living expenses. I accepted, and was off to Rochester and found the school a real challenge. The things that were mechanical, I found easy, while the electrical concepts were difficult for me. However, I successfully completed the course and returned to devote much of my time to the switching systems.

I enjoyed my work very much and determined the telecommunications field would be my vocation. In the fall of 1956, I decided that further education would enhance my career, so I enrolled at Morrisville Technical College studying electrical technology. I continued to work part-time at the telephone company. I found the college course work to be extremely difficult as I had none of the prerequisites in high school. Concentration was also difficult as I was now going with Joan who was attending college at Alfred. After a few weeks, I caught the flu that was going around and was sick for a week. That ended my attempt at further education. I returned to the telephone company full-time and worked in Sanborn, near Niagara Falls for a time. Ultimately, I returned to Dryden where I remained for the duration of my career.

Beginning in 1956, the company experienced rapid growth through acquisitions. The Dryden Telephone merged with several other telephone firms to form the Independent Telephone Corporation. The financing was done through various investment companies on Wall Street. For a time, the organization had its headquarters in Dryden and remained under the control of the Harrison family. The number of people employed by the company grew rapidly. In 1962, I was promoted to the position of Plant Supervisor, responsible for the installation and maintenance of all the telephone facilities

in the Dryden area. In 1963, the investment firms in New York began to take full control, and arranged for the merger with several companies around the country. That was the start of the consolidation of the independent telephone industry that continued throughout my tenure.

Continental Telephone Corporation assumed control in 1964 and was to last for twenty-eight years. The Harrison family no longer played an active role in the company. There were numerous management structures initiated over the years. Many upper managers were hired and fired. Some were good leaders and others were incompetent. A few were alcoholics. I held a number of job titles over my career. Most were in first level management. I always enjoyed a good relationship with my immediate superiors, but can't say the same for some of the upper level managers.

Like any large organization, there was a certain amount of politics and conformance required. I did not always excel in that regard. I had the good fortune of having good people as subordinates. My group was always in the top ranks of all the various measurements of performance. As a result, I avoided the heavy pressures many other managers operated under and also enjoyed the financial rewards that were tied to performance measurements.

Continental Telephone merged with GTE in 1991. There was a major restructuring of the entire organization. Many of my associates were highly disturbed with the different culture in the GTE organization. I did not share those feelings as I believed that GTE had a superior structure and looked forward to the changes.

As with all mergers, there was a need to effect a reduction in the number of employees. Several incentive programs resulted the retirement of many people. In 1992, I was presented with a retirement package that was too good to refuse. So on January 8, 1993 at the age of 55 and with 39 years of service, I retired. I was lucky to have worked in a field I loved. Leaving the only place I had ever worked was in deed a sad time. I shall always remember the sound of the latch as the door closed behind me for the final time.

Listings of APPRECIATIONS and CONTRIBUTIONS

December 7, 2017 through June 5, 2018

Southworth Homestead Project:

Ewald & Sharon Bleck	Ann Brady	Leslie A. Chatterton	Myra J. Fincher	Stephen M. Kilts
Christopher J. Lowe	Claudia K. Melin & Charles R. Smith		Doris Nitsios	Aiden E. Payne
Bard & Gina Prentiss	Barbara M. Shew (In memory of Randy Shew)			Robert & Dorothy Slocum
Donald E. Turk	Robert J. Watros (Front driveway realignment)			Harry Weston

In memory of

Viola Lane: Edward P. Brennan	Jarrel & Faye Butts	Joan Cox	Dryden Senior Citizens
Mary Hornbuckle	Anne M. Koreman	Glen Morey	Doris Nitsios
Terry & Liessa Murphy	Thomas Sinclair and Julie Powell		

Bob Luss: Marlene Luss

Seraphim Nitsios: Doris Nitsios

Shirley Olds: Jack Bush

Joyce N. Perkins: Brad & Kathy Perkins

Paul Perkins: Brad & Kathy Perkins

Horace Shackelton, Jr.: Shirley Shackelton

Robert & Christine Slocum: Robert & Dorothy Slocum

C. Robert Southworth, MD: Rose Marie Southworth

Sibley Stewart: Letha B. Sutton

Dewey & Roberta Whitford: Maureen D. Finn

Belle Snyder Wolcott and Harold & Muriel Wolcott: Pamela Shoemaker

"a family member": Ann Brady

DTHS General Fund:

David & Brenda Armstrong	Paul E. Dedrick	Mark N. Goldfarb	Jeanette M. Knapp
Michael Lane	Charles L. Logan, Sr.	Elizabeth C. Schmerhorn	

Gift Memberships from:

Jeanette M. Knapp	Robert & Dorothy Slocum	Richard Sweetland
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Genealogy Research:

Dryden Senior Citizens: "anonymous"

"Our Business Supporters:

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Freeville Publishing Co.	Michael Lane, Attorney	

IN MEMORIAM

Viola Simons Lane

April 29, 1917 - April 10, 2018

Mrs. Lane was a charter member and DTSH supporter. Her faithful participation in all programs and events is missed.

Joyce McKinney Perkins

Jan. 20, 1923 - June 1, 2018

Mrs. Perkins was a greeter in DTSH Homestead Historic Tours.



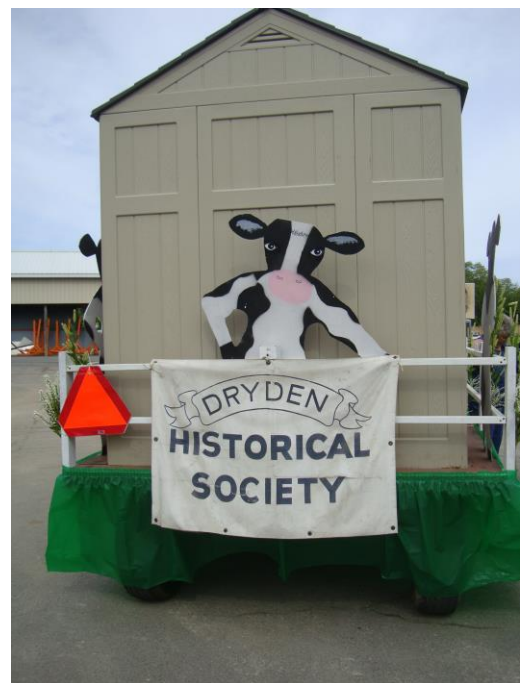
Driveway Re-alignment project



June 9 Dairy Day at Montgomery Park. Mary Hornbuckle staffs the DTSH table filled with Dryden history display, books for sale.



DTSH Dairy Day float "Thinking about Dairy and Local Farms" designed by Shirley Price. from left: Gina Prentiss, waver; Joshua Prentiss, waver; John Kiefer, tractor diver, Shirley and Luke, in bovine costume.



June 9 Dairy Day parade, rear view of DTSH float which won 2nd prize!



Southworth Homestead trim painting underway by Doug Wallenbeck Painting and Staining. Doug is in the bucket!

Dryden Town Historical
Society

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If so, please send us an email with "Prefer Newsletter Electronically" in the subject line to drydennyhistory@gmail.com.

Dryden Town Historical Society
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