

Carriage House Crier

WOLCOTT HISTORICAL SOCIETY • P.O. Box 51, Wolcott, NY 14590

Summer 2015

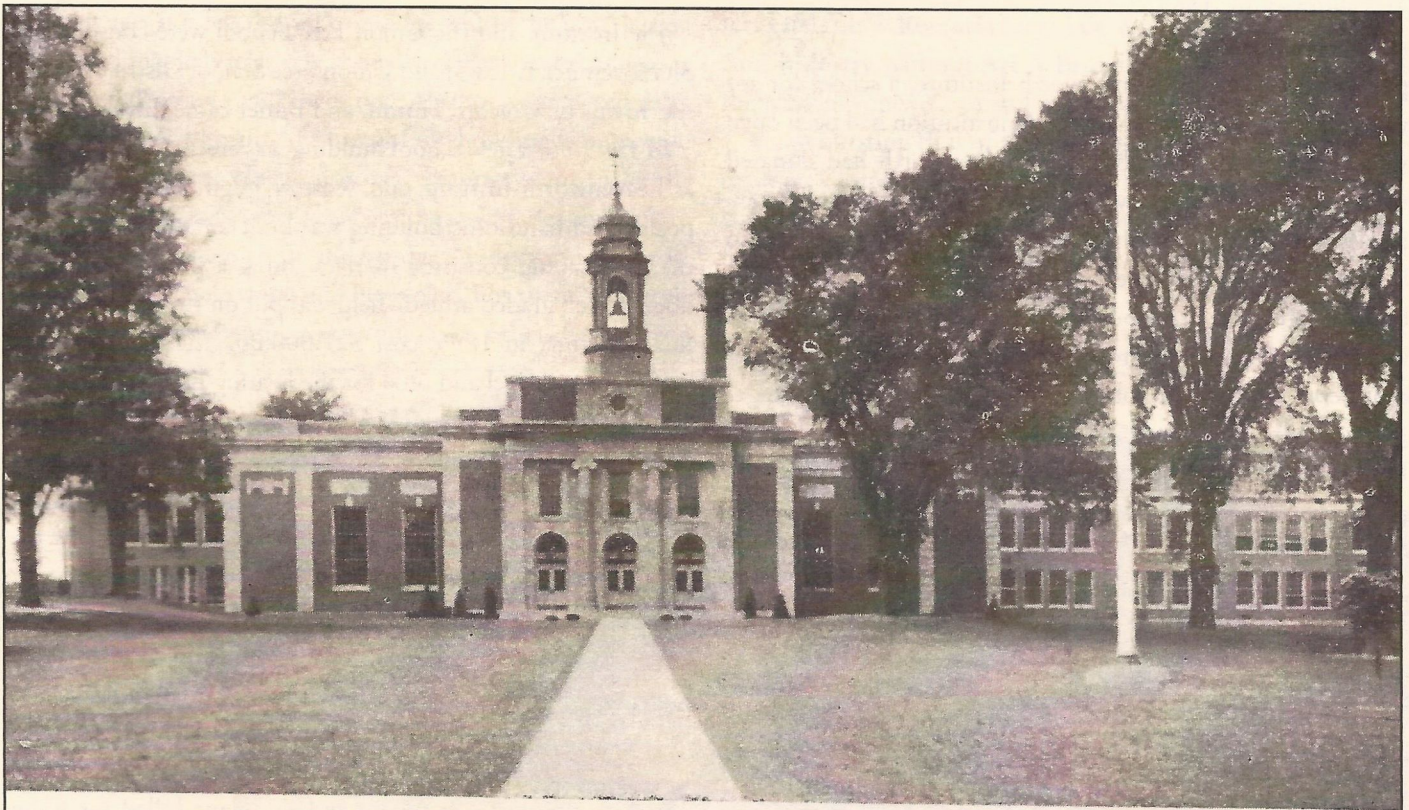
www.wolcottny.org

FREE

To sponsor a newsletter, contact Norma Stewart at rhstewart@mail.com or Mary Ann Ryan at tommaryryan1@gmail.com.

WHO'S TURNING 80 THIS YEAR?

If you guessed Leavenworth Central School, you're correct! There is some history on the early school system in Wolcott. When the settlers came, homes were built first, next places to worship and schools for their children.



LEAVENWORTH CENTRAL SCHOOL

The first schools in the district were one rooms which served all grade levels. The girls sat on one side and the boys the other. This arrangement can be seen at the Huron schoolhouse. There was one schoolteacher. Historical records say that the first log schoolhouse was built in 1810 on a site west of the present Presbyterian Church. That would be on the southwest corner of West Main and Draper Streets. 1812 Melvin gave some land to build another schoolhouse approximately where

NAPA is today. In 1813, Jonathan Melvin donated land where the present day Baptist Church and Northup Park are located. He specified that the land was to be used for school purposes, religious events, traveling entertainment, and society meetings. This building was built of lumber from Melvin's saw mill. A few years later the building was moved across the street as addition to the hotel.

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A needed new school, built of lumber and painted red, became known as the Old Red Schoolhouse. This school was built on the northwest corner of New Hartford and Washington Streets. Once again, the building was used for various activities, as well as school. In 1843, a two story schoolhouse took the place of the smaller Old Red Schoolhouse. This burned in 1865, and the public school



1st Leavenworth Institute

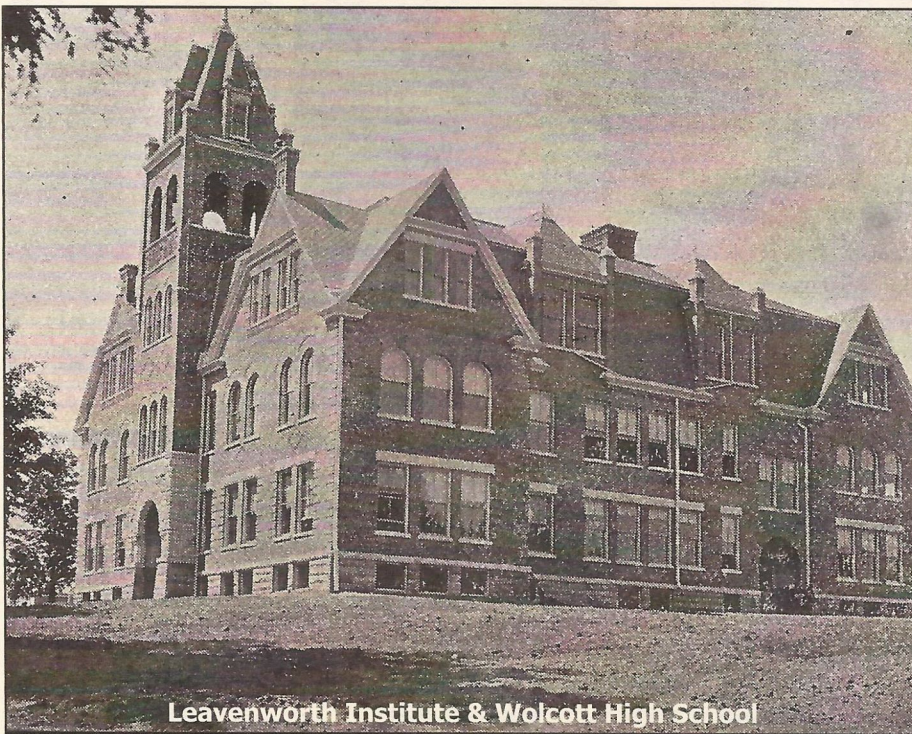
pupils were moved to Leavenworth Institute, a school for advanced pupils. This higher academic institution had been open since 1856. The Honorable Isaac Leavenworth had donated the site and half the money to build it. The other half of the expenses were paid for by subscriptions. The Village Hall was also located there. The Institute gave complete academic courses for business or college to a group of young gentlemen, who studied under the principal. A group of young ladies studied under a preceptress. With the older institute students and younger public students studying under one roof, Wolcott had a real Educational Center!

The Institute and the Union Free School were consolidated on November 1, 1865, and Union Free School District No.1 of the Towns of Wolcott, Huron, and Butler came into being.

In 1895-96, a new school building was erected, to be known as Leavenworth Institute and Wolcott High School. This imposing and handsome building was built on a knoll and with the landscaping consisted of trees lining a path to the front door. A well graded athletic field was put on the grounds. This fine structure, in 1895, cost \$27,000.00. The basement was below ground level and used for the heating plant and storage. The first floor was for the grades and teachers' room. Second floor used for academic preparatory, two general class rooms,

drawing, laboratory, study hall, and the principal's office. The top floor was the auditorium, with a seating capacity for 1,000. Later 2 rooms were finished to provide a gymnasium and a lunch room.

In 1934 this stately brick building was torn down as it was deemed not large enough for a centralized school, parts of it unsafe and the plans called for room for future expansion. A larger school was planned and the new building would be known as Leavenworth Central School. When the old school was demolished, I've heard that the bricks were buried on the grounds. Does anyone have facts about this? The next episode in this school saga is the building of Leavenworth Central.



Leavenworth Institute & Wolcott High School

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With the former Leavenworth Institute & Wolcott High School demolished, the students for one school year, had classes in other places in town: churches, Masonic Temple, Grange Building, American Legion Rooms, Metcalf's Annex and the National Bank Building. In just one year (1934-1935), Leavenworth Central School was built giving employment to many local laborers. The cost of building and furnishing with up-to-date of equipment this magnificent school was approximately \$450,000.00!

In the June 1935 issue of the Lake Shore News, the following article was published: "TAKING OUT TREES— Work on School Campus Arouses Some Opposition To take their minds off from Venus, a good many people are becoming agitated about the removal of the old maples from the school campus. Frank DeForest is pulling up rows along either side of the front walk. They're rock maples, well over three-quarters of a century old, set too closely together in the first place and beginning to feel their age. It is felt that all would die within the next decade (for a hard maple is relatively short-lived tree), and that now is the accepted time to pull them out. Also they are placed as to hide the best architectural features of the building from people passing along New Hartford Street. Feelings seem to be divided, but unquestionably there are those who deeply deplore the removal of these trees, and are becoming vocal about it. Doubtless the whole thing will blow over, but there have been numerous protests, while at the same time, others have agreed

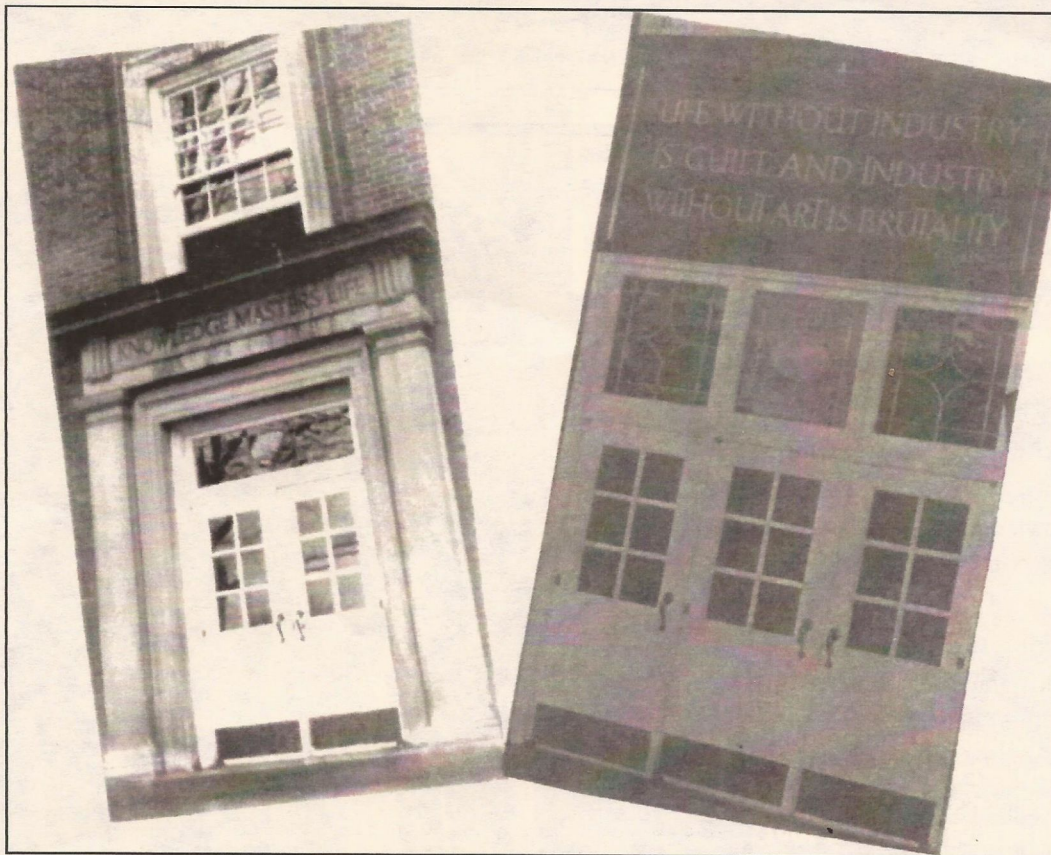
that the right thing was being done."

The dedication was on August 30, 1935. At this time Mrs. Ida Cosad succeeded her husband as the School Commissioner, (later title changed to District Superintendent.) Mrs. Cosad made the statement that "Leavenworth Central School is not an achievement of this present day and hour, but its new, dignified and magnificent garb, it is the soul of generations of men and women whose dreams and public spirit have made this community what it is." Leavenworth has three floors plus the basement. At this dedication the General Contractors of The Benz Engineering Corp. of Salamanca, NY, turned over the school structure to the district. Ralph Paddock, President of the Board of Education, accepted the building. The ceremony was held in the auditorium and it was filled to capacity. The auditorium has always been beautiful, but just imagine it when it was new!

The inscriptions over the doorways, front: **Knowledge Masters Life...F.W.Roe**, and back: **Life Without Industry is Guilt, And Industry without Art is Brutality.....Ruskin**. Ever read them when you went in and out the school doors?

The graduating class of 1935 held the ceremonies at the Presbyterian Church, as the school wasn't quite ready. This picture is on display at the Carriage House Museum, Wolcott. The first class to graduate from Leavenworth Central was the Class of 1936.

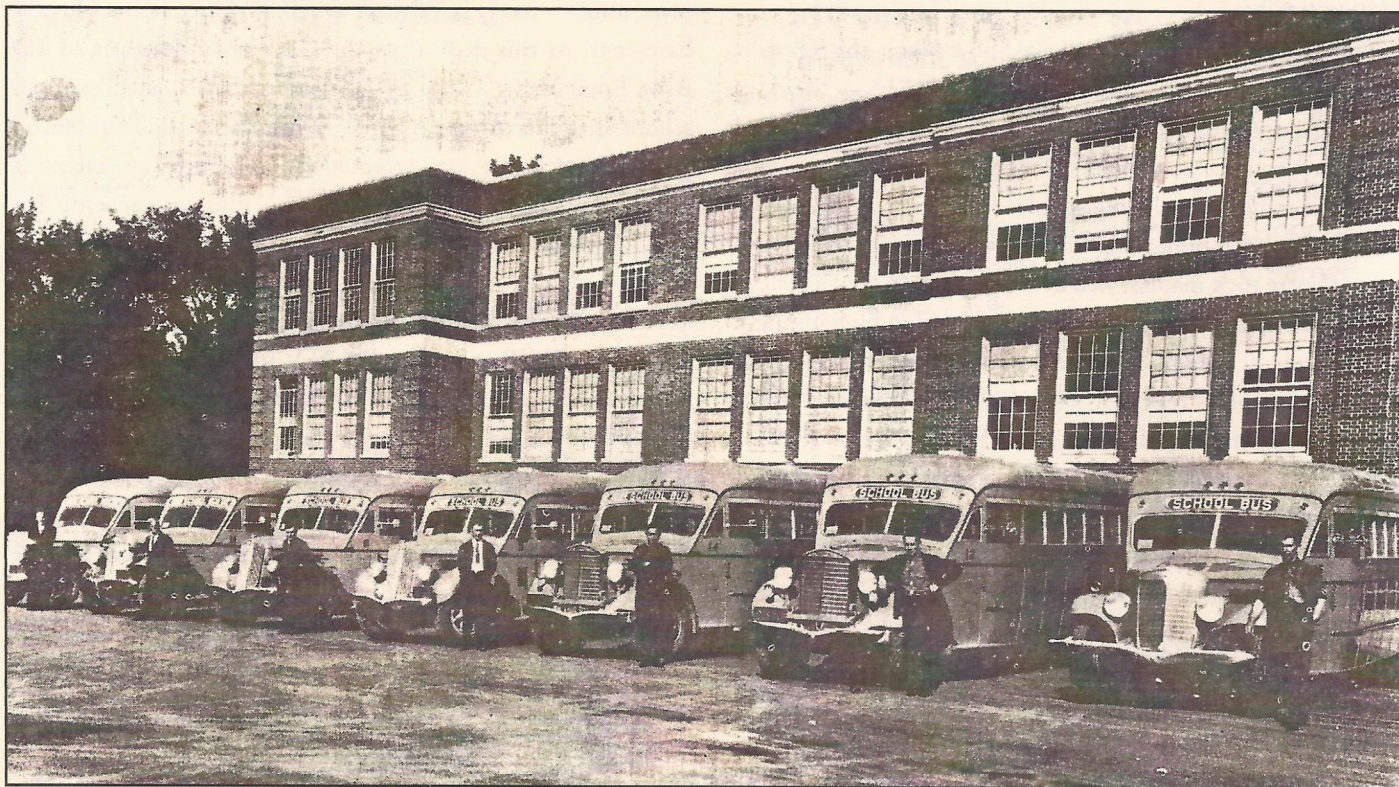
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The 1936 graduates were: Howard A. Bacon, Jane Bessy, Elsie L. Covill, Ruth M. Dates, Albert Dobbin, Stanley E. Farnam, Lawrence E. Foster, Gordon Fowler, Ruth D. Harnden, Karl L. Helliesen, Esther M. Hutchinson, Karlyne D. Kinney, Donald C. Knapp, Matilda R. Chatfield, Pauline S. LeFevre, Melvin E. Mack, Everette A. McCloud, John E. Osborn, Katherine Palmer, Mary L. Pittenger, Charlotte M. Quance, Leon E. Reynolds, Eleanor M. Richardson, Harriet M. Smith, Helen

M. Soules, Richard C. Spross, Lyle H. Stoughtenger, Mary Valentine, Irene Van Vleck, Sarah M. Van Deusen, Dorotha H. Versprill, Mildred E. Walker, Kathryn N. Ward. One of the awards went to Leon Reynolds for best Work in Agricultural, \$2.50, donated by the local Grange.

The fleet of school buses and drivers are pictured at the new school.

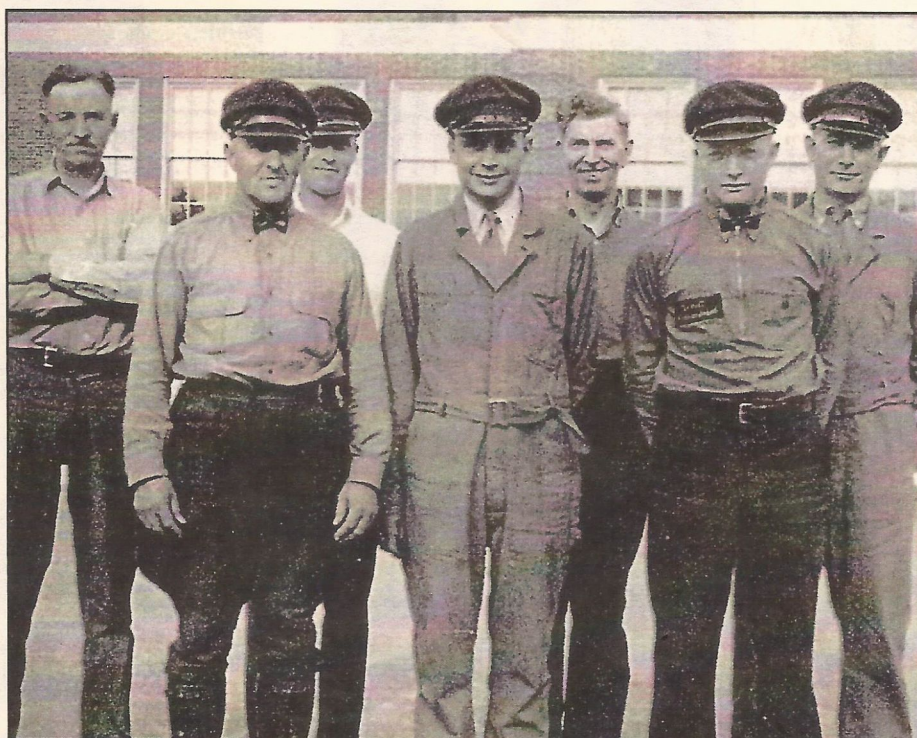


BUS DRIVERS

Back row: Floyd Briggs, Clate Van-Houte, Eugene Fitch, Charlie Bush,
Front row: Mack Park, Leon Eynor, Fred Lander

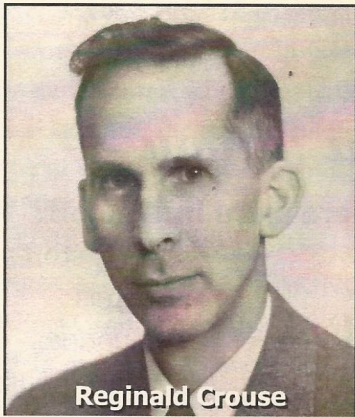
Some of the teachers that were there in the Fall of '35 to welcome the students were: Myrtle Carr, English & dramatics; Gertrude Fowler, mathematics; Esther Ferguson (Searle), music; Robert Bradbury, physical ed and coach; Betty Wilmoth (Nelson), Alice Payne, Lena Knapp, 7th & 8th grades; Calla Green, Hazel Bennett, Ora Fransisco, Bertha VanVleck, Edna Flatt, Bernice Eynor were a few of the grade school teachers.

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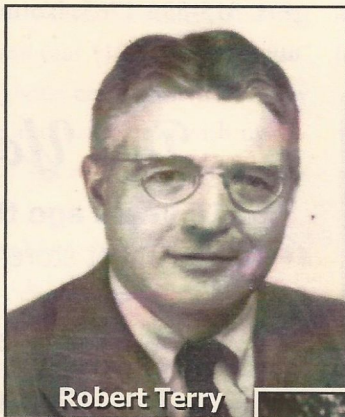


When the new school opened in September 1935, the total enrollment was 717. The principal at this time was Ralph S. Herre.

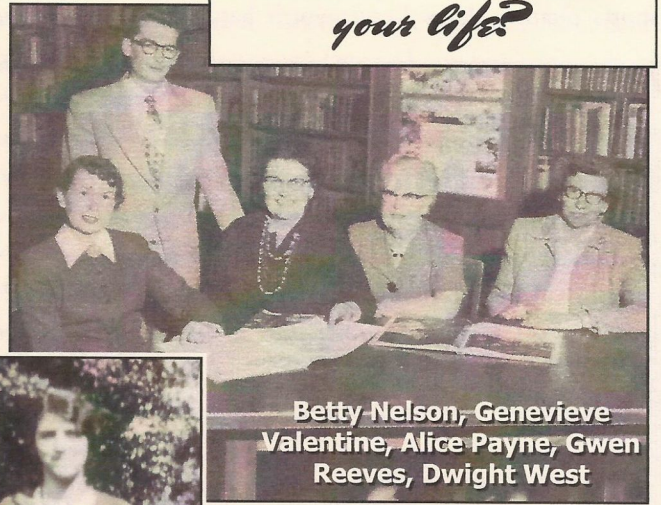
*Did any of these
educators influence
your life?*



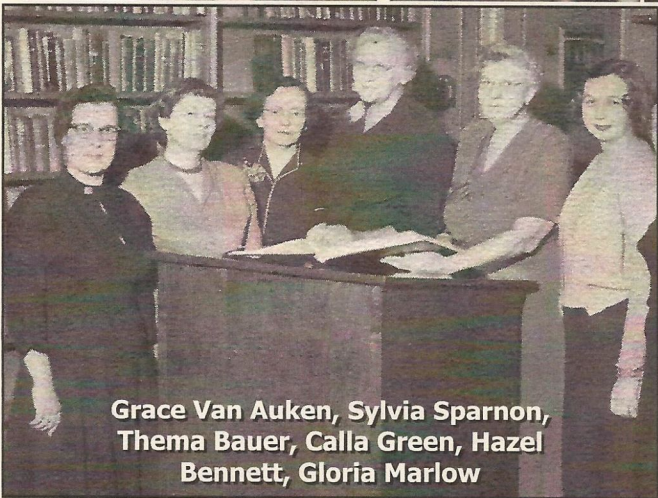
Reginauld Crouse



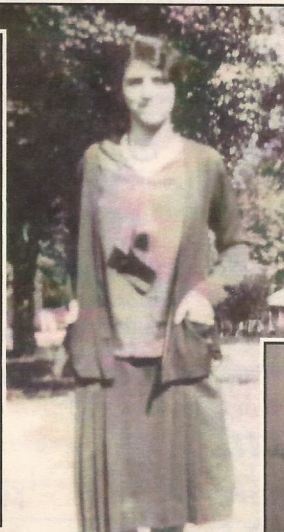
Robert Terry



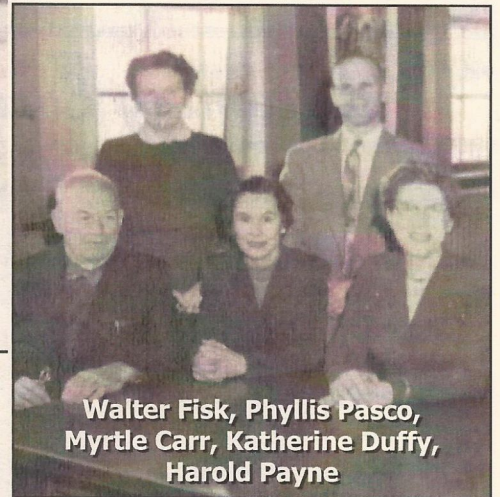
Betty Nelson, Genevieve Valentine, Alice Payne, Gwen Reeves, Dwight West



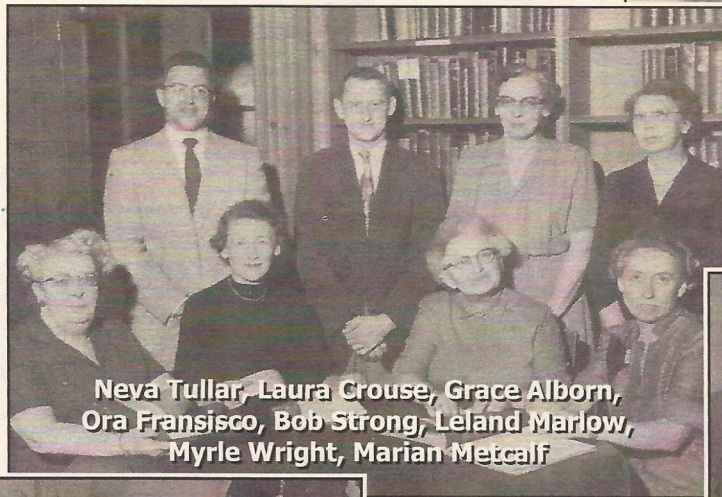
Grace Van Auken, Sylvia Sparnon, Thema Bauer, Calla Green, Hazel Bennett, Gloria Marlow



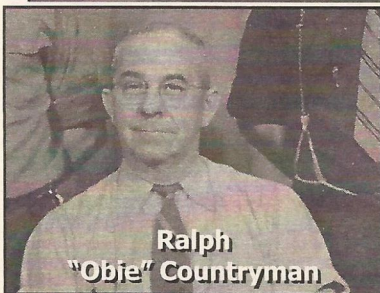
Gertrude Fowler



Walter Fisk, Phyllis Pasco, Myrtle Carr, Katherine Duffy, Harold Payne

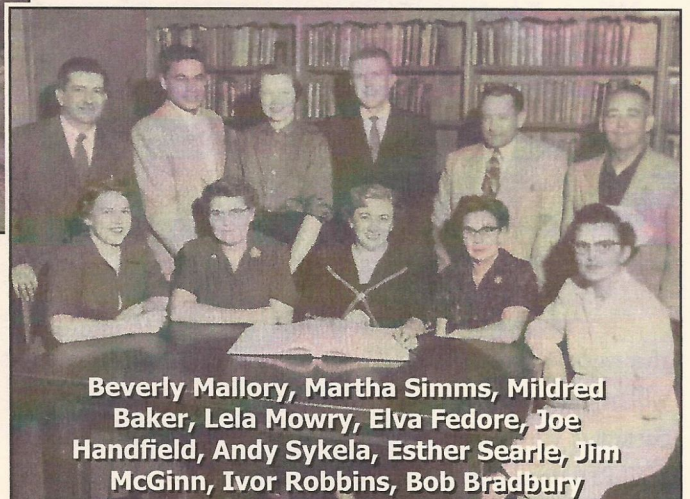


Neva Tullar, Laura Crouse, Grace Alborn, Ora Fransisco, Bob Strong, Leland Marlow, Myrle Wright, Marian Metcalf



Ralph "Obie" Countryman

**Not an educator,
but by example
great work ethics!**



Beverly Mallory, Martha Simms, Mildred Baker, Lela Mowry, Elva Fedore, Joe Handfield, Andy Sykela, Esther Searle, Jim McGinn, Ivor Robbins, Bob Bradbury

The Carriage House Museum has loaned a room for the Leavenworth Alumni to set up a display of much of the memorabilia of Leavenworth. The Librarian's desk is one of the center pieces. There are Senior trip composite pictures, yearbooks, sports pictures, large Leavenworth banner, Alumni banquet

pictures, grade school desks, Senior Class pictures, programs, and much more. Museum will be open from 10-2(Aug. 8) or for a special time call Bob Stell, 315-594-9065; Linda Shippers, 315-594-2765; Norma Stewart, 315-594-9361, to open museum.

Wolcott Historical Society

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TRUSTEE / HISTORIAN

315-594-9361

Did You Know ...

110 years ago there were in Wolcott:

- 4 department stores
- 4 drug stores
- 4 grocery stores
- 4 hotels
- 1 wood working shop
- 2 foundries
- 1 electric company
- 1 opera house
- 1 pickle & sauerkraut factory
- 1 cannery
- 1 billiard & pool hall
- 1 creamery
- 1 flour & feed mill
- 1 cider mill
- 1 bakery & confectionery
- 4 blacksmith shops

There were also: 5 physicians, 6 attorneys, 2 dentists, 3 opticians, 2 veterinarians, 2 newspapers and 2 banks.

There were 5 churches: Presbyterian, Baptist, Methodist, Episcopal, Protestant Methodist Church. We also had a railroad station, coal and lumber yards.

This information was gleaned from "Grips" Historical Souvenir of Wolcott.

Upcoming Events

- October — **Richard Camp book signing**
- November 21 — **Bake Sale** at Bob's Supermarket
- December — **Festival of Trees**
- For next year we are planning a **Tea Party, Wine Tasting Dinner, Annual Dinner/program**
- We ARE NOT planning a **YARD SALE** this year.

PLEASE NOTE:

that we have had to shorten our OPEN HOURS. The Museum will be open during the summer from 10-12 on Wednesday & Saturday. We do need docents for the these times. CAN YOU HELP? Contact one of the board members.

COMMEMORATIVE BRICK ORDER

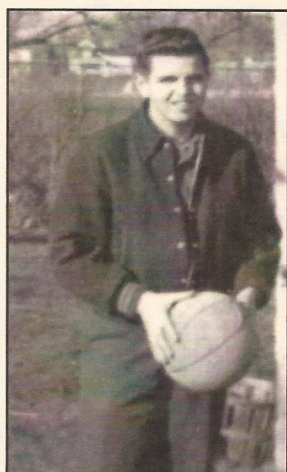
We will continue to take brick orders and place when we have received a minimum. If you would like information or to place an order please call Bob Stell 315-594-9065 or Linda Shippers 315-594-2765. Be sure to stop and view the many bricks that have already been placed in front of the museum.

ROBERT STELL

BOARD MEMBER BIO

Bob was born in Sodus, NY. At the age of 7, the family moved to Wolcott where his dad Chet became manager of the newly established Wolcott Produce Company.

His siblings include Kathy (Topping), Tom, and the late Suzanne (Warren). Bob graduated from Leavenworth Central School in 1955, and from Syracuse University—Business School in 1959. He served active duty, 3 1/2 years in the U.S.



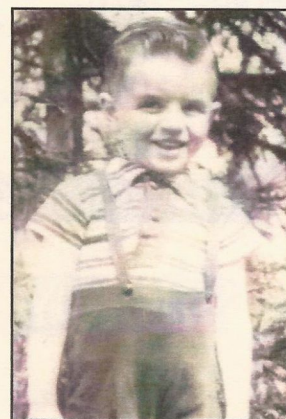
Army Signal Corps, then spent his working career as a sales and marketing field representative for Kordite Corp. (later Mobil Chemical), Macedon, NY, and from 1966-2002, with two firms out of Denver, CO, and Kansas City, MO. Bob lived in the Denver area, and for 22 years in Albuquerque, NM.

Upon retirement, 2002, he relocated back to Wolcott. Early and continuing involvement with the Wolcott Historical Society beginning with the relocation and reconditioning project of the Carriage House building, 2003-2005, along with many volunteers.

Bob's main interests include 19th and 20th centuries American and World History, with an emphasis on New York State and local history. He has had a life long interest in following

the major leagues of baseball, and during the growing up years, the Rochester Red Wings and the Syracuse Chiefs. He retains pleasant memories of American Legion summer ball in 1950's Wolcott, when Paul Palmer and Mike Alteri spent many hours coaching and guiding the young ball players.

Bob also served as President and Vice-President of the Historical Society. He is in charge of the grounds and maintenance at the museum. We celebrate him this year, 2015, as the Jim & Ruth Chatfield Volunteer of the Year recipient. You're a great guy, Bob Stell!



**Jim Chatfield, Ruth Chatfield,
Bob Stell, Rev. Jake Denny**

MEMBERSHIP

\$10.00 — Individual Membership

\$15.00 — Family Membership

\$20.00 — Group Membership

\$100.00 — Contributing & Sustaining Membership

\$500.00 - \$999.00 — Life Membership

\$1000.00 — Endowment Membership

Send to:

Wolcott Historical Society

P.O. Box 51

Wolcott, NY 14590

An excellent way to help secure the future of the Wolcott Historical Society is to designate the WHS as a beneficiary of your will, foundation, or trust. We are a non-profit 501-(c)-(3) corporation. Donations are tax deductible to the maximum extent allowed by law.

Donations

Iona Camp in memory of Bob Stewart

Charles & Renee Steves

Lyons National Bank

Fowler Bros, Inc.

Dennis Conger

Sandra Reiss

Bob Stell

Ann Sapp

Art Bush

Bob & Helen Delf

Pete & Carol Merrell

Thank you!



Wolcott Historical Society
P.O. Box 51
Wolcott, NY 14590

Thank you Phoebe Meijer for the beautiful plants and landscaping that surrounds the Museum.



Proclamation

Bob and Norma Stewart guided a small group of interested Wolcott people in visualizing then organizing, the Wolcott Historical Society in 1998. This group was successful in attaining a substantial roster of original members, providing some early revenue to proceed with the efforts to achieve a functioning organization. Bob and Norma kept those members informed and involved by publishing newsletters, writing local history articles, sorting and recording many types of local historical documents, books, photos, etc.

During the 17 years since, Bob and Norma have remained proactive in the working of the Society and the establishment and operation of the Carriage House Museum site not only with their time and know how, but also with financial support when and where special projects have needed a “boost” to proceed.

That they have made a major difference is certainly an understatement.

Thank you, Stewarts.

If you would like to know more about any of the subjects in this newsletter, contact any of the board members.