

~ The Vista ~

NEWSLETTER OF THE SCHUYLER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

END OF AN ERA IN MONTOUR FALLS

Two of the large Shepard-Niles buildings will be dismantled this summer.

It will truly be an end of an era when two of the massive factory buildings at Shepard-Niles come down and are erased from the familiar Montour Falls landscape.

Although still operational in a much smaller capacity, Shepard-Niles Crane & Hoist Company, which for many years served as the lifeblood of the Montour Falls community, will mostly now exist in the memories of those who worked there and their families.

It will also exist in the numerous photos and documents collected by the Historical Society and available to see in



Ed Cullen, Andrew Tompkins, Rick Hughey, and Dave Kunzman at Shepard's (photo by Kevin Hughey)

our Research Room.

Museum Director Andrew Tompkins, Kevin and Rick Hughey, whose father worked at Shepard's for many years, and former Shepard employees Ed Cullen and Dave Kunzman were recently able to tour and photograph the buildings before demolition begins.

During the tour Ed and Dave pointed out the many shops and work areas where the cranes and hoists were manufactured and assembled. It is somewhat hard to believe now, but during World War II Shepard's ran three shifts and employed 600 workers!

For more on Shepard's turn to page 6 and 7.

SOCIETY BOARD MEETINGS OPEN TO SOCIETY MEMBERS

All current members of the Historical Society are eligible to attend the Board of Trustee regular business meetings as a benefit of their membership. So, if you are a member and would like to see what we do, feel free to attend one of the upcoming meetings. This may be the first time an invitation has been extended. However, if you have ever

thought about helping out at the Board level, why not come to a meeting? They are typically held on the 4th Wednesday of most months, at 2:00 PM in the Research Room of the Brick Tavern Museum. The next three scheduled meeting dates are: JUNE 25, JULY 23 and AUGUST 27. Sometimes, summer meetings are cancelled, so call ahead 535-9741. *RO*

FROM THE MUSEUM DIRECTOR

ANDREW TOMPKINS

I would like to take a little space here to reflect upon the recent passing of two great guys who always had the best interests of our Society and Museum in mind.

Roy Craver and Don Riley, who both volunteered and served in various capacities here for years, are now gone but their legacies remain.

Roy and his wife Shirley both served on the Society's Board of Trustees and in officer posi-

tions. They were instrumental in raising funds for capital improvements to our old tavern building in the 1990s. I will miss Roy's calm and gentle nature.

Don Riley served as secretary on our Board for many years. He was always efficient and accurate with his note-taking and knew parliamentary procedure better than the rest of us. We often asked him for advice.

Besides serving as secretary, Don was the obituary collector for our

research room obituary files. He transferred obits to our card catalog system and kept us up to date. He easily cataloged over 10,000 obits on his old computer.

We will miss these men dearly. As you can see, their efforts on our behalf will leave a lasting legacy which will benefit future generations visiting and re-searching at the Museum.



NEWS OF THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND THE BRICK TAVERN MUSEUM

The spring season has been very busy for the Society and at the Museum.

On April 23rd we held our Society's annual meeting and program on the Watkins Glen State Park. The following week we sponsored a joint presentation with Dundee and Yates on the Native Americans of the Finger Lakes at the Tyrone Fire Hall. Then came the ZONTA Club/MF Library with their Montour Falls Historic House Tours,

which included a stop at our Museum.

Soon after that came our annual Victorian Tea, sponsored

this year by MuraBella's Italian Steakhouse in Montour Falls.

We also hosted the Burdett Ladies Wednesday Afternoon

Club for one of their monthly meetings. Finally, we toured the Watkins Glen Tiger Scouts through the Lee School Museum. We have much more to look forward to, including the Watkins Glen 4th graders visit and the Moose Club Benefit Breakfast on June 22nd.



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FROM SOCIETY PRESIDENT RICHARD OWLETT

The **2014 Annual Meeting** at the end of April accomplished several things, among which were a change in the Society Constitution allowing “a maximum of thirteen (13) Trustees” - down from a required 15 - and the election of 4 officers and 3 Trustees. The Board now consists of officers *President* Richard Owlett, *Vice President* Doris Pike, *Secretary* Bonnie Romeo and *Treasurer* Fred Hall. In order to stagger the terms in the future, Richard & Fred have 2-year terms, and Doris & Bonnie each have 3-year terms. The standard term for officers is two years.

The newly elected/re-elected Trustees are Jean Hubsch, Dave Lisk and Michael Grant. The Trustees whose terms are still in effect are Heidi Berghoff, Marian Boyce (also

the Schuyler County Historian), Bob Crippen, Paul Gillette, Nancy Whipple and Donna Wickham. The Trustee terms are three years.

The program for the Annual Meeting was presented by Josh Teeter of the Finger Lakes State Parks. The topic of his talk was the history of the Glen itself. Josh made a few million years of history just fly by! It was so interesting that we have asked him to do it again later this year.

Are you a resident of either the Town of Reading or the Town of Cayuta? If so, and have an interest in history, please call your Town Clerk and ask about becoming the Historian for your Town. Here are the numbers: Town of Reading, 535-7459 and Town of Cayuta, 594-2507.

RECENT PRESENTER HONORED BY NEW YORK STATE

Anthony J. “Tony” Specchio, Sr., who presented a program at the Museum last November around Veterans Day, was inducted into the New York State Senate Veterans’ Hall of Fame on May 20th.

Last November Tony spoke about growing up in Watkins Glen and being drafted during the Korean War. In Korea he served as a tank driver/commander along the 38th Parallel. He also spoke about witnessing the atomic bomb testing in Nevada.

Tony was inducted by State Sena-



Tony Specchio, Sr. in his fireman's uniform (photo by C. Haeffner)

tor Tom O’Mara at a ceremony in Albany. Inductees to the Hall are

chosen annually by state senators from within their respective legislative districts.

Tony has been active in many Schuyler County service organizations, such as the American Legion, Elks, VFW, AMVETS, Disabled American Veterans, and the Watkins Glen Fire Department. He’s also been active in local government, having served as a town supervisor and Schuyler County legislator.

Congratulations Tony for your well-deserved honor!

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MUSEUM RESOURCES

BOOKS FOR SALE

The Museum has many wonderful books and maps available for purchase. All prices include tax.
(Shipping is also available. Please call Museum at (607)535-9741 for shipping charges.)

Home in These Hills: A Young Woman's Diary

Author: Viola Coolbaugh / Published: 2010 - 82 pages /
Price: \$10.35

A Link in the Great Chain: A Hist. of the Chemung Canal

Author: Gary Emerson / Published: 2004 - 100 pages /
Price: \$13.50

The Stoneware of Havana, N.Y.; and its makers 1850-88

Author: Allen F. Sweet / Published: 2011 - 87 pages / Price:
\$24.30

Around Watkins Glen: Images of America

Author: Charles R. Mitchell & Kirk W. House / Published:
2006 - 128 pages / Price: \$21.50

**Schuyler County Days Bygone: An Historical look at
Schuyler County**

Author: Barbara H. Bell / Published: 2008 - 338 pages /
Price: \$26.00

History & Families: Schuyler County, NY

Author: John Potter, ed., Schuyler County Historical Society /
Published: 2005 - 144 pages (hardcover) / Price:
\$21.50 or \$32.40 (leather)

Seneca Hope: The Life and Landscapes of James Hope

Author: Frank W. Steber / Published: 2012 - 118 pages /
Price: \$16.25

Seneca Dawn: The Pioneer Journey of John Dow

Author: Frank W. Steber / Published: 2007 - 114 pages /
Price: \$16.25

Seneca Sunrise: The Life and Times of Frederick Davis, Jr.

Author: Frank W. Steber / Published: 2002 - 134 pages /
Price: \$13

Watkins Glen Tour Guide

Author: Gordon D. Cooper / Published: 2009 - 320 pages /
Price: \$32.50

Town of Catharine History, Schuyler County, New York

Author: Carol Tetz Fagnan / Published: 2003 - 408 pages
(hardcover) / Price: \$43.25

**The History of the Town of Catharine, Schuyler County,
NY**

Author: Louise Cleaver / Published: 1945 - 686 Pages
(hardcover) / Price: \$54

Early History, &c., The Village of Havana, NY, Illustrated

Editor: W.E. Morrison & Co. / Published: 1976 - 400 pages
(hardcover) / Price: \$59.50

**Early History, &c., The Towns of Catharine, Hector, Veteran,
Catlin, Dix & Montour, 1798-1870**

Editor: W.E. Morrison & Co. / Published: 1976 - 100 pages
(hardcover) / Price: \$37.80

1873 Village of Watkins Map reproduction, 23"x17"

Price: \$32.95

1874 Atlas of Schuyler County reprint

Price: \$53.95

Duplicate school yearbooks available for purchase!

**Watkins Glen High School: 1938, 1946-1951, 1954, 1955,
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70TH ANNIVERSARY 1944 - 2014

Pvt. Edwin F. Carpenter of Odessa was killed at Normandy on June 6, 1944.

As part of Company A, 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment (PIR), 82nd Airborne Division, Private Carpenter was killed during the invasion to free Europe from Nazi Germany.

Born in 1920, Edwin was the son of Cleon and Mabel Carpenter of Odessa. His father, also a veteran, predeceased him in 1934.

Carpenter graduated from Odessa High School in 1938. He played centerfield for his high school baseball team and, according to *The Odessan* yearbook, was very much involved in sports. He had been in the Army for three years before his death,



Pvt. Edwin F. Carpenter

initially training in the Signal Corps.

During the period of action from June 6 to July 13, his regiment, the 508th PIR, lost 336 men during intense fighting at Normandy.

Under Edwin Carpenter's name in the 1938 *The Odessan* yearbook his classmates write, "For various reasons we figure Ed will be a politician. He would be able to talk knowingly about athletics (he plays very well), dramatics, dancing, etc."

The quote he chose for himself senior year seems somewhat sad based on his later circumstance- "I strove with none. For none were worth my strife." Carpenter is buried in Laurel Hill Cemetery near Odessa. Schuyler County lost close to fifty men during World War II.

VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION

The grounds of the Museum and the Lee and Wedgwood Schools have been ably maintained by dedicated volunteers who must be recognized.

Wayne Chapman mows and weed whacks the front and sides of the Museum as an RSVP volunteer.

PhilJo Smith, a neighbor to the back of the Museum, mows our large back lawn with his ride-on when he does his own yard.

Michael Grant recently pruned all our hedges before the Victorian Tea- they needed it.

Roy Evans mows and maintains the area around the Wedgwood School.

Last but not least, **Bob Symes**, who mows, plants flowers, and weeds the Lee School grounds and keeps a watchful eye over our first museum.

Without these volunteers we would have a real hard time keeping our building grounds so well maintained and attractive to visitors. If you see any of these men out and about please thank them for their dedication.

Also, have you noticed that we now have fancy thank you and membership reminder postcards? These were designed, purchased, and donated by Board member **Bonnie Romeo**. Thank her as well!





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MUSEUM RESOURCES

HISTORICAL PHOTOS

William H. Shepard, Sr. purchased a small foundry in Havana (now Montour Falls) in 1878. By 1880 he and his two sons, William Jr. and James, started their own company known as William H. Shepard & Sons. They produced small farm implements, such as barn door hangers, stump pullers, and plows at their original plant shown at right.

They soon expanded their business to include iron structural works and bridges. William Jr. died in a tragic accident in 1892. James, a mechanical genius, continued on but decided to focus on developing

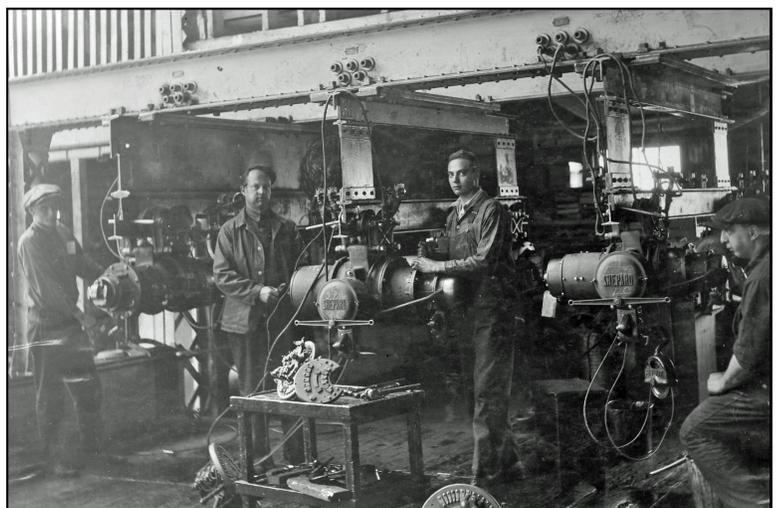


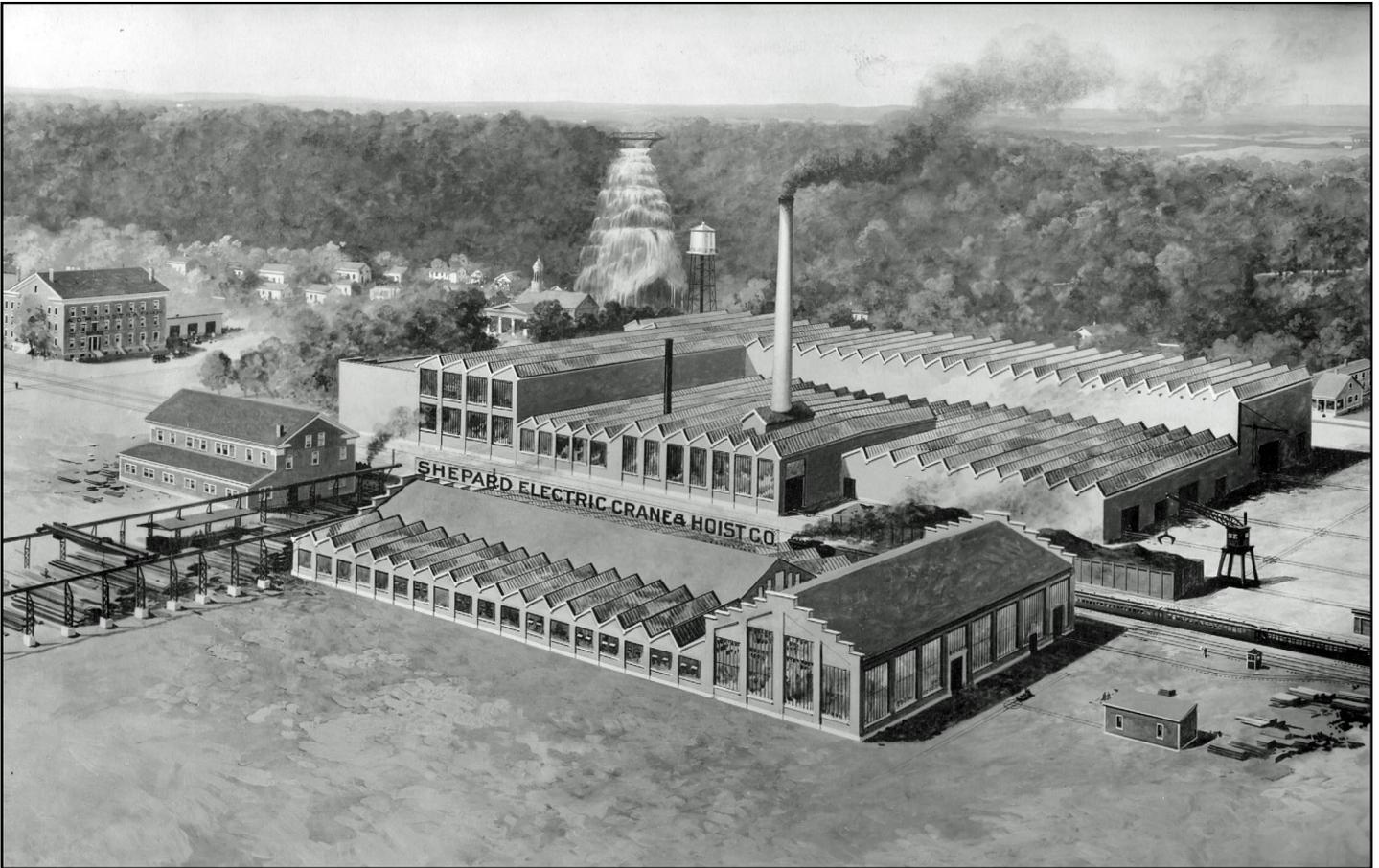
more reliable cranes and hoists. He became one of the early pioneers of the electric wire-rope hoist. His innovations continued unabated in the early 1900s. He invented the pneumatic riveter and pneumatic hoisting outfit used for building and erecting bridges. He designed air motors and the chain hoist driven by pneumatic motor. In 1903 he built the first electrically operated hoist and placed it on the market.

James developed gearing systems and drive designs that are still in use today. In fact, Shepard products helped America triumph in World War I and II. They hoisted the first atomic device into place for testing. In 1959 their cranes helped in the production of the first nuclear powered merchant vessel. By 1962 they were helping NASA hoist missiles onto launch pads. Shepard Niles became synonymous with craftsmanship and ingenuity.



By the 1980s Shepard's started suffering from labor disputes and a sagging economy. Manufacturing jobs were being lost to overseas competition and the need for heavy industrial equipment in America dropped. In 2002 Finnish company Konecranes purchased Shepard Niles and continues to service and repair cranes as Shepard Niles with a much reduced staff. Shepard's also continues to make new heavy duty hoists and hot metal hoists under their own brand name. The extensive industrial campus, once used to make bridges and enormous cranes, is no longer needed to service current clients.





Here is a somewhat stylized marketing piece produced by the **Shepard Electric Crane & Hoist Company** as it was known until its purchase of the Niles Crane Division of Niles, Bement and Pond in 1928. On the far left is the Montour House. The artist took license with the rendering of Shequaga Falls in the middle. The current owner plans on dismantling two of the large machine shops with slanted roofs this summer.



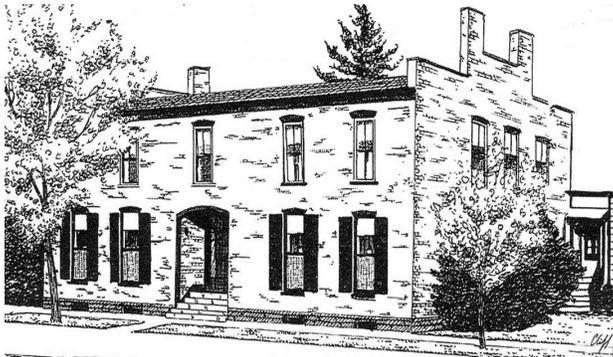
Current views of the interior (*left*) and exterior (*right*) of one of the Shepard buildings to come down. The buildings are in general disrepair but at one time served their purposes extremely well.





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Editor:
Andrew Tompkins



Operation of the Brick Tavern Museum is partially funded by a grant administered by the Watkins Glen Area Chamber of Commerce and authorized by the Schuyler County Legislature.

KAYAK RAFFLE WINNER

Last year, as a benefit for the Historical Society, we were able to raffle off a kayak donated by Famous Brands at the **Watkins Glen Waterfront Festival**. The raffle went so well we decided to continue the kayak raffle in 2014.

Generous sponsors **Frog Hollow Marina, Famous Brands**, and an anonymous donor teamed up to sponsor this

year's kayak and paddle. The drawing was held on Saturday, June 14th at the Festival.



We would like to thank the sponsors for their generosity and support of our mission

The winner of the kayak was **Mathew Woodworth** of Burdett. Congratulations— we are sure he will enjoy it!

Society Calendar

June 22: Montour

Moose Club Benefit
Breakfast, 8-11am

August 2: Montour

Falls Village-wide yard
sale, Museum porch
sale

October 4: Montour

Harvest Festival Booth