

Sharon Historical Society



News from the President

Greetings:

This has been a busy summer! We have been preparing for the new expansion project. Museum Curator Michelle McCallion and I have been searching for items to put in our new "store vignettes". We have found quite a few things at flea markets and auctions. We were also fortunate to obtain more items from the Sharon Springs synagogue from Sean McGiver who bought the synagogue on Willow Street to turn into an artist residence. Thanks to Sean, we were able to get the altar and several other major pieces from the building as he was cleaning it out.



Upcoming Programs

- Tracing Your Home's History - August 22
- The Life and Times of Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad - September 12
- How to Re-glaze and Preserve Vintage Windows - September 26
- Amish Life in Schoharie County - October 10
- Paranormal Activity 101 with NYC's Morris-Jumel Mansion - Meg Lynch - October 24
- Ballads of the Schoharie Creek Drownings - November 14
- Amazing Caves Around The World - November 28th

Inside this issue:

Greetings from President 1

Upcoming Programs

None of the Dead Come Back—Or Do They? 2-7

Argusville Murders 8

Motels, Cabins & Motor Courts 9-11

Bank Robberies 12-14

We have been hard at work raising funds for the expansion project. Our garage sale brought in over \$1,000. Thanks to Michelle McCallion and Caroline Bade for working the sale. We will be holding another sale on September 17th and 18th in the ballroom of The Roseboro Hotel. Anyone who would like to donate items, please email us at sharonhistoricalsocietyny@gmail.com.

We will need a lot of help clearing brush from the property around the cabins we purchased for the new village. If you are willing to give us a hand, please call me at (518) 860-5513. The more we get to help, the easier it will be!

Ron Ketelsen

Sharon Historical Society President



Ladies of the Sharon Historical Society enjoy a ride in a horse drawn "surrey with the fringe on top".



A 1901 Oldsmobile "Horseless Carriage" with a rutter steering wheel was driven by owner and Historical Society President, Ron Ketelsen.

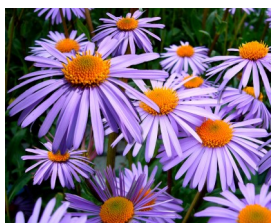


Sharon Historical Society members Caroline Bade and Barbara Cousineau rode on of the day's floats.

Photo by Patsy Nicosia—printed in *Times Journal* 7/4/22

"The Sharon Historical Society Board of Directors has made great progress this year with moving the expansion project forward."

Ron Ketelsen



Sharon Historical Society Float in 4th of July Parade as printed in *Mountain Eagle Newspaper*.

NONE OF THE DEAD COME BACK—OR DO THEY?

By Sandra Manko

There are several homesteads and various establishments in the Town of Sharon where spiritual events have occurred and been witnessed. Not a believer you say? Please read on and you may change your mind.

Baxter Homesteads The Baxter family were some of the first settlers in the Engleville hamlet. Historian Jephtha R. Sims, who wrote *History of Schoharie County and Border Wars of New York*, writes that on the day prior to the Battle of Sharon in 1781, Captain Gross, while on a foraging expedition, found evidence of the Indians near the Baxter home (renovated and later called Spook Hill since the 1960s). Spirits are known to have resided in Engleville for years. This oldest of two Baxter houses is thought to be haunted by the ghost of an early occupant who fell victim to the scalping knife of marauding Indians.



Along with the house's history comes an atmosphere of mystery.



A friend of 1970's owners, Jean Bakkom and Edith Bell, was staying in an upstairs bedroom. She saw the figure of a man standing next to the bed with a "rag" around his head. Was the rag covering up the bloody wound of the scalping? The resident cat thought something was amiss because her fur stood up as she arched her back and was ready to attack

"something."

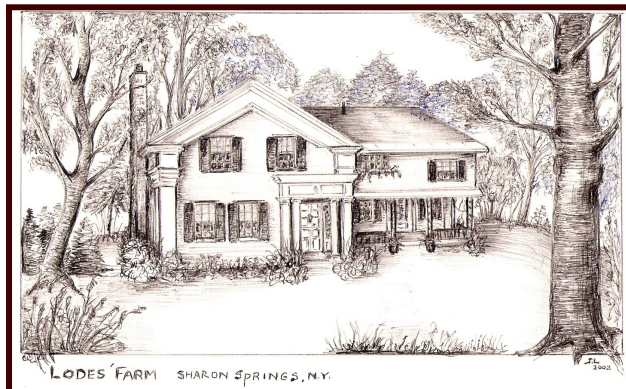
Another legend tells of a servant girl who once had a room in the attic at this same Baxter homestead. She became pregnant and "beside herself" concerning her predicament. Feeling she couldn't deal with the dilemma, she hung herself in the attic. In the 1970s, when Edith Bell's niece stayed at Spook Hill, she saw a specter in a long skirt come out of the wall where the attic door had been. The apparition walked down the front stairs to the front hall, as if in anticipation of someone. The niece didn't know this, but the attic door had originally been where she saw the apparition appear.

On other occasions, a presence was sensed when the attic door was opened. A draft? Could it be a g-g-g-g-host? A chilling



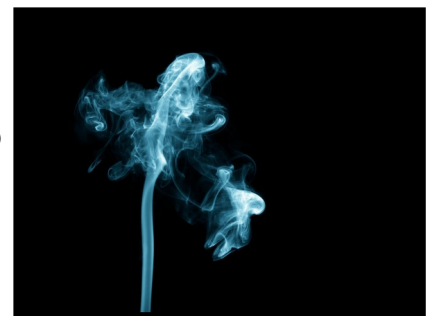
Spook Hill, Engleville

breeze was felt as if someone was swishing past, possibly trying to escape. Imagination, you say? Still a sceptic? Nevertheless, the ghostly legends prevail . . . it may be something more.



Lodes Farm, Drawing by Jacque Lodes

Another old Baxter house is located across the road from Spook Hill. Little did the Lodes family know in 1984 when they purchased a previous hops farm, that quite possibly a spirit frequented the 1835 homestead. Initially, nothing significant was noticed until Peter Lodes' mother, Jacque Lodes, came to stay. Jacque Lodes used the back bedroom on the first floor and the only time the bedroom door stayed shut is when she was in there. Any other time, when the room was vacant or if someone else was sleeping in there, the door opened by itself and banged against the radiator. And the plot thickens . . .



One night Jacque Lodes had a strange dream and told the family about it the next morning. In her dream she saw a woman, Jennie, with long dark hair wearing a nightgown standing at the top of a stairs looking down toward the Lodes house. The next day after the dream, the Lodes family was invited to the home of Jean Bakkom and Edith Bell, just up the hill and across the road. Jacque Lodes excused herself from the gathering on the pretense of using the bathroom. Her instincts told her to check out the stairway. She was astonished to see the same stairway as in her dream the previous night. However, she was relieved to see there wasn't a door at the top of the stairs as in her dream. She had never been in the house before and had never seen the interior of the house. Maureen Lodes encouraged her mother-in-law to tell about her dream; Jean Bakkom and Edith Bell smiled and leaned forward into the conversation, anxious to hear more because this scenario was so familiar. The description of the female in the nightgown matched the apparition which had also been seen by their niece; they just didn't know her name was Jennie. Oh, and by the way, Ms. Bakkom explained that the door was originally at the top of the stairs but when they remodeled, the inside walls had been changed and the door was removed. Still a disbeliever? Read on.

When interviewed, Maureen Lodes explained in the corner of their dining room, the family feels a presence. When sitting in the chair at that location, there is a very loving, comfortable emotion and definitely a feeling of someone there. If it is a spirit, it exudes a soothing and peaceful energy. Electrical anomalies are commonly experienced. Music is heard but when they go to turn off the TV or radio, they find no one is there and the radio and TV are shut off. Footsteps are audible from other parts of the house. Perhaps these gentle footsteps are subtle reminders of a Baxter who once lived there. Is it "someone" showing resentment from the grave? We can only ponder incidents and the purpose of those on the "other side."

In the cellar of the Lodes house there is a "hidey-hole" under the dining room that can't be accessed. It is partitioned off nearly to the ceiling, similar to a cistern but there is also a cistern nearby. The Lodes' have tried to see into this space, on ladders, using mirrors but to no avail. An uneasy feeling exists when entering the basement. They finally decided it was best to leave it alone because some things shouldn't be disturbed. We're not meant to know all of the answers. It may be just a coincidence that this space in the basement which can't be accessed is under the dining room at the same location as this "energy" only one story down. Could it be a ghostly encounter? If so, this is one powerful ghost. When we are in the Engle ville area, perhaps if we are quiet and respectful, we will "see" and "feel" what others have experienced.

Roseboro Hotel Dawne Belloise and Dennis Giacomo were previous owners of the Roseboro Hotel (before current owner Ron Ketelsen) and Dawne tells of strange happenings and ghostly experiences on several occasions. She saw light orbs . . . NO, it was not a reflection off the glass, no cars were coming up the road, no mirrors and definitely no smoke. Dawne says it was an overwhelming feeling that Harry Wasserman (previous owner) was lingering which is why Dawne hung a sign on the Roseboro front porch which reads "Say, 'Goodnight Harry.'" Dawne explains that once she explained everything to Harry . . . And yes, she said she was talking out loud in the dining room . . . that if he didn't stop scaring her, she was going to have to stop work. After she explained to Harry that she was merely the caretaker for his hotel, he seemed okay that a shiksa was working for him and taking care of his hotel. She swears "things"

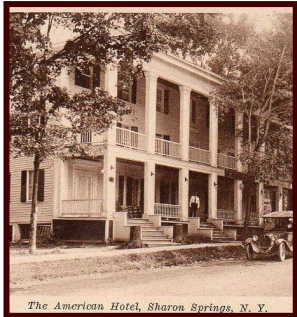


Roseboro Hotel before renovation

stopped after that. She states there were more incidences but she can't remember them all. Current owner, Ron Ketelsen, says "nobody is there except him." Dawne feels the reason Ron never experienced the spirit of Harry in the Roseboro is possibly because she was told Harry had a fondness for red-headed women . . . plus, Harry liked her better! Dawne thinks maybe Ron is just a big scaredy cat!

Klinkhart House In addition to previously owning the Roseboro Hotel, Dawne Belloise and Dennis Giacomo also owned Klinkhart House which is where George and Lulu Klinkhart lived, and they also owned Klinkhart Hardware. In the 1911 Klinkhart's Hardware fire, Lulu Klinkhart was killed. Dawne says, "Even more than 'feeling it' at the Roseboro, it was stronger at the Klinkhart house." Things would be missing, doors would shut unexpectedly. "There was a lot more going on there and I knew it was Lulu," says Dawne. She claims she and Lulu had a great relationship and got along magnificently. Dawne says, "I would talk to Lulu and would ask her about what colors she thought would be right to paint the rooms and other details." She knows Lulu was there.

American Hotel Current owners of the American Hotel, Doug Plummer and Garth Roberts agree that there have been paranormal experiences at the hotel. Even the early photograph of the American Hotel at the left looks a little eerie. Not to be dramatic, but both Doug and Garth have seen and heard from the "other side." The third floor has not been remodeled and that's where the spirits normally reside. There is one spirit that countless guests have experienced, and that is the sound of someone running very quickly and loudly down the third floor hallway. Doug and Garth have heard it, as have many of the staff. The third floor is a series of 13 gutted guest rooms and the stairwell door is usually locked, to keep guests from getting nosy! Had it not been for a guest, a Native American medicine woman staying at the American, they would never have known what the sound was and just chalked it up to some random spirit or large squirrel.



"So," says Doug, "as told to me by our guest, Theta, a Cherokee Native American Medicine woman, who said that all the women in her family were psychic from as far back as any family could remember. She told us of several spirits that she was aware of. Some, we knew of, but others were new to us. We had dubbed him 'Running Guy' and as I mentioned, we knew nothing about him until Theta. I took Theta to the third floor to see if she picked up on anything. I let her walk down the hallway by herself so as not to lead her in any way. From the other stories she had told me she was obviously very perceptive. We had always believed that the running started in an end room on the northeast corner of the hotel. When Theta arrived at the door, she put her hand to her mouth, gasped and stepped back as if she had run into a force field." Theta then turned to Doug and said, "Oh Lord, you have a dead boy." Jokingly, Doug said, "Currently? I knew we shoulda locked this door, you never know what's gonna crawl in and die." Theta said, "No, and actually this isn't even a spirit here, it's a trace memory. There's no boy here. I'm just seeing the memory of an event, like an echo." Doug continues, "Now, not being up on my paranormal lingo, I had no idea what this meant and said so." Theta's take was, emotions are energy, energy can't be destroyed or created. All the energy that was here when the world began is still here in some form. Sometimes energy from an experience or even emotion just stays in place. In this case, it was the traumatic ending of a young life and the mother's profound grief. Doug asked her what exactly she was seeing. She told Doug that there was a young Orthodox or Hasidic boy and he was covered in blood, as were the walls and bed and the mother was wailing as she wrapped his payos (long side curls worn by Orthodox men) around her finger as she would have when he was alive. The mother was wiping blood from the boy's



mouth and nose and Theta believed he had suffered a lung hemorrhage of some kind. Now, Doug says, "Please remember that I am seeing nothing but an empty room, so it's just getting more creepy by the minute. Theta then asked if there was ever a powerful Rabbi that came to the Village. Doug says, "Yes, there were two—Rabbi Schneerson, the grand Rebbe of the Lubavitch Hasidim, and Rabbi Teitelbaum, grand Rebbe of the Satmar Hasidim. Why?" Theta said she believed the parents had brought the boy to be healed and she was devastated because it hadn't worked. Just then Theta quickly moves to the side as if being shoved and she says with some shock, "Oh my, this must be the daddy." Doug is now completely wigged out and desperately wants to get out and go back downstairs before this nut, Theta, kills him and makes him a ghost. But playing along, he says, "What's he doing?" Her gaze follows him out of the room and down the hall and she says, "Oh, the poor man is running down the hall screaming for help." Doug froze at this statement, since he had never mentioned the 'Running Guy'. Doug asked, "Would we hear this?" Theta said, "Hear what, the yelling?" Doug says, "No, the running." She turned and said, "Do you?" Doug replied, "Yes, pretty often and very loudly." She nodded her head as if to agree and said, "Wow, that's powerful." Doug asked why "it" would just "play" from time to time, and she said, "who knows what will set it off . . ."

At this point Doug had one last question and that was why she kept looking to one side of the room. Again, the room at this point is gutted down to the studs and lathe, and there is no furniture. Nor did they ever take a photograph during the restoration of the hotel, because it was particularly dirty and disgusting. She proceeded to describe the room to Doug, saying, "Well, the Momma is on a Bentwood chair there in front of the window, there are two beds here by the other window, with a small table in between, a small closet there by the door and the boy is on a cot there against the wall." Doug replies, "I must have gone white with shock when she mentioned the cot and I said in a mildly shaky voice, "A cot?" And she said, "Yes, those old fold-up Army cots, why?" Doug says, "Well because, you have just described the room exactly as we had found it and out of 26 guest rooms, one and only one had an old folding Army cot, and it was against this wall." According to Doug, you could say it was a coincidence or she had seen a picture, but there were none especially since the cot had been used by the tribe of raccoons that had been living in the hotel and had used the cot as their latrine and it had been covered in about a foot of petrified raccoon poop. So they had thrown it away immediately. Doug says, "I had frankly not really even thought of the cot till then." After mentioning this, Theta got a look of pride and contentment and said, "Oh, I do love when they see the light."



Doug and Garth periodically have guests mention the running on the third floor or down the stairs and think, "Running Man" is at it again. And according to Theta it probably won't go away and they will always hear him. Thankfully, it's just an echo and not a spirit.

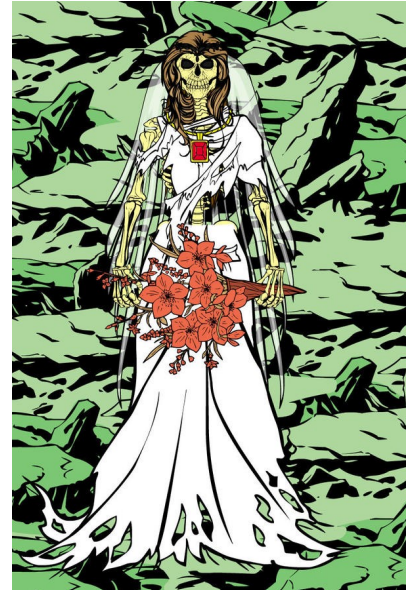
Cobbler & Co. Maureen Lodes owns Cobbler & Co. and that is yet another of the spooky places right in our midst.

Spooky Tale # 1) Maureen says an early reporting came via a phone call from a women in Ohio who was wondering if they had any experiences with the unexplainable in one of the upstairs rooms. She said she was trying on a hat and something or someone sharply pulled on her hair. She was alone in the room. She was so freaked out she left immediately and raced out of the store. During the call, Maureen asked about all of the possibilities including the likelihood of a zipper on the customer's dress catching her hair. She said absolutely not. She said the feeling stayed with her so strongly that she had to see if it happened to someone else. A bit of backstory . . . At that time the upstairs rooms were occupied by different vendors.



Maureen Broeking, hat designer, had a booth with hats and also bridal veils she created for sale. They weren't selling so when Joe Todd Campbell decided to open his boutique "The Finishing Touch," it was decided Maureen would move her hats to his shop later on. Once that decision was made and discussed, her hats started selling like crazy. Remember . . . Florence Fonda (the original owner of the shop) had a hat-making business. Was she jealous? Maybe once Maureen and her hats had been there for awhile Florence got used to her presence and liked her being there? One must ponder.

Spooky Tale # 2 Late one evening three of the "girls" were switching items in the shop over to the Christmas theme. (There may also have been a bottle of wine involved.) They were having a great time and were accomplishing a lot. Kathy Spofford was working in the upstairs kitchen room, Donna Barlow in the Garden Room and Maureen Lodes was between both of them. By now the vendors were gone and all of the rooms' items belonged to Cobbler & Co.



Kathy was cleaning some wine glasses and put them on the floor in the Christmas Room. Donna called for Maureen's help. As Maureen passed the Christmas Room on the way down the hall, she felt an incredibly bone-chilling cold patch in the hallway. So cold that she turned back to see if there was a window open. There was not. All of a sudden, they heard the sound of breaking glass. The wine glasses which Kathy just cleaned were shattered. No one was near them. They were in the middle of the cold spot which Maureen had just experienced, and no longer existed,

once the wine glasses shattered. Was Florence Fonda, the milliner, responsible? Perhaps she didn't like them drinking wine? (By the way, the glasses were in the exact same spot where the lady had her hair pulled—although surely it was just a coincidence!) After a few more similar incidents they came to the conclusion that the spirit was a child (poltergeist). The next story makes this clearer.

Spooky Tale # 3 Angelina started working for Maureen when her child Madison was just a baby. Angelina would bring Madison to the shop while she worked. When Madison was a little older, she would put out a blanket on the kitchen floor so she could watch movies, color, etc. It was time to close one day and Angelina called to Madison that it was time to leave. Madison's response was that she wanted to stay and play with her friend. As far as Angelina knew, Madison was alone. This was not the first time Madison mentioned this particular friend. And yes, Madison and her friend played in the same area between the kitchen and Christmas room as referenced in # 1 and # 2 above. (Maureen is quite sure the Christmas Room was the original dining room when upstairs was Florence's apartment.) This brings more evidence that perhaps their ghost was a child.



Spooky Tale # 4 A mother and her three-year old were shopping. They got to the top of the stairs and approached the kitchen at which time they had to turn around and leave immediately. She said her daughter felt something up there, got scared and had to leave.

Spooky Tale # 5 At one point Maureen was contemplating what to do with the shop. She said, "Should I stay? Should I sell? It was weighing heavily on my mind for quite some time. One Saturday morning, I was opening the shop. I got to the card room and the entire wall of

plaques with inspirational sayings were on the floor. Only one lamp was knocked down. Was it a critter? But everything on the floor?" Maureen continues, "I found it difficult to start picking up the plaques (normally I would have been on it right away. As the day went on and the shock of what I found started to ease, I started picking them up and replacing them on the wall. All but one of the plaques on the floor was face up. I could not bring myself to pick up the one that was face down. It was the last thing I did before leaving that night. Wouldn't you know . . . It was the answer to my ongoing dilemma about selling or staying. It read, "Life makes sense when we are centered in our own hearts and embrace our own unique journey". It still hangs in my office and I'm still here. Literally I was thanking Florence. I asked for a sign and she delivered."

Spooky Tale # 6 Maureen says, "For this one, I even called in an energy healer. She went straight to the upstairs area from the top of the stairs and stopped at the kitchen/Christmas room area. There was no doubt, she said, she felt strong energy in that area. She did not know any of the specifics of previous experiences."

Spooky Tale # 7 People come to Maureen and say, "You know you're not alone here." Maureen will ask where they felt that . . . It's always upstairs between the top of the stairs and the kitchen/Christmas area.

Maureen says, "At this point, we live in harmony. I say 'good morning' when I arrive and 'goodnight' when I leave, always asking that the shop stays under their protective watch. Guess after 25+ years, it's working."

These are mysteries without explanation. Could it be ghosts?

There are many other households and individuals who have had similar incidents. About 20 years ago, a contractor was working at Beekman Mansion and his tools kept moving . . . not where he had left them . . . not just once but several times . . . and sometimes on a different floor. No, it wasn't his imagination. It was a little unsettling and unnerving. Was it a ghost playing tricks?

This article is just a "sampling" of encounters. This newsletter doesn't do justice to all of Sharon's encounters. Some people haven't told of their experiences for fear of ridicule—other episodes are not documented. We can only ponder spectral incidents and the purpose of those on the other side. Although unexplainable events have occurred, no one can say exactly who or what they are, and when and why they happened. Perhaps the footsteps heard at the American Hotel or Roseboro Hotel are gentle reminders . . . and sometimes not so gentle . . . of those who once lived there.

Apparently most ghostly encounters involve people who are no longer with us but many others have had occurrences with animals as well, normally a cat or dog. For example, they speak of knowing that a pet is still there after it has passed. One woman felt the family cat rub against her leg as if anxious to get fed, as in the past, and felt the cat jump on the bed in the middle of the night. Imagination, you say? Maybe kittie just hadn't left this world for the other side.



If walls could talk, all those hotels and boarding houses in the downtown area certainly have stories to tell. When Ron Ketelsen says, no one is at the Roseboro except him, maybe . . . just maybe . . . the encounter hasn't happened yet while Ron is staying at "Harry's" establishment. Something to think about. Maybe this article will make him a believer.

When it comes to restless spirits, there's a fine line between fact and fantasy, but the bottom line is can we really be sure? Maybe we're afraid not to believe. Spirits cause no harm—but as those who have experienced their presence, it can be just a bit unsettling.



Argusville Murders In 1826, a murder took place in Argusville by a man named Van Alstein. It is said that when the sheriff came to collect unpaid taxes, Van Alstein took him down by the Argusville Bridge and beat him to death with a stick. He was tried in Fonda, convicted of murder and hung by the neck. The murder weapon is at the Old Stone Fort in Schoharie.

Another murder happened in Argusville around 1855 and was described in the *Cobleskill Index*. A family (name not known) was an argumentative type and when they argued, the whole town knew. One night a dispute broke out. The mother forced the daughter to hold the father's legs when she beat him. The mother was tried, convicted and hung.

A third murder on March 17, 1905 stirred up the small community of Argusville as nothing had in many years. A local newspaper account of the incident reports Daniel Smullen, 35 years old, fair looking and very fond of hard cider, was charged with the murder of Peter Conrad, 67 years old, described as an aged farmer. Both men were said to have visited the hamlet of Argusville on March 17th and joined heartily in observance of St. Patrick's Day.



There were bad feelings between the two men because of a previous incident over missing chickens. Peter Conrad lost 18 fowls one night and claims he followed tracks to the Smullen residence. Another time, Smullen's cattle broke out from their pasture and got into Conrad's grain. This added to the bad feelings.

On the day of the murder, an argument broke out between the two men at Lehman's Store in Argusville. Smullen was said to have been in a partially intoxicated condition from having consumed too much hard cider. Witnesses observed the argument and the two men leaving the store, and then racing their horses up Main St.

Mrs. Conrad reported her husband missing and Smullen even joined the party to help search. Peter Conrad's body was found near his cow shed. The left side of his forehead was crushed and a trail of blood drippings was found. Blood led to the Smullen homestead and blood was also found on Smullen's sleigh. One of the buttons was missing from Peter Conrad's shirt and said to be found in Smullen's yard. There was blood on Smullen's jacket hanging in the woodshed, still wet. Human flesh and bone were found in Smullen's yard.

Dr. Fred Diefendorf of Sharon Springs, being the physician who examined the body, was called to testify at the trial. He testified that Conrad's body was badly bruised having the skull smashed, the right wrist broken, the left arm broken, nose flattened and smashed, upper jaw broken, scratches on neck, and bruise on the side of the face.

Peter Conrad's body was later disinterred and the remains again examined by physicians to see if the bone fragment fit the hole in the dead man's head. However, at the end of the trial, an announcement of an acquittal was received with applause and cheers, but also wondering, **where is the guilty man?**

The jury declared Smullen innocent and the so-called evidence was explained away. The prosecution's vast amount of testimony was all circumstantial. Smullen claimed his horse had cut its foot which explained the blood in the snow. Peter Conrad's wife said she removed the button from her husband's shirt and gave it to Charles Conrad (Peter's brother) so he could find it in the yard. There was no attempt to hide the bloody jacket. A cow was recently butchered which explained the blood on both the jacket and sleigh. After the body was disinterred, it could not be sworn that the bone fragment came from Peter Conrad's skull.

The murder trial ended with Conrad's brother seeking revenge. Charles Conrad stopped at the Mohawk Hotel after the trial and flashed a loaded revolver, declaring that someone had murdered his brother and that he would take the law into his own hands. An officer happened to be at the hotel and told Conrad to put up his gun and close his mouth. The officer emptied the revolver of bullets and gave it back. Conrad took the officer's advice and went home; otherwise an arrest would have followed.

So ends the Conrad-Smullen conflict and hopefully the last of the murders in Argusville.



DR. FRED S. DIEFENDORF
On Main Street

OFFICE HOURS:
9 to 11 A. M. 3 to 5 P. M. 7 to 8 P. M.

He is very zealous in his profession and devoted to it. He has the confidence of the people of the community and vicinity, and his practice is continually increasing.

Fred S. Diefendorf, M. D., was born at Canajoharie, N. Y., June 1st, 1872. His early education was received at Fairfield Military Academy, Fairfield, N. Y. He graduated from the Medical Department of the University of Michigan, at Ann Arbor, Michigan, in 1898.

September 18th, 1894, Dr. Diefendorf was united in marriage to Miss Ada Garlock, of Marshville, N. Y. Two daughters, Catharine and Marion A., bless this union.

The Doctor has a large clientage in Sharon Springs and vicinity, and in Sharon Hill and Argusville has the exclusive practice.

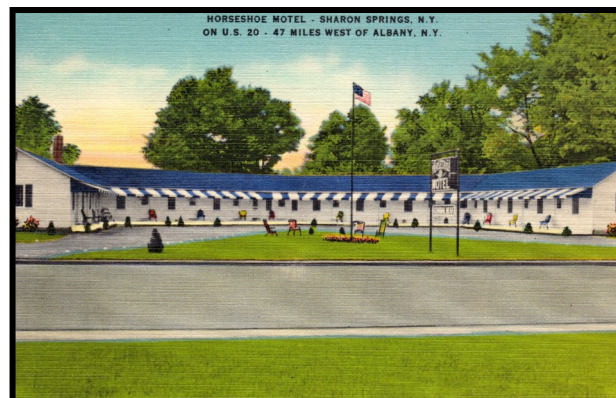
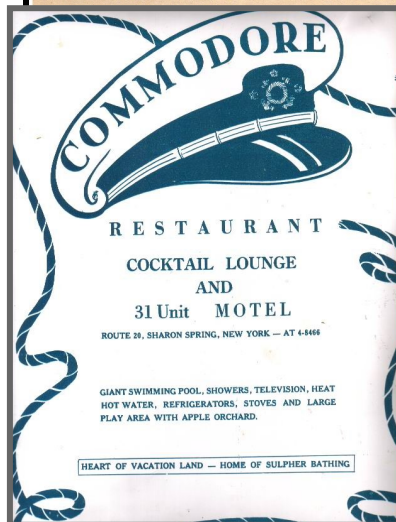
He is the medical examiner for several life insurance companies; among them: The Mutual Life of New York, The Mutual Benefit of New Jersey, the Manhattan Life, The New York Life, and the North Western. He is also the attendant physician for Maccabee Lodge of Sharon Spa., and is health officer of the town of Sharon. He is an enthusiastic Mason, and is a member of Sharon Springs Lodge No. 624, F. & A. M. The doctor, though a young man, is a very busy one.

Motels, Cabins & Motor Courts

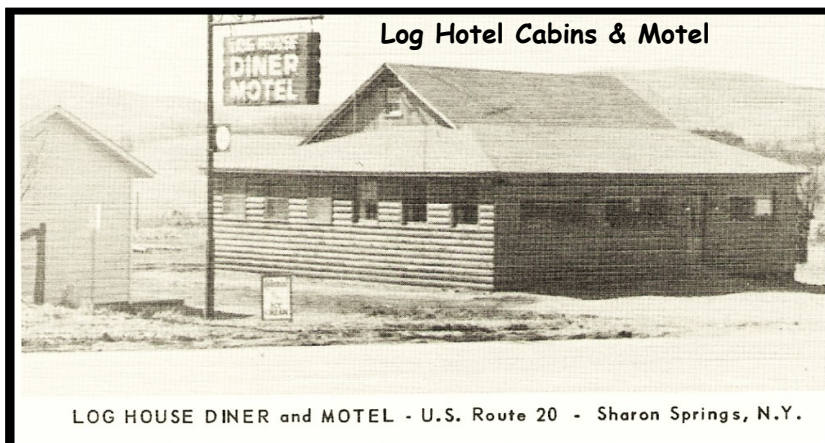
Soon after Prohibition ended in 1934 and the Depression had ruined the finances of clientele, owners and local residents, a new form of transportation, the automobile, transformed Sharon's character. The automobile may have been the biggest factor which brought the glory days of Sharon to an end. Motor cars required wider, straighter roads. Route 20, formerly the Great Western Turnpike, was re-routed and widened in the 1930s to connect Leesville to Sharon Springs. New types of accommodations, motels and motor courts, such as the Commodore, Davis Cabins, and Eigen's Point, appeared along the new route. These establishments catered to the automobile culture, emphasizing independent travel and do-it-yourself convenience, a far cry from the all-inclusive services of hotels like the Pavilion or Roseboro.



The Commodore

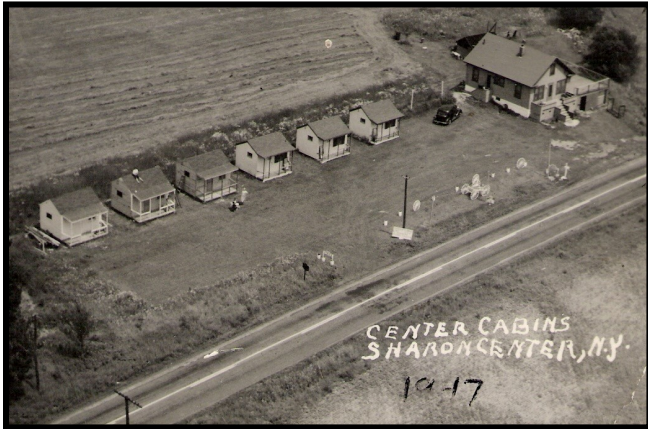


Horseshoe Motel



1958

Motels, Cabins & Motor Courts (Continued)



Center Cabins 1947 Sharon Center

After WWII, with war-time restrictions over, automobiles were once again coming off the lines in Detroit. With gas rationing a thing of the past, Americans took to the road. Along Route 20, motels and restaurants were busy and served a nation on wheels.



The Mohaven



The Belvedere



Davis View Tourist Cabins



Davis View Tourist Cabins



Davis View Cabins—later renovated and renamed Skyline View Motel



Skyline View

Motels, Cabins & Motor Courts (Continued)

It appeared the Route 20 transportation system had worked its magic to favor Sharon. But the motoring public wanted to "get there" faster and in 1954 the New York State Thruway opened bypassing Sharon, leaving it to languish and fade like many small towns across the country. Some visitors continued to come to Sharon Springs by bus, but the rest of the world whizzed by on super highways.

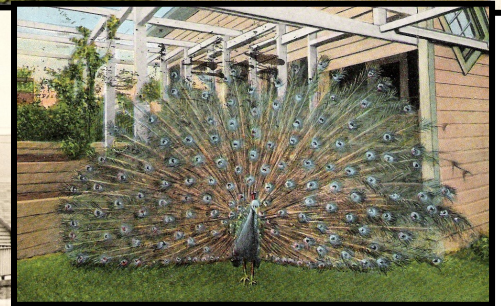
Eigen's Point



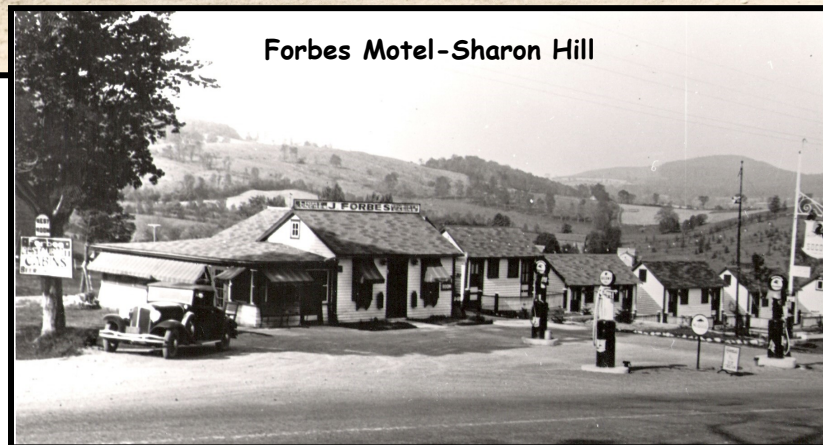
Eigen's Point



Forbes Motel-Sharon Hill



Eigen's Point Peacock



Eigen's Point

Bank Robberies



There have been two bank robberies in Sharon Springs that I'm aware of and this is one of those things we hope there isn't a repeat performance.



Approximately 10:30 a.m. on Friday, December 17, 1982, two men wearing ski masks and gloves and armed with a sawed-off shotgun and starter's pistol, entered the Sharon Springs Branch of Central National Bank and demanded money from the 3 employees. This was when the bank was located downtown—in the Samson Block building—next to the Roseboro Hotel—to the left of the 204 Main Restaurant. Bank Manager Helen Wardwell and tellers, Linda Lape and Dorothy Farro gave \$17,291 to the two men. No one was hurt and no shots were fired.

The two men fled in a blue Ford LTD, which police found abandoned about 20 minutes later on Beechwood Road about 2 miles from the bank. Police also found the masks and gloves and determined the two men had used a second car.

Through interviews with people in Sharon Springs, they established the make and color of the second car. Police arrested 3 men in connection with the hold-up and recovered the \$17,000 that had been taken—just 6 hours after they learned of the armed robbery at the Sharon Springs bank. One man was from Fort Plain, one from Nelliston, and the third from Van Hornesville.

The tellers were interviewed. Dorothy Farro said, "We just started filling the bag up as fast as we could." The bank manager, Helen Wardwell and the other teller, Linda Lape, thought friends were playing a joke.

"I couldn't believe it was happening," said Mrs. Lape, an employee of the bank for 7 years. "I thought that any minute they'd pull off their masks and they would be someone we all knew."

The big man, the one who came to Dorothy's window, got up on the counter, threw the bag over, and told us to fill it up," said Mrs. Wardwell. "He was waving his gun awfully close to Dorothy, so without thinking, I said to him, 'Get off that counter.' It was a stupid thing to say and he didn't get off."

The men made the 3 women lie on the floor when they left, Mrs. Lape said, and the entire robbery took no longer than 2 minutes.

Edward Spraker, spokesman for Central National at bank headquarters in Canajoharie, said, "So far that's the first holdup and we hope the only holdup."



On March 25, 2001, a bank robber was killed on Short Road in Sharon after a high speed chase. He was an Oneonta man who had robbed a bank in Colonie and possibly other bank heists.

The driver was seen throwing a bag out of the van window near I-88. The bag was recovered and contained the money from the robbery and a toy gun. The high speed chase that began by I-88 ended on Short Road in Sharon Hill.

The *Times Journal* quoted Sheriff John Bates who said, "This incident shows more and more that Schoharie County is no longer isolated. Things happen. People travel through. Things are changing."

Then again on Wednesday, January 23, 2013 a lone thief, displaying what a teller believed to be a firearm, pulled off a mid-day robbery at the NBT in the busiest junction of Sharon Springs prompting a brief lockdown at Sharon Springs Central School. According to *The Daily Editor* a man wearing a hood entered NBT Bank just after noon, walked up to the teller and displayed a note demanding cash. The man fled on foot with thousands of dollars and despite a search by troopers in a helicopter and troopers with K-9 unit tracking dogs, the robber could not be located.

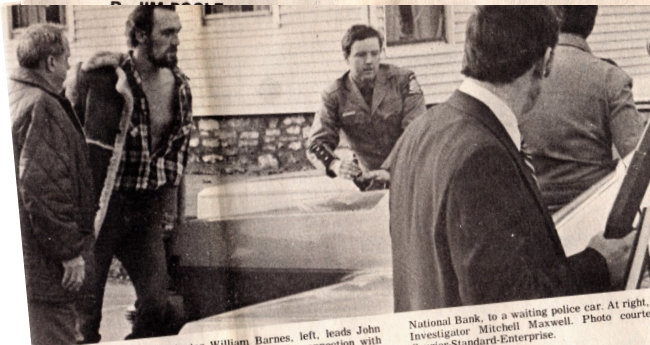
The lockdown at SSCS was lifted about 15 minutes after it was imposed. Officials said the move was a cautionary one. Residents said such crimes are a rarity in the sleepy village that is crisscrossed by U.S. Route 20 and State Route 10. As quoted in the *Daily Editor*, "It's a little nerve-wracking that somebody would come out to our little bucolic area and try to do something like that," said Kevin Kutzscher, a former member of the Sharon Springs Parent Teacher Organization.

It isn't known if the bank robber was ever apprehended or not.

Let's hope we don't have more bank robberies to reminisce about in the future.

Times Journal December 22, 1982

Tellers: 'We just did what they told us to'



ARRESTED — BCI Investigator William Barnes, left, leads John Charles Klepey Jr., one of three men arrested in connection with Friday's armed robbery of the Sharon Springs branch of Central National Bank, to a waiting police car. At right, Investigator Mitchell Maxwell. Photo courtesy Courier-Standard-Enterprise.



SCENE OF THE CRIME — State troopers, Bureau of Criminal Investigation investigators and FBI agents converged on the Sharon Springs Central National Bank on Wednesday morning. Photo by L. J. Munger.

Times Journal March 27, 2002

Shot in Sharon after long chase

By David Avitabile

An Oneonta man who allegedly robbed a Colonie bank and may have been involved in other area bank heists was shot and killed by police on a back road in Sharon Monday morning.

Suspect John Clune, 44, was pronounced dead at Bassett Hospital at Cobleskill at 11:11 a.m.

His death came after a car chase that began on I-88 and ended on Short Road in Sharon.

Mr. Clune's mini-van collided head-on with a Schoharie County Sheriff's car at 10:18 a.m. Two state troopers and one deputy opened fire when Mr. Clune refused to comply with their orders

to show his hands.

An autopsy was to be conducted Tuesday at Albany Medical Hospital to determine where and how many times Mr. Clune was shot, said Schoharie County Sheriff John Bates.

The investigation is still in its initial stages, officials said at a press conference in Princetown Monday afternoon. It will include looking into whether Mr. Clune, an insurance underwriter for New York Central Mutual Insurance in Edmeston, was involved in other bank robberies in the area.

Those robberies ranged from Oneonta to the Fleet Bank in

Schoharie on August 17, 2001 to the Charter One Bank in Worcester on January 29.

"Definitely that will all be looked into," Sheriff Bates said Tuesday morning.

"Going from Oneonta to Colonie is unusual."

Police will also investigate on why Mr. Clune, of 15 Jackson Avenue and the father of two daughters, allegedly robbed the bank.

The State Police gave the following description of the bank robbery and subsequent chase:

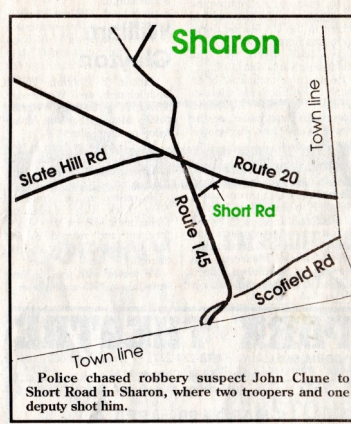
An armed robbery occurred at 9:09 a.m. at Capital Bank and Trust on Wolf Road.

The robber, who was described as a white man between 40 and 50 years old, displayed a silver handgun. He demanded and received more than \$20,000 which included \$80 of "hot money" which triggered an alarm to police. He left onto Wolf Road in a 1995 green Pontiac mini-van with a blackened license plate.

At 9:47 a.m., a State Police officer in an unmarked car observed a vehicle fitting the description of the van westbound on I-88 in Cobleskill. Several police cars were dispatched the area as well as the Schoharie County Sheriff's car.



New York state troopers and Schoharie County sheriff's deputies investigate the fatal shooting of a bank robbery suspect on Monday after a car chase ended at the intersection of Route 145 and Short Road in the town of Sharon.



Police chased robbery suspect John Clune to Short Road in Sharon, where two troopers and one deputy shot him.

SHARON SPRINGS School locked down after bank robbery

By EDWARD MUNGER JR.
Gazette Reporter

Officials instituted a lockdown at the Sharon Springs Central School on Wednesday after the bank across the street was robbed.

Schoharie County Sheriff Tony Desmond said state police are handling an investigation into a robbery at the NBT Bank on Main Street in the village.

Troopers at the Cobleskill barracks were unable to release details Wednesday evening and referred questions to the Troop G press officer.

It was unclear immediately Wednesday evening whether any suspect description had been developed.

Desmond said it was his understanding there were no injuries in the robbery.

He said the robber made reference to a weapon before leaving the scene and was believed to remain on the loose.

Desmond said helicopters were brought in for a search following the incident.

The Sharon Springs school, which is situated directly across the street from the bank, posted a notice on its website informing parents they were told to lock the school down around 12:20 p.m.

The notice said the school was locked down throughout the day but police told officials they could carry on with regular school activities.

"The district canceled girls and boys' modified basketball games for the afternoon, as well as all other afterschool activities."

A room was designated for students needing supervision up to 4 p.m., when a late bus was made available, according to the district.

Bank robberies are relatively rare in Schoharie County and sometimes offbeat. A man later identified as Nathaniel D. Jenkins was convicted of robbing the Bank of Richmondville wearing a monkey mask in May 2005.

In August 2001, a man dressed in women's clothing robbed the Fleet Bank in the village of Schoharie, making off with \$2,990.

Reach Gazette reporter Edward Munger Jr. at 212-6223 or emunger@dailygazette.net.

Gazette
1/24/13

The Daily Gazette March 26, 2002

Dorothy Farro wrote a poem to commemorate the
Sharon Springs bank robbery in 1982

It was December 17 in 1982,
On a Friday morning about 10:02
When a sudden "swish" sound in CNB
At Sharon Springs office alerted me.



On looking up two "black holes" I did see,
And behind them a mask peering ghastly at me.
I suddenly realized before the crook spoke,
We were being held up—armed robbery—no joke!

There were two of them armed—with guns in our faces.
They demanded our money while we stayed in our places!
This done they ordered us flat on the floor
While they instantly turned and rushed out of the door.

We sprung to our feet and hit the alarm,
Which I couldn't do sooner without risking harm.
In a very short time the Village was covered,
With police officers, bankers, and newsmen who hovered.

Before the sun set the culprits were caught,
We were open for business more cautious in thought.
\$17,000 recovered, the guns were taken,
The robbers in custody then were the shaken!



Through all of this our Christmas tree stood,
Giving strength and hope with the promises of good.
The robbers themselves without any reason,
In their red and green jackets were dressed for the season!



Sharon Historical Society and Museum

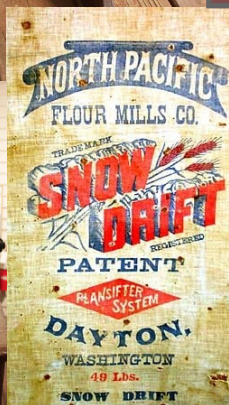


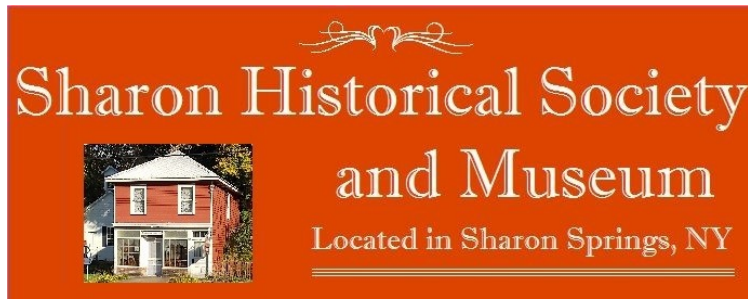
Located in Sharon Springs, NY

We are Looking For Antiques

Items for our new historic village beside the current museum.

General store items from the late 1800s to early 1900s, tins, clothing, baking utensils, butter churns, flour sacks, barbershop items, etc. Items must be in good shape. Please call us at (518) 860-5513 or email us at sharonhistoricalsocietyny@gmail.com





2022 Membership Form For The Sharon Historical Society

A shared heritage and a sense of history are priceless gifts for ourselves and for generations to come. Join the Sharon Historical Society and become part of one of the most active and fastest growing historical organizations in Central New York. Your support provides more than just preservation of historic materials; it brings the unique heritage of Sharon and its people to life for audiences worldwide.

Date _____

Name _____

(Use Preferred) Home Phone _____ Cell Phone _____

Address _____ City _____ Zip _____

Email _____

Membership Types and Rates:

1. **Individual active members**; any person interested in the purposes of the Society is eligible. Annual dues for an individual active member is **fifteen dollars (\$15.00)**.

2. **Institutional members**: any organization, board, school, or library interested in history of Sharon shall be eligible. Annual dues for institutional members are **fifteen dollars (\$15.00)**.

3. **Life members**; individuals only. Dues for a life member is a one-time fee of **one hundred dollars (\$100.00)**.

PLEASE NOTE: Membership dues are paid on an annual basis (Jan-Dec) and are not pro-rated if a member chooses to join mid-year. Membership dues are non-refundable.

Amount of Payment

_____ Individual Membership -\$15.00
_____ Institutional Membership -\$15.00
_____ Lifetime Membership - \$100.00

Please accept my donation of \$ _____
to support the Sharon Historical Society. I
do not wish to become a member at this
time.

Total enclosed \$ _____

Make checks payable to: **Sharon Historical Society. Mail to PO Box 363, Sharon Springs, NY 13459**