



THE HOMESPUN COLLAGE

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE PORTVILLE HISTORICAL AND PRESERVATION SOCIETY

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P.H.P.S. and Friends of The Portville Library to Honor Jane Miller April 9, 2000



The Friends of The Portville Free Library and The Portville Historical and Preservation Society invite you to a tea in honor of Jane Greenman Miller who recently retired as Historian for the Town and Village of Portville. Jane held this position for twenty-two years. The tea will be held at The Portville Free Library at 2 p.m. on Sunday, April 9, 2000. Please RSVP to Rachel Boyer at 933-8690 with the number of guests attending.

We read and hear a lot about women in today's world and how they balance marriage, family, and their job. Jane Greenman Miller successfully did that for over fifty years and today continues to work and be very involved in her community.

Jane was born on June 19, 1915 in the same house she lives in today. She recalls that her mother

Gertrude was a wonderful baker who spent most all day Saturday baking. She often shared special treats with the young boys who played with Jane's younger brother Phillips.

Jane's Portville roots are very deep. Her maternal grandfather was a coachman for Portville library founder, Mrs. Marilee Wheeler in the 1890's. Jane recalls him saying that Mrs. Wheeler in her long full gown looked just like Queen Victoria.

Dodge's Creek was the summer playground for Jane and her friends who used an old door for a raft. Before they were allowed to get in the creek, her father Raymond walked up and down the creek making sure there were no deep holes.

Jane started school in the brick school on North Main St. in 1921. Her teacher was Mrs. Waterman. In high school she loved sports and was Captain of the Girls Basketball Team. She played tennis on a friend's court, square danced and roller skated at the Coliseum in Ceres, PA.

It was at Portville High School that Jane discovered that history was her favorite subject. As she read and listened over the years she became very knowledgeable about the history of her own community.

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After graduation from high school in 1933, Jane attended Westbrook Academy in Olean. Her first job was in Dr. Duncan Wormer's office where she was a medical assistant and receptionist. However, the insurance business appealed to Jane and she soon found employment in Carl Holcomb's Insurance Agency. The office was in the municipal where the Post Office and the Colonial Quality Shop were also located. Jane took a State Insurance Course at St. Bonaventure and became a licensed agent, a position she held for 25 years.



Jane Greenman Miller
PHS Basketball player in 1931

historical society.

Today, in addition to her church and the many organizations

Jane met her future husband Arnold at the Portville Methodist Church. Because of Arnold's family responsibilities it was almost five years before they were financially able to be married in 1945. During WW II Arnold became a US Army Staff Sergeant and the couple lived for a time in Savannah, GA.

Jane took time off from work to have three daughters, Melora Ann, Marcia Lynn and Janice Lee. In addition to her busy work and family responsibilities Jane found time to serve as Regent for the Olean Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. She serves as treasurer of that organization today.

Jane spent many years teaching Sunday school at the Methodist Church and singing in the choir there. She was also a Matron of the Eastern Star and President of the League of Women Voters. Jane devoted many hours of volunteer service to the Portville Central School. She was honored with a Life Membership to the P.T.A.

In 1977 Jane was appointed Historian for the Town and Village of Portville by the Town Board. A New York State law requires that all municipalities in the state have historians. Jane's duties have included indexing all news items regarding Portville, researching family and Portville history for the many requests she receives, attending meetings of Town Historians, and presenting programs for the public. Jane has for many years functioned as historian for P.H.P.S. Since her retirement as Town Historian, she looks forward to being able to devote more time to the

in which she is still active, Jane enjoys working at the Portville Free Library.

The last few years have been sad ones for Jane due to the death of her husband, Arnold, and her brother and sister-in-law.

Please join us in honoring Jane on Sunday, April 9, 2000.



Thoughts of Spring

A VISIT TO THE PFEIFFER NATURE CENTER

You need not travel far to learn about and experience the beauty and diversity of our natural world. A unique and ideal place is right in Portville at the Pfeiffer Nature Center. The Center, which is located at the head of Lillibridge Road, was established in September 1998 by a bequest of its founder, Eleanor "Wendy" Lawrence.

The Center encompasses 188 acres and has since its inception held many educational programs for school and college groups. The members of the center and the public of all ages have enjoyed events such as nature walks, bird banding demonstrations, butterfly identification and a salamander hunt.

Because of its location in 85 acres of old growth forest of white pine, oaks and hemlock, the Center is involved in a comprehensive management plan of preserving the integrity of the old growth areas and the management of previously

harvested portions of the property.

Richard White, the director of the Center is an ornithologist and wet lands scientist who at one time conducted plant research at Mt. St. Helens for the US Dept. of Agriculture. Previous to joining the Center he worked in this area as an instructor for Empire State College. Rick is particularly interested in bird migration. Whether the young birds that were raised on the property will return the following year.

The original 5 miles of trails which were once the bridle paths for the Pfeiffer family are being maintained, their original names preserved with new signs. A self guided interpretive trail through the old growth forest is being developed.

Guided nature walks are held every Saturday and Sunday during the summer months. Watch the Olean Times Herald for announcement of future events or call the Center for information.(373-1742).



Dresser-Rand's History Has Link To Portville

Thanks to Kim Craddock for providing information for the following article. It was found in an in-house Dresser Rand magazine, "From Alpine Highways To Great Salt Lake, Painted Post Finds Solutions For 100 Years" and Clyde Collin's remembrances of Westons Mills. More of Clyde's history of the brothers Weston and Westons Mills can be found on pages 91-108 in The History of the Town of Portville 1805-1920.

Many of our readers are familiar with the Weston brothers who in the 1850's constructed a large capacity sawmill in the community that bears their name. They developed the operation after purchasing water rights and small mills already in existence at that site. Earlier, the Weston brothers Abijah, Orren and Wallace had along with John G. Mersereau modernized and operated a small water mill at the mouth of Oswayo Creek.

Abijah, the eldest brother was already the owner of a bank and business in Painted Post. It is very possible that he provided the capital for the purchase of the lumber interests in Portville.

Abijah Weston had started a lumber company in Gang Mills, near Painted Post in the 1840's. In 1868 he bought a nearby small foundry and machine shop that manufactured stove and farm implements. When fire destroyed his lumber yard in the 1800's he sold that business and began expanding the machine shop. In 1886 the business was known as the Weston Engine Shop. Abijah manufactured the Imperial High Speed Steam Engine. After his death in 1898 the business was sold to Rand who began manufacturing steam driven air compressors. After a merger in 1905 the company became Ingersoll-Rand. In 1987 Dresser Industries formed a partnership with them which is known as Dresser-Rand.

Abijah Weston's engine company employed 125 men when Rand purchased it in 1899. Located today on the same site in Painted Post, the Dresser-Rand manufacturing plant employs over 1,000 and supplies reciprocating compressors for the petroleum and petrochemical industries.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

G. Jane Robinson
and
Margaret. E. Robinson

THANKS AND APPRECIATION
TO THE FOLLOWING:



Tim Barton - Three letters dated 1857, Portville, N.Y. The letters were the correspondence between brothers Joseph, William, and N. R. Luce. The letters discuss farming, taking grain to the mill to be ground, how many teams of oxen hauling logs went by in a day, and the problems a flood caused on a farm. N. R. Luce writes that he taught penmanship at district schools in Portville. He describes the way to hold your pen to make fancy letters.

Cora Parson - Five large original photos of Portville High School Classes and groups, which include the 1931 Girls Glee Club and the 1931 Girls Basketball Team.

The Portville Historical
and
Preservation Society
PO Box 59
Portville, NY 14770



Jane Greenman Miller (far right, second row) with 1931 Portville High School Glee Club.

Back row: June Hallahan, Mary Hill, Genevieve Stout, Loretta Whiteman, Eloise Hayes, Carmen Hackett, Ann Blackwell.

Middle row: Dorothy Ryder, Naomi West, Ellen Rice, Beatrice Linn, Marjorie Strong, Shirley Walker, Edith Phillips, Jane Greenman.

Front row: Vivian Marsh, Laura Crittenden, Arletta Wagner, Ethelyn McIntosh, Ruth Washburn, Rose Anne Jones, Anna Glady, Leona Marsh.