

# Town of Onondaga Historical Society Newsletter



Tel. 315-214-2383

[www.townofonondagamuseum.com](http://www.townofonondagamuseum.com)  
[townofonodagahistorical@gmail.com](mailto:townofonodagahistorical@gmail.com)

Summer 2025



## *School Days – Part 1*

Natalie Williams-Dardaris

*In the words of Chuck Berry:*

**“Up in the morning and out to school  
The teacher is teaching the Golden Rule.  
American history and practical math  
You studyin’ hard and hopin’ to pass.”**

were one room school houses. Several schools simply went by their number, others had names to go with their numbers. District #15 school was called the Johnny Cake School because it was located on Johnny Cake Street, today’s Tanner Road in South Onondaga.

From the Original 29 District Schools, the Town of Onondaga currently has 5 located within its boundaries; all 3 schools in the Onondaga Central School District - Rockwell, Wheeler and Onondaga Jr.-Sr. High School, Westhill’s Onondaga Hill Middle School and West Genesee’s Split Rock Elementary. At one time there was another elementary school - Marcellus’s Kasson Road before it closed and Split Rock High School before joining the West Genesee School District.

From our many artifacts we have pieces of school life from other eras.

A District #6 teacher’s contract provides a glimpse into teachers' pay and expectations on their performance.

Children in Miss Bertha Sauer/Mrs. Avon’s classroom had their class projects, an essay on Pinky the Rabbit and a Class construction project on how to properly approach a railroad crossing. At the 4 room District #6 School, she taught 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade.

The TOHS is fortunate to own and is continuing to obtain artifacts relating to school days of the town’s past. The museum has some of its holdings in a permanent display in the museum.

There were 29 original schools that were numbered from 1 to 29, from District #1 School in the Onondaga Valley, near Academy Green, to District #29 Gifford near Oakwood Cemetery. The majority

A STUDENT'S  
DRILL AND REVIEW BOOK

IN  
*This*  
ALGEBRA  
*Workbook*

BY  
GERTRUDE W. SHEW

*Burb*

A method giving the essentials of  
Elementary Algebra in most con-  
venient form for quick mastery,  
together with abundant drill for  
application and testing.

*Kids being kids no matter  
what the era, Orshall Tripp had  
his opinion of math.*

TEACHER'S CONTRACT

To be executed in duplicate

This Agreement made the 23 day of March, one thousand nine hundred and 34

By and between the Board of Trustees of Onondaga Hill, county of Onondaga, party of the first part, and Mrs. Gertrude J. Avon, residing at Onondaga Hill, N.Y., party of the second part,

Witnesseth: That the said party of the second part covenants and agrees to and with the party of the first part to teach in the public school of said district for the term of 36 consecutive weeks, except as hereinafter provided, commencing on the 1st day of September, 1934

And the said party of the first part covenants and agrees to pay unto the said party of the second part in consideration of such service so to be performed the sum of \$35.15 a week, payable at the end of each 30 days during the term of such employment. It is mutually understood that 4 per cent of the amount of each order or warrant issued in payment of the compensation required to be paid hereunder shall be deducted by the party of the first part, as provided by article 43-B of the Education Law relative to the State Teachers Retirement Fund.

And the said party of the second part further covenants and agrees with said party of the first part that the said party of the first part may provide for a vacation or vacations of not more than 2 weeks in the aggregate during the aforesaid term of employment for which no compensation shall be paid by the said party of the first part and which shall not count as a part of the term of service above referred to.

And the said party of the second part hereby covenants with the said party of the first part that she is duly licensed under the Laws of the State of New York and the rules and regulations of the State Education Department to teach in the public school of said district and is fully competent to perform the services required under this contract.

In witness whereof the parties to these presents have hereunto set their hands the day and year first above written.

Handwritten signatures of trustees and teacher.

C229-3e3-15,000(11210)\*

Those of us who attended Onondaga Hill Elementary in the 1960s remember Mrs. Avon as a third grade teacher who was adamant that we finished our vegetables served at lunch and to avoid chocolate milk.

From a recent find in an attic on Onondaga Hill came school books used in the early part of the 20th century, 1915 - 1930, some used at the District #6 school, some used at Syracuse's Central Tech. The books belonged to the Tripp children and to Frances Makyes. Titles included:

Elementary American History and Government

The Mother Tongue - Elements of English Composition

Community Civics

1904-1928 Regents Review Book on Commercial Arithmetic (appears generations have had to study/cram for Regents exams)

Prose and Poetry, featuring the works of Longfellow, Whittier, Lord Byron, Edgar Allan Poe and pieces such as the Legend of Sleepy Hollow, Song of Hiawatha, and Lincoln's Gettysburg Address

Written in Thelma Tripp's Composition and Rhetoric Book was her finding - "resolved that expansion of the chain store systems is detrimental to the best interest of the American People."



Circa 1940's on Onondaga Hill, Mrs. Avon's class, District #6



On October 13, 1925, Orshall Tripp had to write a composition on the title "How Education Improves Citizenship"

# *The Return of Bald Eagles*

**Submitted by Carl Wiezalis**  
*Reprinted with the permission of the  
South Windsor Historical Society of Connecticut*



The Bald Eagle's role as a national symbol can be traced back to June 20, 1782 when Congress finally adopted the design of the Great Seal of the United States. Charles Thompson, the secretary of Congress in 1782, was given the job of creating the seal after three separate committees failed to come up with a design that Congress would approve. Thompson combined what he thought were the best elements of the three previous designs to create the final seal. One of those elements was the image of a small white eagle. Thompson changed it to a Bald Eagle, made it more prominent in the design, and a national icon was born.

Bald Eagles build some of the largest nests in the world, with most nests around 5 feet in diameter and 3 feet in height. They tend to repair and expand their nests each year and can use individual nests for decades. Their nests are mainly composed of large interwoven sticks with a soft interior bowl of hay or grass clippings.



Bald Eagles typically place their nests in prominent trees that sit above the surrounding forest canopy. These nest trees will often be on hillsides, lake and ocean shorelines, riverbanks, and forest edges. In the northeastern United States, bald eagles use a wide range of tree types and are also increasingly nesting on human-made structures such as electric transmission towers.

Bald Eagles are considered juveniles if they are less than 4 years of age, because they have not yet developed a white head and tail!

The Bald Eagle population has rebounded from a low in the 1960s of approximately 400 pairs. In the 21st century, breeding populations can be found throughout most of North America.



According to The Cornell Lab of Ornithology website, [allaboutbirds.org](http://allaboutbirds.org), "Sometimes even the national bird has to cut loose. Bald Eagles have been known to play with plastic bottles and other objects pressed into service as toys. One observer witnessed six Bald Eagles passing sticks to each other in midair."

# GIFT SHOP

# LECTURE NEWS



Now that summer is coming to an end and kids are going back to school, we invite you to take some time to visit the museum and gift shop.

We have many books with stories of the villages that make up the Town of Onondaga. Especially of interest is Rich Miller's detailed series on the Split Rock Explosion. Ron Ryan has written the book, "Teflon Shelly" in which he chronicles the investigative approach needed to prove several fires in the Town of Onondaga were purposely set. Also 2 books by Jim Farfaglia, a local author, on classic snowstorms of CNY are available.

Pick up some notecards with the historic images of the Town in bygone days. Also available are DVDs about the Poorhouse, Split Rock explosion, and history of the Town.

Drop in and browse around this fall.

Janice Pellegrino

Wednesday, October 15 at 7 PM

## “Saigon 1973-1975: Not the Usual War Stories”

**Karen Kaiser and Kat Fitzpatrick**

Many people believe the Vietnam War ended when the United States military withdrew its troops, but that is only partially true. Between the signing of the Peace Accords on January 28, 1973, and the fall of Saigon on April 30, 1975, fighting between North and South Vietnam continued while approximately 6,000 American civilians, including families with young children, lived and worked in Vietnam. Karen and Kat were among them. Using images and personal stories – some harrowing, some humorous – Karen and Kat share their real-life experiences in Saigon during the last days of the Vietnam War. You will learn why they were invited into a critical war zone, the nature of a super-secret propaganda radio station, what challenges they faced, and how they made it out in time. This year marks the 50th Anniversary of the Fall of Saigon.

Refreshments will be enjoyed.



## Thank You

We would like to thank all of our community members who supported our recent fund raising quilt raffle. The \$300 raised will go towards the purchase of preservation materials. Congratulations to Janice Pellegrino, the winner of the quilt. And a big THANK YOU to Judi Garrett and her talents in creating such beautiful work and contributing to the TOHS raffle.

## ADDITIONS TO OUR COLLECTION

Mary Lou Michalec, Curator

### Cheryl Welles

\*Family Histories: Day, Strong, Oschner, Johnson, Welles, pictures/family information

### David Tuxill

\*Nedrow: Milk bottle and crate 1930's; Rockwell Springs Dairy, J.H.Bailey

### Mary Ryan

\*Navarino: Sweatshirt, Antique Tractor Tug

### Mary Ryan

\*Apple parer/corer C.1830

### George Skelton

\*Onondaga Hill Fire Dept. book of minutes from 1<sup>st</sup> meeting 11/19/1920

# BUSINESS MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY

## *Please Patronize These Services*

### *Attorney*

**SAM BEARDSLEY, LAWYER**  
EXPERT LEGAL SERVICES: DIVORCE,  
ESTATES, WILLS, TRAFFIC  
7106 S. Salina St., Nedrow, NY 13120  
315-469-3232  
email: sblawyer@twcny.rr.comz

### *Food*

**THE CIDER MILL**  
4221 Fay Road, Syracuse, NY 13219  
315-487-0647  
Located at the former Morey's Mill  
[www.THECIDERMILL.US](http://www.THECIDERMILL.US)

**MARCELLUS NURSERY INC.**  
LANDSCAPE CONTRACTOR,  
GARDEN CENTER  
5062 Onondaga Rd., Syracuse, NY 13215  
315-488-2632 [www.marcellusnursery.com](http://www.marcellusnursery.com)  
email: MARNURSERY@aol.com

### **DAGUE LAW OFFICE**

Raymond J. Dague, Esq.  
ATTORNEYS & COUNSELORS AT LAW  
4874 Onondaga Rd., Syracuse, NY 13215  
315-422-2052  
[www.DagueLaw.com](http://www.DagueLaw.com)

### **GREEN HILLS**

GROCERIES, MEAT, PRODUCE, BAKERY,  
DELI & PREPARED FOOD  
5933 South Salina St., Syracuse, NY 13205  
315-492-1707  
[www.greenhills.com](http://www.greenhills.com)

### *Metaphysical*

**"AFTER GLOW TAROT"**  
CLAIRVOYANT READINGS  
4905 Grolier Road, Syracuse NY 13215  
315-925-1243 text only  
email: AfteGlowTarot@yahoo.com  
After-Glow Tarot on Facebook Page

### **THE WALSH LAW FIRM**

D.W.I. & TRAFFIC MATTERS  
5108 Velasko Rd. Syracuse, NY 13215  
315-579-3117  
email: syracuseDWIattorney@gmail.com

### *Funeral Services*

**BUTLER BADMAN FUNERAL  
HOME INC.**  
FUNERAL & CREMATION SERVICES  
4504 W. Seneca Tpk., Syracuse, NY 13215  
315-492-4264 email: [butlerbadman1@aol.com](mailto:butlerbadman1@aol.com)  
[www.butlerbadmanfuneralhome.com](http://www.butlerbadmanfuneralhome.com)

### *Physician*

**"MY COUNTRY DOCTOR"**  
PERSONALIZED PRIMARY CARE  
INCLUDING HOUSE CALLS, WOUND  
CARE, MINOR SURGERY  
5695 Bull Hill Rd., LaFayette, NY 13084  
315-396-8185 – [www.mycountrydoc.com](http://www.mycountrydoc.com)  
email: [pferenchak@gmail.com](mailto:pferenchak@gmail.com)

### *Automotive*

**VALLEY AUTO**  
QUALITY PRE-OWNED CARS,  
TRUCKS, SUVs  
6201 South Ave., Syracuse, NY 13205  
315-218-5177 – [www.valleyautopro.com](http://www.valleyautopro.com)  
email: [valleyautopro@gmail.com](mailto:valleyautopro@gmail.com)

### *Garden Center*

**SOLLECITO LANDSCAPING  
NURSERY**  
HARDY SUSTAINABLE PLANTS – some  
with historical ties to the Town of Onondaga  
4094 Howlett Hill Rd., Syracuse, NY 13215  
315-468-1142 [www.sollecito.com](http://www.sollecito.com)  
Visit Sollecito Landscaping Nursery on Facebook

### *Real Estate*

**MYTown REALTY**  
RESIDENTIAL REAL ESTATE  
BROKERAGE  
344 South Warren St. Suite 202  
Syracuse, NY 13202  
315-497-6500  
[www.Mytowncny.com](http://www.Mytowncny.com)

### *Dentists*

**CARROLL DENTISTRY**  
THOMAS J. CARROLL, DM  
5110 Velasko Rd., Syracuse, NY 13215  
315-474-4232 Fax: 315-474-4249  
[thomascarrolldmd.com](http://thomascarrolldmd.com)

### *Landscaping*

**GASPARINI'S  
LANDSCAPING CO., INC.**  
PLANTING, PATIOS, WALKS, FENCING  
5072 Smorol Rd., Camillus, NY 13031  
315-488-4261 [www.gasparinilandscaping.com](http://www.gasparinilandscaping.com)

### *Wine & Spirits*

**SHADY BROOK LIQUORS, INC.**  
RETAIL WINE & LIQUOR SALES  
4800 McDonald Rd., Syracuse, NY 13215  
315-475-0227  
[www.shadybrookliquors.com](http://www.shadybrookliquors.com)

## *Thoughts to Ponder*

Submitted by Richard Giarrusso

If you scatter thorns,  
don't go barefoot."  
*Italian Proverb*

"Stopping smoking is the easiest thing in  
the world. I've done it dozens of times"  
*Mark Twain*

"I owe everything to  
those ears!"  
*Annette Funicello*

**DUES TIME** – If you haven't paid dues, now is the time. Fill in the form below and return it to the museum. Check your mailing label for date and fill in the year below.

*Town of Onondaga Historical Society Membership Dues*

Membership Year: 20\_\_\_\_ Jan. - Dec.

Annual Dues

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Individual: \$10.00 \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Life Membership: \$200.00 \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Donation: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

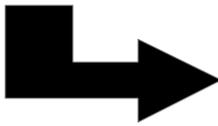
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL Enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Renew: \_\_\_\_\_ New: \_\_\_\_\_

Clip and mail form to: TOHS-Membership, 5020 Ball Road, Syracuse, NY 13215



***“Saigon 1973-1975: Not the Usual War Stories”***

*Karen Kaiser and Kat Fitzpatrick  
Wednesday, October 15 at 7:00pm  
Refreshments will be enjoyed.*

**TOWN OF ONONDAGA HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
5020 BALL ROAD  
SYRACUSE, NEW YORK 13215**



Town of Onondaga  
Historical Society

**Please check your mailing label to see if your dues are up to date. If the date underneath your address is not 25 or \* (life member) your membership has expired. Please send in your dues and bring your membership up to date.**