

XX Years

by Lynne Belluscio

I'd be remiss if I didn't thank the Board of Trustees of the Historical Society and the members who stopped by LeRoy House last Thursday to share kind words about the last twenty years and encouragement to continue for a few years more.

Joanne Graham spent quite a bit of time putting together a partial list of the events, exhibits, programs and projects that have happened since the fall of 1988. We all had a chance to read through them and I had to remind everyone, that none of these accomplishments could have been successful without a lot of hard work and commitment by a huge corps of volunteers. I have been very fortunate to have the support of a lot of talented people.

Through the years there have been hundreds of people who have pitched in and rolled up their sleeves to make the museum and the LeRoy Historical Society a vital part of this community. My intention has always been to create a program, or an event or an exhibit that would make everyone proud. As a transplanted LeRoyan I have discovered this community's history and have found it exciting, fascinating and engaging. I have enjoyed sharing LeRoy's history with all of you.

The first *Pennysaver* article that I wrote was in November of 1988. It was about the discovery of Myron Pierson's Civil War sword. Four 4th grade boys who had stopped by LeRoy House were excited about finding Myron's name on the Soldier's Monument in Trigon Park; and this led to the first exhibit on the Civil War based on Myron Pierson's diary. It was before we put carpeting on the exhibit room floor and I nailed a Civil War tent to the floor.

Through the years there have been a lot of exhibits. Some featured LeRoy artists – Frank Eastman Jones, Ida Taylor, Antonio Barone. LeRoy has had some wonderful artists. Other exhibits focused on the pioneers, the Underground Railroad, LeRoy's industries, quilts, petticoats, Ingham University, wedding gowns, aprons, agriculture and

Staffordshire. The collections at LeRoy House are so rich and extensive, that the exhibits can go on for years. The same is true for the *Pennysaver* articles.

I guess that if I average 50 articles a year for twenty years, that means there are now more than 1000 articles - - including the infamous flamingo stories. So many people have asked if I will ever publish some of the articles and I guess the answer is, "if I ever have the time." It's funny, but some of the articles I remember so well and others have passed into oblivion. Luckily each week Ruth Harvie clips the articles and slips them into a sheet protector and puts them into a notebook. Then she types the title and the subject on a 2 by 5 card and files it in the card file.

So this week when Henry Spiller called to say how much he enjoys reading the articles that John Graney sends to him, and mentioned that I should write about the Hauptman-Woodward Medical Research Center in Buffalo, I told him that I had already written an article about the Center and I would send him a copy.

Right now, it's great to have the Jell-O Gallery to lure people to the LeRoy Historical Society. There seems to be an endless stream of people from all over the world who want to stop by and see what a Jell-O Museum is all about. They also get to see the wonderful transportation exhibit and LeRoy House. I am still working on LeRoy House, to make it a memorable experience for visitors.

There's more that we can do, but it is the volunteer docents who relate to the visitors and tell the story of LeRoy House and we are lucky to have a group of very dedicated volunteers. Probably one of the most gratifying things that I have been involved with here at LeRoy House has been our education programs that we offer LeRoy students. Even be-



fore I was the Director here, I had been a volunteer for several of the programs. I get a big charge when someone stops by and says that they remember baking biscuits or churning butter – or washing clothes on the back porch when they were a kid in school. It annoys me when people say that kids don't like history, because I know better. All you have to do is stop by some time when the kids are here and you know differently. But like I said, these school programs would not have taken place without some great volunteers.

In the next couple of years, I will be focusing on our storage areas. It is very important to have good storage areas that are organized so that the collections are protected. Right now, we will be reorganizing the art storage area and creating a new computer inventory of the paintings. It was

a project that I worked on almost twenty years ago, but now its needs attention. A college intern from Buffalo State has agreed to help. The new textile storage area needs attention. Eileen Partise and Evelyn Taylor have spent a lot of time accessioning the textiles so now it's very important to place them in a clean, organized storage area.

The archival storage area - made possible by the generosity of Dr. Burton Spiller will have attention very soon. The third floor of LeRoy House is being reorganized for better storage and hopefully the large storage area on the top floor of the Academic Building will get its day. Storage organization is like cleaning a closet. Nobody knows what you've done, but it needs to be done. So I guess the next couple of years, I have my work cut out for me.

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