

In Memory Of Bill Lane

by Lynne Belluscio

I think I met Bill Lane for the first time at the Farmer's Museum in the early 1970s. He was taking a carpentry course and I was participating in an open hearth cooking class and we learned that we both lived in LeRoy. Although most people in LeRoy remember Bill because he was the head of the Music Department at LeRoy Central School, I remember Bill because he later was the archivist for the Wadsworth collection in Geneseo and spent many hours at LeRoy House sorting and cataloging our photograph collection. It was a monumental task, but he had the commitment and dedication to identify and label hundreds of images. He established a cross reference card file which we still use today.

A few years ago, I remember going through the file drawers looking for a specific photograph of Oatka Creek. Totally frustrated because I couldn't find it, I looked under O for Oatka and C for creek, B for bridge and C for Clay Street bridge and still I couldn't find it. Inadvertently, one day I found it under M for Mill Pond. Of course I can still hear Bill laughing and telling me that if I had used the cross reference card file, I would have found "see Mill Pond" on the Oatka Creek card.

It was quite a few years since

Bill had worked with the photograph collection and the boxes began to pile up with photos we found in closets and trunks. We moved all the file cabinets from the LeRoy House to the new office space in the Academic Building in 2000 and we made an area just for the photograph collection. We added more file cabinets. Folks dropped off more photographs and an alluvial fan of unsorted photos began to pile up. Oh Bill, if you could only help us out, but his age finally caught up with him and he moved to an assisted living facility in Rochester.

Last year in July, Bill Lane died at the age of 89 and his family designated the LeRoy Historical Society as a recipient of the memorial money and his friends and family were very generous. I told his wife Betty that we would find a suitable project as Bill's memorial. That has now come to fruition.

With today's technology, it is possible to scan all our photographs and to organize them to make them easier to access. It would require an upgrade to our software program and the purchase of a new external hard drive.

Jim Delooze, who has been working part time at the Historical Society was very interested in working with the photograph collection so we visited the Ontario County Historical Society, and

with the kind help of their curator Wilma Townsend, we looked at what they were doing with their photograph collection. It has taken them over five years, but they are scanning each and every image in their collection and accessioning each of them with a unique number.

Jim and I also visited the George Eastman House and met with their curator, Cathy Connor, who took time out her busy schedule to show us their system. Last week I ordered the software and it arrived last Friday. I bought the new external hard drive this weekend. Jim has already started scanning images. It takes a little while to put in all the correct information.

I have decided that the Ingham University collection is the first to go through the process. The collection includes class pictures, images of the campus, ambertypes, tintypes, daguerreotypes, stereopticon slides, postcards and albums. But once we are done, we



Photo from 1960 Oatkan.

can search for images of particular students or faculty members. It's pretty exciting.

We will prioritize which collection heads for the scanner after the Ingham collection is complete. More than likely it will be the 1940 book and its negatives and prints.

The Historical Society would like to extend its appreciation to the family of Bill Lane who chose the Historical Society as a recipient of the memorial funds. We would also like to thank all the people who made generous contributions in memory of Bill. I think Bill would have approved.



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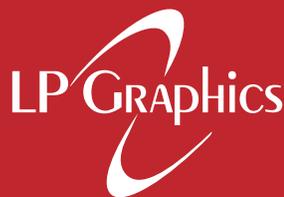
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