

Six Pewter Platter Cozies

by Lynne Belluscio

Last weekend the former residents of LeRoy House gathered to share their stories. If you weren't able to get tickets, they might be willing to come back again next spring. The Historical Society depends on a dedicated group of volunteers to make this happen.

They all came together for a group photo in the front parlor after the last tour on Sunday night. Liz Carney and Elizabeth Bolton portrayed Ingham students, Mary Cox and Anner Peck, and Cheryl Fernaays served them tea. Brenda Beal was Mrs. Spry and Jacob Williams portrayed her son, Robert.

Scott Ripley volunteered to help with the evening and became Roy McPherson, the first president of the Historical Society. Joanne Graham took the part of Secretary, Adrienne Sanderson. Sam Leadley came up with a thick Irish brogue to play Jacob LeRoy's gardener, Florence McCarthy and Sylvia Fraser stoked up the fire in the kitchen and became the cook.

Joining the cast in the basement was Sylvia Furr, the governess and Evan Williams, one of the LeRoy boys, Augusta. The guides for the evening were Michelle Penepento, and Natalie Mistersaro and Katlin Blackburn. I portrayed Miss Marsh, a music teacher at the LeRoy Academic Institute.

All of the scenarios were based on people and events associated with the house. And although we take a few liberties to make the stories amusing, the underlying themes are based on historical facts. Jacob LeRoy did grow giant cauliflowers and his gardener, Florence McCarthy, was Irish and came to LeRoy from Herman LeRoy's country estate. Mrs. Spry, who lived in LeRoy House, was on the welcoming committee for Eleanor Roosevelt's visit to LeRoy. Her husband was the superintendent of schools and they had a son Robert.

Mary Cox lived in LeRoy House with her father and she attended Ingham University. She did not think favorably of Madam Emily Staunton, the founder of the University. The Cox family



did "inherit" peacocks left by the Bartow family. Anner Peck boarded at Ingham University and remarked about the soldiers who attended the Presbyterian Church. She also shared a room with a girl who played the guitar and interrupted Anner's studying. She also hated the food that was served at school, especially the applesauce with nutmeg.

Professor Russell and his wife Margaret, and their four children lived in an apartment in the front of LeRoy House. Professor Russell introduced the German kindergarten to LeRoy, and he did insist that students wear slippers in school to reduce the noise from their wooden heeled shoes. Professor Blennerhasset lived in LeRoy House and he did walk down

Main Street carrying an open can of oysters. He also believed that LeRoy House was haunted.

Now a few comments about the 1942 Historical Society meeting that was held this last weekend. Yes, insurance for the Historical Society was \$14 in 1942. (Today the bill is nearly \$4,000) and yes dues was only \$1. (Today a single membership is \$20) And yes, the Town of LeRoy gave the Historical Society \$500 (That has not changed.) And yes, the Historical Society had furnace problems and had to decline the offer to use the house as a polling place on Election Day, because there was no assurance the heat could be turned on. (Our furnace, although it is not the coal furnace from 73 years ago, gave us problems this year, and we are

keeping our fingers crossed it will still be working by Election Day.)

And yes, it was reported that the Historical Society had received a dainty silver filigree bouquet holder, a canon ball found in a field on South Street, and the gong from Ingham University. But I have to confess, that President McPherson and Secretary Sanderson never turned the six pewter platter cozies into a tongue twister, (but they should have. Bet you can't say "six pewter platter cozies" three times fast.)

Again, thank you to our enthusiastic volunteers. Instead of a bouquet of flowers, you all get a giant cauliflower!

