

# Elementary

by Lynne Belluscio

If you have kids in first grade, you might want to ask them about Mr. LeRoy's gardener, Florence McCarthy – (alias Sam Leadley.)

This year, for the gardening activity, Mr. McCarthy talked to them about “veg-e-tables.” Mr. McCarthy came from Ireland and was the gardener for Herman LeRoy in New York City and then came up here to help Herman's son, Jacob. As you probably remember, Jacob had an arboretum and was known for the huge cauliflowers that grew in the veg-e-table garden. He also had a very tall brick wall around his garden, and just to make sure no one came into his garden, he put broken glass on the top. He grew his fruit trees “espaliere” against the wall, which means he trained the branches to lie flat.

Sam - er Florence - talked to the kids about planting veg-e-tables. How many carrot seeds do you need to plant if you want five carrots? If you plant one cucumber seed, how many cucumbers could you have? Where do potatoes grow? When you plant a tomato seed in a little pot inside where it's warm, then when it grows, it becomes a “seedling” that you plant outside. (One of the kids even asked whether the tomato was a vegetable.)

So we had some trouble with the weather, but we finally planted all the marigolds in Mr. LeRoy's garden and each student took home some bean seeds to plant. The seeds are for yellow pencil pod beans that were developed by a man from LeRoy, Calvin Keeney.

If you have kids in fifth grade, they might have come home to tell you that they had a little soldier food, of beef jerkey, hard tack and coffee. They might have also told you that they enlisted in the Union Army for three years. And on Friday, they placed 100 flags around the Civil War - - or as they discovered - - the War of the Rebellion Monument. Each flag has a ribbon with the name of a LeRoy Union soldier. You probably saw the photograph the next day on the front page of *the Batavia Daily*.

There's a little more to the

story. It seems that when the rain hit that afternoon, it blew down many of the flags, so when Trey Prevost came by to show his mom, he was disheartened to see so many flags on the ground. His mom said, “We can fix that.” So even though it was still raining, Trey and his mom set the flags back up. Thank you Trey -- and Mom.

If you have kids in kindergarten, they came by LeRoy House and sat in the front parlor with Mrs. Frew and Mrs. Furr and discovered things in Grandma's Trunk. Old things and new things. Sometimes they had to put their thinking caps on, but they discovered that many things today are thrown out after they are used, but in Grandma's day, things were washed and used again, over and over.

If you have kids in second grade, you might have seen us walking up Main Street - - on a very hot day. We found 30 George Washingtons, and a historic marker on the front of the Smokin' Eagle. We also learned about Mill Street, Church Street, Bank Street and Lake Street. And that Wolcott Street is named for an early pioneer. That Clay Street is named for a very important man from Kentucky who was a Senator in Washington. We also found some iron buildings that were made in Buffalo at the Washington Foundry. If you have second graders, ask them to show you the George Washington building.

If you have kids in third grade, we talked a lot about simple machines. I have to admit, I never took physics, and although I know that a pulley is a neat simple machine, I never did any experiments with simple machines. But maybe that's good because my understanding of simple machines is pretty simple. But it is frustrating to talk about a see saw only to realize



that playgrounds don't have see saws anymore. But I did make a “home run” talking about baseball bats, because a few of the kids were on Little League teams and knew that if they “choked up” they weren't hitting the long ball, and if they were told to bunt, they were placing the ball right in front of the catcher. “So now do you understand a lever and a fulcrum?” You bet they did.

Then there were the kids who really believed that they pounded screws in with a hammer. And never made the connection between a nail and a hammer and a screw and a screwdriver. We even identified a Phillips-head screw and screw driver. For one little girl, I hope she remembers the difference when she gets to college and wants to hang a picture on the wall.

Fourth graders always enjoy their Pioneer Sampler and we enjoy sharing all the different activities with them. From washing clothes to playing old fashioned games, it's a great day and for that, I really want to thank all the volunteers who make that happen. Joanne Gra-

ham who has showed kids how to play skittles and use the “do nothing machine” for at least 20 years. Shelia Furr who shares her quilting experience. For the last couple of years, Anne Frew has rolled up her sleeves and washed clothes with the kids. This year, because it was so cold, we had to move inside, but the kids still had to do the work.

Cheryll Fernaays, has for the last couple years, churned butter. She has the patience of Job to stick with this activity, because butter seems to have a mind of its own and will only form when it's good and ready. And if you're a fourth grade parent, you might want to track down the papers the kids brought home. There is a great recipe for a simple cake that is wonderful with strawberries. 1-2-3-4 cake. Cream a cup of butter with two cups of sugar. Beat in 4 eggs until fluffy. Then add 3 cups of flour. The batter will be stiff like pound cake. Pour into a greased cake pan and bake at 375 until done. Serve with fresh berries and whipped cream. School's out. Vacation time.