



Sharon Historical Society

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For appointments—call 518-860-5513 or 518-775-3753

Helen Bekert, Curator

A Message from the President:

Fall is here already! Lots of new and exciting things have been happening at the Sharon Historical Society. We participated in the Sunshine Fair and had an exhibit on the spas of Sharon Springs. A special “thanks” to Caroline Bade for helping to staff the exhibit.

I am happy to announce some very exciting new! The Sharon Historical has decided to work on an expansion plan for the museum complex. We are completely out of space and need room for more exhibits, meeting space, and a climate-controlled document storage facility. We are putting together a three-phase plan that will include purchasing the property to the right of the museum; adding an addition onto the back of the museum; and renovating the barn behind the museum. We would like to add an interactive Jewish History exhibit to the museum complex as well since Sharon Springs has such a rich Jewish background.

The Historical Society is partnering with the Village of Sharon Springs and the Village has given approval to start working on the plans. This is an very ambitious plan and it is all dependent on the Historical Society being able to raise the funds for this project through grants and donations. We are currently looking into 9 sources of funding for the project.

If you are interested in learning more about the museum expansion project, please give me a call at (518) 860-5513.



*Ron Ketelsen, President,
Sharon Historical Society*

Upcoming Zoom Programs, 7:00 pm

9/13/21 “Jewish Life in Sharon Springs”

10/11/21 “The Adler Hotel—Sharon Springs NY—From Heyday to Present Day”

11/8/21 “They May Have Just Found James Tanner’s Legs”

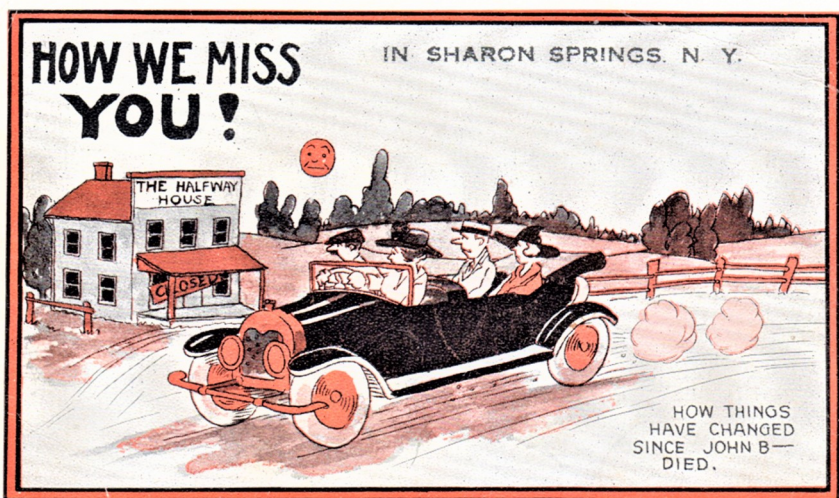
11/22/21 “The Assassination of John F. Kennedy—58 Years Later”

12/13/21 “Santa Claus: History of the World’s Most Legendary New Yorker”

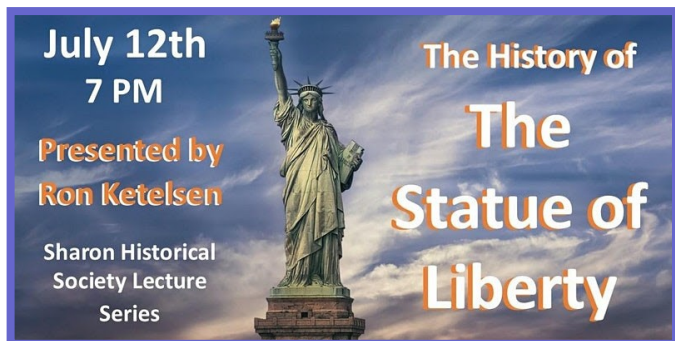
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Sandra Manko, Editor



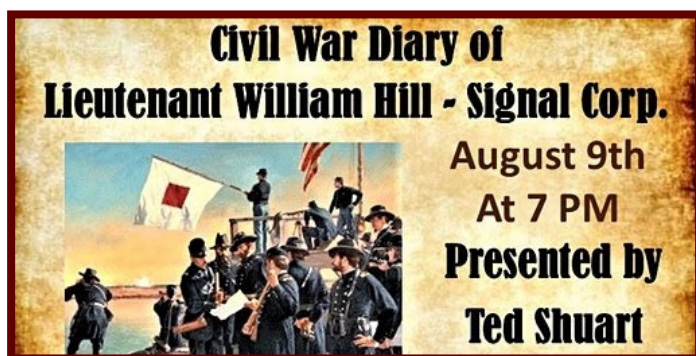
This early 1900s postcard shows folks having a good time in Sharon Springs NY. What’s your opinion on the statement in the lower corner? “How things have changed since John B died.” Who is John B?



Programs

On July 12, 2021, Ron Ketelsen, President of the Sharon Historical Society Board of Directors, presented "The History of the Statue of Liberty" via Zoom with approximately 70 participants in attendance. We learned a lot about the 1885 gift of friendship from France and its sculptor Frederic Augustus Bartholdi who is credited with the design. Once built, the statue was dismantled in France and 350 individual pieces were shipped to the US in 214 crates aboard

the French Navy ship, Iser. The fund-raising efforts on this side of the Atlantic for the construction of the base wasn't as easy but eventually it all came together. Ron surveyed the participants and found that many of the listeners had visited the statue and also climbed the stairs inside the statue's arm. Nice program. Thank you, Ron.



About 30 people tuned into Zoom on August 9th to hear Ted Shuart, Schoharie County Historian, discuss the "Civil War Diary of Lt. William Hill". Ted did extensive research of Lt. Hill's background and told how Hill quickly moved up through the ranks to the Signal Corps and interacted with the war's top officers. Hill's diary tells how he met several girls but many times just wrote in his diary, "Didn't like her." It's believed Hill never married or had a family. Hill was a Captain at the end of his military

career. He died at age 42. It's believed there are other diaries of William Hill somewhere but Ted only had one so we don't know the rest of the story. Ted did a great job. Very, very interesting.



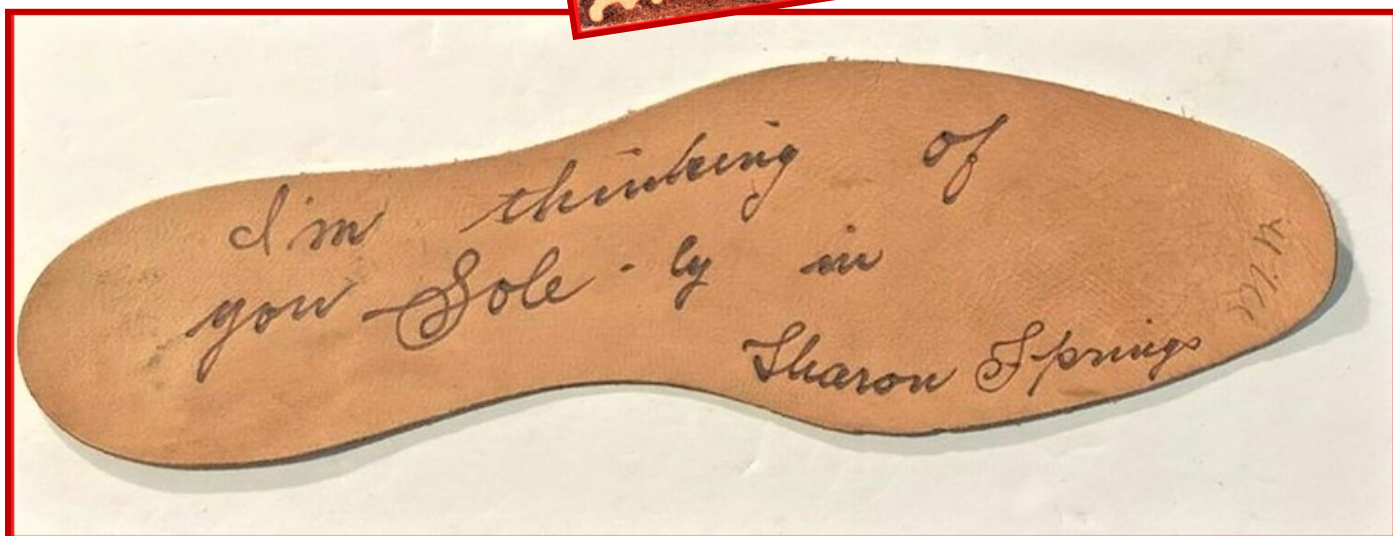
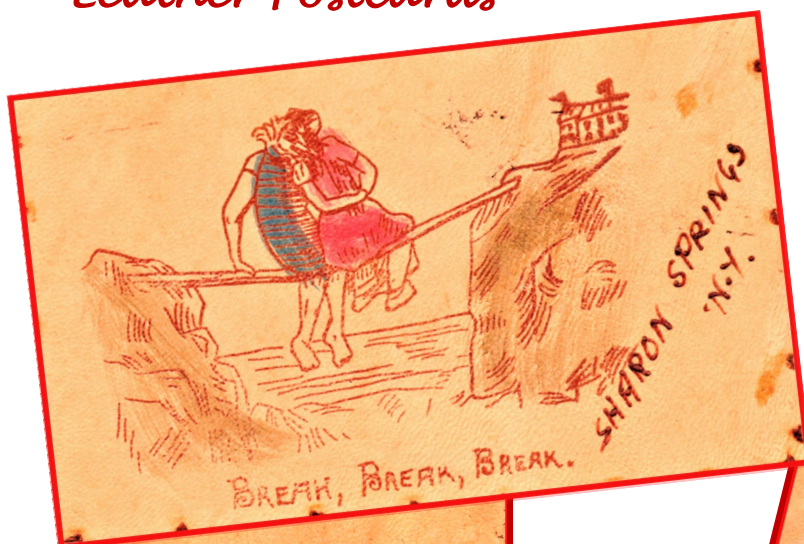
The museum looked great all summer with the hanging baskets, flowers along the sidewalk, and the well-kept lawn. Thanks to Ron Ketelsen and Walt Manko for taking care of the grounds.



White Sulphur Springs of Sharon Springs NY mineral water bottle cap from 1910s. These now sell between \$2.00—\$5.00 each.

Leather Postcards

Around the turn of the 20th Century, leather postcards were popular. These early-1900s leather postcards were imprinted with humorous scenes, images of flowers, and other designs, and more crafty ones were even hand-tinted. Today these postcards are fun pieces of history and affordable collectibles. They sell for \$6.00 to \$15.00 each depending on topic and condition.



Avery DeLuca

March 30, 1911—February 21, 1997

Educator and Friend

Avery DeLuca is a familiar name in these parts—teacher in Jr. High, Guidance Director, Social Studies teacher, Business Manager, Principal, and Supervising Principal. When serving as Supervising Principal, he continued to fill the positions of Principal, Guidance Director and Business Manager. Mr. DeLuca or Mr. “D” as he was fondly called, was a friend to many. Kids of the 1940s-1960s remember him fondly—after they graduated. While in school, there was the fear of being called to the principal’s office!



This photograph by Logan Pomella was printed in *The Times Journal* on June 10, 1970 to celebrate Avery’s retirement after 35 years at SSCS.—from 1935 to 1970. From left: Daughter Carol DeLuca, Mr. “D”, Mrs. “D”, and son David. Another son, Donald DeLuca lived in Little Rock, Ark. and was unable to be with them for the retirement program.

TODAY I’M 80 *by Avery DeLuca*

Today, dear Lord, I am 80 and there’s much I haven’t done.
I hope, dear Lord, you’ll let me live until I’m 81.
But then if I haven’t finished all I want to do.
Would you let me stay a while until I’m 82?

So many places I want to go—so very much to see,
Do you think you could manage to make it 83?
The world is changing very fast. There is so much in store.

I’d like it very much to live until I’m 84.
And if by then I’m still alive,
I’d love to stay ’til 85.

More planes will be up in the air so I’d really like to stick,
And see what happens to the world when I am 86.
I know dear Lord it’s much to ask and it must be nice in heaven.
But I would really like to stay until I’m 87.

I
know by then I won’t be fast and sometimes will be late,
But it would be so pleasant to be around at 88.
I will have seen so many things and had a wonderful time.
So I’m sure I’ll be willing to leave at 89 . . . Maybe.



Fritz Vogt—Itinerant artist

The name Fritz Vogt is very familiar to people who have an interest in art and history of this area. Fritz Vogt was born in Germany in 1841 and immigrated to America in 1890 and spent the last 10 years of his life in this area traveling from place to place and detailing images of homes, farms, churches and other buildings in Schoharie, Montgomery, Otsego, Fulton, and Herkimer Counties. More than 40 of his drawings were of the Sharon area. Mr. Vogt didn't always use the traditional rules of perspective, but took some artistic liberties and squeezed in as many features as he could. His drawings leave behind a detailed history of the area.

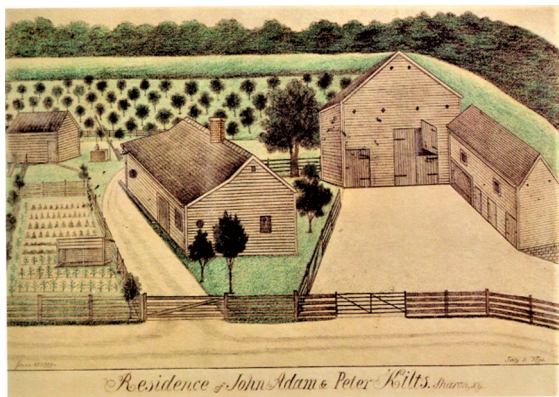


Figure 29
Residence of John Adam & Peter Kilts
Sharon, Schoharie County
June 15, 1899
Colored and graphite pencil on paper
20 1/4" x 26"
New York State Historical Association, Cooperstown, N.Y.

This is a copy of a page from Fenimore Art Museum's publication "Drawn Home: Fritz Vogt's Rural America" of the 20 1/4" x 26" drawing of the Residence of John Adam & Peter Kilts, June 15, 1899. The Kilts residence was located on Argusville Road in the Town of Sharon.

broken English and surprised many with his intellect. Besides his talent of being able to draw, he sang and entertained many by playing the organ and violin. He may have been paid a couple of dollars for a specific piece but was more often paid in kind, with a place to stay, meals or alcohol. He relieved the pain of rheumatism with alcohol and died in a poorhouse.

As stated in a brochure from the 2002 exhibit at Fenimore Art Museum, "Alcoholism and a degenerative form of arthritis contributed to the harshness of Vogt's itinerant lifestyle. The effects of his condition most likely slowed his ability to actively draw in the late 1890s. In 1898, Vogt entered the Montgomery County Almshouse in Yosts, located on Route 5 between Palatine Bridge and Fonda. He continued to draw on a limited basis but spent his last year in institutional care and died January 1, 1900 from complications of his arthritic condition." It is believed Mr. Vogt is buried in a small cemetery just west of the prior Montgomery County Home. He left behind a collection of 200 drawings. Today, one of Vogt's drawings sells for many thousands of dollars, depending on size, if done in color pencil, topic, condition and collectability.

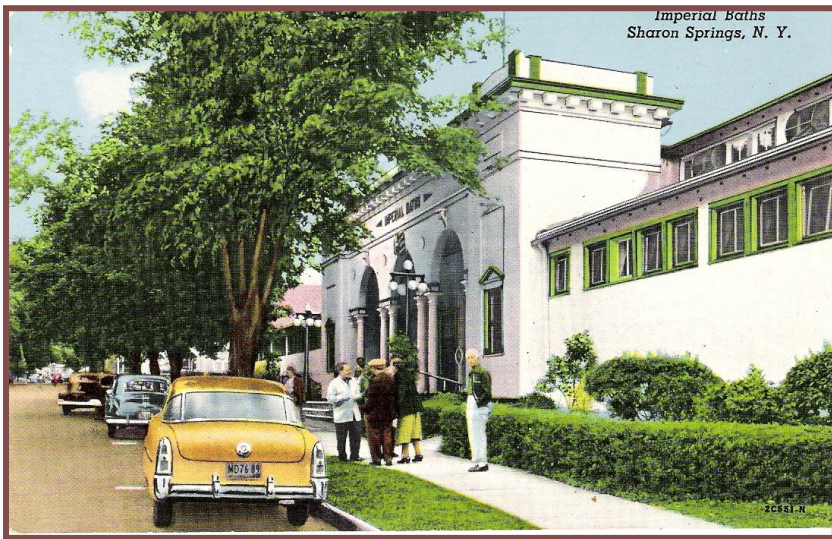
The late W. Parker Hayes, Jr., a project director for the Smithsonian Institution's traveling exhibition service, produced a catalog book "Drawn Home: Fritz Vogt's Rural America." The catalog was published by the Fenimore Art Museum in Cooperstown. The Fenimore Art Museum and Arkell Museum in Canajoharie exhibited Vogt's work as well as the American Folk Art Museum in New York City. According to Hayes, who did extensive research, says Vogt was "a short, smallish man with a quick step, yet slightly rotund." Hayes added, "He wore five or six second-hand shirts layered over each other, the underlying shirts visible through holes in the outer layers. He slept in the shelter of barns between two buffalo-hides on a pile of hay. When Vogt entered a home to complete his drawings, he wore a pair of slippers or crude shoes fashioned from carpet remnants." Hayes said, in August of every year, beginning in 1891, Vogt picked hops and didn't do any drawings in August during harvest.

Vogt fit in with the region's existing German-American population. "He relied on an ethnic network to get the basic things in life and to find patrons," Hayes said. He spoke German and



A grave marker was placed at the location where Fritz Vogt is thought to be buried in a small cemetery on Route 5, Montgomery County.

The Imperial Baths Remembered



150,000 sq. ft.

The amount of floor space in the Imperial Bathhouse.



150 There were 150 wainscoted bathing and resting rooms in the Imperial.

THE IMPERIAL BATHS OPENED JUNE 1, 1927 IN CONQUEST FOR HEALTH

Thousands Win Victory at Sharon Springs

Accommodations for 5,000 Treatments Daily

Favored by Nature with the twin advantages of health-restoring elements and an environment that invites recreation, with both these advantages developed to their fullest extent, Sharon Springs is a resort approached by but few others, and those at a considerable traveling distance from New York.

This community has long been noted for its Famous Sulphur Springs, with the waters of which treatments are effectively given by European methods to relieve Rheumatism, Gout, Skin and Nervous Diseases, Neural Catarrh, Disease of the Respiratory Organs and of the Heart. Thousands come here each summer for these treatments, and the town contains many hotels and boarding houses for their accommodation.

From Sharon Springs, overlooking the Mohawk Valley, the vast sweep of panorama northward is unrivaled in the East. You will see farms and patches of woodland covering the rolling terrain for miles. Beyond that, a long stretch of the rugged crestline of the Adirondacks. With a glass on a clear day, even the Green Mountains come into view.

THE IMPERIAL BATHS

To meet the requirements for treatment sought by the thousands of visitors to Sharon Springs, this elegant and handsome bath-house has been built to supplement a large number of other buildings. Centrally located on the main street of this picturesque village, it is one of the largest structures of its kind in the world. It contains 150 rooms, 15,000 square feet of floor space and equipment of the very latest type.

WHITE SULPHUR SPRINGS COMPANY

LOUIS GORDON, MANAGER SHARON SPRINGS, N. Y.

1927

When the Imperial Bathhouse opened.

\$1.25 was the price of a Sulphur bath in 1945.

IMPERIAL SULPHUR SPA
Sharon Springs, New York

6 SULPHUR BATH TICKETS

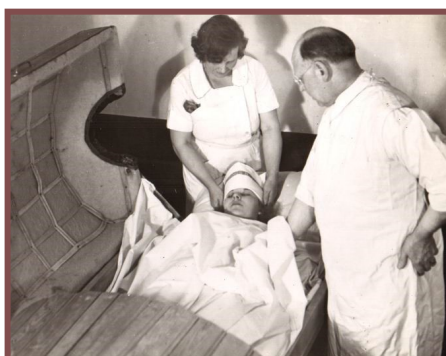
THIS BOOK
ISSUED TO: _____

HOTEL _____

TICKETS VOID IF DETACHED
PRESENT BOOK TO ATTENDANT
POSITIVELY NO REFUND

00048

6 A packet of 6 Sulphur Bath Tickets could be purchased at one time.



5,000

Owners boasted that there were accommodations for 5,000 treatments daily. (Dr. White on right.)

5 Largest of the 5 immaculate bathhouses at the mountain spa was the Imperial. Visitors made appointments at the reception room for Nauheim and Sulphur baths, douches, irrigations, inhalations, massages, and packs.



This visitor to Sharon Springs ca. 1940 stopped at the Board of Trade office to look over the listing of the numerous boarding establishments while her son sits on the suitcase and patiently waits for her to make a decision.

A SMALL TOWN—AND ITS' ORGANIZATIONS MATTER

Even here in the little Town of Sharon, the pandemic has disrupted our lives – children's school attendance and remote learning, working from home, shopping on line, constant cleaning and disinfecting everywhere—at the office, at home, the car, doorknobs, etc.—virtual meetings and programs—not the least of them the Sharon Historical Society meetings—and who can forget—the



masks! The Sharon Historical Society hasn't held in-person monthly programs since 2019. Board of Directors' Day is typically held quarterly at the Town Hall which is normally open from 9:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m. or whenever you can see Melissa's car in the parking lot. The "Hysterical" membership normally meets the second Monday of the month and on this day, we can usually muster up a good crowd of 15 to 20 people to gather in the Community Room. We sit

in hard, metal folding chairs patiently waiting for the meeting to end so we can chatter and have refreshments. We listen as the President begs for volunteers to act as receptionist, and brings us up-to-date on the current carpenter ant situation at the museum, electrical problem in the barn, weeds in the flower bed, finances – or lack of them, and how to attract and increase the tourist population.

Regardless, Historical meetings and Board of Directors' meetings are sort of fun. There's the social aspect to it – whether so and so joined as a new member, information about a recent historical find or donation to the museum, and of course there's also the surprise element. It's true, debating the eligibility of a member or the minutiae of some minor expense or another isn't fun, but then aren't these the messy, bland, and uninspired realities of life?

And there's always the unplanned aspect to it – what's crept up on the agenda since the last meeting which no one wants to deal with i.e. some visitor to the museum moved the black hat pins in the Lappeus funeral exhibit and no one can find them, the bed collapsed after an overly spirited child took the gate down and used the bed as a trampoline, the brochure with the maps were passed out and no one kept an original copy, *A Touch of Nostalgia* was sold for \$15.00 instead of \$24.00, so we need to be careful. How do we convince visitors that no one is buried under the stones in our small graveyard exhibit? You get the picture.

Also, Historical meeting day is when we catch up on the latest – not gossip, exactly – but what is happening around Town. Did Dave get his hay in before it rained? Did you have frost at your house this morning? A bear was seen yesterday morning near George's house? Mary made marmalade and brought some jars so help yourself. Squash is plentiful this year so please take one when you leave, Karen's "girls" are laying like crazy – eggs for all.

There would probably be the usual talk about budgets and committees and new people in town, the usual laments about the electric bill and insurance and things that need repair. Many think it's hilarious that a 15 to 20 person social event is described as "large-ish." But we know exactly what is meant.

By the time you read this, the official summer season will be done. Maybe, if the pandemic has continued to wane and vaccine participation has increased, we'll have our annual potluck or some such social holiday gathering. We hope it will be a "large-ish" group.