



# Half-Shire Historical Society Newsletter

The Towns of Half-Shire:  
Albion...Amboy...Boylston...Camden...Florence...Mexico...Montague...  
New Haven...Orwell...Osceola...Parish...Redfield...Richland...Sandy Creek...Williamstown

December 2021 Preserving History in the Eastern Lake Ontario Region of NY since 1972 Vol. XLVII No. 4

## Carol Williams Pelosi Recalls a special 1947 Christmas in Redfield

In Redfield, N.Y., where Gary and I grew up, Mother was the only one who thought about Christmas in October. That’s when she began rehearsing her first, second, and third graders in the songs and few words for a Christmas operetta that was always performed in the combination gym and auditorium in the village school. Otherwise, we waited to think of Christmas until after Thanksgiving, and even then, the preparations were few.



Mother, Gary, and I put up a tree in front of the big window in the living room. Down at the store, Mr. Crow would string up shiny red paper bells in the windows. There were some decorations in each of the three classrooms at the school.

After supper on Christmas Eve, we and everyone else in town would put on hats, coats, gloves, and boots and drive to the Congregational Church. (It took me years to learn there is a Congregational denomination; I had thought it was meant in a communal sense.) Every pew would be filled, and the only lights I remember came from those on the big tree in front on the left. It is a very friendly feeling to sit in a hushed, warm, softly lit church with almost everyone you know.

We would sing a few carols, hear the minister, Mr. Rowley, read the Christmas story, and then Santa would bound in from the fellowship hall on the right and we children would all pretend not to recognize Clarence Durst. \* He would pass out the small presents our parents or grandparents had taken to the church – a box of crayons or a coloring book – and then give all the children the small boxes of Christmas candy. Those were the boxes you could carry by the white string, and the candy was usually a few loose pieces while the rest of the pieces had consolidated themselves into a hard mass. (How did churches and other organizations find those same candy boxes year after year?)

One year it was different. Redfield was a very white place – white skins, white snow, white bread – but this year a family from New York City had moved onto an old farm outside town. They were dark-skinned. Today we would say black or African-American, but then we called them Negroes.

Mrs. Johnson was a widow who wanted to remove her daughter and grandsons from the seductive, poisonous influences in the city. Although there were some who avoided her because of her color, many in town pitied her and wanted to help her because she had bought the farm, sight unseen, and was told that she could make a living there. We knew better; farmers had been selling up for years, which was why the farm had sat idle for years.

This year as we began the first carol, there was a new voice. Clear and strong, Mrs. Johnson’s voice was heard above the others with a new inflection and beat. For the first time, we heard “Silent Night” sung as a spiritual.

It was a remarkable experience. In the months and years afterward, she was often asked to sing solos in the church, but I’ll always remember the night a stranger became a part of us by making the familiar words new again.

*Notes: Member Carol Williams Pelosi lives in Wake Forest, NC, and edits a weekly online newspaper. When she had originally written this story a few years back, she misidentified Santa as Louis Harvey: Conversations with Carol and others present, including Nancy Yerdon Forbes led to general agreement that was likely Clarence Durst (1896-1979) in the role, which was later carried out by Fred Anken. Mrs. Johnson’s grandsons were: Leon & Boylann Johnson, John & Howard Taylor.*

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**Half-Shire Membership:** 2022 Annual Dues are \$15 per year, \$50 for supporting membership, \$400 life membership payable to Half-Shire P.O. 73 Richland, New York 13144-0073. \*\*We are now accepting 2022 dues. Paid members will also receive the quarterly *Tug Hill Literary Review*

**The Half-Shire Historical Society**

**P.O. 73; 1100 County Rte. 48, Richland, NY 13144-0073**

**Phone: 315-298-2986; [halfshire@hotmail.com](mailto:halfshire@hotmail.com) <http://www.halfshire.org>, Facebook: "Half Shire"**

**Founded on November 15, 1972; NYSED charter: Provisional-Dec. 1973; Permanent-Feb. 1978**

**Officers (2020-2022) with terms of office expiration**

<b>President (2022)</b>	Shawn P. Doyle, 85 Lake St, Pulaski, NY 13142	315-298-3620	<a href="mailto:spdinpul@gmail.com">spdinpul@gmail.com</a>
<b>Vice Pres. (2022)</b>	Greg Monette, P.O. Box 2006, Liverpool, NY 13089	315-532-8265	moon2eye@yahoo.com
<b>Treasurer (2022)</b>	Betty Warren, 2785 Co. Rte. 2, Richland, NY 13144	315-298-2975	Bettybjwarren@aol.com
<b>Secretary (2022)</b>	Fay Ann Colvin, P.O. Box 592, Brewerton, NY 13029	315-447-4270	facolvin@windstream.net
<b>Librarian (Appointed)</b>	Sharon L. Turo, P.O. Box 256, Sandy Creek, NY 13145	315-387-3112	slturo@earthlink.net

**Board of Trustees (2021-2022) with terms of office expiration**

<b>Albion (2023)</b>	Florence Gardner, P.O. Box 394, 312 Bridge St, Altmar, NY 13302	315-298-5723	(no email)
<b>Amboy (2023)</b>	Lori E. Monette, P.O. Box 2006, Liverpool, NY 13089	315-657-3579	gratefullyadopted@yahoo.com
<b>Boylston (2023)</b>	Marcy Newman,	315-778-4234	marcyn@frontiernet.net
<b>Camden (2023)</b>	Rebecca Kennedy, 8823 St. Rte 178, Henderson, NY 13650	215-532-4464	rkennedy62@yahoo.com
<b>Florence (2021)</b>	Doreen Tilton, 12334 Florence-Redfield Rd., Camden, NY 13316	315-245-2760	Doreen_Tilton@yahoo.com
<b>Mexico/New Haven (2024)</b>	Allie Proud, P.O. Box 703, 83 Wayne Street, Mexico, NY 13114	315-963-3129	<a href="mailto:proud83@icloud.com">proud83@icloud.com</a>
<b>Orwell (2024)</b>	Rose Graham, P.O. Box 162, 1999 Co. Rte., 2, Orwell, NY 13426	315-298-2070	rosegrah@yahoo.com
<b>Osceola/Montague (2024)</b>	Leona Chereshnoski, 1075 Comins Rd., Redfield, NY 13475	315-599-8836	<a href="mailto:lmchere@gmail.com">lmchere@gmail.com</a>
<b>Parish (2024)</b>	Venita Ackley, 422 Kipp Rd., Parish, NY 13131	315-382-6529	ackleyv@gmail.com
<b>Redfield (2022)</b>	Maureen Stedman, 259 McCaw Rd. Redfield, NY 13437	315-599-7166	maureens0259@gmail.com
<b>Richland (2022)</b>	Robin Philips, 102 Ivans Rd., Pulaski, NY 13142	315-298-7279	designsofelegance@netzero.net
<b>Sandy Creek (2022)</b>	Margaret Kastler, 1695 Co. Rte. 15, Lacona, NY 13083	315-387-5209	kastlerm@hotmail.com
<b>Williamstown (2022)</b>	(Vacant)		
<b>Trustee-at-Large (2022)</b>	Heather Stevens, 435 Deer Run Dr., Central Square, NY 13036	315-870-2069	<a href="mailto:dstevens@incpark.com">dstevens@incpark.com</a>
<b>Trustees Emeritus</b>	Julie Robst, 1100 Druid Rd. East, Apt. 511, Clearwater, FL 33756	727-276-4375	keeperofthetree@aol.com
	Liz Grant, 722 Co. Rte. 47, Redfield, NY 13437	315-599-7735	(no email)

### President's Report, Shawn Doyle—

As the autumn leaves blow across our lawns and the temperatures drop daily, reminding us of the oncoming winter, it is a time of reflection. This fall as I write with Thanksgiving soon upon us, I am very thankful for the support of our membership and supporters. I am also very proud and happy to work with our superior team of dedicated volunteers and board members here at Half-Shire. In this second year of the great pandemic, our team has continued to work hard at various tasks and helped see through some exciting projects.

As 2022 dawns upon us, we expect another very busy year. We are excited about the new Theo and Agnes (Duane) Grant Memorial Agricultural building that will grace our southeast property line. We broke ground on September 25<sup>th</sup> following our annual meeting. Another exciting building project will soon be announced and is under the direction of our life member John Allen (more later as this unfolds!).

Inside our building, we continue to do some finish work. Insulation has been added in the attic, trim work and moldings throughout where needed, and the stage will finally come to completion this winter.

Our collections of family and regional histories grow weekly. One important facet we have focused on this year has been the family Bible collection located in the old woolen mill cabinet in the Allison Regner Balcom Library. That collection now numbers over 200, and within these holy books are records spanning 300 years. This collection is digitized and available to researchers as needed. We hope to soon have an index

available online, along with our other collections that are all currently available on the website.

Another important collection is the school yearbook collection in the new southeast classroom. We are still looking for some missing issues from APW, Sandy Creek, Mexico, Camden, and Belleville. Our Pulaski collection is complete! This room is very popular, and the pleasing environment in both the SE and SW rooms make guests comfortable as they peruse the collections.

Also, as we look ahead to 2022, we are planning to complete the garden work that never was finished this year. In the spring, we will be building the long talked of perennial beds and adding to the roses and lavender that both do so well in the front of the building. 150 fresh bulbs were planted around the front sign recently, and we eagerly anticipate their spring blooms.

The schedule of events on the last page is only as good as the COVID climate, so check ahead with us if planning to travel and visit. We anticipate staying open as much as possible this winter, likely with the Friday through Tuesday schedule we now have. We are still looking for volunteers to staff Wednesday and Thursdays for open hours. There is always something to do here, and the new heating system makes winter days comfortable to work on site. We continue to follow and reflect the local school snow-day closure schedules.

I again thank all of our supporters and wish one and all the happiest of holidays! As the old year passes, here's to a healthier, happier 2022!

## Remembering Friends

*(Half-Shire volunteers clip from the Pulaski, Camden, and Watertown newspapers weekly and scan the internet for death notices of significance to the area. We have a comprehensive index available online on our website. We select significant deaths that touched our organization, officers, members, or communities from this large collection. We try to represent our fifteen towns and their people in all we do, and this small selection is just a sample of our weekly additions.)*

### **Kay Ellen LaSalle Robarge** (Apr 24 1952-Sept 18 2021)

Born in Watertown, NY the daughter of Edward & Hilda (Howes) LaSalle, Kay was married over 30 years to James Robarge formerly of Richland. She is survived by her husband and two children along with five grandchildren, Kay was active in the Aubrindale, Florida community where they lived. Both were Half-Shire members.

**Melvin House** (Oct 21 1940-Sept 25 2021) Born in Parish the son of Charles & Marion (Slocum) House of Parish. Melvin was married to Beverly Lescenski by who he has three children and five grandchildren and six great grandchildren. Melvin was well-regarded area resident. Melvin had ties of blood and friendship to many Half-Shire members.

**James Burdick** (Jan 14 1944-Oct 2 2021) Born in Oswego the son of Robert & Dorothy (Vickory) Burdick. Jim attended Scriba and Oswego City Schools and went on to the US Navy. He had lived many years in Etowah, TN where he passed. His sister Betty Warren is our Treasurer, and we offer sincere condolences to the family.

**Herbert Nemier** (Apr 15 1928-Oct 9 2021) Born in Orwell the son of John & Alta (Shafty) Nemier, Herbert was a 1946 graduate of Sandy Creek, and Army veteran. He married Karin Preston in 1977. A long-time highway worker in the town of Boylston, Herb is survived by his wife, a son and two granddaughters, along with many cousins, several of whom as Half-Shire members.

**Richard Tilkins** (Dec 13 1962-Oct 12 2021) born the son of the late Richard & Nancy (Lloyd) Tilkins, "Dickie" attended Richland and Pulaski schools. He was married to the former Cathy Brown, who survives along with their son Ben, and Richard's sister Renae Sacco of Oswego and several nieces and nephews. "Dickie" was a valued member and supporter of Half-Shire, and was pre-deceased by brothers Rodney, William and Karen Tilkins as well as his parents and step-brother Dave Reynolds, and step father Bill Reynolds.

**James LaCelle** (Mar 3 1931-Oct 12 2021) Born in Sandy Creek the son of G. Clarke & Marguerite (Waggoner) LaCelle, Jim was a 1948 graduate of Cincinnati Schools and a Korean War veteran. Jim was married to the former Dottie Yaddow. Both have been active and valued members of Half-Shire. He is survived by his wife, his brother and nieces and nephews.

**Robert Presley** (Jun 1 1970-Oct 13 2021) Born in Tampa, Fl. The son of Ronnie & Deborah (Barker) Presley. Robert attended Sandy Creek Schools and later worked at International Wire in Williamstown. His parents and siblings along with several nieces and nephews survive. His father Ron is a longtime member of ours and we offer our sincere condolences to the entire family,

**Nancy Boyd Thomas** (Sep 23 1941-Oct 13 2021) Born the daughter of Robert & Anna Mae (Parker) Boyd, Nancy was a 1959 graduate of Pulaski Schools and an active member of the Alumni board for many years. Following her graduation from Rochester Business Institute she was employed at various local businesses before her retirement from Community Bank in 1999. Nancy was married for nearly 60 years to Jack

Thomas who passed away over the summer. The couple have three daughters Jeanne, Jackie and Susan who survive along with a growing family of four grandchildren and one great grandchild. Nancy was an active and beloved member of the community, and a longtime member of Half-Shire.

**Nicholas Dunn** (Aug 31 1983-Oct 17 2021) Born the son of Gregory Dunn and Julianne Holt; Nick was a 2001 graduate of Phoenix schools. His sudden death leaves a void in his family during these difficult times. He was a great nephew of Connie Armstrong (below), and his mother Juliann Johnson is a correspondent of ours on Facebook. Our sympathy to the whole family on his passing.

**Harold Kimball** (Aug 28 1939-Oct 18 2021) Born in Brookfield, Vermont to Herbert & Hilda (Ash) Kimball, Harold and his family moved to the Sandy Creek area in later years. He served in the Marines and was active in scouting for many years. Harold and his late wife Judith owned J & R Diner in Lacona for several years. Harold is survived by son Shaun and two grandchildren, several siblings predeceased him.

**Judith Carney** (May 2 1957-Oct 20 2021) Born in Auburn the daughter of Clarence & Elaine (Peterson) Carney, Judy made her home in Pulaski many years where her father "Larry" was well respected and passed away last year. She, her sons Kody and Kylan Trombley survive along with two grandsons. Judy was well-regarded and an active, but quiet volunteer in the community. Her sons were very involved in scouting and worked with Half-Shire on their eagle projects.

**Connie Wise Armstrong** (Nov 30 1942-Oct 23 2021) born in Oswego the daughter of William & Mable (Perry) Wise, Connie was a graduate of Catholic High there, and later married Richard Armstrong, (1939-2003) by whom she had four children who survive: Deborah, Renee, Dorae and William, along with eight grandchildren and four great grandchildren whom she treasured. Connie was a longtime member of Half-Shire, and was working with us as she pursued her Master's Degree this past year, studying Albert Finney and the "Burnt over District Period". Connie was active in the Catholic Diocese and had a wide circle of friends.

**Lorraine Petrie McGinn** (Sep 11 1927-Oct 23 2021) Born in Wolcott the daughter of Fletcher & Ethel (Cole) Petrie, Lorraine was married to Hugh James McGinn and made their home in Wolcott. Hugh died in 1978. Lorraine is related to several Half-Shire members, and her family acquainted with many more. She is survived by sons Michael and Shawn McGinn and a daughter Megan Schneider as well as six grandchildren and eight great grands and countless nieces and nephews who mourn the loss of this beautiful soul.

**Carole Hilton Cashel** (Nov 3 1934-Oct 26 2021) Born in Orwell the daughter of Brainard & Ada (Greenfield) Hilton, Carole was a 1954 graduate of Pulaski Schools. She was married in 1955 to Raymond Cashel, who passed away in 2009. The couple owned the Pineville Campground many years. Carole is survived by a daughter and three sons as well as sisters Phyllis Wortman and Harolyn Boyle. Several members of this family are members of Half-Shire.

**Wendy Robarge Ogden** (Sep 9 1972-Nov 2 2021) Born in Watertown the daughter of Robert & Delia (Compo) Robarge, Wendy was an LPN at St. Francis in Oswego where she tended to several Half-Shire members, as well as being related to several of our Robarge members. Her sudden death was a shock to all who knew her, including her two children. Her fiancée, musician **Bryan David Greene** (Dec 8 1967-Oct 27 2021) had recently died of complications from COVID. He was the son of Donald & Mary (Broadwell) Greene of Fulton.

**Theodora Sobles Horth** (Sep 19 1942-Nov 4 2021) Born in Buffalo the daughter of Leon Sobles and Margaret (Spencer) Sobles Rodriguez, "Teddi" attended Pulaski Schools. She was married to James Horth in 1959, and they raised a family of two daughters and a son who survive along with eight grandchildren and six great grands. Teddi returned to school when her family was raised and earned her college degree and taught Global Studies at Pulaski schools until her retirement in 2007. She was a well-known crafter and was very involved in the Boylston/Sandy Creek communities. Her son Jim is a member of Half-Shire.

**Owen Dale Bristol** (Sep 28 1927-Nov 5 2021) Born in Albion the son of Floyd & Dora (Maynard) Bristol, Dale was a 1944 graduate of Altmar-Parish High School. He was married to Carol Mowers in 1998, following the death of his wife of 38 years Dorothy Phillips, and Doris Gates. Dale was a well-known farmer, and respected community member in the south Albion region. His sons David and Daniel and six grandchildren have our sincere condolences.

**Steven Washburn** (Jul 22 1961-Nov 12 2021) Born in Watertown the son of James & Joan (Stonson) Washburn, Steve was a 1980 graduate of South Jefferson Schools. He worked as custodian for the Sandy Creek School system until his 2017 retirement. He served on the Village board 10 years in Sandy Creek. His daughter Brittany works as a clerk for the town of Sandy Creek, and we offer her and Steve's extended family our condolences. In past years Steve assisted Half-Shire with floor cleaning and other maintenance.

**Richard G. Bailey** (Oct 26 1945-Nov 13 2021) Born the son of Robert & Helen (Kingsley) Baily, Rick attended Liverpool Schools and served in the Army reserve during the Vietnam era. He worked 40 years at Carrier Corporation. Rick was married 54 years to the former Lorraine Church, who survives along with four children and several grandchildren. Rick's niece Lori Monette is our Trustee for Amboy. And along with her family have our sincere condolences.

**Christopher Rogers** (Nov 19 1986-Nov 14 2021) born the son of Wayne & Cheryl (Draper) Rogers. Chris was a 2004 APW graduate. He was killed in a tragic car accident, leaving a large grieving family which include several with ties to Half-Shire including his Uncle Rodney Salisbury, a good member of ours. Our sincere condolences are extended to the family.

**Carol Falke Yerdon** (Dec 22 1942-Nov 14 2021) Born in Watertown the daughter of Dwight & Dora (Candee-Baldwin) Falke, Carol was married to Francis Yerdon in 1962. She was the mother of four, Mitchell, Roger, Valerie and Victoria, and grandmother to thirteen, and great grandmother to thirteen. Carol was always active in the Osceola and Redfield communities during her married life. She was an early and active member of the Redfield Volunteer Fire Department, a 4H instructor, an EMT, an active member of the Redfield Fish & Game Club and countless other pursuits in the Tug Hill region. Carol will long be remembered as a kind and good soul in her region.

**Carol DeMassey Stoker** (Feb 3 1943-Nov 21 2021) Born in Williamstown the daughter of Samuel & Geraldine (Harris) DeMassey, Carol was a 1961 graduate of APW schools. After raising her four young children, Carol began a career at Oswego County Social Services, retiring in 2011. She was involved in most facets of the Williamstown community and was beloved by area Sheriffs and other law enforcement for hot meals, coffee, and baked goods, as well as strong advocacy. Carol's sudden passing is a great loss to her community and the region as well as her four children, eight grandchildren and three great grands, who we join in mourning her loss.

## **Tug Hill Bibles: The Irish Family of Connecticut and Happy Valley (Oswego County)**

Several years ago, one of our departed members whom we miss, Harold Hubbard (1920-2017) gave us a very old and damaged bible that belonged to his late wife, the former Marjorie Spoor's family. The bible dates back to 1735 and is the oldest one in our collection. This summer we took it to our book restoration contact, Robert Lomascolo, in Aurora, NY. His expert restoration work has restored this bible for another 300 years!

The first owners of the bible may have been Jedediah Irish, Jr. who is the earliest entry in the volume, born May 20, 1738. It was passed to his son Jonathon Irish (1761-1836), and on to his daughter Melissa Irish Demelt (1805-1898).

Melissa married Stephen Demelt and passed the bible on to their son Edwin Darius Demelt (1844-1924) who married Mariah VanTassel, and passed the book on to their son Frederick (1867-1945) who married Edna Westcott and passed the bible to their daughter Gladys Demelt Spoor (1897-1977) who married Asa Spoor and lived in Dugway. Their daughter Marjorie Spoor Hubbard (1920-2014) and husband Harold Hubbard (1920-2017) passed it on to Half-Shire in the early 2000s

**At the beginning of the book, on the first few pages these entries are made:**

Job Irish was born May 22, 1773

Hannah was born June 22, 1776

Jedediah Irish was born July 6 1760

Judith Irish was born May 22, 1759

And died the twenty second day of May 1826

Jedediah Irish was born May the 20, 1738 and died February 6, 1778

Susannah Irish was born July 14, 1733 and died July 28, 1820

David Irish was born September 11, 1735 and died March 10, 1751

Esther Irish was born August 29 1758

Jedidiah Irish was born July 6, 1760  
 Jonathon Irish was born December 26, 1761  
 Sarah Irish was born January 23, 1764  
 Justus Irish was born January 25, 1766  
 Joshua Irish was born July 29, 1768 and died August 18, 1847  
 Elizabeth Irish was born June 18, 1770

**At the End of the New Testament these entries:**

Jedediah Irish was born the 20<sup>th</sup> day of May 1738 and died in the fortieth year of his age on the 6<sup>th</sup> day of February 1778  
 Susannah Irish was born the 14<sup>th</sup> day of July 1733 and died in the 88<sup>th</sup> year of her age on the 28 of July 1820

David Irish was born September 11, 1735 and died in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of his age March 10, 1751  
 Esther Irish was born August 2 day 1758  
 Jedidiah Irish was born July the 6 day 1760  
 Jonathon Irish was born December the 26 day 1761  
 Sarah Irish was born January the 23 day 1764  
 Justus Irish was born January the 25 day 1766  
 Joshua Irish was born July the 29 day 1768 and died August the 18, 1847  
 Elizabeth Irish was born June the 18 day 1770  
 Job Irish was born May the 22 day 1773  
 Hannah Irish was born June the 26 day 1776

**From our files:** According to research by the late Esther Rancier, the Irish family goes far back into English history to a knight who went on the First Crusades to the Holy Land in 1099. However, some material is in dispute, so none of this early history had been included. John Irish, born ca. 1617 in Barrow, Somersetshire, England is regarded as the first to America. Documents in England show he was indentured to a felt maker on 20 April 1629 for five years. He must not have liked felt making because by 27 June 1629 he arrived at Cape Ann, Salem, MA on the "Talbot".

He took up residence at Duxbury, MA with the original Pilgrims where he became a surveyor of note. In the Pequot Wars, 1633-1637, he volunteered for the defense. He left much property in Seaconnet, RI. His wife was Elizabeth Risley, born ca. 1619 in Clovedon, Somerset, England.

He had a namesake son John, born ca. 1641 in Duxbury. John worked as a carpenter. About 1673 he moved to Little Compton, RI. By 1678 he was appointed the constable. He also surveyed highways in the town. John wed in 1672 Elizabeth (Savory) Thurston. They had ten children. Elizabeth died between May 1699/May 1708. He remarried Priscilla Southworth, but no known issue has been found.

On 9 November 1715 John wrote his will which can be found in Taunton, MA Probate Book, v. 3, p. 387. John died on 21 February 1717. He named his wife and children in his will. He was buried on the Irish farm located across from the old Friend's Meeting House in Little Compton.

John and Elizabeth's son Jedediah Irish, born 7 October 1688, wed in 1711 Mary of North Kingston, RI. He moved to live in Kingston, then Westerly, RI and then to Stonington, CT. He wrote a will on 17 April 1757, dying in 1758 at Stonington.

Jedediah and Mary's first son was Jedediah, born 16 November 1711 at Westerly, RI. After his wife's passing on 10 December 1732, he wed Thankful Lamphear in Westerly. They had two children. Then he had a third wife and more children. His wives and children need more research. They lived at Quaker Hill, NY and were recorded in the Oblong Quaker Records. He wrote a will dated 7 August 1792. He died before 18 January 1797.

Jedediah and Thankful's son Jedediah was born 1738. About 1756 he married Susannah West of Charlestown, RI. Susannah was the daughter of Clement West and Sarah Waste. They lived in Quaker Hill, Dutchess Co., NY. On 7 November 1761 they joined the First Baptist Church of Dover in Pawling, NY. They had nine children. He died in 1778 and his will was proved after 3 May 1782 when the widow had to give a bond to administer his estate.

Their son Jonathan, born 1761 in Quaker Hill, Dutchess County, NY married Ruth Myrick in 1783. They later migrated into Central NY. Jonathan died in Auburn at his daughter's home in 1838. Their daughter Melissa, who married Stephen Demelt, settled in the Town of Parish and their family were buried in Dugway cemetery for several generations afterward.

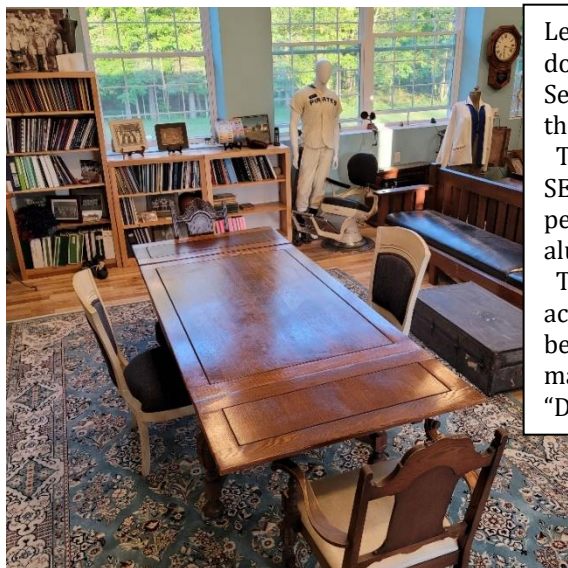
Marjorie and Harold Hubbard's daughter Jean Hubbard Delacey, a Half-Shire member, is of the seventh generation first listed in this bible, and of the 11<sup>th</sup> generation in America.

**Bible Restoration Fund**

*On your slip, there is a box added for Bible restoration. Half-Shire has a family Bible collection that spans 300 years, with our earliest volume a 1735 book that documents the Irish Family who later settled Albion. We have been sending our Bibles in most need of repair to Robert Lomascolo of Aurora, NY. We have been delighted with his expert craftsmanship and care in the repair and restoration of these priceless tomes that tell the story of our regional families, often long before vital records were kept in New York.*

*Work costs range between \$80 and \$200 for most books. We aim to conserve our entire collection over the next couple of years as funds allow. If we have a Bible in our collection for a family of yours, you may want to sponsor its restoration. Several who have seen and admired the restoration work have already done this!*

# AUTUMN 2021 MEMBER NEWS AND VIEWS CENTERFOLD



Left: This lovely oak table set was donated by Steve & Kathleen Sutter of Selkirk, from the Fitch Boarding House that predated their redesigned cottage. The table and chairs fit perfectly in the SE Classroom, where researchers can peruse our extensive area yearbook, alumni, and school textbook collections. The renovation of this classroom was accomplished thanks to a generous bequest by the late H. Douglas Barclay made in loving honor of his wife, Sara "Dee Dee" (Seiter) Barclay in 2020.



Right: Harden Chairs donated by Bond, Schoeneck & King Law Firm received through the assistance of life benefactor John Allen, a retired member of the firm. Former Harden worker and Trustee Doreen Tilton recalled working on them years ago in the Harden Factory!



Gordy Trudell and his niece, our Trustee Doreen Trudell Tilton enjoyed a dance during his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday party on October 1, at the Williamstown American Legion Hall.



Gordy Trudell's 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday in Williamstown on October 1<sup>st</sup>. Gordy, Bill Trudell, Leigh Trudell, Charles Trudell, Front—Alice Trudell Matthews and Hilda Trudell Trnchik. Children of Leon & Blanche (Foster) Trudell of Maple Hill, siblings Ken Trudell (1933-2018) and Marjorie T. Eychner (1935-2018) predeceased them.



The Fiddlers Hall of Fame from Osceola held their annual picnic at Half Shire in October. The building was alive all weekend with great music.



During the Fiddlers Picnic, Dave Secor of Camden played the late George Widrig's piano in our southeast classroom with the aid of Lizzie Hobbs. Lizzie told her mom Jackie "there's a lot of great history here, we have to come back!"



Robin & Brenda Caster (right) of Fulton along with cousin Lloyd Harrington & wife Diane of Mexico stopped by in mid-October to examine our extensive collection of Castor/Caster family photos & documents.

## AUTUMN 2021 MEMBER NEWS AND VIEWS CENTERFOLD

Half-Shire hosted what we hope is the first annual Heritage dinner on November 13<sup>th</sup> with members of The Sons of the American Revolution (SAR), and the local Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) chapters. Honored guests included Empire State SAR president Joseph Fitzpatrick and wife Kitty, William Pomeroy and wife Sandra of the Pomeroy Foundation, Marilee Rayome Regent of Ontario Chapter, Catherine Beebe Regent of the Kayendatsyona/Ft. Oswego Chapter, as well as Dr. Sarah French past state official of both the Children of the Revolution (CAR) and DAR.



Empire State SAR President Joseph Fitzpatrick and wife Kitty, William Pomeroy and wife Sandra of the Pomeroy Foundation.



Forty-five people enjoyed a formal lunch of Beef Wellington, mashed potatoes, mushroom gravy fresh local Brussel sprouts, and Waldorf Salad.



Empire State SAR President Fitzpatrick and past president George Gydeson presented William Pomeroy with the Meritorious Service Medal for his service to the Empire State Society of the SAR and its mission.



Priscilla Thibault of the Ontario Chapter DAR presents an award to retired veteran Eileen Yager for her years of service.



SAR Registrar Chris Sheldon is presented with a Bronze Oak leaf cluster addition to his previously awarded Liberty Medal by Syracuse SAR President Dave Powell. Chris, a Half-Shire member has signed up countless new members to the SAR.

After a delay of over a year the formal ribbon cutting of the William G. Pomeroy Genealogy Research Library was held November 13<sup>th</sup>. L-R: Sharon Turo, Pomeroy Room curator, William Pomeroy and wife Sandra, and Betty Warren, Pomeroy Room Volunteer and Society Treasurer.



## News and Contact Info from Across the Fifteen Townships

**Albion—Florence Gardner, Historian and H-S Trustee:** Box 394, Altmar, NY 13302. 315-298-5723.

**Amboy—Tim Kelley, Historian:** 822 NYS Rte. 69, Williamstown, 13493. Phone/Fax: 315-964-1165. amboytownhistorian@gmail.com **H-S Trustee Lori E. Monette:** 1847 Co. Rte. 6, Fulton, NY 13069. 315-657-3579. gratefullyadopted@yahoo.com.

**Boylston—Marcy Newman, Historian and H-S Trustee:** 184 County Rte. 13, Lacona, NY 13083. 315-778-4234. marcyn@frontiernet.net

Marcy will be relocating to North Carolina after the first of the year. Her replacement has not yet been chosen for the town; she will remain on our board for the time being as we hope to have her back some during the summers and working and attending our meetings remotely.

**Camden (Oneida County)—Tim Nichols, Historian:** 56 Harden Blvd., Camden, NY 13316. 315-245-1982; [timgtto15@yahoo.com](mailto:timgtto15@yahoo.com). **Becky Kennedy, H-S Trustee:** 8823 St. Rte. 178, Henderson NY 13650 215-532-4464. rkennedy62@yahoo.com.

**Florence (Oneida County)—Sherry McNamara, Historian:** 11899 Tompkins Corners, Florence Rd., Camden, NY 13316. 315-245-0487. **Doreen Tilton, H-S Trustee:** 12334 Florence-Redfield Rd., Camden NY 13316. 315-245-2760. [Doreen.Tilton@yahoo.com](mailto:Doreen.Tilton@yahoo.com).

**Mexico—Judy Greenway, Historian:** 503 East Stone Rd, Mexico, NY 13144 315-963-9593. jumangree@yahoo.com **Allie Proud, H-S Trustee:** 83 Wayne Street, Mexico, NY 13114. 315-963-3129. [proud83@icloud.com](mailto:proud83@icloud.com) Mexico Historical Society PO 331, 3250 Main St., Mexico, NY 13114 315-963-7853.

The Mexico Historical Society leads the celebration of “Christmas in Mexico” on Saturday, December 4. This day-long event has multiple venues across the community, with special exhibits at the Starr Clark Tin Shop Museum there.

**Montague (Lewis County)—Dave Andolora, Historian:** c/o 6353 Salmon River Road, Lowville NY 13367. **Leona Chereshnowski, H-S Trustee:** 1075 Comins Rd., Redfield, NY 13437. 315-599-8836. lchere@hughes.net.

**New Haven—Debra Allen, Historian:** PO Box 141, New Haven, NY 13121. 315-963-3900. historian@newhavenny.com **Allie Proud, H-S Trustee:** 83 Wayne Street., Mexico, NY 13114. 315-963-3129. [proud83@icloud.com](mailto:proud83@icloud.com).

**Orwell—Rose Graham, Historian and H-S Trustee:** 1999 County Rte. 2, Orwell, NY 13426. [rosemgrah@yahoo.com](mailto:rosemgrah@yahoo.com). 315-298-2070.

Rose will soon depart for Florida for the winter but will keep in close communication with us here. During her time in the south, she always keeps busy planning

for the coming year. As Rose leaves, she is completing a major organization of the Evergreen Cemetery records with help from Sharon Turo, at Half-Shire, who continues to digitize what Rose finds.

**Osceola (Lewis County)—Historian Tammy Becker** 2630 Prince Brook Rd., Redfield, NY 13437 [Beckertammy604@gmail.com](mailto:Beckertammy604@gmail.com) **Leona Chereshnowski H-S Trustee:** 1075 Comins Rd., Redfield, NY 13437. 315-599-8836. lchere@hughes.net. Town Historian: Tammy Becker 315-599-7122

Marilee Rayome is the new Osceola Historical Society President and has reorganized the group that meets in the public library in the community.

**Parish—Bridgett Swartz, Historian:** P.O. Box 195, Parish, NY 13131. **Venita Ackley, H-S Trustee:** 422 Kipp Rd. Parish, NY 13131. 315-382-6529. ackleyv@gmail.com

**Redfield—Liz Grant Historian and H-S Trustee-Emeritus:** 722 Co. Rte. 47, Redfield, NY 13437. 315-599-7735; **H-S Trustee: Maureen Stedman,** 359 McCaw Rd., Redfield, NY 13437, 315-599-7166 [maureens0259@gmail.com](mailto:maureens0259@gmail.com).

Our new trustee Maureen Stedman has been a great addition to the board and has assisted with all mailing preparations, dinner, and sundry other tasks. Maureen was able to borrow some very significant Stedman family photos and archives from her cousin Dr. Helen Breitbeck in Oswego that lent much more information to the recent *Tug Hill Literary Review* article on the History of John Davidson and the Braes.

**Richland/Pulaski—Shawn Doyle, Town & Village Historian:** 85 Lake St., Pulaski, NY 13142. 315-298-3620 or 602-6388. spdinpul@hotmail.com **Kevin Stewart, Deputy Town Historian:** junkyinny@gmail.com **Robin Philips, H-S Trustee:** 102 Ivens Rd., Pulaski, NY 13142. 315-298-7279. designsofelegance@netzero.net

The annual “Light up Pulaski” celebration across the Village of Pulaski will take place Sunday, December 5. The memory tree lighting will occur at dusk in the south park. Charlotte DeGaetano, who leads the annual Memory Tree collection for area food pantries, has been actively soliciting memorial donations from area and regional supporters. The Memory Tree event is a much-anticipated annual event that brings the community together each year. The Salmon River Arts Center, the Make Sense Shop, The Masons Lodge, Pulaski Methodist Church and Library are among the many venues across the village with activities through the day.

**Sandy Creek—Peggy Rice, Historian (Town, Village and Lacona):** P.O. Box 52, Sandy Creek, NY 13145. 315-387-5456 x7 [schistorian@frontiernet.net](mailto:schistorian@frontiernet.net) Website:



<http://SandyCreeknyhistory.com> **Margaret Kastler, H-S Trustee:** 1695 Co. Rte. 15, Lacona, NY 13083. 315-387-5209. kastlerm@hotmail.com.

**Williamstown—(Vacant), Historian & H-S Trustee:**

Just as we were preparing to go to press, we received the shattering news that our beloved Trustee and long-time Williamstown Historian, Glenna Muir Gorski had passed away on November 23, 2021, the birthdate of her late husband and love Richard Gorski.



Glenna was born July 2, 1951 the daughter of Glenn & Vivian (McCarty) Muir. She was educated in APW schools and a member of the class of 1971. Glenna was married on August 15, 1975 to Richard Gorski of Williamstown. Richard died in August 2014.

Together Dick and Glenna had nearly 40 years of happiness together, they

collected antiques, traveled the regional back roads on weekends and both shared a deep love of our region's history.

Glenna served as Williamstown Historian since 1987, and spent an equal time involved with Half -Shire, spending over 20 years on our board as the Williamstown Trustee. During this time, Glenna led several book projects, most recently the Williamstown Ladies Book project. Besides her well-researched publications and day to day work, Glenna led the Williamstown 200<sup>th</sup> celebration in 2003 and served on the Oswego County 200<sup>th</sup> committee in 2016.

Glenna was instrumental in the establishment and annual operation of the Heritage Building at the Oswego County Fairgrounds in Sandy Creek. Her detailed exhibits were always an attraction, and her day-to-day work on the grounds assisted many people in their family history research.

Glenna's loss leaves an enormous void on our board and in her community. A great deal is owed to Glenna and Dick for their belief in our organization in the difficult years of transition that brought us to the successful position we are at now.

A spring memorial service is planned. A suitable memorial to Glenna will also be planned here at Half-Shire.

The Historical Building in Williamstown is open Tuesdays: 9 a.m. to noon, with Bev Carusone managing things there for the time being.

## Half-Shire to Mark 50 Years in 2022

On November 22, 1972, six friends interested in history met at the home of Floyd Kent and daughter Marie. Besides the Kents, present were Floyd's cousin Avis Donovan Widrig and son George, Betty Carey, and Helen Hastings. The group had all felt it was time for a historical organization to form in the eastern end of Oswego County to better document and preserve the unique rural heritage and family histories of the region. A subsequent meeting on December 6<sup>th</sup> brought in Louis Tryon and Betty Martin, and Half-Shire Historical Society was born.

In late 1973, the Town of Richland deeded over the former Richland Elementary School to the group. A museum was set up with seasonal programs, exhibits, and dinners.

Throughout the American Bicentennial and into the early 1980s, Half-Shire thrived with many activities and a solid membership. Problems with the building, particularly the roof and heating systems, bedeviled the early leaders and led to some declining years into the 1990s.

A period of renewal and growth began in the late 1990s as a newer generation of leaders joined the board and steered the direction of the group more into genealogical research. Extensive restoration of the building continued until recent years.

As of this writing, our paid membership numbers stands at just over 900, and our annual budget at \$50,000 with no paid staff, but instead a dedicated team of volunteers who keep the building open on an almost daily schedule, with countless activities throughout the year and a vibrant publication committee that researches books on families and the fifteen covered towns as well as ensures this newsletter and the *Tug Hill Literary Review* go out quarterly.

At the November 20<sup>th</sup> meeting, Vice President Greg Monette was selected to lead the planning committee for the golden anniversary of our organization. Throughout 2022, we will revisit past accomplishments and milestones in our publications. We hope to celebrate with a picnic during the summer and a formal dinner in autumn.

In the words of Half-Shire President Shawn Doyle, "Our best years are yet to come, with new and exciting projects on the horizon." Doyle added that he is both honored and humbled to serve on such a dedicated board of directors where everyone brings experience and enthusiasm to the organization. "It's not just about the meetings, it's what occurs day to day, and outside of our meetings, that makes our group special and so successful."

## Brothers and Sisters of the Past: Masonry in The Half-Shire region

Over the years, we have had access to an amazing set of historic documents and photos kept by our area Masonic Lodges. The earliest lodges in our region date back over 200 years, with the craft following the flow of settlers from New England. The Mexico Lodge was one of the earlier in our region and the first meeting was held January 2, 1808.

The Lodge in Parish was founded on October 13, 1853; it later merged with Amboy and came under jurisdiction of Pulaski in 2019. As we research these departed Masons, we hope to aid others in their genealogical work.

This particular member stood out to us do to his unfortunate death. Mr. Keeler was a Civil War Veteran and from a good family in the area. He passed one week after affiliating with the Parish Lodge.

### William Marvin Keeler

Born-Mar 6, 1837; Parish, Oswego County, New York

Died- Oct 13 1903; Parish, Oswego County, New York

Buried-October 1903; Bidwell Cemetery, Parish, Oswego County, New York

Parents-Nathan Olmstead Keeler (1790-1877) Elizabeth Henderson (1812-1888)

Spouse-Franjeskia Coan; Degrees-Affiliated with Lodge Oct 10, 1903

WILLIAM M. KEELER OF PARISH MEETS TERRIBLE END  
WHILE CROSSING R., W. AND O. TRACKS  
Special to The Journal.

PARISH, Oct. 14. -Thrown 50 feet in the air, his neck, left arm and leg broken and lacerated. William M. Keeler of this place was instantly killed last night while attempting to cross the Rome, Watertown and Ogdensburg tracks in front of the observation car of the superintendent bound for Syracuse.

Keeler was 66 years old and had made his home with Mrs. Nellie Schumaker, his daughter. The examination of the body was made by Dr. F.R. Foot of Parish.

At the time of the accident, conductor Wiggins was in charge of the car. Engineer Walker reversed his engine and stopped the train as soon as possible. Several persons witnessed the accident. The car was bound for Syracuse.

Some time ago, Keeler had funds deposited in the Onondaga County Savings Bank. He called at that institution one day, presented his bank book, desiring to draw a certain amount, and was astonished when the paying teller informed him that there was nothing to his credit on deposit in that bank. It appeared that the fund deposited by Keeler had been withdrawn by some person without authority and he began an action against the officials of the bank to recover the amount due him and won the suit, which attracted no little amount of attention at the time.

Coroner Box decided not to hold an inquest but will take some testimony today in regard to the case. Mr. Keeler leaves one daughter, Mrs. J.W. Schumacher, and one son, Avery Keeler of Montana.

(Source: The Syracuse Journal, Syracuse, NY., Wednesday, Oct 14, 1903 - page 10 with picture)



### Books for Sale

**Mexico Independent Series, Vol. 1 Julie Litts Robst (2020)** The Mexico Independent began its operation at the onset of the American Civil War. As a paper in the heart of Oswego County the vital records here cover a much wider region then the other two series by Julie. Volume 1 covers 1860-1869 **(\$45)**

**History of Oswego County (1816-2016)** This bicentennial book was a team effort of all the local historians at the time. Amply illustrated and packed with interesting "top ten lists" of trivia and facts from each community. Half-Shire has some of the last known copies of this book. **A bargain at \$22 for hardcover and \$12 for soft cover.**

**The Madame's Business by Ann Callaghan Allen, 2019** This is a well-researched, remarkable story of Oswego County's first female millionaire, and the high-jinx of her estate battle that occurred for many years following her untimely death. A great mystery

still..... The popular book sale benefits the restoration of the subject's grave site in Riverside cemetery of Oswego, New York **(\$22)**

Many more books are available at our bookstore!

Writer Richard Palmer has been spending some time with us examining the original Oswego newspapers. It seems that among the eight pallets of historic area papers Marcy Newman conserved this past summer, some have never been microfilmed.



### Trustee Spotlight: Heather Stevens

One of our newer members of the Board is Heather Stevens, our Trustee at Large.



Heather Stevens, daughter of Larry and Cheryl (Krueger) Robinson was born and raised in Holmen, Wisconsin. She entered the US Army between her junior and senior year of High School and completed Basic Training, then returned home to complete her senior

year of high school.

During her enlistment in the Army, she completed combat medic training at Fort Sam Houston where she met her husband, Daniel Stevens of Lacona, NY. Heather later attended the University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse and was a Cadet in the ROTC Program.

In 1989, she moved to NY, and in 1991, Heather and Daniel were wed in Orwell. They settled in Central Square where Heather and Daniel have raised their four children: Kayleigh, aged 30, Nicolas, aged 20; Benjamin, aged 19; and Matthew, aged 16.

In addition to raising her children, she became involved in community service, working as a teaching assistant in the Central Square School District, a Trustee for the Village of Central Square, and as their public relations representative for the Town of Hastings.

A self-described "volunteer-aholic," she is a member of Project Bloom since 2003 and a life member of the Girl Scouts, serving as president and treasurer, leader, service unit manager since 1996. In addition, she writes as a guest columnist for the Citizen Outlet and served in the local PTA/PTOs since 1996. She is a member of Divine Mercy Catholic Church and the Boy Scouts of America since 2006, serving as a den leader, Scoutmaster, camp director, and council advancement vice chair. She is a member of the Order of the Arrow, vice commander with Post 915 in Central Square and created/runs the Hometown Hero banner program for the community. Heather is also the chairperson for the Wall of Distinction and facilitator of the Superintendent Parent Council.

As for her historical interests, she founded the Central Square Community Historical Society in 2011 and serves as an officer. She has been the Village of Central Square Historian since 2007 and the Town of Hastings Historian since 2019, and has served as adviser to the Fort Brewerton Historical Society and coordinates their ghost walks.

Heather enjoys taking photographs, gardening, exploring local history, and spending time with her family. Through the Oswego County Historian Group, Heather became familiar with Half-Shire. When approached to serve as a member at large, she did not

hesitate to say yes. She enjoys the energy of the group and is inspired by the volunteers. As a lifetime member, she hopes to learn and contribute for many years to come.

### Guess who? Way Back:



We received a call right off from Camden historian Tim Nichols, who recognized last quarters mystery photo as the John Dorrance (1837-1919) house on Church Steet in

Camden, now owned by Ron Scales. Dorrance was born in Florence and built this stately brick home in the late 1800s. John's brother, William H. Dorrance, built an equally impressive Queen Anne style home just down the street, which is being lovingly restored by Half-Shire member Casey Cook. The Dorrance brothers came from a banking family.

In this issue, we are returning to "People of the Shire" with this gentleman from our region for whom a hamlet was named. Previous to his residency there, he lived in another hamlet, now a ghost town in the Happy Valley preserve, where he served as Postmaster. A widower in the 1860s, he never remarried This man was much revered by his family and community until his death in 1904.



Winners will be selected from two mailing districts: people who live in zip codes beginning "13---" and all others. This is how the mail goes out. First call or email from each mailing district will earn a year's membership and a Half-Shire publication of their choice.

### Autumn Raffle Winners

The Autumn raffle winners were drawn at the November 20th meeting, which was also on Facebook Live. Winners were 1st-Bonnie Wines, Cleveland (DNA) 2nd- Shawn Mahaney-Orwell (seeking choice) 3rd-David Hopkins, Blossvale—afghan of choice 4<sup>th</sup> bonus afghan! -Barb Joslyn, Lacona 5<sup>th</sup> bonus afghan! -Lucille Johnson, Missouri Congratulations to all the winners!

This quarter we have another DNA kit, another three afghans, and book of choice. Thanks to Lil Frazier, Doreen Tilton and Mary Hurd Patterson for all their efforts "hooking the afghans!"

Half-Shire Historical Society  
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Richland, New York 13144-0073

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### **Scheduled Meetings and Upcoming Events for 2022\*\*\***

- Fri-Sun Jan. 28-30, 2022 Salmon River Winter festival-(See our Facebook for details)
- Sat. Mar. 26, 2022 Regular luncheon and meeting, Richland headquarters noon-2 p.m.
- Sat. Apr. 30, 2022 Regular luncheon and meeting, Richland headquarters noon-2 p.m.
- Sat. May 21, 2022 Dinner Dance with Still Kickin, Richland headquarters 5 p.m.-11 p.m.
- Sat. May 28, 2022 Regular luncheon and meeting, Richland headquarters noon-2 p.m.
- Sat. Jun. 18, 2022 Regular luncheon and meeting, Richland headquarters noon-2 p.m.
- Sat. Jun. 25, 2022 Area Schools Alumni Open House, Pulaski Bus tour-10 a.m.-4 p.m.
- Sat. Jul. 24, 2022 Regular luncheon and meeting, Richland headquarters noon-2 p.m.
- Fri-Sun Jul. 30-Aug 1,2 Annual Grant Family Reunion (Private)
- Sat. Aug. 8, 2022 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Pulaski Schools 1980s Reunion dinner/dance 4 p.m.-11 p.m.
- Sat. Aug. 26, 2022 Regular luncheon and meeting, Richland headquarters noon-2 p.m.
- Sat. Sept 24, 2022 Annual luncheon and meeting, Richland headquarters noon-2 p.m.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Sat. Apr. -Nov. 2022 Ontario Chapter DAR Regular meeting, (Private) noon
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Sat. Apr. -Nov. 2022 Kayendatsyona-Ft. Oswego Chapter DAR Regular meeting, (Private) noon

**\*\*\*All Events are subject to cancelation depending on the COVID situation and warnings in our area, best to contact us ahead at 315-298-2986 or Shawn Doyle at 315-602-6388**

#### **Facebook "Mary White/Halfshire"**

(Unless otherwise stated, all meetings are at Richland headquarters)

Half-Shire Headquarters is located in the former Richland School building at  
1100 County Route 48 North in the Hamlet of Richland NY, (Just north of the County Route 2 intersections)

\*Meetings subject to Change - see the Local Papers or our Facebook "Mary White"

Or call the Society at 315-298-2986 or Shawn Doyle at 315-298-3620