

Historic Childs: One-of-kind Cyclorama adds beauty to Farmers Hall



The Cyclorama is shown at the Cobblestone Museum, 2022.

Posted 5 February 2022 at 11:51 am

By Doug Farley, Cobblestone Museum Director – Vol. 3 No. 4

GAINES – The historic hamlet of Childs is home to a one-of-a-kind local artifact that the Cobblestone Museum refers to as “The Cyclorama.” Webster’s Dictionary defines the term as a curtain or backdrop for a stage, which was exactly the original purpose of our Cyclorama.



The colorful “curtain” was prepared for the Murray Grange, No. 1292 (Patrons of Husbandry) in 1929, and was used as a theatrical backdrop for their invited musicians who entertained at dances and meetings held in the Grange Hall.

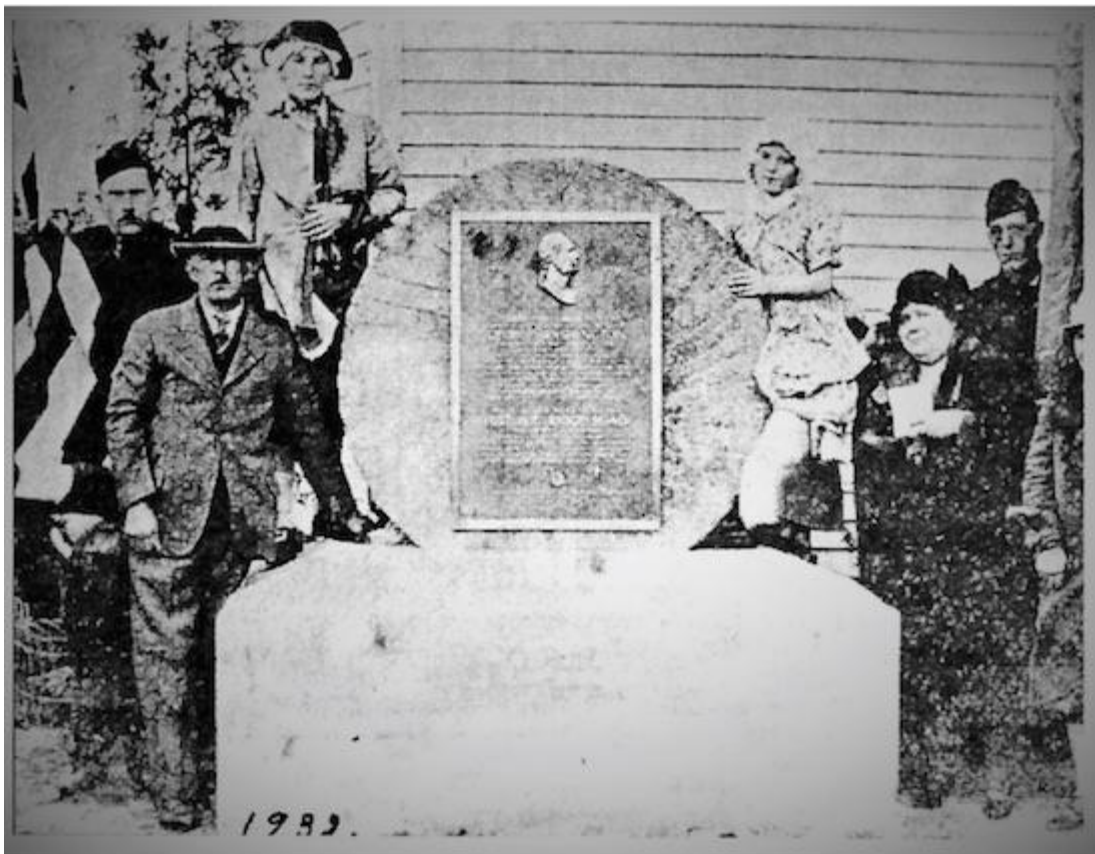


The backdrop was produced by the Anderson Scenic Company of Buffalo. The Murray Grange was formed in December 1912, and they held their meetings in a building known as the “Modern Woodmen Hall,” located in Murray. (Modern Woodmen was a fraternal organization formed in the late 19th century.)

The Murray Grange existed until 1917 when many of their members went off to war. The Grange surrendered its charter with many members joining Clarendon Grange, while others

elected to take a dimit card, hoping the Murray Grange would be reinstated after the Great War. About ten years later in 1927, the Murray Grange was reorganized with an enrollment of 32 Charter Members. The organization continued meeting in their original Grange building. Eventually, the Grangers outgrew their building and their large membership forced the Chapter to seek a larger building.

In February 1928, Murray Grange No. 1292 purchased the 19th century building at the northeast corner of Routes 104 and 237 in Murray. For many years prior, the building had served as a second-hand store operated by William Fuller. The building was modernized and electric lights were added to accommodate Grange meetings.



Four years later in 1932, the Orleans Chapter Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) dedicated a monument in front of the Murray Grange building, honoring George Washington and Revolutionary War soldiers from the County.



The former location of the Murray Grange as it looks today is shown above.



The historic marker honoring George Washington was dedicated at the corner in 1932 and remains in place today.

In 1929, the Murray Grange purchased the aforementioned theatrical backdrop and used it in their new building to provide a colorful way to decorate their hall and provide acknowledgement for the many businesses that had supported their efforts.

The drapery around the advertisements was painted bright red, and the individual ads were painted blue, pink and yellow. Advertisers on the backdrop are:

- F. G. Buell Footwear and Clothing, Holley, NY
- F.W. Newman-Lincoln/Ford & Fordson (Tractors & Trucks)
- Duffy Mott Co., Cider and Vinegar
- W.J. Hawkins Drugs, Rexall Store, Holley
- Hudson & Co. Inc., Packers of Fancy Canned Goods, Holley
- Holley Canning Company
- B.L. Geyo Garage, Holley
- Henry M. Clarke Drugs, Holley
- McCrillis & Co., Farm Supplies & Produce, Holley
- McCrillis & McKechnie Plumbing & Heating, Holley
- C.M. Webster Clothing, Holley

- Ira Edwards & Sons, Winchester Store, Paints, Holley
- Charles' Barber Shop, Charles Padaman, Proprietor, Holley
- Magin's Department Store, Holley
- State Exchange Bank, Holley
- Evarts & Salisbury Furniture & Undertaking, Holley
- Warren & Lee, International Harvester Tools
- Bauch Chevrolet, Brockport-Holley-Hamlin
- Bruce Seager, Hudson, Essex
- N.L. Cole, Lumber, Coal & Buildings Materials, Holley –Albion
- J.B. Merrill & Sons Furniture & Funeral Directors, Holley-Albion-Kendall
- W.J. Hatch, Feed & Seeds, Holley.



In the course of over 80 years of business, most of these businesses have closed without a trace today. However, two business still operate in some fashion. Merrill-Grinnell continues today as part of Mitchell Family Funeral Homes and N.L. Cole Lumber carries on through the name Stockham Lumber.



The Murray Grange (Patrons of Husbandry) flourished for several decades until declining membership forced it to dissolve in the mid-1960s. At some time after this, the Cyclorama, a colorful piece of local history, was given to the Murray-Holley Historical Society. But, because of very limited hanging space, the Cyclorama had to be rolled up and stored, out of public view.



Fast forward to 1997, after several decades of storage, Murray-Holley Historical Society representative, Marsha DeFilipps, approached Bill Lattin about donating the backdrop to the Cobblestone Museum. The Museum board gladly accepted this outstanding piece of local Americana and hung it on the west wall of Farmers Hall on their Route 98 Artisans Campus. This position of honor is still the home for the Cyclorama, today. Shown above, Town of Murray Historian Marsha DeFilipps (right), receives an honor at a meeting of the Murray-Holley Historical Society in 1988, presented by Dee Robinson.



The picture above shows the appearance of the west wall of Farmers Hall prior to the installation of the Cyclorama. Local Social Studies teacher, Gary Kent, is seen standing with his class of students from Kendall School in 1979. (Gary's students were the first school group to tour Farmers Hall.) The raised platform on which Gary is standing was originally the choir loft when the building was used as the Kendall Universalist Church. Later, the building became the Kendall Town Hall, before being moved from Kendall, board-by-board, to the Cobblestone Museum and reconstructed in 1978 and 1979.



The Cyclorama adds its beauty to the collection of farm tools proudly displayed in Farmers Hall.