

11-24-82

# Bethinking of Old Orleans

C.W.Lattin • County Historian



Photo by Bill Covell

MEET

LYSBETH (BETSY) HOFFMAN  
HISTORIAN TOWN OF CARLTON

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No. 47

Betsy Hoffman, Historian for the Town of Carlton was born into an old stock Orleans County family. Her parents were William and Mary Covell Hey of Lakeside and she is the sixth generation on one line descended from Joseph Hart, Jr. who came to Orleans County in 1811. Following her graduation from Lyndonville High School, Betsy attended Brockport State Teachers College. Twenty-six years ago she married Richard Hoffman who is employed at Eastman Kodak and they have two sons, Scott and David. Their family pets include two West Highland Terriers.

Betsy has always had an interest in local history and attributes much of this liking to her cousin Miss Katharine H. Billings who was also born in Carlton, for promoting enjoyment in it. Her picture here surely indicates some of this enthusiasm for history. It was taken in 1976 during the Bi-centennial by Bill Covell. The dress is a reproduction of an 1850 ball gown complete with hoop skirt. Betsy was very active during the Bi-centennial in numerous ways. She was a director and secretary of the Orleans County Bi-Centennial Corporation as well as chairman of the Calendar Committee for 1976.

Since 1976 she has been associated with WJBT AM Brockport and has frequently been on the air with a weather show which included historical highlights. For a number of years she has written "Lakeside News" for the Journal-Register. She is a member of the 4-H Fair Board and has had a prominent role in public relations and publicity for that cause. Through her efforts a traveling museum of F.D.R. memorabilia known as the "Roosevelt Special" was brought to the Fair this past season.

In 1980 Betsy Hoffman was appointed Historian for Carlton by the Town Board following the death of Bernard Lynch. As historian she is collecting old photographs, booklets and other memorabilia relative to Carlton's history. With this material she maintains a showcase of historical displays in the town building. She also appreciates contact with individuals who will let her borrow things for the locked cabinet. In seeking information about Carlton she hopes sometime to talk with long time residents of the various hamlets to hear of legends of their locality. At her suggestion an historic marker will be dedicated in the Spring of 1983 which will indicate that the Kenyonville United Methodist Church is the oldest church building in Carlton.

She states, "the costs of maintaining a steady progress forward prevents many from enjoying treasurers of our past. Yet we are fortunate that many in Carlton have an appreciation of the past." Betsy points out, "We have recorded history in Carlton before any other part of the county. We know because Indian tribes found this area to be prime hunting ground 500-1000 years ago at least. Sir Wm. Johnson and his Indian fighters camped at the mouth of Johnson's Creek July 6, 1759. Aaron Burr was interested in buying lands bordering what he called Tonawanta Bay in 1798 now known as Oak Orchard Harbor." She further points out that the very first apple orchard in Orleans County was planted by the Dunham Family near Kuckville in what is now Lakeside State Park." She indicates that many years ago Carlton was a mixture of recreation and farming and that she is pleased to see the recreational part coming back through the salmon fishing as the Indians also caught salmon from Lake Ontario. She says, "I like to see people making the best use of natural resources."

Aside from being town historian, Betsy is a member of the Orleans County Historical Association and a member of the Fairbanks Family in America Society which dates back to 1633. She is a member of the Orleans Chapter DAR including six years as secretary of the Orleans Chapter DAR and Historical Society, Inc., and she is a member of the Pullman Memorial Universalist Church in Albion.