



## CHARLTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

FALL 2020

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[http: www.charltonnyhs.org](http://www.charltonnyhs.org)

### THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY 2020 DURING THE COVID-19 VIRUS RESTRICTION

**Museum:** Last fall plaster repair was done on walls and ceiling that necessitated moving cabinets and furniture as well as creating dust. Volunteers readied the museum by cleaning, moving furniture back into place, and then setting up new displays.

The Museum was opened on schedule for summer hours following the guidelines of wearing masks and practicing social distancing. There were a number of visitors and many saw our ad in the "Local First" weekly paper which generously printed the ad many times. Everyone wore their masks, and new masks, hand sanitizer, and wipes were available to those in need.

This fall before the weather gets cold, the Museum will be opened by appointment. Contact Sue York at 518 399-3797 to make arrangements.

New this year is a beautiful model ship and information on the Hudson River Day Line, made by our Board Member Bill Wehrle, a display by Wayne Davis on Parker Vanamee, who will be honored next year on Founders' Weekend. Two displays made by Alice Crotty are on the history of Charlton's schools and on the Charlton's new firehouse.

**Virtual 5K Race Fund Raiser:** Our first (and hopefully only) Charlton Heritage Virtual 5K Run/Walk is in the books. Congratulations and thank you to all of the runners who entered! One fun thing about the Virtual Race is that the runners can live and run anywhere. With a time of 19:53, our Overall Winner and Men's Top Finisher is Joe Chapman from Washington DC. Not only did Joe clock the best time, but he brought two friends along with him. Congratulations and thanks, Joe! Our Second Place Winner and Women's First Place Finisher, with a time of 20:21, is Sarah Fritz from Bethesda, Maryland. Congratulations, Sarah! Congratulations to all of our Winners, and to all who participated in our Virtual 5K!



Runner Steve Aldi with daughter Gianna



Thank you to our generous Sponsors and to all of the runners who donated to the Charlton Historical Society. Your generosity will help us maintain our two historic buildings and preserve and protect the artifacts and historical documents that have been entrusted to our care. Being unable to hold the race in person this year due to the pandemic, we were faced with an austere budget, already knowing that the Schoolhouse needs insulation and the Church/Museum needs to be painted. In addition, the schoolhouse furnace is getting old and gave us significant problems a few years ago. Although we won't be able to do everything this year, the Virtual 5K will allow us to do the most urgent work. Again, our sincere thanks to each one of you.

We look forward to seeing all of you in person next year for the 2021 Charlton Heritage 5K, complete with Smith's Apple Pie!

## ***Please support our generous Sponsors!***

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**Caroline Crawford Labe honoring her  
Charlton families of Bell Baxter Morris Crawford**

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## **Our California Members**

The Charlton Historical Society has a number of members who live in California and who have made very generous donations to us. We pray for their safety and well-being while raging fires are burning throughout their state. They all have ancestors who lived in Charlton and they have reached out to us with their ancestry research. We have Bonny & Alan Cook who live in Rancho Palos Verde, Frances & Thomas Coughlin who live in Atascadero and who sent a generous donation just recently, Laurie Doerksen who lives in Turlock, and Caroline Crawford Labe who lives in Woodside and is a member under the Bell Baxter Morris Crawford Families. Caroline generously sponsored our Virtual 5K race at the Platinum level and has recently Emailed that day is like night with a red glow in the distance.

## New to our Collection

This year the Charlton Historical Society has received three very special donations to our collection.

During the summer, Peter and Jan O'Brien donated a large photograph of Peter's childhood home, 767 Charlton Road. The photograph was taken in the 1920's, before Charlton Road was even paved. It can be seen on page 143 of the House Letters which states that the home was in the Callaghan family from 1861 to 1936. Melancton Callaghan operated Charlton's famous general store which is where our Post Office was once located.



Just recently we received a generous offer from Bonnie Rowe of Bridgeport, CT. Bonnie has donated a beautiful baby cradle that was used in Charlton by Maud A. Farrington, who was born in 1905 to Mary and Ernest Farrington. Bonnie's sister, Dorine Solberg was storing the cradle at her home in Fort Plain. Bonnie and Dorine are very interested in their Farrington ancestors and Chuck Latham is helping to research what he can.



Also, new to our collection is a beautiful, framed watercolor picture of the Charlton Historical Society Maple Avenue Schoolhouse painted by our very talented Trustee Don Davis.



The Charlton Historical Society is very grateful to these generous donors.

## BUILDING AND GROUNDS

One of the museum shutters had a rotten portion. We thank Silas Schrader and Robert Page from Schrader and Company for donating their expertise, time, and materials to repair the shutter. We also thank Chuck Latham for sanding and painting the museum door sill that was in bad shape.

We thank Stacey and Bob Fenton for donating slate that has been laid around the Schoolhouse foundation to prevent siding rot and mud splatter. Some rotted siding was replaced last fall and painted this spring.

The museum yard has been cleared of brush up to the property line to allow mowing. Large stones will be removed in the next few weeks to complete the job. This will reduce weed whacking charges by permitting mowers to cut.

Gutter and siding damage was found on the museum's south side wall. Trustee Chuck Latham cleaned the gutter and installed gutter screening to prevent future clogging. Because water from the clogged gutter hit the wall, the siding showed signs of rot. Ken removed the rotted siding to find that damage had occurred to the supporting structure. Former Trustee Bob Martin was called and he recommended Dick Stewart to do the repairs. Dick was hired and has completed the job.



This fall, Ken is planning to trim trees on the Schoolhouse property line. Next year, peeling paint on the museum needs to be addressed.

**Stop by and see what has been done this summer.**

## CHUCK LATHAM'S CHARLTON HISTORY—FACTS and LEGEND

### How did Charlton get its name?

Frank Lafforthum, Editor and Researcher  
A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE TOWN OF CHARLTON

*The origin of the name "Charlton" is clouded with an air of mystery. One historian stated that it was so named after a famous doctor but searching old records one cannot find a Dr. Charlton listed as a resident of Charlton. Another historian states that the name was derived from an itinerant. It is difficult to conceive that the new Freeholders would change the name to honor an itinerant. While researching we found mention of Dr. Charlton who preached in the community in those early days.*

## THE FARM COMMUNITY AND FARMING IN CHARLTON, SARATOGA CO., NY CIRCA 1900

Written by William Lane Cavert, 1958 for his grandchildren  
Provided to us by Helen Alexander and Linda Forbess (con't)

***The Neighbors:** Perhaps, the best way of giving a picture or rural Charlton is to briefly sketch some of the Cavert's neighbors.*

*Mr. and Mrs. Constantine Jansen: This elderly couple occupied an adjoining 50-acre farm to the West. The farm was mostly tillable and had perhaps 7 acres of good apple orchard. He kept about 5 cows, 2 sows, perhaps 40 to 50 chickens and two work horses. He would ordinarily sell 200 barrels of apples, 10 tons of hay 10-12 pigs and perhaps 300-400 pounds of butter. The total gross receipts in the early 1900's ran around \$500-\$600. The couple was well past middle age. At that time, the two sons had left home and he was not robust so it was necessary to keep a hired man for about eight months of the year. The hired man probably received about \$20 per month plus board. Yet Mr. Jansen never owed any debts and was reputed to have savings beside the farm. Every aspect of the business was well cared for to the best of his knowledge. No money was spent on liquor or tobacco and practically none for recreation. They had a comfortable house according to the then prevailing standards and were excellent neighbors. One of his grandsons, Carl B. Jansen, graduated in engineering from Union College and has become President of the Dravo Corporation, Pittsburg, a leading contracting firm in that area. He is a trustee of Union College.*

*The George Heaton's: George Heaton, a bachelor and his two maiden sisters, lived on a farm of about 50 acres, lying between us and Charlton Village. The farm had about 8 acres of apple orchard, well cared for according to local standards and producing 100-300 barrels a year. Perhaps 100 hens and 2 or 3 cows were kept. Perhaps 10 to 14 tons of hay were sold. Here again was a farm that spent very little cash on living. I recall that on one occasion Dad loaned him \$200 with which to replace a horse that had died. Perhaps, that was the only time that he was ever in debt.*

*Dr. James T. Sweetman: As previously mentioned Dr. Sweetman was by far the wealthiest man in the neighborhood and one of the pillars of the Presbyterian Church. He also had more education than anyone in the community other than the Minister and Miss Mary E. Callaghan. In his early years, he had studied medicine and acquired an M.D. but as far as I know he never practiced except for a bit of charity work. He owned the farm to the North and spent substantial sums fixing up buildings and in building stone wall fences to enclose fields of 5 to 8 acres. Apparently, he thought that a stone wall fence was a structure that would be useful for all time. He was very public spirited and took the lead in establishing the Charlton Industrial School for Boys. The funds for this unique undertaking were given by John S. Hawley of San Diego, California, a former Charlton resident who had acquired a fortune in the confectionary business. Evidently the terms of the gift were such that the funds were available, if Charlton citizens would take over the responsibility of establishing and managing the school. Dr. Sweetman took the lead in setting up the school, picking the land to be bought and associating with him several local residents as directors. The school was intended as one that guide in the right direction, homeless boys or those who had shown some tendency toward minor delinquencies. During most of its early existence it had 12 to 20 boys and some of them are known to have become worthwhile citizens, but I have no idea as to the percentage of success. Father was one of those whom Dr. Sweetman associated with him in the Directorship of the school. After Dr. Sweetman left the community, Father was treasurer for many years.*



*The first Superintendent was Richard Carter of Galway, N.Y. Mr. Carter was a unique character. An upright Christian gentleman, he was also a capable farmer, a good business manager, a good disciplinarian and one who had the welfare of each boy close to his heart. The operation of the school in its original form came to a close when the building burned, perhaps about 1930. Lately, in part, through the activities of Rev. Walter Dudley Cavert, the land and endowment is being utilized for a school for girls who have shown wayward tendencies.*

*The Sweetman Family, along with the Caverts, and others, were among the early settlers when Charlton township was settled, soon after the Revolution. The Sweetman fortune was said to have had its start through the general store that Dr. Sweetman's father had kept at Charlton for many years. (to be continued)*

## ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REMINDERS

- Remember that the CHS is eligible to receive funds from the **AMAZON SMILE FOUNDATION**. If you would like to support the Charlton Historical Society with your Amazon shopping, you can log onto [Smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) and select the CHS to receive .5% of your purchase price, then proceed to shop.
- Correction in last newsletter: Parker Vanamee joined the American Army early in World War I at Plattsburg, NY not in Britain.**
- We will be resuming our **monthly meetings** as soon as it is safe to meet as a group in the Schoolhouse.
- As part of our history, we would like to keep a journal documenting how Charlton residents lived through the COVID19 virus. Email your thoughts to Alice at [crottyao@aol.com](mailto:crottyao@aol.com), Sue at [yorkmm474@aol.com](mailto:yorkmm474@aol.com) or Nancy at [cebneb07@gmail.com](mailto:cebneb07@gmail.com)

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Please call any member of the Board of Directors with questions and comments.