

Sidney Historical Association
44 Grand Street, Sidney, NY 13838

Founded 1945

Spring 2023 Edition

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Please come see us on Wednesday or Saturday from 10AM to 2PM, Or by appointment by contacting Mike Wood (607)-434-8258 or Larry Halbert (607)-237-4762 – larryhalbert7@gmail.com

Mike Henry Mason

Sidney Town & Village Historian

Even Mike's name sounds historic, as in Michael Henry Mason. Mike has been Sidney's long time Village/Town Historian, since 1982.

There will be some fun facts about Mike that we will certainly enjoy as we get to know him a little better through this short bio. Mike joined Sidney Historical Society, as it was named back in the '80's, in 1982. American history has always been a passion for Mike and especially of the local police departments.

Mike was born in Frankfort, Germany. At six months old he moved to the USA. A Class of 1980 Sidney graduate. He has two children with his wife Laurie, they are Zach, Sidney class of 2007 and Tyler, Sidney class of 2009. The Mason family also includes three grandkids, two girls and one boy.

Mike's work history is as follows: Schuster's grocery store, Bigun Chrysler, reconditioning cars, Security for Wells Fargo, night clerk at Red Barrel.

Mike became a part time police officer in 1982, then on to the police academy (1983) in Binghamton for three months. Mike's Dad, Jack Mason, who was Mike's most influential mentor, who was also a long-time police officer was able to attend the pinning ceremony at Mike's graduation of the academy. In 2004, Mike retired from the Sidney

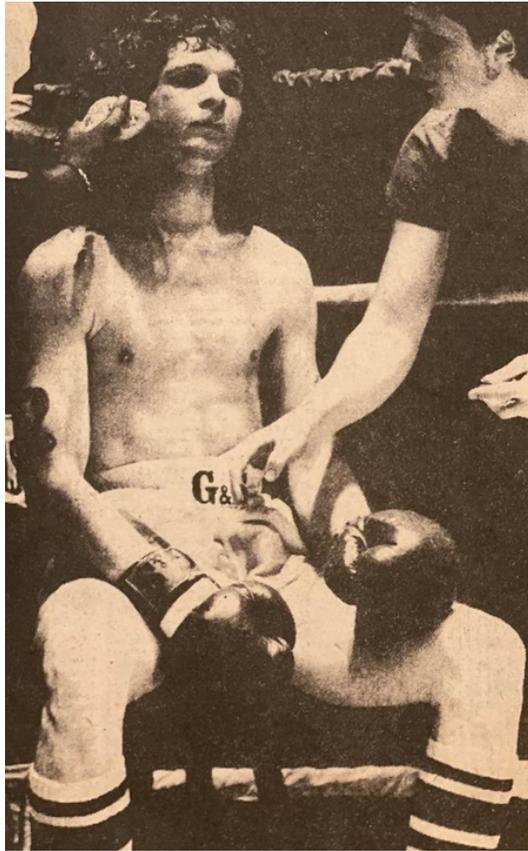
police force, then went on to ACCO Brands in security, Unalam and is now currently employed by Amphenol Aerospace.

One of Mike's mentors was Coach Francis L. Redmond. Mike enjoys athletics, including high school sports, and was one of the original founders of the Sidney High Gridiron Club in the early 2000's. At the pro sports level, it is the Oakland Raiders, favorite Raider being Ken Stabler, the NY Yankees, favorite Yankee being Thurman Munson. Mike was a Sidney Alumni Sports Hall of Fame member, doing a lot of research for our talented Sidney athletes.

Family has been of the utmost importance in Mike's life.

We thank you and appreciate your dedication to preserving our local Sidney history.





Tom McElligott



Pat McElligott

Pat McElligott, on Saturday, June 10th presented a program on local Sidney boxing. It was very entertaining yet very informative. This was well attended and enjoyed by all. So many familiar faces.

McElligott's produced five generations with at least one amateur or professional boxer. The photo above is of brother-in-law Keith Miley and Pat working Tom's corner in his last pro fight. Tom won an upset unanimous decision over an opponent who would go on to be ranked in two divisions by Boxing Illustrated.

The Sidney Rec Center boxing team produced numerous fighters who won Junior Olympic, Southern Tier, and district Golden Gloves champions. In more recent years, two Sidney High School graduates have won NYS Golden Gloves titles, something Tom took great pride in.





In grateful recognition of your continuing time, talent, and service for your dedication to preserving our history, Sidney Historical Association hereby presents

Dale & Tina Utter

With this Certificate of Appreciation

June 2023



We are making progress on creating a new website.

Here is a mock-up of our potential logo. With a few more tweaks we will be using this:



We have uploaded literally hundreds of photos on our new computer. These will be available to our audience sometime soon.

Plus, we are also working on providing the platform for the Charles H. Phelps collection that will be graciously donated by Chuck Yenson. Chuck has spent the past 15 years or so collecting real photo postcards (RPPCs) created by the Sidney photographer Charles H. Phelps. Charles H. Phelps had several affiliations with other local businesses which sold his cards under their own name, such as The Oneonta Department Store. This is exciting that we can provide this.

Thank You Chuck

We plan to have several programs for 2023. Other programs open to the public, still in the planning stages, are David Richards who wrote his PhD thesis on Sidney, Dave Plummer on Scintilla, Dale & Tina Utter on headstone/gravestone etiquette & care, Mary Dexter on the lives of the carvers she named "Coffin Man", "Open Urn" and "Eclectic Man" and their unusual form of folk art, PowerPoint on Sidney businesses, landmarks & organizations and Terry McMaster, direct descendant of Sidney founder Reverend Johnston. These have not been confirmed but we will advertise to be sure that you can attend. We are always looking for any ideas for future programs. Please let us know at historicsidney@gmail.com

This short excerpt, Contributed by Sidney Alumni, Dr. David S. Richards from his 2011 Dissertation.

Scintilla Worker's Lives

In many ways, by 1940 Sidney had become something of a "company town." The community's well-being was closely tied to that of Scintilla. More than 60% of the village's labor force worked at the plant and most all area businesses depended on Scintilla's workers' money. By 1945, almost 70% of all employed village residents

worked at Scintilla, and the community had experienced the most prosperous era in its history. For many of the people who lived and worked in Sidney during the war years, it was a special time in their lives.

Ruth and Fred VanVoorhis, who both worked at Scintilla spoke of those times, saying that their wartime experiences better prepared them for the post-war world, saying “once you went through that you could do anything.” Margaret Gill Cycon remarked that by helping win the war despite hardship and deprivation, that she and her cohort really were “the greatest generation.”

Despite the sacrifices, recreational opportunities for workers abounded, including field trials for dog enthusiasts, a model railroading club, hunters participated in company-sponsored gun clubs. The local 20th Century Lanes had a Scintilla League, ski clubs were formed, dances at the USO Recreation Center, patriotic beauty contests to crown “Miss Scintilla.” Aviation enthusiasts formed a model air-planning club. However, there was a war on, and for most employees it was business as usual, not fun and games.

By 1941, Scintilla had greatly diversified and besides aircraft magnetos, was producing many other products: switches, sparkplugs, harnesses for radio shielding, magnetos & switches for tank destroyers; industrial magnetos for PT boats; diesel fuel injection pump equipment for seagoing tugs; minesweepers & millions of spare parts.

This diversification of product lines provided opportunities for both skilled & unskilled workers to obtain employment that would frequently last for decades after the war. Many workers were drafted but returned to find a job still waiting for them.

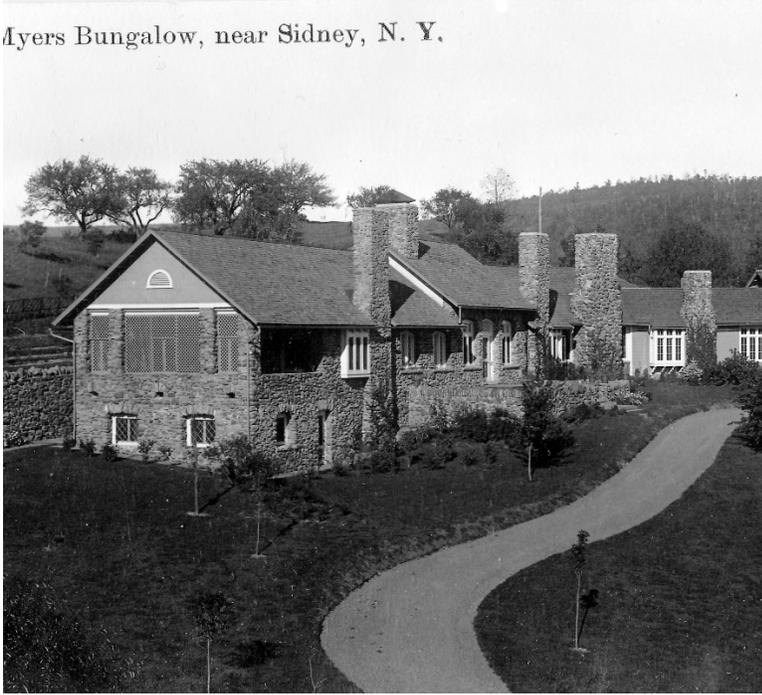
As a result of the diversification and expansion of the plant, by the end of the war, many area residents had become white collar workers, some promoted to supervisory positions. As the company grew & diversified, more engineers were hired, many of Swiss extraction.

Security became important at the plant during the war and had to be aware of possible sabotage or attack. There were more than seventy uniformed and armed members of the Scintilla Police Force.

Rationing, long lines in stores, and even longer working hours took their toll.

Stonehenge Motel

Myers Bungalow, near Sidney, N. Y.



After some remodeling, Stonehenge Motel opened its doors to guests in the mid 1950's into the '60's. Catering to mostly businessmen visiting Scintilla & other local businesses. Previously known as Meyers Bungalow, this fieldstone house was planned by Dr. William S. Myers in 1902. He built it as an extension to the wooden frame farmhouse that belonged to his grandparents.



The Master Market located on Route (7), Riverside was Harry's Inn, a restaurant with music, dining & dancing. The building then became Joe's Master Market. Ferraro's purchased the Master Market in 1959, sold it to Bernie & Shirley Ford in 1970

Curator's Corner: Submitted by Mike Wood

The Association and the donated items for the museum continue to grow. Visitor attendance is up and to our delight new memberships are on the increase, but most importantly active members are growing. It has been five years since our move to our current location. The museum is easily accessible with plenty of parking space and air conditioning for summertime comfort. Our Wednesday hours (10AM-2PM), have become increasingly popular with local members enjoying camaraderie and an endless pot of coffee.

At our annual meeting in May, the membership voted to accept stewardship of the District II, Youngs Station schoolhouse. We are pursuing titleship of the property. The original schoolhouse is in good condition. We plan on a restoration project through a newly formed committee.

In May, a gentleman, John Johnston, from Livingston Manor offered a donation of a horse drawn sleigh/cutter. This is fully restored and originally made by the Cortland Cart & Carriage of Sidney. Along with the cutter comes an enclosed trailer for transportation and protection. We accepted this generous and much appreciated offer. We hope to see you at the museum.

JOHNSTON FAMILY REUNION - Anyone interested can contact me via email: Cbrigaglia@aol.com; phone: (607)760-0234; Or on our Facebook group @ JOHNSTON FAMILY REUNION

We have an exciting newfound enthusiasm here at Sidney Historical Association.

Since our founding in 1945, We immensely appreciate all the work that past members have performed in preserving our rich history.

We appreciate all our new members. We appreciate all that donate their time and talent to our efforts and ongoing projects.

We are always looking for innovative ideas and suggestions for historical program events.

Submitted by Larry Halbert

Sidney Historical Association President