

Sidney Historical Association

44 Grand Street, Sidney, NY 13838

Winter (1st Quarter) 2024 Edition

Founded 1945

★ Curator: Mike Wood ★ Treasurer: David Plummer (2024) ★ VP: Bill Morton (2025) ★

★ Secretary: Alana Grays-Bailey (2025) ★

★ President: Larry Halbert (2025) ★

Board Trustees: Chris V. Smith; Al Stark; Tina Utter (2025); Steve Arrandale (2026)

Don Tuttle (2025); Bill Meyer (2026); Mike Mason (2026); Dennis Porter (2026)

When the new year begins, we often reflect on our accomplishments. Some of our 2023 highlights are as follows:

We purchased a new state of the art, computer system: This new computer will allow us to improve existing Sidney Historical sites, plus improve our historic recordings/documents. We thank all that have contributed: United Way, Tianaderrah Foundation and donating members.

- **Programs in 2023:**

History Conference including (7) local Associations; Local Boxing History Program

NY State's Covered Bridges; Troop "C" Program by Louis Palombo. These were all very well attended thanks to advertising in various print & social media sources.

We are working on a new website that at some point, will hopefully include over 2,000 Charles Phelps postcards. The SHA site will include membership info, upcoming programs, photo gallery, videos of our programs including a Les Gregory 100th birthday interview and more. We will feature an On-Line Digital Museum.

DVDs are available for our 2023 Troop C and the Covered Bridges programs. Past program DVD's available are Terry McMaster and Les Gregory.

We also now have a DVD, "The Best of Tom Robertson". The National Hall of Fame wrestling coach of Sidney from the early 60's through the '90's.

If you would like a DVD of these programs, please contact us at historicsidney@gmail.com / (larryhalbert7@gmail.com) or Mike Wood at (607)-434-8258. Donations are really appreciated when ordering a DVD.

Membership: Continued to increase in 2023.

- **Upcoming Spring Programs 2024:**

Railroads: The evolution of Sidney railroads, including a time line on the progress, population growth & prosperity in the Village of Sidney by Steve Arrandale & Jim Gale on **Saturday, March 9th @ 11AM**

Civil War: Jonathan “Jed” LaBounty will present on **Saturday, April 13th @ 11AM**

Patriot Burials Sign Dedication – By Dale & Tina Utter; Program to include Sons of the American Revolution & the Sidney American Legion – **Saturday, May 18th @ 10AM**

All three programs will be at the Sidney Memorial Public Library

- **Upcoming Tentative Fall/Winter Programs 2024-2025:**

Local Native American Artifacts: Presented by Dave Moyer

A New Deal on the Home Front Sidney, NY 1939 – 1945: Presented by Dr. Dave Richards

Gravesite Care & Preservation: Presented by Dale & Tina Utter

We have formed a committee for the planning of the upcoming Scintilla 100th Anniversary which is in 2025. More to come on this as we are closer to the date.

We would like to congratulate Dale and Tina Utter for their most recent Delaware County Historical Award of Merit. This award is for those that have volunteered their time and skills to preserve and/or present the history of Delaware County.

Congratulations – We are all proud of your dedication and loyalty to our local history and beyond



Tina & Dale Utter - Mt. Upton, NY

Tina & Dale both grew up locally in Delaware and Chenango Counties and have a vested interest in the history of our area. They have been exploring and working together in cemeteries for the last decade. Their expertise in the gravestone preservation field was developed by attending workshops, many of which were conducted by the international organization, Association for Gravestone Studies.

Smalley's Theatre from the Cooley Photo donated by Rachael Cooley



Smalley's Theatre had (880) seats, which included a balcony. It opened in 1922 with sound equipment installed in 1929. Performances included silent movies accompanied by live music, vaudeville acts, and talkies. Personal appearances by Roy Rogers, Tom Mix and Gene Autry to promote their westerns at Saturday matinees drew, sometimes 3,000 people. In 1957, Smalley's was sold, but the building remained a theatre until 1997.

Dave Richard's dad took over management of the theatre in 1960 after rotating between the Palace Theater in Oneonta and the theatre here in Sidney. Both were owned by Mr. DeGraw in the mid '60's, until when he sold out and moved back to Baltimore on the late '70's.

Welcome Inn

The Welcome Inn (Sidney)

Sidney Historian and author Chuck D'Imperio always seems to find interesting articles and post them on Facebook for many of us to enjoy. See Chuck's most recent discovery on The Welcome Inn. So many of us either worked there or patronized this restaurant, especially in our youth. Oh, the memories from The Welcome Inn. Celia Garramone Moore, who came from a family of (12) brothers and sisters, owned this establishment up until 1984. She was an extremely hard-working woman who was well known by so many in the area.

Ask any Baby Boomer from Sidney, NY (Delaware County) or neighboring Bainbridge (Chenango County) what their favorite "food memory" of the 1950s-1970s was and in a heartbeat, you will hear them shout "Hamburger on Homemade at the Welcome Inn." Probably the most popular restaurant in its day, the "inn" was a favorite for families, workers at the nearby Scintilla, Borden's, and Keith Clark calendar factory, and it was a place that would remain packed to the walls during college breaks. The original area place "where everybody knew your name," especially the friendly waitresses. If any restaurant deserved the title "beloved" it was this one.



Read More: [These Upstate Restaurants Are Long Gone, And Very Much Missed!](https://cnynews.com/new-york-state-lost-restaurants) | <https://cnynews.com/new-york-state-lost-restaurants>

"Welcome Inn" Lost in Fire - by Lea Kenyon Gregory '45'

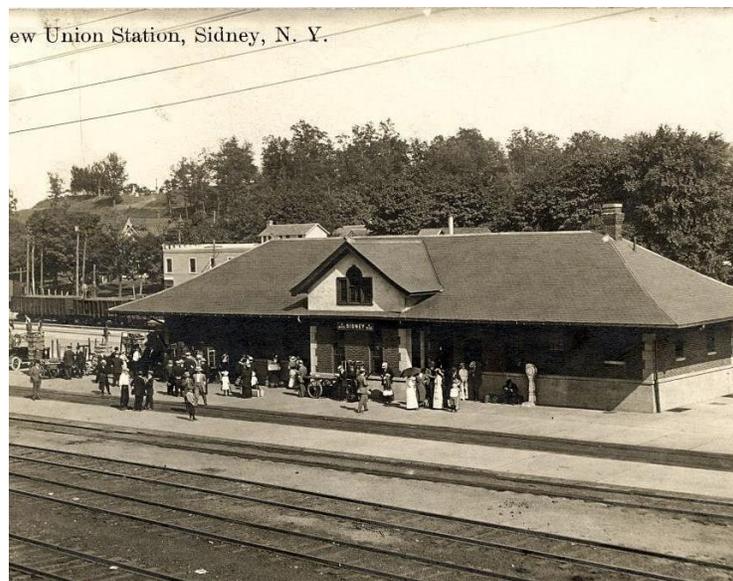
Late this past summer, an early morning fire destroyed the restaurant known as the "Welcome Inn" Many remember the great food and good times spent at the little restaurant located on route 7 between Bainbridge and Sidney.

The name "Welcome Inn" is quite familiar. Did you know it got its start in the 1930's as a gas station and a small eating establishment? One of the early owners was a family named "Gustavson". They bought the business and the house across the road which became the home of several of the future owners. It was then called "Twin Rivers" because the Unadilla River empties into the Susquehanna about a mile east of there.

In the 1940's it became an extremely popular spot with Scintilla workers. A specialty was the great home-baked bread and hamburger rolls. A frequent patron was plant manager, Sol Gerig, who ordered steak and spaghetti with such regularity, the dish was named for him on the menu.

A gentleman named "Sparkle" Church owned the establishment in the 1950's. His personality was similar to Jackie Gleason as the "bartender". The "Welcome Inn" changed hands several times, but always remained a favorite of high school kids from both Bainbridge and Sidney. The loss of this long-running business is sad, but as Bob Hope would say, "Thanks for the memories!"

Union Passenger Station – Circa 1920's



During WWII, the commuter trains stopped at the station they backed down to the Scintilla plant to let off the workers for different shifts. This would make sense as it was otherwise an inconvenience to walk back and forth to the station.

The bus companies became more and more hard pressed to provide service. Eventually the Office of Defense Transportation ordered the O&W to provide additional service and they added three Norwich-Cadosia trains. Of particular concern to the government was the Scintilla aircraft magneto plant at Sidney. The trains were timed largely to accommodate the shift changes at the defense plant.

Curator's Corner by Mike Wood

Dear Friends,

Here at the museum things could not be better! Our members have been busy through the winter preparing for upcoming programs. The participation and attendance at monthly meetings have grown. Preparation for renovations & repairs of the O&W railroad telegraph building plus the Young's District #11 schoolhouse are in the planning stage.

Donations of Sidney memorabilia continue to add to our collections.

We are currently seeking all items depicting a Native American Indian, a past symbol of our Sidney school. Recently, our logo/nickname/mascot changed from Sidney Warrior's to Sidney Sabers.

A special thank you to Sidney alumnus, Steve Anderson, and family from Burnet, Texas. Steve has donated items through Joe Singlar, a large amount of O&W railroad material pertaining to Sidney.

Thank you to all members for your continued financial support. Donations from our annual campaign assist us to fulfill our mission statement. The recording and promotion of our local history is essential.

See you at the museum,

Mike

We are always looking for ways to improve our organization. If there is anything of interest that you want us to present, please let us know by contacting me at historicsidney@gmail.com or larryhalbert7@gmail.com or (607)-237-4762

We will be unveiling a new website sometime in 2024.

Please come visit us at 44 Grand Street on either Wednesday or Saturday, hours are 10AM to 2PM or by appointment through Mike Wood (607)-434-8258 or larryhalbert7@gmail.com or (607)-237-4762 – All ideas are welcome

Our mission is to present photos, documents, and artifacts to our audience through a vast collection of resources. SHA museum highlights the history of Sidney.

Larry Halbert - President, Sidney Historical Association