

*Sidney Historical Association - 44 Grand Street, Sidney, NY 13838*

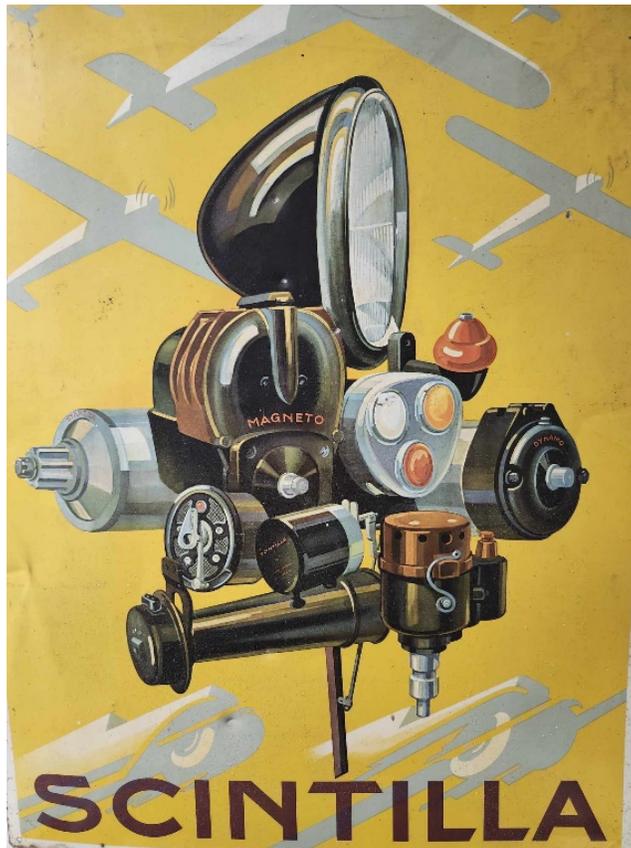
*Spring/2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2025 Edition*

● Curator: Mike Wood ★ Treasurer: Denise Singlar (2026) ★ VP: Bill Morton (2025) ★

★ Secretary: Alana Grays-Bailey (2025) ★ President: Larry Halbert (2025) ★

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*Donated by Gary & Chris Wilson*



Vintage Scintilla Poster - Magneto Plus



The March 22<sup>nd</sup> program was a huge success, attended by close to one hundred people. Dave had approximately 170 slides. This was an extremely informative program that encapsulated a ton of information. After all, we are talking about 100 years of history.

We thank Dave Capello for kicking this off by speaking about the upcoming official open house by Amphenol-Aerospace.

**AMPHENOL**  
SCINTILLA | BENDIX | ALLIED

**CONNECTING  
100  
HISTORY**  
1925 2025

Amphenol Aerospace is celebrating its  
**100th Anniversary in Sidney, New York on July 19.**

**Saturday, July 19:**  
Open House for the general public, employees, families, and friends from 12:00 to 6:00 PM. activities to include:

- Factory tours
- Museum exhibits
- 100 years of Engineering Technology
- Customer and Distributor Exhibits
- Raffle Baskets
- Fun Kid Events
- Food and Drinks
- Amphenol giveaways and items for purchase
- New Book documenting the 100-year history of Amphenol in Sidney
- And more...

We look forward to seeing everyone as we celebrate this incredible milestone.

**Amphenol**  
Aerospace

***Sidney Historical Association, in conjunction with the  
Community Cultural Center, Presents:***

***A Roundtable Discussion about the History of Sidney,  
New York. "The Village we can't do without"***

***This was yet another exciting and well-attended  
program that featured a variety of interesting topics.***

We are always looking for ways to improve our programs. Are they too long? What is the right amount of time to keep the audience interested? Do we need more audience engagement and participation? For our last two programs, we did live-stream them. We are working on improving that as well. Please let us know your thoughts.

You can still view these. Sidney Roundtable Discussion: <https://www.youtube.com/live/rNB3SVBaE-g?si=wdVH31kXDMx0r80X>

OR, Sidney Historical Association Presents *Scintilla – 100th Anniversary Program By Dave Plummer*

Here is the link to the webcast: <https://www.youtube.com/live/rNB3SVBaE-g?si=wdVH31kXDMx0r80X>



**Harvey Hathel Ward – Born April 5<sup>th</sup>, 1890 – Death July 1<sup>st</sup>, 1982 (Age 92)**

## Burial – Paige Cemetery, Downsville, NY

Some portions of this article are from Never Yet Melted.

Harvey Ward, age 87, carves beautiful grained shovels with a double-edged axe.

Jack: “After directing 'With These Hands: The Rebirth of the American Craftsman' for ABC and Johnson Wax, it won a blue ribbon at the American Film Festival. The New York State Council on the Arts saw that and asked if I'd do a picture about New York State craftsmen. I was writing “Portraits of Our Vanishing Inheritance” after seeing a handmade wooden shovel in a small upstate museum. That's when I connected with Harvey Ward. I drove to Sidney, NY, and saw old, bent, tough Harvey standing on a pile of wood chips, holding a giant axe.

*Harvey Ward was known as, The Last Scoop Maker. That title came to him from the documentary that filmmaker Jack Ofield made about his scoop, which was broadcast on PBS in 1974. Harvey was the last of his family line to make wooden shovels for a living. Each wooden shovel was cut with an ax and carved out by hand. He made scoops just about every day of his life, starting when he was about 14 years old or for about 78 years. Making a Wooden Scoop requires a great deal of upper-body strength. Harvey managed to perfect his craft so well that the entire process of building a scoop from start to finish was done in 51 minutes. He claims he wasn't the fastest, though. That titled belonged to his father, Joseph, who was renowned for making the fastest shovels and an extremely smooth finish achieved with a single ax head. Harvey used a double-ax head for his craft.*

*Harvey's family made “scoops” for hundreds of years, which can be traced back to his Delaware Indian roots. In Native American tribes, families were assigned roles. Harvey's family was assigned to make all the wood tools and other wooden utilitarian ware needed by the tribe.*

*In the 1700s-1800s, there were plenty of wooded forests in the northeastern United States. In later years, Native Americans traded beaver skins with the English to obtain metal tools. These metal tools made making wooden shovels and handcrafted objects much easier. Often, tribesmen melted down the metal and customized their own tools to suit their needs.*

*Harvey's family made wooden bowls and plates to eat off of, as well as other needed objects such as firewood boxes. The tradition was passed down from generation to generation until Harvey and his brothers were taught to make wooden shovels as teenagers.*

### **John Ward**

My name is John Ward, Harvey Ward was my great grandfather. My family and I greatly appreciate Jack Ofield and staff who took the time and attention to honoring my Great grandfather. He and his wife, Grace, were fantastic people. At the time, Jack had one of the top-of-the-line cameras and everything was preserved so beautifully. I recall as a young child going to my great grandparent's home in “Shanty town” which is located in Sidney NY. In the video, you can see his workshop, but the other building was their home. It was located on a dead-end dirt path, very close to the railroad tracks. That's why you can hear the train horn so clearly in the video. This video takes me back to my childhood and the memories of those very simple but loving times. Thanks to all for posting and viewing this video. Special thanks again to Jack Ofield and partner who assisted him in the making of this video.

You can view a video on YouTube at [The Last Shovel Maker | Folkstreams](#)



At the age of 90, Harvey Ward was still carving wooden shovels. People traveled from far and wide to meet him and purchase his hand-carved wooden products, which included shovels, scoops, sap yokes, and butter bowls. He was even featured in a documentary on a television network.

Harvey was born in Morrison in 1890 and learned the craft from his father. After losing his job during the Great Depression, he began working full-time at his wood carving business. Notably, in the early 1930s, the shovel business was thriving, and he was producing approximately six shovels a day, selling them for fifty cents each.

The shovels were made of basswood or butternut, whittled down from a block of wood with an ax forming a basic shape. Once the outline was complete, knives and shaves finished the job. That lasted for 78 years.

Ward lived in a little home on the Willow Street extension. Humorously, the large pile of wood chips in front of his house was the only street address that Ward needed. Harvey had six children, and many grandkids & great grandkids.

Countless individuals in Sidney fondly remember this dedicated man, whose reputation extended far beyond the local community and resonated across the state and beyond. Daily, residents would pass by his home on their way to school, a testament to his presence in their lives. Unlike traditional metal shovels, his wooden shovels served a vital purpose in grain handling; they effectively eliminated the risk of metal slivers tainting the feed for farm animals, ensuring the health and well-being of livestock. His commitment to quality and care for the community left a lasting impact that will not be forgotten.



## ***Evonne Acenath “Bonnie” Provenzon Curtis***



Bonnie, a long-time resident of Sidney, was born in the Empett house on West Main Street. Mrs. Kitty Empett had the unique distinction of celebrating her 100th birthday in February 1986. For twenty-five years, Kitty operated a maternity home in Sidney, working as a practical nurse and midwife.



Bonnie was blessed to have two uncles, Henry and Sam, and two aunts, Ginny and Ruthy. In Sidney, everyone knew Sammy Provenzon as the barber who brought joy to the community. One resident fondly recalled her school journey, where she would pass Sammy's barber shop and be greeted by his dazzling smile, as he paused his work, and wave with his comb and shears in hand. Sammy truly was the "barber of barbers." He cut hair for 53 years. He had the honor of cutting hair for the Dick Lawrence family across six generations, displaying his dedication and skill.



Bonnie's middle name is Acenath, which has been passed down through seven generations. This gendered name encapsulates a sense of divine connection and reverence, often signifying dedication to a higher power.

Bonnie married Gerald “Jerry” Curtis in 1960. Jerry, a proud Marine, joined the United States Marine Corps (USMC) in 1959, right after graduating from high school. He had the incredible honor of serving as a guard for President Eisenhower at Camp David. The couple married on a Saturday and landed in Washington, DC, the following day, spending the subsequent eighteen months there.



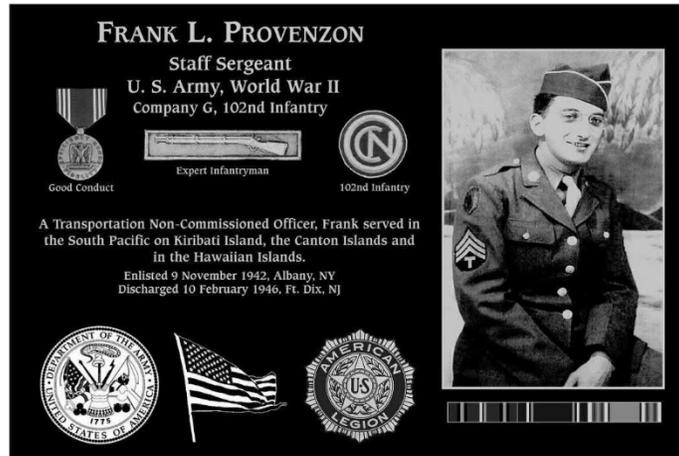
Bonnie has three children: Jill, Jim, and Juli, all of whom are graduates of Sidney High School. For approximately fifteen years, Bonnie took care of her children at home, and she also took care of other children through her babysitting business. After that, she began her professional career, working at various businesses. Bonnie spent twenty-four years at Texas Propane on Division Street and worked at Jamesway, the Sidney Memorial Public Library, and Keith Clark.

Bonnie played a crucial role in establishing the Sidney Central School Alumni Association, a lively organization dedicated to preserving our school’s spirit. In recognition of their efforts, Mayor Jim Warren officially declared July 17th and 18th, 1999, as the first annual alumni weekend celebration. This inaugural all-class weekend was a spectacular event that included a golf tournament, an engaging open house hosted by the Sidney Historical Association, a fun gathering at Toddies, and the 12th annual all-class luncheon held in the senior high school gymnasium. This annual event has continued to grow and is still celebrated today.

For decades, Bonnie has been a cornerstone of the Sidney community, contributing her time and energy to multiple organizations. Her involvement in the Mother’s Club, Sidney Historical Association, Sidney Alumni Board of Directors, Sidney Alumni Sports Hall of Fame, and her local Methodist church—where she taught Sunday School—demonstrates her commitment to our community's growth and well-being.

Bonnie's involvement with the Sidney American Legion Auxiliary began at an early age; her parents enrolled her in the Legion juniors when she was only ten. From marching alongside the Legion members

to helping with dinners and attending monthly meetings, Bonnie embraced every opportunity to serve her community.

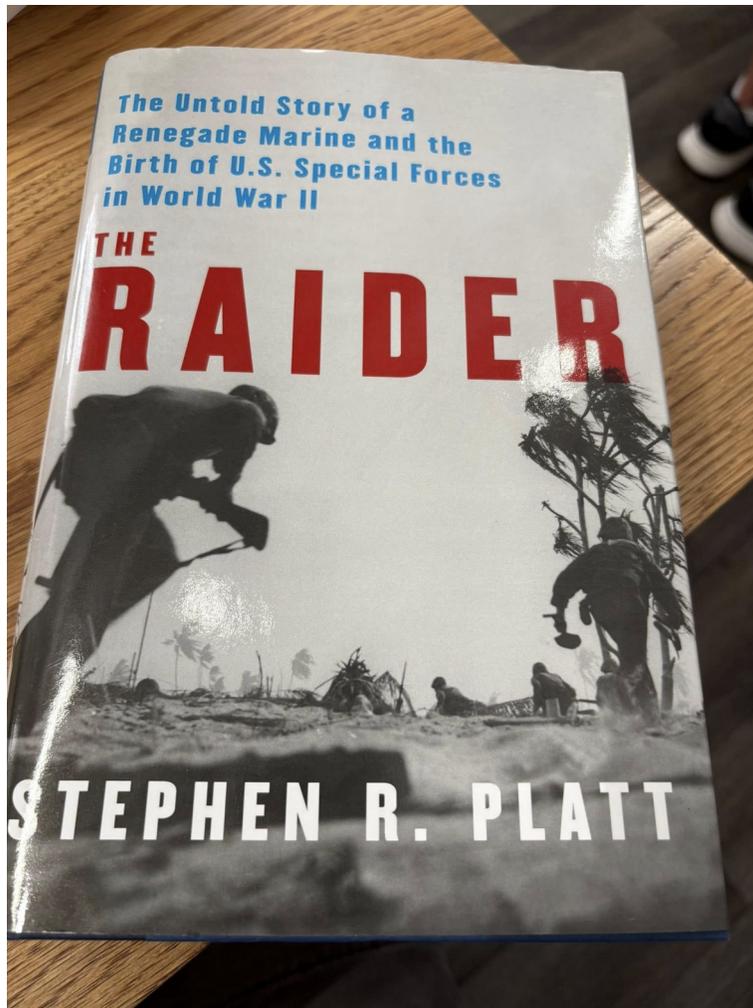


Throughout her adult life, she continued to be an enthusiastic and dedicated member of the Auxiliary, demonstrating her lasting commitment to its values and mission for many years.

The Mother's Club, located at the corner of Main Street and Division, played a role in supporting those in need through its fundraising efforts, including yard sales that benefited residents.

***Bonnie, we sincerely appreciate your commitment to the values supported by the Sidney Historical Association and other organizations. Your generous volunteer efforts are vital to enriching our community and preserving Sidney's remarkable history. Thank you for your steadfast dedication; you have truly made a difference!***





***Evans Fordyce Carlson (February 26, 1896 – May 27, 1947) was a decorated and retired United States Marine Corps general officer who was the leader of "Carlson's Raiders" during World War II. Many credit Carlson with developing the tactics and attitude that would later come to define America's special operations forces. He is renowned for the "Makin Island raid" in 1942, and his raiders' "Long Patrol" (aka Carlson's patrol) behind Japanese lines on Guadalcanal, in which 488 Japanese were killed. Carlson popularized the phrase "gung-ho".<sup>[1]</sup>***

***Early years: Evans Carlson was born on February 26, 1896, in Sidney, New York, the son of a Congregationalist minister. He ran away from his home in Vermont in 1910 and two years later disguised his age to enter the United States Army.***



**Curator's Corner by Mike Wood**

*The museum's collections continue to grow each month. We are always surprised and excited when these local treasures come through our doors.*

*Recently, Tracy DeMatteo, a past recording secretary, donated the entire records for the Sidney Chapter No. 255 Order of the Easter Star. This is a century of documented activity of female masonry. Club 55 owners donated old, framed photos of Mason's that were discovered in the basement of their restaurant. Our members continue to donate memorabilia, so I will mention a few of them.*

*Gary and Chris Wilson, Tina & Dale Utter, Steve Roff, Larry Fancher, Steve Arrandale, and the Village of Sidney.*

*One special collection is very dear to many of our active members. We have added it to our display area.*

**Becky Leidy best tells the story:**

*Springtime brings excitement! New beginnings and the return of cherished activities await.*

*In the Dann family, springtime meant waiting for fields to be plowed for spring planting. My Dad, Charles Dann, and his three children in tow would visit the freshly plowed ground in search of arrowheads. My dad passed that excitement to my brothers, Bob & Bill, but not as much to me. Always a history buff, my dad passed that love of arrow-heading to Bob & Bill. The cumulative collection grew as the years passed. Many fine arrowheads were found lying on the freshly turned dirt.*

*My brother Bill made arrowhead-shaped boards from plywood in shop class at Sidney High School. He painstakingly mounted the arrowheads in patterns showing the beauty of the perfect points. Our family has recently donated this collection to the Sidney Historical Association so that others may admire the beauty of these points and other pieces used by the Native Americans who lived here along the Susquehanna and Unadilla rivers many years ago.*

***Submitted by Rebecca (Dann) Leidy – April 2025***

***Mike Wood Cont'd: Living in the Village of Sidney for most of my life, I have seen the passing of many of its long-time citizens. It always saddens me to see the roll-off dumpsters pull into the homes and haul off potential items of history. Please keep the museum in mind if this happens to your family. Have a great summer!***

***See you at the museum - Mike***



**Join us for our exciting Open House during Alumni Weekend! Mark your calendars for July 18th and 19th, from 10 AM to 2 PM. We can't wait to reconnect and share memories with you at our welcoming space at 44 Grand St. Don't miss this opportunity to catch up and relive the good times!**



***Please always remember that if you want to see a specific piece or topic, please let us know. Contact me at [historicsidney@gmail.com](mailto:historicsidney@gmail.com)***

***Larry Halbert – Sidney Historical Association President***

**ALUMNI WEEKEND 2025 SCHEDULE** - Go to [sidneyalumni.org](http://sidneyalumni.org) for listing of all events