

Preserving and Promoting our History

Dates to Remember:

January 31, 2010, 2pm
At the Community Center
"Share Your Collection"

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Dear Historical Society Members and Friends,

2009 was a good year for the Society. Your volunteer Board continued to work hard on its main goals:

- 1) To manage the museum and its collections;
- 2) To bring programs to the public that inform attendees of our unique and interesting history;
- 3) To enlarge our collection of oral histories;
- 4) To continue the care of the Hague Heritage Cemetery

To do all of this, of course, requires time and money. Our main purchases in 2009 were a camcorder and a PC to be used in the museum for viewing programs and taped interviews. These items were funded by the Town and their support is greatly valued. All other expenses are paid from dues, contributions, and the sale of note cards.

Our *Sexton Sisters* and *Houses of Hague* programs were both very successful this year and we want to thank you all for coming out to see them and for all your positive feedback. Knowing that you enjoy the results makes the work on these projects that much more worthwhile!

Our research focus for 2010 will be the *Hotels in Hague*. We will develop an exhibit and program for the Annual Meeting in June. Please join us in this project as an active participant or by sharing your stories, artifacts, pictures, etc. for use in this research. Be sure to read "Growing up at the Trout House" on the following pages for a look back at hotel life in the first half of the 20th century.

We look forward to another productive year and we hope to have your participation. Call anyone on the Board to volunteer and become part of this vital Town organization!

Growing up at the Trout House

By Dick Bolton

As I think of growing up in a summer resort environment, it certainly brings back many fond memories. Since my grandparents, R.J. and Mame Bolton, were owners of the Trout House and surrounding cottages and my brother Jack and I were their adopted children, I was in touch with everything that was involved in running a hotel.

First off, you had to have a general knowledge of plumbing, electrical and personnel problems. In other words, you had to be a "Jack of all trades".

(RJ and Mame celebrate their 50th Wedding Anniversary)

Usually about the first week in May we started opening up the hotel and cottages. That involved painting, cleaning, lawn care and the hiring of summer employees. We hired approximately 30 people to start the season. Most of the summer employees were from Hague and the



surrounding towns. They were hired with room and board and were housed in a large building in back of the hotel where there was also the laundry and the ice house. Finding a first class chef was the biggest problem as all the qualified chefs would have been hired by the year-round restaurants. Many times my grandmother, who was an excellent cook, had to go into the kitchen and cook the meals until a replacement could be found. Many times I washed pots and pans to help her out.

A number of the employees we hired such as: Head waitress, Pastry Cook, Head Chambermaid, General Repairman and Lawn Maintenance had been with us for many years so their areas were well covered. They were just like family returning for the summer.

Another big problem in opening up was the leaking pipes and radiators. When the water was turned off during the winter and turned on again in the spring, these leaks developed. It usually took about a week to rectify this problem.

The hotel was supplied by water from our reservoir which was located at the farm. The reservoir had to be monitored daily. When it ran low, usually in August, we had to pump water from the Hague Brook into the reservoir. We had a guest who came to the hotel every year. I had to take him over to Smith's Flats in West Hague to get water from a boiling spring that was located there and he kept his bottle of water at his dining room table where he could drink it daily. He claimed that this water kept him living for another year!

The season generally started about the middle of June and lasted until Labor Day. There were slow periods between these dates, but it also depended on weather and holidays.

When the first guest arrived, we had to be ready. They usually arrived by car, train, bus or boat. They were greeted by a Bellhop who helped them with their luggage and then to the front desk where they checked in. Their choice of stay was either on the American Plan (meals

included) or European Plan (room only). Rooms alone ranged from \$8.00 to \$12.00 a night depending on what floor your room was at. The hotel had 50 rooms and three stories. The rooms were less expensive on the upper floors. All rooms were equipped with sinks. Some rooms had bath facilities and others had a connecting bath for two rooms. All floors had shower, tub, and toilet facilities.

After check-in they came to the dining area where they were assigned a table for the duration of their stay. After dinner there were a number of activities they could enjoy. We had bingo, movies, card games, and a casino across the street for their dancing pleasure. There were also two drug stores (owned by Byron Marshall and Carrie Wilcox) within walking distance to meet their needs. During the day we had rowboats, canoes, tours of the Lake by motorboat, tennis courts, horseback riding, hiking trails up Swede Mt. or Black Mt., a local golf course, and a fishing boat, run by Leon Wells, that would take guests lake trout fishing.

My full time job started when I was 12 years old. I had to keep the boats clean and tidy up the beach and docks. The next year I was promoted to dishwasher and chef's helper. My 14th and 15th year I was the helper on our delivery truck which included filling the ice boxes in the hotel and cottages. We also took all the waste to our landfill at the farm. We returned from the farm with fresh vegetables and milk that were produced at our farm. We usually made this trip twice a day.

Since we had no electric refrigeration, all the coolers in the hotel and cottages had to be cooled by ice which was stored in our icehouse. Our icehouse held approximately 1500 cakes of ice and lasted the entire summer. The ice was harvested from Lake George and was insulated with sawdust that we got from the local sawmills.

My 16th year in the hotel was the best. I got my driver's license and I was "top-dawg" driving the service vehicles. This meant also that I was able to pick-up guests at the train station, take people to visit the fort and drive all around town to do the chores. In between times there were always emergencies that I was called upon to do, such as fix a leaking faucet, fix the dishwasher, deliver ice to a guest or retrieve a boat that had broken loose from the dock and was in the middle of the Lake.

The next 2 1/2 years I was in the service and was discharged July 5th, 1946. When I came home, I filled in wherever they needed me. The last years in the hotel I was married and my wife Penny worked in the office and dining room and I worked as bartender.

(RJ with grandsons Dick and Jack – 1946)

There is a lot more I could tell you about "Growing-Up" in a hotel but I will close by saying that my grandparents were the best parents that a person could ever have. They were understanding and helped me in so many ways. I LOVED THEM BOTH.



RJ with grandsons Dick and Jack -- 1946

**HAGUE
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY**

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On the Web!

See the link on the Town
of Hague Home Page

We're turning 50! We need a logo!

The Hague Historical Society will celebrate its 50th anniversary in 2013. Seems like a long way off, but there are things to do! How about helping us to design a logo for our organization?

The logo would be used on our letterhead and any promotional items we may want to develop for the 50th.

If you've got an idea, or if you're graphically talented, email us your thoughts at haguehistoricalsociety@yahoo.com. We'll be watching for them.



"The New Trout House, Hague-on-Lake George, postmarked August 25, 1924, reads "We are staying here and having a very good time."

Please help us plan for 2010 – send your dues in today to the address above. Dues are \$5 for the year and contributions from you, our members and supporters, are deeply appreciated. Thank you and Happy New Year!

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January 2010