



## WALKING TOUR KIOSKS REPAIRED & UPGRADED

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### Special points of interest:

- Next Meeting Sep-  
tember 17 9am  
Wanakena Church
- Order a NEW Cat's  
Meow keepsake see  
pg 4
- Gift memberships  
are a great idea for  
the holidays

At the May meeting it was agreed to be cost effective to replace all 16 panels on the kiosks at the same time. Quite a few of the panels are warping and starting to crack and the pictures are fading. The original panels installed in 2004 were printed on heavy duty card stock, while the new panels are made of Dibond, non-flammable, long-lasting aluminum, with a solid polyethylene core, a flat surface that will not bow or "oil can". The entire project, included printing 16 panels, the DiBond material, protective plexiglass, and installation on new rails.



Bill Gleason, secur-  
ing the new panels  
on the town kiosk

A core team of member-volunteers, led by Bill Gleason, assessed bids/costs and worked to a installation with awesome results.



Newly installed panels on the  
town kiosk.

Feedback has been 100% positive with the pictures and text on the new panels appearing crisper and brighter than the originals when they were brand new! The next steps to improve the walking tour are to replace individual pages of the flip charts as needed, and to add to and revise the before and after pictures of the houses on Second Street.

Again, thank-you to Bill Gleason and all who worked on this project!

## TREASURER'S REPORT: MAY 2011

RON CAPONE, TREASURER

As reported by the treasurer at the May 21, current funds are:

Balance June 27, 2010	\$7,010.10
Fund Drive & Dues	\$ 5,076.00
Expenses	< \$921.75 >
Balance May 21, 2011	\$11,164.35

## WILFRED MORRISON:

A SHORT BIOGRAPHY BY: *SUSAN SMEBY*

Born 1865 in Schroon Lake, NY to a Scotch-Irish family, after the deaths of his parents young Wilfred was sent to live with an uncle in Quebec. This upbringing might explain his unique speech: a colorful "Frenghish", with a strong Scottish burr. His uncle intended Wilfred for the priesthood, but after a visit to Benson Mines in the 1880s, Wilfred did not return home. He began working as a chore boy at Sternberg's Hotel a Inlet on the upper Oswegatchie. Wilfred was soon taken under the wing of Uncle Steve Ward, a Civil War veteran and the best-known guide of the Cranberry Lake region. After Rich Lumber built their new logging town of



Wilfred Morrison (left), with another guide in front of the Wanakena depot. Wilfred has a large stove tied to his back with rope – probably going to pack it in to someone's camp. No padding from the looks of it either, just tied to his back.

"HERB ADMITTED HIS FRIEND WAS  
RARELY INCONVENIENCED BY RICH  
LUMBER'S DRY LAWS"

Wanakena in 1903, followed by a bustling tourist trade, Wilfred built his reputation as foremost of the river guides, from Wanakena to High Falls and beyond.

In 1907 Wilfred met a boy in Wanakena named Herb Keith. He could not have known that years later this young man would write a book of his early life in Wanakena, and his friendship with Wilfred. Herb Keith became Wilfred's pupil, much as Wilfred had served his apprenticeship with Uncle Steve. Wilfred taught Herb the ways of woods and waters, paddling and poling the upper Oswegatchie, fishing the trout springholes, following faint paths through the forest, hunting and preparing game. He also taught Herb how to guide for "sports", the often wealthy visitors from the cities. Sports could be demanding, but Wilfred was always a polite gentleman, and Herb adopted his soft-spoken manner. In his book, "Man of the Woods", Herb repaid his mentor for his outdoor education. Without Herb's book, Wilfred would have been one of a long list of early regional guides, whose stories are barely remembered today. Herb related many tales of Wilfred's adventures – dodging game wardens, spending a winter in Florida high society, unwit-

tingly toting a train coupling to High Falls and iced watermelon up Cat Mt., rigging a yearly water-boiling contest, refusing to get a state guide's license (a sure sign of a greenhorn). Herb also admitted that his friend was rarely inconvenienced by Rich Lumber's dry laws, although as a rule Wilfred never let his drinking interfere with his guiding. Wilfred finally went on a month-long, all-expense-paid "cure", courtesy of one of his regular sports. It didn't take. Even a guide like Wilfred could lose his bearings once in a while. In July of 1916, Wilfred had a humiliating experience while guiding a doctor, his daughter, several friends and a toy poodle. The 2-day trip from High Falls to Fide Scott's old camps at Big Deer Pond, then to the Indian Mt. Club became a 3-day ordeal due to Wilfred getting "turned around". This was a low point in Wilfred's guiding career, as he admitted to young Fay Welch when they finally reached Fide's camp: "I am so tam discourage I could cut my own t'roat!" Fortunately, his party was understanding, and even agreed to keep the shameful story a secret – for a while.

After NYS bought Rich Lumber's land in 1919, Wilfred's own Camp Betsy had to be taken down. This was a major blow to Wilfred's guiding spirit. Still, even in Wilfred's later years he was capable of great feats of endurance. Right after walking from Wanakena to above High Falls and back, his services were requested to paddle an injured hunter down the river from High Falls to Inlet House. Wilfred walked back to High Falls, and brought the hunter down the Oswegatchie on a cold, rainy, pitch-black night; the water was rising fast and there were rapids along the river's many bends, but he



Wilfred Morrison, with a smiling female 'Sport' showing off tonight's dinner.

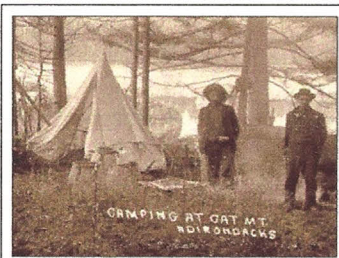
“EVEN IN WILFRED'S LATER YEARS, HE WAS CAPABLE OF  
GREAT FEATS OF ENDURANCE ...”

reached Inlet House and a waiting ambulance at dawn. Herb Keith summarized: "26 miles of walking, a 21 mile paddle in the dark and freezing rain, 1 cup of coffee, a sandwich, and 1 human life saved, all in 24 hours. Not bad for a wonderful old man in the last dim years of his life."

Herb Keith devoted an entire chapter in his book to the story of another of Wilfred's late life triumphs: his trial on charges of possessing illegal venison. Wilfred was arrested in December of 1933 at a camp on the Oswegatchie, with some meat that would later defy description, aiding him in his (self) defense. Tried twice – locally in December by Judge *Otto Hamеле* (the namesake of our



historic walking tour), then again the following May in Canton – Wilfred was twice acquitted. The proceedings at both trials were interrupted by laughter from spectators, and frequent outbursts from Wilfred; the judge had little success at suppressing either. Questions re. the ID of the meat, ownership of a pack basket, open nature of the camp, dubious “blood” stains, plus absence of a smoking gun and Wilfred’s strategy of dogged denial contributed to the outcome. As the Canton Commercial Advertiser reported after the 2<sup>nd</sup> trial: “... while the defendant lives in the woods he is far from dumb...he made an excellent witness on his own behalf.”



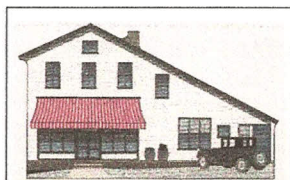
A camp site near Cat Mountain, and may be Wilfred Morrison on left.

Wilfred Morrison died in 1938 at age 73, in Ogdensburg.

## OLD WANAKENA GENERAL STORE KEEPSAKE AVAILABE

Rhody Lea and Virginia Peters diligently worked with the Cat’s Meow Company to have a very special Wanakena historical keepsake available for sale this summer. The keepsake is a reproduction of a postcard in our archives which depicts the old general store with a Model-T Ford parked in front (taken after the lumber co. and RR pulled out). It is printed on wood and is 4” tall and 6 1/4” wide. On the reverse side is printed: “First Wanakena General Store, circa 1902. The Rich and Andrews General Store was built by the Rich Lumber Co. It served as a general store and later as the Post Office. It was demolished in 1961.”

The WHA is selling these for \$20



Wanakena General Store  
wooden keepsake to be sold  
in 2011 for \$20.00

and displayed them at scheduled summer events. Contact a Trustee (see list on address pg of newsletter) if

you would like to purchase. You can order for delivery by US mail, but there will be an additional charge of \$4.00 for shipping and handling. Sorry but we can’t accept credit at this time. Please send your request and check (\$24.00 for each) to:

**WHA—General Store Offer**  
PO Box 73  
Wanakena, NY 13695

# WANAKENA JULY 4TH PARADE

INCLUDES HISTORIC REENACTMENT



1908 Postcard of Cora's Restaurant

A perfect summer day set the scene for the 2011 Wanakena 4th of July parade and duck race. Many summer and year-round residents had a house-full of guests to either watch or participate in this year's events.

Each year children and adults get more imaginative in decorating bicycles, ATVs, golf carts and utility trailers in red, white and blue.

With the help of the WHA, one float was a reenactment of a well known



Gail Simmons & family on the RS float

Wanakena postcard. The postcard depicts a group of people, mostly women in front of Cora's Restaurant which is a page at Station #2 of the Walking Tour, near the Wanakena Beach. Both the picture and reverse of the postcard were enlarged on the



Kim Schneider, Nancy Ellingham, Gail Gates, Allen Ditch & Max on the WHA float.

people", signed, Alta. We are already planning for next year.

All of Wanakena sends a special thanks to Dave & Sue Ziemba, who continue to take a leadership role in planning the parade and duck race. THANK-YOU!

float (special thanks to Nancy Ellingham for her artistic skills). Postmarked Aug 7, 1908 and addressed to a Miss Catharine Carey in Oswego, it says, "We are having a lovely time. This is our crowd taken in front of Cora's restaurant. Very pretty place and pretty



Dave & Sue Ziemba working the duck table.

## REMEMBERING IVA APPLE

On December 28, 2010 Wanakena lost a good neighbor and part of Wanakena history when Iva Apple passed away. Polly Hamele remembered her 1944 neighbor and best friend when she lived on the corner of 2nd and Front and Iva and her husband Maurice moved from the now almost forgotten house on 2nd street that used to occupy the space directly across from the old school house as you enter Wanakena (the stone foundation is still there). Polly recalled how she and Iva rigged a pulley line between their two houses, sending messages to each other throughout the day. Iva led a meaningful life, and made it her mission to help senior citizens, often by playing pinochle regularly. She regularly bowled at the Wanakena bowling alley and was one of Wanakena's best Bridge players. Iva operated Wanakena's Amateur Radio Station WA2RLV beginning in 1961 and was an active member of the Wanakena Presbyterian church for many many years.

Each of us can continue on our own life's journey with fond memories of associations with Iva Rose Murphy Apple and her love for life, family, friends and Wanakena NY. Condolences to Richard & Carol Apple and their family.



## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT:

### ALLEN DITCH



We are very lucky that the Wanakena Historical Association includes many members who play an active role and are working to make our archives grow and become more available in the future. As of the May meeting we have 99 members who are up-to-date with their membership dues. Out of those ninety-nine, twenty-one are lifetime members. The trustees are very grateful for all that continue to support the organization, which allows us to ensure that the walking tour is maintained in good condition for friends, tourists, and school children to learn about the history and heritage of Wanakena.

The Trustees continue to explore the possibility of having a building to house some of the artifacts and memorabilia that are currently in storage, and available to view by appointment only. We continue to record and document our inventory so that it will be easier to locate pictures, postcards, documents, news clippings or artifacts. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at [agditch@aol.com](mailto:agditch@aol.com).

### LOOKING FOR PICTURES, POSTCARDS, FAMILY STORIES AND ARTIFACTS

Before anymore of Wanakena's history is lost, now is the time to go through those boxes in the attic or garage. Although the WHA has an exciting collection, we just don't know what we don't have! In other words, please share your old keepsakes, pictures or postcards. We would love to hear your personal stories about your grandparents, or yourself! Send us a letter about why Wanakena is special to you, and we might publish your story in the next newsletter!

The WHA is a federally recognized tax exempt organization and donations are fully tax-deductible; and has a provisional charter from the NYS Board of Regents.

If you have items PLEASE, PLEASE consider sharing. You can donate, or let us make photographic or digital copies and we can return the original to you (although we would love to have originals for our forever archives). Contact *Sue Smeby, Bill Gleason, or Allen Ditch*.

## A WANAKENA MEMORY

My First Visit to The Little Crooked House (#10 6<sup>th</sup> Street)

Very late in July 1945 my parents (William & Dot Lea) brought me and my two sisters (Jane & Primrose) on our first vacation. My brother (Bill Lea) was still serving in the Army Air Corps and was stationed in Mississippi. Our bags were packed and we started off early in the morning. We headed for the North Country in our 1936 Plymouth Sedan. How exciting it was for we three girls. We arrived at our camp, very late in the day and found ourselves knee deep in high grass, to say nothing of the dust and cob webs inside the house that had been empty for a number of years. With some effort we



were able to settle in for the night. The next day we got up early to get some necessary items, such as ice! Although we had electricity, we did not have a refrigerator. We found ice for sale in a place called Spains, a large building just off the "Inlet Road". There, in what looked like a barn, was the ice, kept cold with a covering of saw dust and wood shavings. The ice had been cut the past winter from the frozen Oswegachie River. On our return to camp we donned our swim suits and headed for the swimming beach. Having been accustomed to the salt water of the Raritan Bay near Long Island, where we swam for years, the fresh water of the Oswegachie took a little getting used to. Over the next few days at the beach we met many new friend including Richard Apple, Ed Bassett, Kieth Bazzette, the Hazeltons, Northrups, O'Connors and Sawyers. Lots of fun was had by all of us.



Ginny Peters in front of her "Crooked House" on 6th Street.

The first hike we would take was up "The Inlet Trail". Shortly after heading out, the sounds of the gurgling river were interrupted by the pealing of the Wanakena church bell, along with honking horns and a clamor of what sounded like someone beating metal cooking pots and pans. We immediately returned to our "Little Crooked House" to learn that the Japanese had surrendered. It was August 14, 1945, V-J Day, the war with Japan was finally over!!!! This memory I will never ever forget.

Virginia (Ginny) Lea Peters

## WHA MEMBERSHIP:

**JOIN OR RENEW TODAY**

*Your current membership status* should be indicated on the mailing label. If your membership is expired or you have never formally joined, please complete the form below and send form and payment to: **Wanakena Historical Association, PO Box 73, Wanakena, NY 13695.** All gifts, above membership are tax deductible.

**Annual Membership:** Individual Membership:  1 year \$10  3 years \$25

Family Membership:  1 year \$25  3 years \$60

Contributing Member:  \$50

Lifetime Membership:  \$100

New or  Renewal

NAME:		Date:	
Address:		City:	State: Zip:
Phone:	E-mail:		
Prefer to receive correspondence by:		<input type="checkbox"/> E-Mail	<input type="checkbox"/> US Mail

**GIFT MEMBERSHIP for:**

NAME:		Date:	
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Phone:	E-Mail:		

*Gift recipient will be notified by mail*

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WANAKENA HISTORICAL

Association

PO Box 73

Wanakena, NY 13695

WHA Board of Trustees (2010)

Allen Ditch (Pres.)	Sandy Conklin
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Sue Smeby (Secty)	Janet Rhodes
Wayne Allen	Marcia Smith
Judy Benzel	John Stein- burg
Bill Gleason	Bruce Smeby
Polly Hamele	Maria Twyman
Judy Hastings	

Membership Information:  
Current Membership:

Next Meeting  
Sept 21 -9am