Our last meeting was our second annual picnic at Island Park. The weather was less than stellar, but still fifteen of us met and filled up on taco salad dip, soup, brownies, vegetables, pizza, wine and more. We remained dry under the pavilion, and even watched a little lightning activity off in the distance.

Our next meeting will be October 4th, again at the Nancy Howe Auditorium. Mike Schleigh will present a talk about the old Wellsville, Addison and Galeton Railroad. I met Mike last year when a group of WAG enthusiasts met and walked a few sections of WAG terrain. Alan Forsberg invited me along for the experience, and I truly enjoyed the day. Mike offered to speak with our group at that time, the challenge was in getting together for a date. I know you will enjoy the talk.

Betty Burns was in town a few weeks ago to do some research, and I think we helped a tad. Bill and Betty included TRGHS as recipients of their Burns Family Foundation. We received a $1,000 check from the foundation this month.

The Wellsville Red Hat Ladies met at the museum on August 16th. It is always a pleasure to speak with these ladies.

Carol Rogenmoser Pratt and Charlotte Altizer visited us researching their Rogenmoser/Stein/Wilson and Schoen families.

The XRAY Shoe Fitting Machine will be coming into the museum soon (I promise). I think it will evoke some memories in many people.

TRGHS will participate in History Awareness Week again this year. The theme will be Allegany County and the Civil War. We do have many items in the museum pertaining to the Civil War, we are only disappointed that we cannot honor every man singly.

If you have not received a brochure on the weeks events, they are:

**Tuesday Sept 26th** - Kick-off Reception at 7PM in the exhibition room

**Wednesday Through Saturday** - A Display of artifacts and information about Allegany County and Civil War in the Exhibition Room of the DAHPL

**Wednesday Sept 27th** - Col. Tom Vossler (Ret) will speak in the auditorium on The Battle of Gettyburg at 7:30 PM

**Thursday the 28th** - Local Historian George Bradley will speak on “Writing of Surviving Stonewall” at 7:30 PM in the Auditorium

**Friday the 29th** - Dr. Spencer Annabel will enact the role of his great grandfather, a Civil War Surgeon.

**Sunday, October 1** at 2PM, drive to Cuba and enjoy an afternoon at the Palmer Opera House where “Voices From Our History” will come alive.

We expect most of the schools in Allegany County will send students over to visit the exhibit. We hope you will all get a chance to visit us.

Back in April of this year, there was a cave in of property that was located on top of the Madison
Creek at East Pearl Street. In the 1930’s the creek had been excavated and encapsulated in concrete. A concrete cover was constructed over the creek as it passed under E Pearl Street and Scott Avenue. That area was then paved over as were the rest of the streets. Well, I wanted the rest of the story, not to place blame on anyone or anything for any failures, but for history’s sake; how did the creek become so artificial? So, with that in mind I attempt a condensed timeline of the “Spring Brook”.

Thank you for your Donations
Allegany County Historical Society - A Rusty Reuben Boys Postcard
Burns Family Foundation - A $1,000 Donation AND a $100 donation earlier in the month.
Dorney & Deschler families. Sgt. Edward Dorney’s Purple Heart, and the Purple Heart Certificate that was held at Embser’s Funeral Home. Sgt. Dorney was killed on D-Day, June 6, 1944 during the invasion of Normandy.
John Embser – A small Hall’s Drug Store medicine bottle
Sandy & Cory Guenter - Items to keep or disburse as we need to: Air Preheater Exchanging Times” and “Trends” newsletters, photos, Doo Dads & What Nots of Wellsville from their collections, A collection of Adelphia/Rigas clippings, A Maggie Adams basket, A scrapbook from Geneva Harder’s WHS days, Allegany County Brochures, Lions Club Directories, 2 Grace Livingston Hill books, 1 book from Ruth Munce who was Grace Livingston Hill’s daughter. Book “The Enchanted Years” by Carroll Cartwright, 2 Wellsville Dry Cleaning Bags, A Combustion Engineering portfolio and more.
Linda Ackley Gridley - In memory of Duke and Ruth Ackley: newspapers to keep or give away, clippings for her father Duke Ackley, Lions, Club and the town Clock
Lois Weirich Halbert - Newspapers to clip, Air Preheater “Trends” and product information, a $100 Donation in Memory of Walter and Mildred Weirich
Joan Hall - In memory of Danny Hall; Book: Bradley Empire, Sept 1950 “Beacon”, Macken Hose Co Ribbon, McEwen Name Plate. Rain Bonnet from Gibsons, 5 Postcards, First Trust Bank Book from Danny Hall, First National writing pad, First Trust Account Book, First Trust Santa advertising
Jerome Hart – A Yard Sale find: A 1926 WHS diploma (displays a photograph of the Main St. High School. This school building was destroyed by fire in 1924 and was replaced by the present school in 1927.); 1925 Owl – the Senior Edition; blank writing paper with Wellsville Braves heading; 1935 First Trust Wellsville NY Interest Deposit Book; Immaculate Conception and Wellsville Central schools Report Cards for the 1950s.
Carol & Bill Smith - Dues and a $25 donation
Diana & Phil Weimer - Book “Tilton School” where Art Moscardini and John Walchli went to school.
Richard Wightman - New membership and a $15 donation
Spring Brook
The hills and valleys were pristine; no thing and no one spoiled the scenery. Wildlife proliferated in and around the hills and valleys of the area that would become the Village of Wellsville. The little creek that originated up on the unnamed hill made its way down the slope and emptied into the river. A heavy downpour every once in a while bothered no one and no thing. The downpour may have temporarily changed its normal path, but still, it ran downhill and bothered no one.

And then we came. We built structures too close to that creek, and it became a problem to deal with and so we did what we could to improve the situation. We tried to slow the creek, we tried to use the creek, we tried to contain the creek, but ultimately, nature triumphed. She always does.

I think that about sums up the relationship we have had with the little stream that runs from the top of Madison Hill down to the valley of the Genesee River.

Over the last few weeks I have tried to find a little information about that creek, information that was not easy to find. I know there is more to the story of the creek, but I will pull together what I know. The creek has made the news recently when a collapse caused the partial closing of East Pearl Street.

In 1891, our village engineer Richard Lee calculated that Spring Brook had a drop of 330 feet in its 2 mile run. Lee called it a “mountain spring” which started on Madison Hill about 1 mile north of the village line. He reported that the creek was supplied by numerous springs along its path and that it eventually emptied into the Genesee River.

While it is most probably the first mile of the creek that has caused the village the most problems, the lower part of it was actually used in a productive manner for a few decades. The creek, once called Spring Brook and now called Madison Creek, was mentioned in a very short newspaper article in 1882:

“The supply of water for the tanks at the depot has been obtained, when there was any at all, from the small brook that flows through the northern part of the village. It is taken in pipes from a small reservoir near the corner of Madison and Pearl streets, the fall from that point giving ample head to raise it to the tank. But the supply has been very precarious, and each year the dry season has been increasing in length, so that at times for many months locomotives have been unable to get any liquid nourishment at this station. This is to be remedied. The pipes are now being distributed for a line from the Dyke’s Creek railroad bridge to the depot. An engine and pump will be located at the creek, and a steady and plentiful stream of water kept on hand.” (Wellsville Daily Reporter Dec 28, 1882)

So from that little article, we can follow the pathway of some of the creek water from its natural course above Nathaniel Johnson’s house (the current VFW), down to the tanks by the Erie tracks. There, the waters were used to replenish the thirsty steam engines from 1851 to 1882. I also believe they were used to keep at least one emergency cistern filled with water for fire fighting. (This path is shown by the dotted line on the accompanying map)

The overflow from the creek trickled through a culvert under the railroad tracks near the top of Elm Street, paralleled Loder Street heading northward, crossing Martin Street (both of which had wooden bridges over the creek). The creek turned westward through back yards, crossing under Main Street just south of the Mather homestead and emptied into the Genesee River.
be attributable to the remnants of the discharge. Meanwhile, the waters that remained in the creek bed above the Johnson house on E. Genesee, followed the course it always took, northward across Farnum Street, then through a culvert under the Erie Tracks behind the Wellsville Sanitarium. From there it curved around the Future Sanitarium under North Main Street and into the Genesee.

Back in 1891, Engineer Lee was reporting on the elevation drop as Farnum Street residents were experiencing flooding. Lee believed the cause of the flooding was the culvert behind the property the Healy Tannery owned (the future Sanitarium). The culvert was too small, backing up the debris laden water in times of heavy rains. He was making recommendations to the Erie RR to widen and deepen the culvert to eliminate the flooding problem.

The culvert also passed under the tracks of the BE&CRR which also needed to be addressed.

Problems with wash outs behind the 20th century houses along Park Avenue in the village have been experienced in years past, again caused by heavy rains rolling off the Madison Creek.

**Top of the Hill to E Genesee Street**

Now to focus on the upper part of the creek. With the clearing of the trees for farming and lumbering, and the steady growth of village homes to the corporation line heading up the Madison Hill, Spring Brook threw tantrums when heavy rains struck. Runoff from the top of Madison Hill came barreling down its hillside channel combining with waters rolling off the hills on either side of Madison Street, often spilling over its banks and flowing fast and furiously all the way down to the railroad tracks, carrying debris with it. The torrents tore up Madison Street, filled up basements, and created havoc on the Erie tracks, posing a danger to traveling trains. The floodwaters then followed ditches along the tracks to Fassett and State Streets, causing further damage to homes there as well as flooding down over Main Street.

Newspaper articles about the flooding appear over the years and read much like this article: “The damming up (by debris) and overflow of the creek which crosses the upper end of Madison Street converted that thoroughfare into a very respectable sized river down as far as the bridge today. At that point it poured down onto the track, submerging it as far as Mill Street (Fassett). From there the water took a very orderly course to the low portions near State street, flooding cellars and surrounding the houses.” (Feb 10, 1881 Wellsville Daily Reporter)

For years Madison Creek flooded and the village could not do more than clean up after it. The 1930’s brought some financial relief in the form of the Works Projects Administration.

In 1935 (after a July flood) the first WPA job in Allegany County was approved, and it was here in Wellsville. The WPA laid 300 feet of six and one-half foot iron pipe under the Madison Hill Road at the village edge on Madison Street. This formed a culvert that the rushing waters would funnel into and empty into the old creek bed further downhill on the south side of the road. Karl Buehring of Wellsville was the foreman for that project.

Madison Street was also widened and repaved as the 1935 flood did major damage to the roadway.

An article from 1936 speaks confidently about the next step taken to try to tame the creek:

“Pesky Madison Creek, which cut quite a swath in former days when it rained hard, shooting debris and rocks down into residential sections, will run wild no more. Last Thursday, 18 men wound up the work of harnessing the creek – a WPA job begun last December, and estimated to cost a total of approximately $15,000....They finished the work of laying a concrete bottom nine feet wide, constructing concrete walls in the creek and extending the bottom through the covered portion of the creek...(Allegany County Democrat July 30, 1936)

The above is the portion of the work that suffered a collapse in April 2017, when a driveway located on top of a covered portion of the creek, collapsed under the weight of a car. The village
A further note: A recent Facebook post on the concrete creek between Madison Street and E. Pearl Street generated some childhood memories from former residents of the Madison Street/ East Pearl Street area, their names were withheld to protect their identity (lol!)

“We played in that creek all the time, we went through the tunnel down further comes out down around Meadowbrook Court I think, it's been a long time “

“During the winter we slid down it on our sleds. Fast. “

“There were two challenges with the tunnel:
1. Go through it as a group or alone flashlights allowed.
2. Go through it alone no flashlight.
Also don't let the grownups catch you in the creek, let alone the tunnel. Good times. “

“I remember selling Girl Scout cookies in the winter when we lived on Pine St. and would always stop and marvel at how pretty this was with a heavy, fresh snow that made tree branches bow to the ground “

A view from Madison Street of the concrete canyon containing Madison Creek

has recently announced that Catherine Young has helped secure $700,000 to address the issue, although there is no timeframe for the work yet that I am aware of.

A series of dams were added by the Town of Wellsville and the WPA in early 1938. It was hoped that by adding these “check dams” on the upper part of the creek, the force of the water would be held back and water would flow more perfectly into the large culvert under Madison Street that had been added in 1935.

There have been other creek projects over the years, a 21st century cleaning of the upper hillside I think, and smaller projects to dredge parts of the brook and keep it in order. The WPA projects probably had the largest impact.

Years have gone by, really a little drop in the larger bucket of time. The little creek from Madison Hill still throws temper tantrums when it has the chance, no matter how we humans think we can improve it.

Nature always wins.
I would like to support the preservation of our local history by becoming a member

NAME (s) __________________________________________________________________________
ADDRESS __________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
PHONE   __________________________EMAIL ___________________________________________
Would you prefer your newsletter emailed to you? _____ (Make sure you fill in E Mail Above)
Family membership is $15.00 per year. Individual membership is $10.00 per year. (circle one)
I would like to add $ ______ for ongoing maintenance and restoration projects at the museum.
The society is a 501C3 organization – all donations are tax deductible.