

# THE TIMES OF HALCOTT

SUMMER 2004  
VOLUME 27



*Editors: Innes Kasanof; Peggy DiBenedetto; Judy DiBenedetto; Karen Rauter. Features: Laura Vogel.  
Art: Nina Kasanof.*

## A FARMER'S SUMMER

Summertime on a farm, for many people, conjures up romantic, tranquil images of livestock peacefully grazing, tractors slowly moving up and down the neatly mowed fields and great-tasting, homegrown crops ripening in the warm sunshine. While these ideals surely occur, there is more perhaps than meets the eye. As the cold stillness of winter gives way to the warm reawakening of spring and summer, farm activities likewise accelerate to make good use of the lengthening daylight hours. Summer is the short opportunity to harness enough of nature's bounty to last until the next year's harvest.

Summer is a time of hope: hope for healthy and productive crops and livestock, hope for good weather, hope for few machinery breakdowns, and, mostly, hope for family and friends to be safe while laboring together.

Since most summer farm activities follow natural cycles, much of what we do in summer actually had its start in earlier seasons. For example, crops that are harvested during the summer or fall began with winter or spring machinery prep and selection of seed then spring plowing and planting. As with many agricultural practices, weather plays a big role in when

some jobs get done. Heavy rains, such as those this year, sometimes make it difficult to get into the fields but sooner or later the work always gets completed.

Another important job, one that reaps benefits in summer but begins at "green-up" (a truly scientific term for when the grass starts to green-up as soil temperatures rise), is spreading fertilizer. Soil tests done on each field tell us which and what amount of nutrients is needed where. Often, the fertilizer is delivered in a special spreader or truck. The spreader is hooked to a tractor and can be calibrated to apply the correct amount of fertilizer to each field. Farmers hope to time the fertilizer applications with imminent rainfall to allow the nutrients have a chance to work down into the soil where the plants can use them.

The well-fertilized fields grow quickly, particularly with adequate moisture and warm weather (like this year!), and soon it is the time to start hay work. Once begun, harvesting forage ("haying it" in farmer-speak) may take up much of the summer. Workdays often stretch into the nighttime hours as the push to "make hay while the sun shines" is added to the already present daily jobs of milking, feeding and barn cleaning. During these busy days non-farm tasks such as housework and cooking receive scant attention. Thankfully, my

family doesn't mind cold cereal for dinner! Even though the hay days can be exhausting, some are special in their own way. Often lunch and cold refreshments are taken to those working in the fields. These short lunch breaks not only provide needed nourishment and rest but also nice times to catch up with one another's day. Sometimes, unexpected rain provides a little R&R. In particular, I remember one summer several years ago when the Johnson family and we were putting up hay into George Crosby's barn. A strong thunderstorm moved in quickly so all we could do was take cover in the hayloft. Dry and comfortable on the stacks of hay, we sat visiting and drinking ice cold Gatorade until the storm passed. Sometimes, good memories are made in unlikely moments!

Most likely, of all the summer jobs we do each year, my favorites are working with the new calves and moving temporary fences in the



pastures. Helping the baby calves get a good start in life is tremendously rewarding because these calves represent the future of the

herd. Observing the birth of many calves over the years hasn't made the whole process any less miraculous. When we witness the new calf that just minutes before was warmly tucked in its mother's womb mightily struggle to her feet to take in her first meal, it is easy to feel blessed to be a part of something so grand on a regular basis.

My other favorite job, moving the temporary fences, is a simple but thoroughly enjoyable task. Armed with special fiberglass posts and a reel of polywire (thin, plastic-like strands woven with aluminum wire), we can apportion any pasture into smaller pieces to give the cows fresh grass after each milking. Each day's walk, or ride on the ATV if we're in a hurry, is a great time to observe pasture conditions, clear the mind, and appreciate the beauty of this special place.

Despite all that needs doing on a farm in sum-

mer, it is still a lot of work. Occasional day trips as well as family gatherings break up the heavy workdays in refreshing ways. Even simple activities like sitting on the deck listening to the peepers and watching fireflies dance in the night offer some relaxation. Our family loves to throw an end of school year bash for the local cousins that features a sleepover, swimming, lots of eats, and, of course, flashlight tag. We also look forward to the 4<sup>th</sup> of July festivities at Uncle Michael and Aunt Peggy's place—just ask our kids how much fun they have at that annual gathering! Finally, no summer is complete without trips to local fairs. Putting together the petting zoo and attending our Town's own Halcott Fair is a summer highlight as is visiting the Delaware County Fair in Walton and the Dutchess County Fair in Rhinebeck. Indeed, there is no better place to be in summer than on a farm! *JD*

## AFRICA!

Sometime in the fall, watch for notice of a presentation—perhaps at the Grange—about an adventure in the equatorial country of Ghana. In July, Peg DiBenedetto will join a Methodist group in a mission trip to visit orphanages and work at refugee camps there. Hot weather, hard work, and very harsh results of civil wars and human strife await their willing hands. Peg sends out a big thank you to the community for the outpouring of support she's received. *PD*

## SOCCKER OVERSEAS

*Elena DiBenedetto*

I will never forget the day I received a letter at school. It was towards the end of the school day when one of the guys walked up and handed me an envelope. As soon as I ripped open the envelope and looked at the very top of the letter I knew what it was for. I had been invited to travel to Europe and play soccer as part of the New York State Select team.

My cousin Suzanna and a friend Claire Cella would also be traveling to Europe.

I was so excited. It was my first year on varsity and I was invited to play European soccer. We started practicing in March. We would then have time to meet the other girls and find out how they played. That was weird because we have never met these people before and now we would be on their soccer team.

We all met at Newark airport on April 8<sup>th</sup>. Suzanna, Claire and I left home at about noon to make it to the airport and meet everyone else. I was so nervous but since my cousin was going it made things better. We finally boarded the plane around 5:00PM. We had a 7hr flight ahead of us. This was a real long time to sit but we had movies to watch and games to play. The



guys were on the same flight this year. As we reached Europe we were able to see the lights. Slowly, there were more and more then finally, we reached Paris. The first day we went to the Eiffel tower and spent a few hours there before going to our hotels. The next day the tournament began. The girls were then divided into 3 different teams. Suzanna, Claire and I were on the same team. The tournament was two days long. Our team ended up placing 7<sup>th</sup> out of 18 teams. We did the best out of the 3 girls' teams.

Next we loaded the buses and headed for Belgium for the remaining portion of the trip. This ride took most of the day. We visited Waterloo and then went to our hotel. We would be playing 3 "friendly" games in Belgium against some local clubs. While we were there we toured Antwerp, Brussels and we stayed in Hasselt. Our guide worked at a soccer stadium so we were able to tour that also. That was really cool.

We soon were back at our hotel and scram-

bling to get packed because we were leaving early the next morning. That night we didn't even go to sleep because we would be loading the buses at 2:30 AM to transfer back to Paris airport. Our flight out was at 10:45. Once again we would be on a plane for 7hrs. There was a lot more talking this time because people knew each other.

Even though it was good to get home, I had a lot of fun in Europe. Now we have friends from other schools and awesome memories. I can't wait until next year!

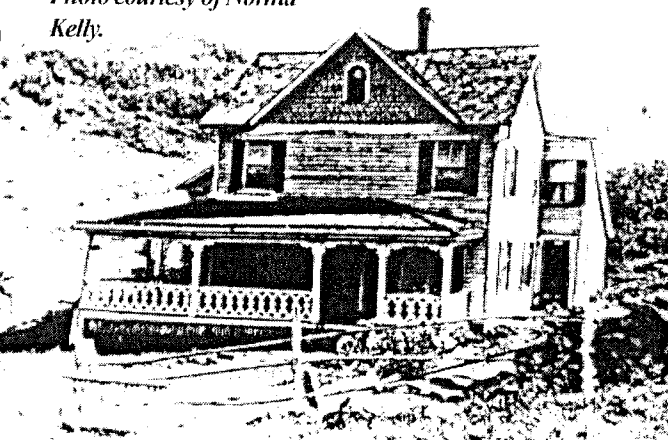
## CY MEAD HOUSE

*Wanneta Finch with additions from Alan Reynolds and Gloria German.*

As I remember the big house on the hill, it was owned first by Cyrus Mead, later Mr. and Mrs. Gottlieb, and then Jack and Edith Westlake. It was built like a patchwork quilt, an addition here, another there. But in all the building on, it still kept its own features: a grand old house.

It started out really being two very small

*Photo courtesy of Norma Kelly.*

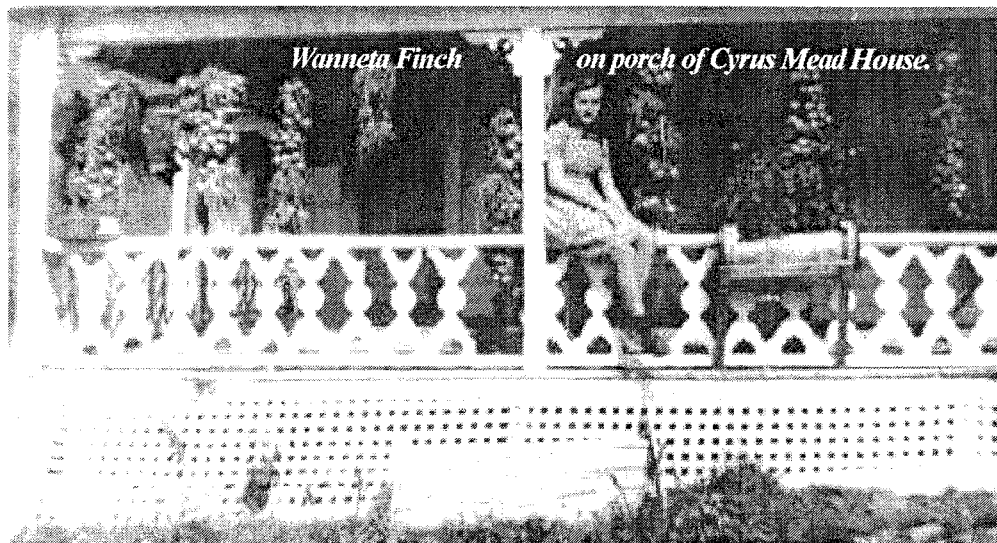


houses quite close together. I heard many times of people stating that an Indian girl and her baby lived in the one that later became a wood house. The other one was made into a huge bedroom and an addition was put on for a living room and bath, kitchen and

pantry making three bedrooms on the second floor. A huge space was left open on the slanted side. Mr. Mead decided he needed more space so Roy Johnson added on some more: a dining room and parlor downstairs and on the second floor two more bedrooms. Then he built a huge big room on the third floor. That big old room was such a joy – a perfect place to run and hide.

the animals to drink from and times when it got so dry other people would need water and they came with sap tanks to draw it away.

The house was heated by wood stoves, a kitchen stove in the kitchen, a big pot belly one in the dining rooms, another one just as big in the living room and in Moma and Dad's room a flat top school



There were shutters on all the windows. On the top floor you had such a view. The only basement was just under the living room and bath. Another thing: in all this adding on, the living room became shorter in height. Tall people had to bend their heads if they came in the door from the pantry. That also was a joy: beautiful cabinets, no cramped spaces, and lots of room for everyone.

I must mention the spring. What a cold, cold spring and so much water. It was located under the huge rock by the kitchen door. There was a ram out in the middle of the lawn with a cute little house covering it and the ram [editor's note: see below for definition of "ram"] went click clack all day and night. A big water trough was in the barnyard going past the house for all

house stove. The house was toasty warm but we sure used a lot of wood to keep it so.

In summer that house was so nice and cool. Even with the kitchen stove going full tilt, it wasn't uncomfortable with so many windows; the air was constantly moving.

A beautiful big porch ran along the width and length of the house on the front and side. It was constantly in use. Drying of vegetables and fruits, the little kids playing and the relatives rocking in the chairs. Mom always liked to have her family around her and they visited real often. With all the rooms there was so much space that it didn't matter how many people were in the house. It was never crowded.

The only noise you heard there is what the

family made. You knew when you heard a car that you were getting company. I guess it's like the song, "Coming Around the Mountain."

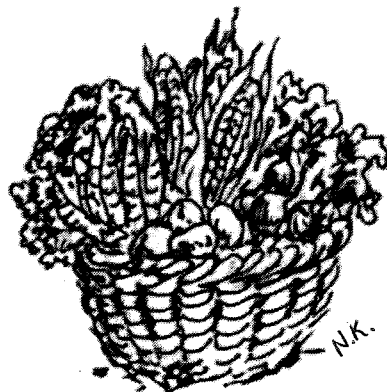
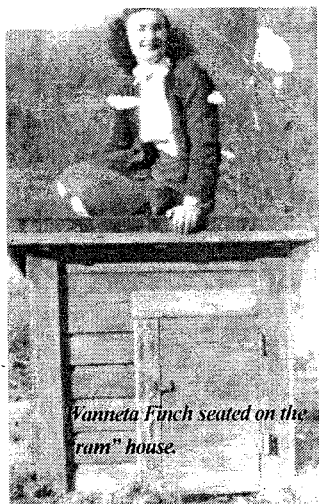
There were seven different entries to the house. It was funny when we all decided to come in a different way. So many little things about the house I remember, like the little latch you lifted up to go down in the basement. The beautiful stone steps going to the basement on the outside. The huge closet in Moma and Dad's room, full length of the room and probably 6 or 7 feet wide. The little 4-foot door at the top of the old stairway

leading to the new stairway. That was a trick. Lots of bumped heads. The wood house had wainscoting up the sides and even on the roof, and big hooks in the ceiling. Mom said it was for drying meat and herbs and that kind of thing.

*Alan Reynolds:* While the Mead house was standing, there was no power line past Allan Robert's farm [ed: today owned by Scott and Bonnie Moroff]. Cooking was done either on the wood stove (most houses had a wood stove going all the time) or occasionally on the kerosene stove. Kerosene lamps provided lighting. The milking machines in the barn were run from a vacuum pump powered by a gasoline engine. While most houses were built below a spring to provide gravity flow of water, this one was built beside the spring, and the runoff flowed below the house. At some point in time a ram pump was installed in the spring run. The ram is a pump that uses some of the flowing water to operate the pumping mechanism. Water was then

pumped uphill to the house in a pulsing manner.

*Gloria German:* "The Mead home, later owned by Jack and Edith Westlake, was burned by the careless act of a friend cooking, as far as I remember. The man's name was George T. Wilkins (a silent film star) who was staying with the Westlakes while his home sold on Turkey Ridge Rd. *Alan Reynolds* adds: "No one I have consulted seems to remember exactly when the Mead house burned, but the consensus seems to be 1958 or 1959. After the fire was out, it seemed odd to see water flowing from the second story pipe, still intact and pumping onto the ashes.



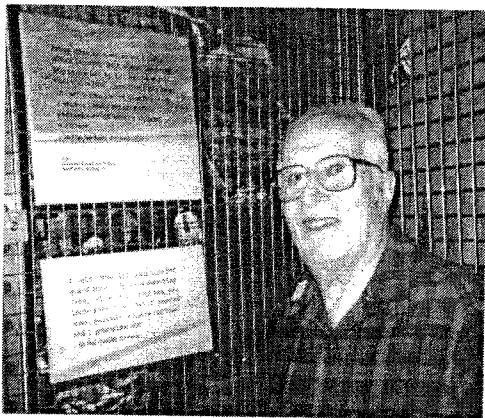
## PAUL STEINFELD'S WORLD WAR II

*By Laura J. Vogel*

In this issue, **The Times of Halcott** continues our series dedicated to capturing and honoring the stories of our community's World War II veterans. Here we present the powerful tale of our neighbor Paul Steinfeld, who experienced harrowing challenges in the European Theater as part of the G Company, 379th Infantry, 95th Division.

Paul and the men of his division were famous for their liberation of the French city of Metz where, to this day, there is a 379th Infantry Street honoring them. Indeed, Paul and his wife Lillian

plan to attend ceremonies marking the 60th anniversary of the liberation, in Metz, this November. Paul is a highly decorated veteran—his honors include the Purple Heart and two citations for bravery, one from General Patton himself. An exhibit about Jewish G.I.s at New York City's Battery Park Museum of Jewish Heritage, on display through August 31, 2004, features images of Paul and quotes about his wartime service.



*Paul Steinfeld today at the Museum of Jewish History, beside an exhibit of his war experiences. Photo courtesy of Bernard Danis.*

Paul Steinfeld was an army infantryman from January of '44 to October of '45. He trained at Indian Town Gap in Pennsylvania, near Harrisburg, and in the summer of 1944 his division set sail for Britain when he was 25. Blessed with a phenomenal memory—often buttressed by that of the lovely Lillian—Paul Steinfeld is a natural storyteller. Accordingly, we will step back and let him recount his vivid tale, as much as possible, in his own words:

“October through December of '44, I experienced actual face-to-face combat with the German army. Our first position was in the hills outside of Metz on the west side of the Moselle River near Gravelotte. We were dug into a hill 200 to 300 yards from a parallel ridge held by the Germans. We did a lot of our activities at night, and one of my early combat experiences was to infiltrate the enemy lines

at night. In November of '44, I was in a patrol which brought prisoners back to our company headquarters for interrogation.

“From the time we were outside of Metz, I made it through two river crossings: the Moselle River into the city of Metz, and the Saar River into Saarlauten, Germany. In Saarlauten we were engaged in house-to-house fighting; we worked our way up the street, from one building to another. My squad held the building that was the point of the U.S. army's thrust into Germany in that sector. They tried to dislodge us by sending tanks to blast the buildings we were in.”

At this point in the war, few details of the Holocaust were known by the general enlisted men, including Paul. “I had heard something about SS. I knew they captured Jews particularly. A lot of the stuff was vague then... I didn't know about the gas chambers. I knew Jews were rounded up and put in prison camps. I didn't know that they were systematically killed.... So, we go into this building in Saarlauten and I capture a few SS. I was suspicious, because they had skull-and-crossbones insignias. I didn't know what it meant, but I knew the insignia was unusual. I had these SS prisoners lined up along the kitchen wall in this house and I was trying to get information: Where was their other unit, where were their tanks? But I wasn't getting much out of them. So I asked one, ‘What's that?’ (referring to the death's head) and he said, ‘Oh, that's just my unit insignia.’ I remained a little suspicious, but I sort of took it at face value.

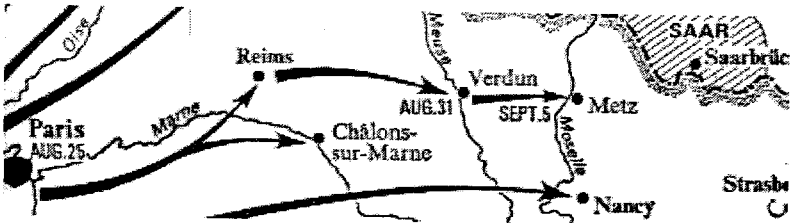
“While I was interrogating these prisoners, we had a young machine-gunner who comes from the basement and says, ‘Steiney, get away from those guys, I'm gonna let 'em have it.’ And the reason that he felt this way was that, some hours earlier, they—if not these same guys, their cohorts—had shot right through the heart of our medic, who had come to attend to someone in an adjacent building. A medic, carrying no rifle,

wearing a red cross, and either these very men or other Germans, had shot him, right through the red cross, and he died literally at my feet. It was very painful for all of us. Experiencing the death of a comrade is never easy, and this machine-gunner wanted to kill them all for that. I waved him aside and said, 'No, no, you can't do it.' I would not let him kill the SS.

"Years later, I was recounting this to one of our dear Israeli friends, who had been a classmate of ours at the College for Jewish Studies, at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America and I said I'd often wondered whether, I, as a Jew, should have interfered with one of our men who wanted to annihilate a few more SS. He said, "Paul, you did not prevent the killing of those SS despite the fact you're Jewish, but because you are Jewish.' I'll

always remember this dear friend's words.

"Many of us, today, Jews,



WWII: movements of American troops from France into Germany.

Christians, will say, When did you know about the Holocaust? It's hard to say; in my case. There was one incident that bears on this. Near the beginning of the street fighting in Saarlauten, we break into a house, and there's an old man lying on a sofa and his aged wife was crying and repeating over and over 'Nicht Nazi! Nicht Nazi!' Every time we encountered civilian Germans they said, 'Nicht Nazi.' After a while, I said—there were no Nazis after all! In this particular case, I couldn't believe her.

"When we entered a residence, we had a routine: one man went to the attic, one man to the basement, and you'd flush the building of Germans. In this building, I went up to the attic, and there were big swastika flags. On the mantelpiece in the living room were family pictures of uniformed German

soldiers, and the old lady is yelling, 'Nicht Nazi! Nicht Nazi!' She kept buttonholing me, saying that her husband was sick and needed an injection, and I gathered that he was diabetic. I said, 'Listen, lady'—in my best German—"that's not my department. Later our medics will come and you'll have help.' She wouldn't let go of me. She says, 'We've got to get to the hospital!' And I said, 'What hospital?' Because we were clearing the town of Germans both in uniform and out of uniform. I said, "What hospital?" And she told me, precisely—"take this street, that street—and in the basement, there's a hospital.' This information was important to me as a soldier.

"I followed the old woman's directions, and I came upon the crude remnants of what had been a hospital. It was staffed by nuns dressed in habits. There were a few forlorn civilians in beds. So I get ahold of the Mother Superior and told her there's an aged

couple, tell her where they are, and ask her to send a litter there because the man needed medical help. She says, 'I can't send people out there, they'll get shot.' It was true, in infantry combat, you see a strange shape, and you might shoot at it. So I said, 'I'll come back at night, when it's easier to move around.' So, sure enough, I went back that night and I got two litter-bearers, and I took them back to the house and we evacuated this old couple. After that, when I was ready to leave, Mother Superior says to me, 'Why do you know German? I said, 'Well, one, I studied it in college,' and then I said, 'I also know some of the vocabulary from Yiddish, because I'm Jewish.' When I said 'because I'm Jewish,' this Mother Superior's head went down, and she could not look at me—it was as though I had hit her. And

at that moment, I said to myself, something more dreadful has happened to your Jewish people than you ever imagined. It was an electrifying moment that I recall as clear as today: I said to myself, something terrible has happened, not just the rounding up of prisoners. And she knew, and she couldn't look me in the eye. She felt guilty, because I had helped that elderly couple... someone like her, so peripheral to the political process, knew enough to feel stricken.

In clearing the city of Germans, Paul was gravely injured in Saarlauten in December of 1944. "I saw a tank coming down the street toward us. Our bazooka man was down in the basement, and I was upstairs looking out the window when I saw the tank coming. Our bazooka man was a young kid, he was 18 or 19, from Virginia, I remember, and his name was Gellison, and he had pink cheeks, we called him Baby Face. I told him, 'Gellison, get up here with that bazooka; we've got a tank!'

Out from the basement I hear his reply: 'Steiny, I's afeared.' I ran down and grabbed the bazooka and a few cartridges and brought them up—at that time, the tank was almost directly outside the window—and I let loose and I hit it broadside. I was so close, and the concussion was so great, that it rocked me on my feet. The tank's motor stopped, and I thought, that's it, I got it. And, lo and behold, a minute or two later the engine starts up again. I grabbed another cartridge, and I remembered that one way to disable a tank is to knock its tread off. This time, it was an easy target. I aimed not for the turret, but for the track, and blew the track loose. Then he couldn't drive straight. When he tried to back up, he was dragging one track so that he spun in an arc. He went, in a wide arc, a couple hundred yards distant from my windowsill, and there he stopped. His gun was pointing right at me.

"But there was no sign of activity. I didn't whether I had killed or injured anyone in my first shot. I did know that my second shot had disabled him so

that he couldn't move in a straight line. He was sitting out there, and I was in the basement. After a while I sat on a pile of coal in the corner of the basement, and I could see through a small window with some steel grating around it. I saw some enemy infantry coming around behind the tank. I tried to steady the rifle against the windowsill; I aimed at one infantryman that I could clearly see and let go—and he kept walking. I was startled,



because I was a pretty good shot. But apparently I didn't hit anywhere near him. As I lowered the rifle—it had been steadied against a vertical steel bar—I saw that there was half a thickness of a rifle bullet notched into the steel bar. I had failed to draw an accurate sight; I'd plowed a groove. I had not held the rifle properly, even though I had been taught to do so from day one. When I had looked through the sight, it was not clear that the bar was in the way. Instead of shifting my position, I had tilted the rifle—called canting—and that's a no-no. But I did, and that's why my shot went awry.

"Months later, reliving this, I said, Boy, why'd you cant the rifle? And the only answer that I could think of is that I wasn't really ready to kill that guy. I could have killed him. I was equipped to do it, I knew how to do it, and I didn't do it. It isn't often that an infantry soldier has a clear target. Lots of times it's at night, or a moving target. I had



once fired at an enemy silhouette at night at close range, and I don't know to this day if I hit him or not.

"The fire from my rifle was seen by the tank, and gave away my position. He let loose an 88 that literally blew the stone cellar wall into my face. "Immediately I had a series of sensations. The first, very clear sensation was intense surprise. The surprise being, You're hit! And on the heels of it, How could this happen to me? I thought you were invulnerable. I never consciously said, 'I think you are invulnerable,' but I clearly did think so. This was my psychological armor, that anyone could get killed except me. By the time that I was wounded, we had lost 119 of our 200 men, and they had replenished us to go into the Saar. Yet there was this intense surprise. And then, following on the heels of the surprise was the thought, My head's off. I had seen decapitations and it felt as though it had happened to me. And then: Impossible! How could you think this if your head's off? And then, since I had seen a dazzling light and then couldn't see anything, I thought, You're blind. And then, on the heels of that, Lillian will love you anyway, and I relaxed. She saved my life. Many men died of concussion, and believe me, I had a concussion, but I never lost consciousness for a moment. And obviously I drew on the strength of our love to believe that, one way or another, I'd get through this.

"I couldn't be evacuated, I was bleeding from the face. All my buddies thought I was blind and I thought I was, too. Some of the shrapnel ricocheted off the wall and plowed through here, my battle scar [Paul shows his upper right arm]. It plowed a furrow through there, but it didn't hit the bone. But they couldn't evacuate me because it was daylight, that tank had started to come down the street around daybreak, so they called the company medic. The company medics were fantastic; the medic crawled around the backyards to reach my building He gave me a pain killer, morphine, and put some salve in my eyes to ease the pain. I was

relatively safe there, but we couldn't move about in daylight. We relaxed there until dark."

The tank that shot at Paul, it turned out, was soon dispatched, though he did not know this at the time: "I learned subsequently, from buddies, while I was in England, that the German tank was a sitting duck. The unit called up a TD, a tank destroyer that finished him off, but I learned all of this later.

"After dark, the medic said, 'Hold on to my shoulder' and I followed him over hill and dale. I had to crawl out, basically, being very careful not to make any noise because the enemy was all around. I couldn't see. When we got to the medical facility nearest to the combat-infantry unit, a little way behind our forward position, there was G company medic and physician, who said 'What's your address at home?' And I said, 'What do you need my address for?' And he said, 'Well, we have to notify your next-of-kin.' And I said, 'Oh that's my wife, what are you gonna tell her?'" And he said, 'One of two things: lightly wounded or seriously wounded.' And I said, 'Well, what are you gonna put down?' And he says, 'You tell me.' A medical officer says this. And I said, 'Write slightly wounded.' Lillian can pick up the story from there."

Paul and Lillian had been married since 1941, three years, at this point. Lillian Steinfeld continues the narrative, stateside: "I came home from work one day, and on the doorknob of the apartment was a ticket from Western Union. I didn't have the courage to deal with it myself, and my sister lived in the next building and my father, who was a widower, was living with her. So I ran over and burst in and said, 'Western Union!' And my father said, 'I'll go.' And my father was not a brave man! [laughs] I stayed there with my sister. And my father, who was really very nonathletic, said he ran the whole way down to the Western Union office, and when he came back he told us that when he got

be an example to us all.



## HALCOTT FAIR

The Fair is July 24th, 12 noon to 6:00pm. and is sure to be our best ever. This year we will have live dinner music to accompany the dinner menu of baked ziti, green salad, roast pork, roast turkey, corn on the cob, cole slaw, potatoes, gravy, and cake for dessert. Dinner will be served starting at 4:00pm and will cost \$9.00 per person; \$7.50 for kids and seniors over 65. Take outs will be available. Hamburgers as well as hotdogs will be sold throughout the afternoon. The Halcott Methodist Church will hold its usual bake sale with sweet temptations galore. We will have another live auction after dinner and a 50/50 raffle throughout the day. The "Halcott Cafe" will be set up in front of the building with free popcorn and coffee for friends to visit with friends they have not seen since the last Halcott Fair. There will be plenty of kids' activities, including a petting zoo, another of Mindy Pfeffer's puppet shows, grab bags for sale, and our traditional corn shucking contest. Of course, we will have our Attic Treasures table. If you have treasures to donate, we welcome them.

Much is planned, so please join us for another fine day and a chance to add to our community fund. *IK*

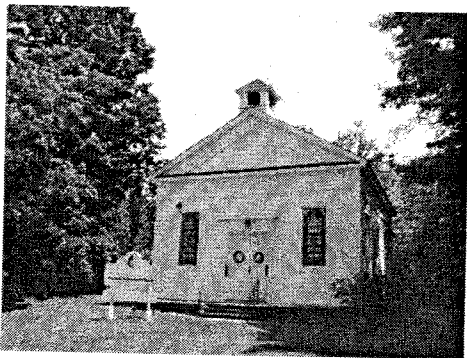


there, they asked him, 'Who are you to Lillian Steinfeld?' And he said, 'I'm her father.' And they said, 'Only wounded.' And he didn't open it, he came back holding a sealed envelope, and he said, 'Only wounded!' Then the floodgates opened—we all just burst into tears. The way the telegram was written, the first line read: 'Regret to inform you that your husband, Sergeant Paul B. Steinfeld...' That was the first line. You had to read to the second line to find out what they were regretting!... 'was slightly wounded in action.' "

After his initial treatment at the field hospital, Paul was evacuated to a military hospital in Thionville, Lorraine Province, France. Paul still thought that he was blind. "I could not see for two weeks, because of all the rubble in my eyes." He was then evacuated by air to Bath, England, for a couple of months, and then was sent to Bristol, England, and finally set sail for home from the coast of Scotland on the retrofitted-for-war Queen Elizabeth in April of 1945.

"On shipboard we heard of President Roosevelt's death. I will never forget the very proper British accent of the ship's captain announcing this over the P.A. system.

A number of his wartime experiences left indelible imprints on Paul's life, especially the moment he saw a dead American soldier on a German city street that looked very much like his home neighborhood in the Bronx, and it hit home much more than fallen comrades in the field. "I instantly thought, If I survive, I would hope to have children." And, indeed he did. "It's amazing how much dramatic detail was crowded into just a few months." It is an honor to hear these tales of bravery, and equally important to know that Paul was inspired to embark on a generous, charitable social-work career after witnessing the death and destruction in Europe. "My whole war experience taught me the importance of helping others to understand our different backgrounds," says Paul, whose life should



# *The Times of the Halcott Methodist Church*

*Pattie Kelder, Correspondent*

## **Coming Events:**

Thanks for helping at and patronizing the March Barbeque.

Next is the bake sale table at the Halcott Fair on July 24. We'd love to have you shop with us!

Congratulations to high school graduates Rebecca Coberly, Antonea Kallivrousis and Ashton Sanford.

**Mission Minutes** are becoming part of the Sunday worship time. Peggy DiBenedetto plans to travel with a *Volunteers in Mission* team to Ghana early in July to assist refugees. Peg needs to raise at least \$2500 for this trip. She is grateful for the generosity of all who are making contributions toward this goal.

We are looking forward to Vacation Bible School sometime this summer. No date has been chosen yet, but we hope it can feature a visit from Peggy after her return.

## **God and Country**

In the Spring Newsletter, need was expressed for scholarships for a Navajo couple studying at Cook College and Theological School in Arizona. Since then, some psalms written by former students have arrived. This one written by Moses Flying By after spending World War II in the

Navy, is still fitting today:

## **A NATION'S LIFE**

So long as there are homes that pray  
We still can hope  
The nation will not lose its way,  
In darkness grope.  
For He who goes before shall be our light  
And guide its steps aright.

So long as there are homes whose anchors hold  
With faith and hope and love and courage bold  
There's strength to labor, patience to endure;  
Our nation is secure.

So long as there are homes with faith aglow  
That seek and follow where God's banners go  
And women pray, and men to God draw nigh,  
Our nation cannot die.

## **Memories:**

Some time ago, we reported that the church roof was being replaced. It hasn't happened yet, and it will cost more than expected, but at least we are on a contractor's calendar. All of this brings to mind tales of some earlier

renovations.

The church interior was redecorated ten years ago. Prior to being painted, the walls sported a plaid wallpaper, which was peeling. Under it, the cracked lath and plaster walls were anything but plumb. The dilemma of the altar wall and vestibule was solved when Claretta Reynolds enlisted the help of son-in-law Herb Bush to professionally hang a heavy canvas wall covering. Meanwhile, Ruth Reynolds, no stranger to heights, climbed the highest ladder to wield a paint brush on another wall. At some point, a nearly full can of paint escaped her grasp. All eyes watched as it landed — right side up. The paint rose like an ocean wave, then settled again. Not a drop spilled. At some point, Mike Morse's wife, May, unexpectedly appeared with a jug of lemonade. Surprised, my mom exclaimed, "Well, for the love of Mike!" to which May replied, "Yes!!" And so it went.

About 10 years later, the floor was refinished and ceiling tiles were installed. The pews went to the Grange Hall for storage on Crosby Brothers' hydraulic truck. Bob Johnson and Walter Miller were spotted seated on one of them for the return trip up the valley in a November

snow shower. Before long, the floor contractor joined the congregation.

In order for the floor to be done, Shirley Bouton removed the carpet runners and steam cleaned them like new. Later, when the chairs were refinished, Merchant Kelly taught Jennifer Bouton how to cane them. It seems that everyone, parishioner and neighbor alike, got in on the act. Even the older members of the Ladies Aid were included in jobs they could do, like hemming the velvet table scarves.

Things outdoors shaped up as well. Donald Bouton found it easier to mow the front lawn after overgrown cedars and rows of barberry bushes were removed. The stone contractor rebuilt the front steps and platform without presenting a bill. Todd's Greenhouse provided new landscaping at cost. And these were just some of the highlights.

### **Reminder:**

The summer worship hour is from 9:00 to 10:00 a.m. Services on the fifth Sundays of the month (including August 29) will have special features, including refreshments and fellowship time afterward. All are welcome to attend anytime.

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**The Times of  
Halcott  
813 Rt 3  
Halcott Center,  
NY 12430**

