

Elsie Hartmann

- The purpose of the West Sparta Historical Society is to collect, preserve, interpret, and make accessible to the public the history of the town and the people of West Sparta

#### Inside this issue:

Old Fashioned Day news	1
Jane Oakes program notice	4
Mill Stone donation	5
Joseph Robert Pauline	6
Membership form	12

# A Light On The Past

The West Sparta Historical Society Newsletter

Volume 8 Issue 2

## THROW YOUR WHOLE SELF INTO THE 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY EXPERIENCE AT WEST SPARTA OLD-FASHIONED DAY

TOUCH, TOSS, PULL, RIDE, DANCE, MARCH, AND MAKE MUSIC

"Participation for all ages" is the byline for West Sparta Old-Fashioned Day 2014, Saturday, July 26, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Visitors can touch animals at the petting zoo (until 2 p.m.), throw horse shoes in a friendly game, vie for cash prizes during the team Tug of War Contest, learn 19<sup>th</sup> century country dances to the accompaniment of traditional music, march in a parade, children can ride the ponies (until 2:00 p.m.) and those of any age can have a hands-on dulcimer lesson. This is just a small sampling of the activities and attractions of West Sparta's fourth annual free community generated history education and arts event. The event is being held at the Park at West Sparta Town Hall, 8302 Kysorville-Byersville Road. It is accessible and free to everyone. Be casual or come in clothing of an earlier century if you wish.

### Old Fashioned Day "Arts in History" schedule

10:00 a.m. **Civil War Era Women's Dress** talk and demonstration by the **140<sup>th</sup> New York Volunteer Infantry** organization - Farmer's Tent  
10:30 a.m. **Parade** led by **Grand Marshall, Elsie Hartmann** – Twice Around the Grounds  
11:00 a.m. **Genesee Valley Mountain Dulcimer Club** program and hands on lessons - Town Hall  
11:30 a.m. **Mustang Challenge** by Emma and Jack Minter – Round Pen  
11:45 a.m. Door Prize Drawing #1  
Noon - **Patriotic Ceremony**, all Military personnel and Veterans invited – Farmer's Tent  
12:30 p.m. **Heavy Horse Team Plowing** Demonstration by Terry & Rick Neu - On the grounds.  
1:00 p.m. **Mustang Challenge** by Emma and Jack Minter – Round Pen  
1:30 p.m. **Grey Beard's Fancy**, **Chris Setari and Mike Kennedy** Farmer's Music Tent

Continued pg 2

## A Light On The Past

---

Schedule continued

1:30 p.m. History of Craig Colony by Tom Roffe, Leicester Town Historian – Town Hall  
2:30 p.m. **19<sup>th</sup> Century Country Dancing**  
– Dance like your ancestors at a community dance. Watch demonstrations, then join in with instructions from the dancers. On the Green  
3:30 p.m. **TUG OF WAR** Games. \$300 in Cash Prizes. \$10 fee per team (5 adults). On the Green  
3:45 p.m. Door Prize Drawing #2 and Drawing for 50/50 Raffle Winner – Farmer's Music Tent



### West Sparta Historical Society

Founded December 2006

c/o Sarah L. Booher, 8253 Green Road, Dansville, NY 14437

Telephone: 585 335 5094 email: [gefbooher@stny.rr.com](mailto:gefbooher@stny.rr.com)

<http://townofwestsparta.org/content>

\*\*\*\*\*

#### 2014 Officers & Trustees

**President Susan Erdle**

**Vice President Sarah Booher**

**Secretary Marjorie Cansdale**

**Treasurer Linda Johnson**

**Trustees Fred Bundschuh, Elsie Hartmann, T. Sue Mahany,  
Sue Noragong, Shirley Palmer, Howard Perry, Rick Pfaff**

**Newsletter Editor S. Erdle**

\*\*\*\*\*

A Light on the Past is a publication of West Sparta Historical Society. Principal Office: West Sparta Historical Society c/o Sarah Booher, 8253 Green Road, Dansville, NY 14437. Tel: 585 335 5094. Website: [http:// townofwestsparta.org/content](http://townofwestsparta.org/content) (click on Historical Society). Email: [gefbooher@stny.rr.com](mailto:gefbooher@stny.rr.com). To obtain a copy of our annual report email or telephone your request to the office.

### Member Remembrance

We remember fondly West Sparta Historical Society member and former West Sparta resident Stanley C. Mastin who passed away May 8, 2014.

Our deepest sympathy to his wife Deanna Mastin and their family. We will miss Stan's kindness and generosity as a Society member.

---

## **Available all day at West Sparta Old Fashioned Day**

The Vendor Village with arts, crafts, displays and food. Children's Fair with games, fishing pond, prizes, balloons. Expanded vintage tractor and car show. Sheriff's Mounted and Canine Units. Walk through Civil War camps with civilian and military Impressions such as proper military camp set up, open fire cooking, firearms demonstrations, proper uniforms and kit, battlefield surveying, quilt making, doll making, getting the laundry done, etc. put on by the 140<sup>th</sup> New York Volunteer Infantry organization. Blacksmithing demonstration by Gary Gerken. Display by West Sparta Historian, David Palmer. Free wagon rides provided by Barry Pratt. History of West Sparta display in Town Hall by West Sparta Historical Society. Fire Truck and Fire Fighting Equipment display by West Sparta Volunteer Fire Department. Get up a game at the free Horseshoe pitch. Tickets upon entry for each child for pony rides and petting zoo provided by Overland Stables until 2:00 p.m. only. Free door prize ticket upon entry for each adult visitor. 50/50 Raffle tickets on sale at entrance until 3:45 to benefit Old-Fashioned Day.

**West Sparta sponsors for Old-Fashioned Day** are Henry G. Everman Farms, Lewis L. Bickle Farm, Good Earth Farm, Stoner Hill Farm, Moffat & Sons Farm, Dansville Water Wells, Inc., Glen Piper, Fender Bender Mender, C&S Excavating Inc., and O'Brien Septic, and others to be announced. Other funding includes proceeds of West Sparta's Annual Spaghetti Dinner and Pie Auction with support of Barilla Company.

The "Arts in History" music and education portion of Old-Fashioned Day is made possible with funds from the Decentralization Program, a regrant program of the New York Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Council on the Arts administered by Livingston Arts, a member supported organization.

For Information Tel: 585 335 5094 or 585 455 4452 or email: [gefbooher@stny.rr.com](mailto:gefbooher@stny.rr.com).  
Website: <http://townofwestsparta.org/content> Vendor space still available.

# A Light On The Past

---

## Save the Date

**Women Doctors of the Genesee Valley** is the subject of a program to be presented by Jane Oakes in West Sparta, Sunday, October 19, 2014, 2 p.m. West Sparta Town Hall. Free and open to public. Light refreshments.

Jane Oakes, proprietor of Jane's Pantry LLC in Mt. Morris, with an M.A. in History 2003 from SUNY Brockport and a B.A. in Theatre from SUNY Geneseo, is a noted independent history researcher who has presented recent original programs including one of on the history of cooking and one on the Opera Houses of Livingston County. Jane lectures on various topics for schools, historical societies, libraries and other institutions and will provide consulting services to those looking to preserve local opera houses. Jane is currently researching the topic of Women Doctors of the Genesee Valley. She will debut a program in the fall hosted by West Sparta Historical Society, sharing information she has gathered about some of the unique and pioneering women physicians who provided medical care in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries before women doctors were commonplace. For more information contact West Sparta Historical Society at [gefbooher@stny.rr.com](mailto:gefbooher@stny.rr.com) or telephone 335 5094.



Jane Oakes presenting  
*From Lug Poles to Mi-  
crowaves* in West  
Sparta, April 2013  
Photo by Sue Erdle.



## Historic Mill Stone Donated By Mullikin Family

This impressively heavy mill stone came from one of the many mills that used West Sparta's rushing creeks and waterfalls to power grinding, sawing and processing equipment for the pioneer settlements. There were a number of mills on Byersville Creek which runs in a northeasterly direction from northern Ossian over three impressive waterfalls onto the flats and into Canaseraga Creek. Though its provenance is unknown, given its weight it probably wasn't moved far and most likely originated from Samuel Stoner's Grist Mill established in Byersville in 1823. After removal from the mill it was preserved for many years at the Byersville home of Dr. A. V. Watkins family and subsequent owners.

The Mullikin Mill Stone is a "running wheel", which turns above the stationary "bedstone wheel". The bedstone and the running stone were "dressed" with the same pattern on the opposing faces to provide cutting and grinding action and channel the grain from the center of the stones, where it is delivered by the hopper, to the outside where the ground flour is collected and bagged. The two stones were balanced so they never touched, and the running stone could be raised or lowered to change the coarseness of the flour.

On June 18, 2014 Alynn M. and Mark A. Mullikin, current owners of the historic Watkins home at 4416 Byersville-Nunda Road in Byersville, West Sparta (Post office address Nunda, NY 14517), made known their intention to donate this stone to West Sparta Historical Society with the stipulation that this mill stone be used as an historical artifact or monument in the proposed Park at the West Sparta, Town Hall and with the request that the stone be interpreted for the public by a permanent marker.



If at any time the Town of West Sparta decides that the mill stone is not needed or wanted for the intended purpose, ownership will be retained by West Sparta Historical Society for its use, display or disposal within the collection policies of the Society.

## Joseph Robert and Marguerite Kenney Pauline

Compiled by Sarah Booher July 2014

Joseph Robert Pauline was arguably the most famous man (and with his wife they might have been the most famous couple) to call West Sparta home. Although Pauline was not born here he joined the prominent Byersville family of Karson and Isabell Kenney when he married their daughter, Marguerite. We can assume that throughout their marriage they visited West Sparta frequently. Later as Pauline retired, Marguerite and he purchased a farm on Presbyterian Road in Union Corners called Northview (now Moffat and Sons Farm) and came to live permanently in West Sparta. It was from West Sparta that the news of his death was broadcast to the world. Voluminous publicity surrounded J. R. Pauline throughout his 30 year performance career. Because of his connection to West Sparta there has probably never been another period where West Sparta was mentioned more frequently in national and international news reports and promotional materials.

Joseph Robert Pauline "was a handsome man with a melodious voice and a vibrant personality. He was a brilliant showman, artist and entertainer". From his Physician father who was an avid student of psychology and who used hypnosis to control the body and muscles in surgical work, he inherited his intense interest in and learned to become a skilled hypnotist. As a young man he incorporated that skill into programs of entertainment that made him famous across America and in Europe. Much of his work was on the vaudeville stage, but he also acted in films, and wrote at least one play, as well as performing his act in many different local and regional settings around this area.

Pauline promoted an air of mystery about his performances. He accomplished astonishing feats of

control over the bodies of his assistants and subjects demonstrating that he could control the muscles and blood flow throughout their bodies. Among other things this permitted him to put his subjects into a "cataleptic state", support them between two chairs in a rigid state and put 500 to 600 lb. weights on them which they supported without any apparent effort or ill effects. Although these feats were often praised as remarkable scientific achievements, of value to medicine and science Pauline took the secrets of them to his grave and they were never explained.

There were other mysteries about Pauline. It is stated with great conviction in various places that he was born in 1874 in France and in others that he was born in Canada. Pauline's nieces, Dorothy Grant Lang and Marion Grant Cosimano compiled a history of his life in 1995. In it they state that Pauline's parents were Joseph Octave Poulin, a Canadian and Marie Billings Poulin, a French woman. They were married in Canada and went to Paris where Pauline was born. They returned to Sycamore, Quebec, Canada and then moved to the U.S. where they became naturalized citizens residing in Pittsfield, Massachusetts. This doesn't clear up the mystery; during an interview with Henry Clune in 1957 Marguerite stated Mr. Pauline was a Canadian by birth". Robert Poulin was the oldest of ten children and changed his name to Pauline when he began his public performances.

Pauline graduated grammar school in Pittsfield, MA, providing the only degree he ever achieved. He spoke both French and English. He studied two years in Paris under the direction of Professor Jean Paul Charcot who was the chief surgeon at the famous Salpetriere Hospital. He returned to the U.S. giving many lectures and was given the title of Professor of Psychology at the University of Vermont.

# A Light On The Past

---

Page 7

He continued to educate himself in the field of Psychology and served at University of Vermont three years. However neither in Paris or Vermont did he graduate as a physician. One assumes therefore that the prefix of "Dr. " which he used for most of his career had to do with a title of honor afforded to him as a professor of Psychology or a self assumed title. He dropped the "Dr." prefix during his 'second comeback" without any explanation.

In 1896 Pauline made his first public appearance at the age of 22. He typically earned \$400 per appearance. It was at a performance at Heckman Opera House in Dansville, NY that he met Marguerite Kenney, daughter of Karson and Isabelle Kenney of Byersville and cousin of Opera House owner, Louis B. Heckman. In an interview with Henry Clune published in the Democrat and Chronicle Dec. 31, 1967, Marguerite sheds some light on that period. At the time she worked as a nurse to a private patient at the Jackson Sanitarium in Dansville. She attended a performance with the patient to see the young hypnotist. Spotting her J. Robert Pauline arranged to meet her. The two were married three years later Nov. 10, 1906 in Long Meadow, MA.

At the time of their marriage Pauline was broke and still a small time performer. They left New York for Greenfield, MA. Marguerite believed in her new husband and from then on she accompanied him on his tours for the rest of his career. "In three years of barnstorming Marguerite besieged the New York managers with press clippings." Finally Mr. Pauline was given a week's trial at Hammerstein's in New York. He was a sensation. The act continued there three more weeks. From then on he was a headliner.

By 1909 Pauline was in such demand that his earnings were \$2500 per week. In 1910 he went to New York and hired vaudeville Director Percy Williams to promote him and achieved almost instant stardom. In 1912 Pauline plays in London at both the Hippodrome and Palladium before going to Glasgow and Paris. The London Palladium Theatre billed him "Pauline scientific humorist and famous American hypnotist.

Pauline's performance has been acclaimed the most remarkable and the most mystifying and the most entertaining act in the history of Vaudeville".



In 1913 Pauline returns to the United States as Professor Pauline, the French Hypnotist. The next year he appears at Williams College in Massachusetts where it was said" that Dr. Pauline's ability to control blood and saliva was 100 years in advance of anything previously known to medical science. In New Orleans, after performing for medical doctors, students and professors it was written that Dr. Pauline was a century ahead of others in his science and it was believed that these procedures used in his act could be used in the surgery of the future. Though physicians and scientists tried to persuade him to give his secrets to the world and promised him riches and a place in history, he never divulged his methods.

In 1914 Marguerite and Joseph had one son, Joseph Robert Pauline

Continued next page

born in NYC Nov. 16.

PAULINE continued

By 1916, during World War I and at a time when the demand for vaudeville was beginning to lessen, Pauline was the most sought after headliner in vaudeville. He played a two year continuous performance as headliner at the New York City Hammerstein Theatre. In subsequent years he put on entertainments in every state in the Union, most of the major cities in the U.S., appeared in Montreal, Quebec, Ottawa, played the other major theatres in New York City including the Majestic, Orpheum, Shubert, Strand, and Pantages.

As the demand for Vaudeville declines Pauline stars in silent movie serials "Man of Mystery" and "The Mystery Mind", and in 1929 he branches out into play writing with co-writer Ted Maclean. Their play "Tied" is optioned for production by Morganstern and Short Co. He continues to be busy with his performances however and in 1932 he tours Publix Motion Picture Theatres.

From 1933 to 1938 many local area performances are produced. He appears at the Star Theatre, Keshequa Grange Hall, Tuscarora, Clyde Playhouse, Palmyra Fair, Ossian Grange Hall and Nunda School Auditorium.

Pauline's performances were bold and inventive. He performed feats of hypnotism on chosen subjects and then tested their rigidity with impossible feats of strength which they survived without harm. One such act had them supporting a 600 pound block of granite while being suspended between chairs that supported only their neck and ankles. Through the years his assistants included his wife Marguerite, then professional vaudevillians including Marilyn Miller, actor Lyle Talbot and Charlotte Lee. Chickie Lee, as Charlotte, was known as a protégé of the Great Houdini. She performed dangerous stunts such as escaping from a straight jacket suspended by her heels high above the street. (Dansville Breeze 1937) (After visiting the Pauline's farm one summer she ended up marrying Carl Johnson and living in Geneseo.) Other times Pauline did demonstrations called street tests such as one in Livonia where he was blindfolded then skillfully maneuvered a horse team and carriage around corners and through Town traffic without mishap.

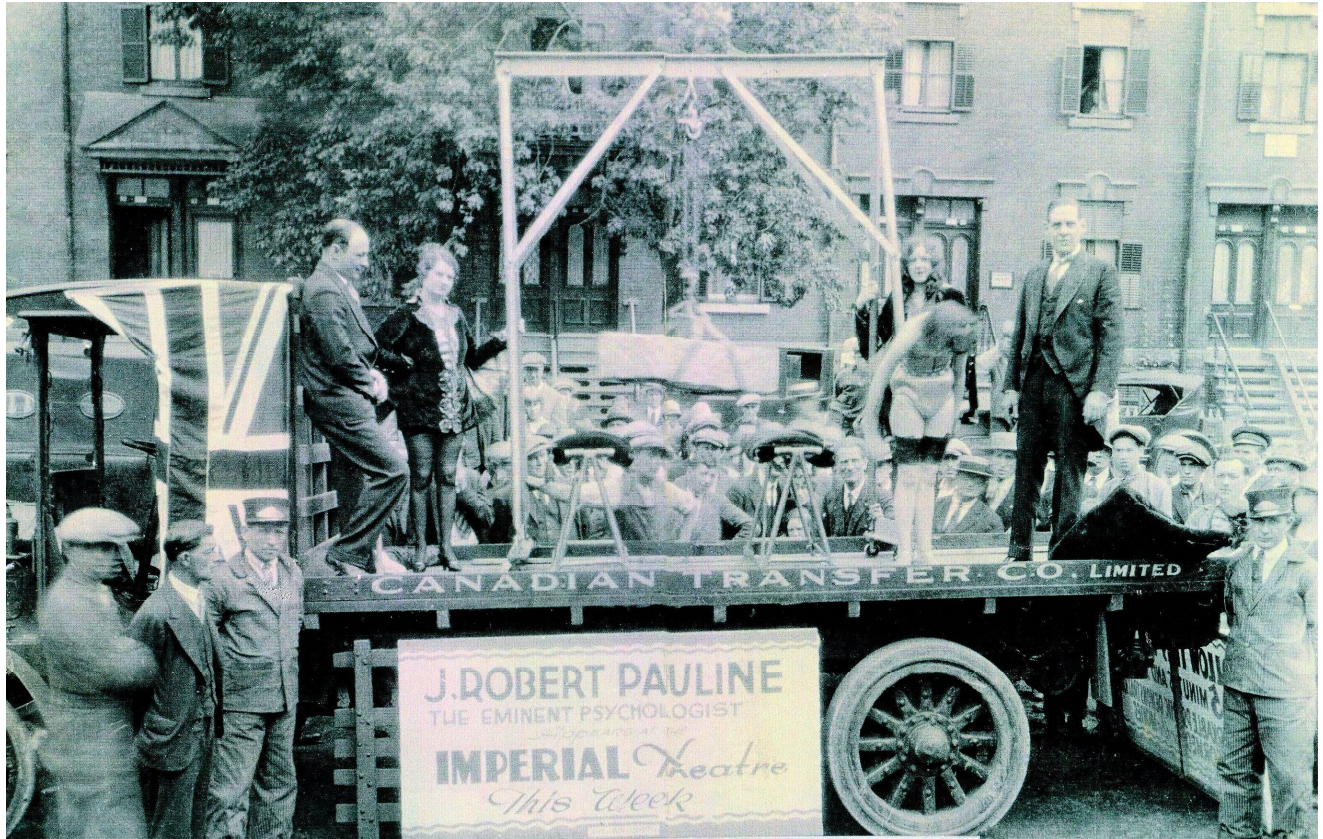
Who was this man of many billings: de Poulin, Dr. Pauline, J. Robert Pauline, Paulina, Professor De Pauline the French Hypnotist, The Eminent French Scientist, The Eminent French Psychologist, Prince of Fun-Makers, The World's Greatest Psychologist and Hypnotist? The online site "MagicPedia", the free online encyclopedia for magicians by magicians lists him as "a professional stage hypnotist beginning in 1909 and appeared for 33 years on the stage in the United States and Europe. He was one of the most successful performers with a hypnotic act."

Henry Clune's interview of Marguerite Pauline in 1967 revealed that "as a headline act, ... (t)hey knew everyone who was anyone in vaudeville; Irene Franklin, Sophie Tucker, Nora Bayes, Fannie Brice, Jack Benny, Burns and Allen, Gus Edwards, Lew Dockstader ... and Edgar Bergen".

Given his fame, skill and the acclamation heaped upon him there was one extremely surprising event in



## A Light On The Past



**Stage Set up apparently in Canada. During his barnstorming years Pauline often carried a whole show with him. This photo shows Marguerite Pauline far left and Dr. Pauline far right. Note the granite stone ready to be lowered onto body of assistant.**

Pauline's career that has been understandably left out of the story by his family biographers. This was reported in the Dansville Express 1924:

### *"Waiter Thrown From Hotel Window"*

*News stories in the New York dailies are of local interest concerning J.R. Pauline, well known in this village and whose summer home is in West Sparta.*

*The New York World of yesterday says: Solomon Trencher, twenty-five, the waiter who, police charge was hurled Tuesday night from a ninth floor window of the Hotel Flanders, No. 135 West 47<sup>th</sup> street, to the marquee of the Cort Theatre adjoining was reported dying last night in Bellevue Hospital.*

*Three men, said to be responsible for the waiter's injuries were held yesterday by Magistrate Levine in West Side Court on charges of felonious assault for examination tomorrow. The court denied a plea for bail by the defendant's attorney, Joseph H. Broderick, No. 55 Broadway.*

*The prisoners are Joseph Robert Pauline, vaudeville hypnotist, occupant of the room from which*

Continued next page

PAULINE continued

*the waiter is alleged to have been hurled, and Pauline's two companions Harry Case and Jack Phillips. The three were taken to Bellevue yesterday and identified by the waiter. The police say trouble arose after the waiter delivered sandwiches to Pauline's room and endeavored to collect the bill.*

*Pauline, known on the stage as Paulina, is fifty, nearly six feet, and weighs 180 pounds. His companions, just out of their teens, are not very muscular. When first arrested, Case accused Pauline of handling the waiter roughly. Scores of persons from the Cort Theatre were on the sidewalk during this intermission when the body of the waiter struck the marquee."*

This sad and shocking incident was blamed on a drinking party and had a tragic outcome. It caused fractured skull, two broken legs and internal injuries resulting in the death of the waiter. Pauline was convicted in 1925 yet he served only a short amount of prison time. By 1926 he was free and working on staging the first of his several comebacks.

By 1928 Robert Pauline was once again a headliner. A none too kindly review in the Medina Daily Register on Nov. 22, 1928 titled "Do You Remember Pauline?" reviews Pauline's headlining lecture on mind over matter at The Hippodrome. The review implies he has changed from "mesmeric performance" to "conversationalist" and the title implies that he has been out of circulation for a time.

The second comeback reference comes in 1937 where it is announced that Pauline is coming back to tour with the Shrine Circus. This reference followed a period where he apparently spent most of his time on his farm in West Sparta and performed occasionally in regional and local venues. However ill health caused him to not leave on the Shrine Circus tour and he retired permanently in 1938.

"In 1940 the Paulines assumed responsibility for Marguerite's two nieces Marion Grant (Cosimano) and Dorothy Grant (Lang). The girls went to live with the Paulines after the death of their grandmother, (Marguerite's mother), Isabell Grey Kenney, the widow of Karson Kenney of Byersville."

After a heart attack in 1942 Robert Pauline spent some weeks of illness in Dansville Hospital and two weeks in a Rochester Hospital. He died on Nov. 11, 1942 and he is buried in West Sparta Methodist Church's Oaklawn Cemetery.

"After the death of Dr. Pauline, Marguerite and the two girls moved to Dansville to the home of Louis Heckman (the aforementioned cousin who introduced Marguerite to Joseph). Mr. Heckman was then an elderly bachelor who was in need of a live-in housekeeper at his house at 1 Church Street. Mr. Heckman died in 1945 leaving the house to Marguerite. In 1956 Marguerite and Robert's son presented her with a grandson, Joseph Robert Karson Pauline born July 22, who grew up and resided in Wayland with his wife and two daughters. Marguerite lived a quiet and gracious life until 1973. The last years of her life were spent at the Livingston County Infirmary where she received full time care until her death in 1978 at the age of 97."



Author's Sources:

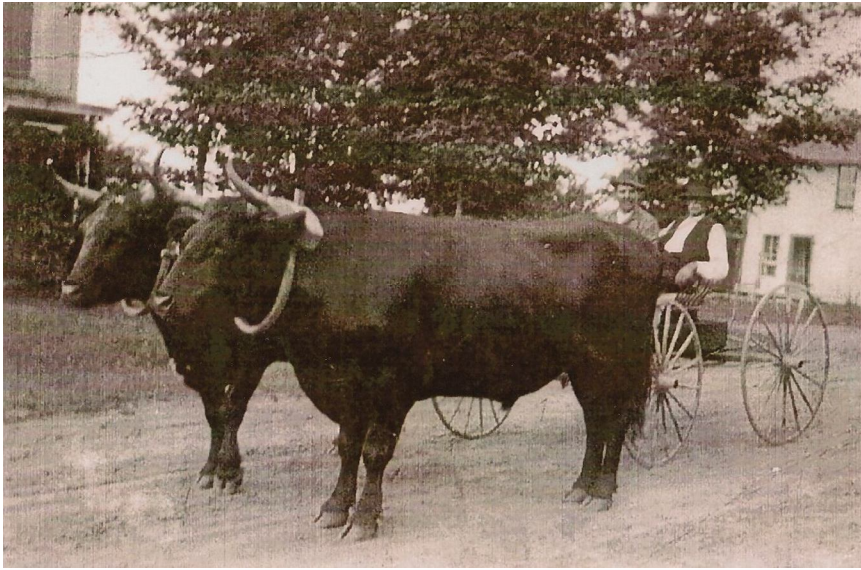
Many news articles, photos and handbills were kindly supplied via email by Lore Disalvo, a relative of Charlotte Lee's, who was most generous with her resources and web links. I am very grateful.

The Column by Henry Clune published in the Democrat and Chronicle, Dec. 31, 1967.

History of the Pauline family compiled in 1995 by Marguerite and Robert Pauline's nieces, Dorothy Lang and Marion Cosimano which is in West Sparta Historical Society's archives.

On line sites: Wikipedia and MagicPedia.

Article titled "Waiter Thrown From Hotel Window" published in Dansville Express in 1924.



**Dr. Pauline (left) with father-in-law Karson Kenney and his impressive brace of oxen sitting in front of the Pauline home at Northview Farm in West Sparta at corner of Presbyterian Road and Pauline Road.**



### Croquet Anyone?

Six West Sparta folks and guests turned out for the West Sparta Croquet Practice hosted by West Sparta Historical Society on June 17 at the West Sparta Fire Hall. The group was the perfect number for a game and demonstrated croquet's versatility as a game fun for all ages. Thanks to Greg Kysor for providing cold drinks and to the West Sparta Fire Department for the use of their facility.

# Membership Application & Renewal Form

## West Sparta Historical Society

Membership at any level entitles you to a subscription to West Sparta Historical Society's newsletter, "A Light on the Past" and other Society communications. Contributing Members give extra money to support the work of West Sparta Historical Society. The names of our generous contributing members are recognized in our newsletter.

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Tel: Home \_\_\_\_\_ Work \_\_\_\_\_ Cell \_\_\_\_\_  
Whose Cell? \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ I do not have email. Please contact me via regular mail.

Check only one membership level from either Basic or Contributing memberships:

-

Basic Membership: \_\_\_\_ Individual \$10.00 \_\_\_\_ Family \$15.00 \_\_\_\_ Business Minimum: \$20.00

Contributing Membership: \_\_\_\_ Supporter \$25 \_\_\_\_ Sustainer \$50 \_\_\_\_ Patron \$75 \_\_\_\_ Angel \$100

Please enclose a check payable to West Sparta Historical Society and mail c/o Sarah Booher, 8253 Green Road, Dansville, NY 14437. For More Information call: 585 335 5094 or email: [gefbooher@stny.rr.com](mailto:gefbooher@stny.rr.com).

.....

---