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The Historical Society will
be closed all Monday's in
January.
It will be Open
February 12 and 26
March 11 and 25.
Closed April 1.

Museum Hours Mondays 9:00-12:00

Next membership meeting
April 17.

Scheduled Monthly Meetings for Members & Guests: Third Wednesday of the Month starting in April
Meetings are held in the cafeteria, starting at 7PM

Fleetwood Area Historical Society
Suite One, 110 Arch Street
Fleetwood PA 19522



Fleetwood Area Historical Society Newsletter

www.fleetwoodpa.org • FleetwoodHistory@fleetwoodpa.org • 610-944.5800

FALL 2023

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President's Message

I want to wish all members a happy and prosperous New Year. I want to thank all the volunteers for the work they have accomplished on the museum and also helping with the book sales and work on the parade floats. This past year has been a very busy year at the Historical Society.

Work continues on the school room and upgrades to the hallway, we have added some new displays for the school room to allow for more photographs. A new reunion wall is being added to allow for posting all the reunion photos we have received. Speaking of reunion photos we are asking anyone that has reunion photos send them to us and we will post them on the wall. The restoring the room has been a slower process than anticipated, it seems like we continually find articles to add. A new Fleetwood School band display required scanning year books to add photos which was extremely time consuming. I'm sure ex. Fleetwood Band members will enjoy it.

In this newsletter you will note a revised time schedule for the museum hours over the winter months. We will update the schedule as needed next quarter. The schedule will also be posted on the website.

The past year it has become difficult to get speakers for our membership meetings. I am hopeful a new list of speakers will become available in the future.

In closing, the volunteers at the Historical Society, keep it going, in the newsletter we have added photographs of are volunteers and wish to thank them for the great effort they have done in the past year with the parade floats and school room.

We at the Historical Society want to thank you are membership for supporting us this past year and are looking forward to 2024.

Thank You
Art Counts, President
Fleetwood Area Historical Society



See more School Room pictures on page 3

Did you know??

The first water pipes used in Fleetwood were made of wood.

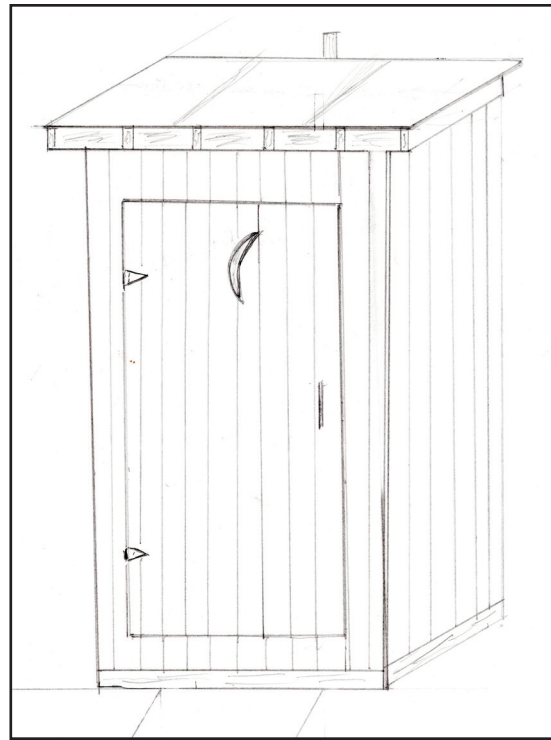
An unused section of this wooden piping was donated by Peter Merkel and is on display at the museum. The pipe is 10 feet long with a 3 1/2 inch hole bored through a square piece of wood which is 5 1/2 inches square. A cast iron fitting extends from one end for joining sections together. It is unknown how artisans managed to bore a straight hole 10 feet in length.

Former Streets Commissioner Mark Rhodes has mentioned removing sections of these wooden pipes from older sections of the Borough.

The donated pipe was found in a shed at A.P. Merkel Plumbing.

Come visit the museum and look it over!

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Fleetwood Area Historical Society

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Clair Derr Jim Shade Grant Moyer
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Contributors:

Genevieve Heffner, Linda Reichardt
 Russell Anderson, Betty Hilbert
 Roger Moyer, Connie Snyder

- A FLEETWOOD MEMORY -

For Fleetwood residents who lived here prior to public sewer being installed this tidbit is for you. The Borough of Fleetwood only installed public sewer in the early 60s. Prior to that event there were rows of outhouses on each block. We lived on east Locust Street and each home had its own. For those who never had the experience of doing your business outside. Imagine hundreds of these small buildings spread around the Borough of Fleetwood!!!

A 4' x 6' building with a slopped roof away from the single front door. A half moon cutout in the door, a wooden floor with a wooden bench seat. There were single seaters and double seaters. Sitting height was 18" for the adult hole and 9" for children. As you may remember, the boards were smooth to the flesh. The federal government even got involved, during the depression, by creating specifications and had WPA groups build them. Underneath the" shanty "was the pit. Most were hand dug holes where the waste fell into. The outhouse sat directly on the ground, on bricks or a cement foundation. The solid foundation was least favorable incase you had to move the building when the pit was full. To those who used the facility you may also remember the building became a visiting area for mice, snakes or rats. Early on, but just like today, toilet paper was a premium and really, the pages of a Sears & Roebuck catalog or Montgomery Ward Catalog were used for cleaning purposes. Corn cobs were also used.

Prior to outhouses chamber pots were used by people for eliminating human waste. People stored them under the bed, emptied them first thing in the morning and washed them for the next evening. Chamber pots were a favorable wedding gift for young couples in those days.

But, getting back to our backyard sanitation facilities. We had flowers planted around the building so that wonderful summertime aroma was less aromatic You always had to check for wasp nests or hornet nests in and around the office. Insides were quit spartan with plain unpainted walls and the outside was navy grey with maybe a splash of color on the trim. So, while the summertime experience was hot and smelly the wintertime chill was also a challenge. You looked at the frost on the seat and you knew the cold against your warm flesh was going to be a shock. There were vent holes or a pipe fitted in most "outside Offices". Either way you went there for a reason so let's get it over with. Usually, families had a bucket of ashes or lime inside the building. The purpose was to spread over the pit to try and eliminate the odor.

As public sanitation improved better bathrooms prevailed and waste water was directed to the same pits from inside the house. Parents cautioned children not to waste water so the pit would not fill up. Wash water was still drained into the gutter and the bluing liquid tinted the gutter blue on Mondays. So, what did public buildings do? They too had out houses, just more of them, until indoor plumbing arrived. The Fleetwood Hotel had a drain field under the current parking lot. The Fleetwood school had tanks between the former tennis court and Green street with a drain field extending into the baseball field.

But as we pass from the hot summer and prepare for winter let us all think back to the days of yore and remember the "outhouse" A small building that did a lot of work!!! For those of you who did not have this treat in life to remember, be grateful to your Borough Council for maintaining an efficient sanitary sewage system 24/7!!!!

The writer requests that you look up James Whitcomb Riley's poem, "Passing of the Backhouse" or Charles Rankin's version of the same. Both will bring back memories and smiles to your face. Credit also goes to Mary Schmalstig and her article "Ode to the Commode", the Little House out Back.

Russell J. Anderson

SCHOOL ROOM RENOVATIONS

Our School Room is getting close to being completed, stop by and enjoy.

