



Date: Wednesday, July 11, 2012 11:09 AM
 From: pdexter@nycap.rr.com
 To: cannyl@averillpark.k12.ny.us
 Cc: history@sand-lake.us
 Subject: Town of Sand Lake Bicentennial and Portrait of Josef Shmoder

Dear Ms. Canny,

A couple of weeks ago I stopped by the West Sand Lake School to ask you about a portrait that my family donated to the school district in memory of Mrs. Annetta Fletcher who taught Kindergarten there for more than 40 years. This e-mail is to give you information on the portrait as well as to ask permission for the historical society (Ms. Judy Rowe and Mary French) to borrow it for a display for the historical society's bicentennial celebration of the Town of Sand Lake.

I came upon this portrait as a friendship that my mother had with Mrs. Fletcher that began when I was about to attend West Sand Lake as a Kindergarten student. Mrs. Fletcher loved to travel and loved Mexico especially. My mother is Mexican and thus a friendship developed. We were invited quite often to Mrs. Fletcher's houses, one of which was on Smauder's Hill on the right as you go by the High School on Rte. 43. The house was a small farm house in white with green trim next to the big red barn with two horse heads painted on the front doors. (It burned down about 3 years ago.) While visiting I was always fascinated with a portrait she had on her wall which Mrs. Fletcher explained was her grandfather Josef Shmoder (with an oomlaut) who was a farmer and Colonel in the Civil War. He was born in Wittenburg, Germany and came to the U.S. During one of his leaves he was injured in a farming accident which severed one of his digits in his hand. He eventually was also injured in combat and I have copies of paperwork which explained the injury and in which he applied for government pension.

Anyway, because Mrs. Fletcher was always kind to my family, we became close to her over the years. She was a widow when we met her. Clarence Fletcher was her first husband. She remarried Clifford Moule and then Franklin Stevens. Mr. Moule and Mr. Stevens passed away ahead of Mrs. Fletcher (she is buried in Elmwood Cemetery on Rte. 150 in WSL) and Mr. Stevens' sons were not interested in the many fascinating collections of art, jewelry, period clothes and furniture Mrs. Fletcher had accumulated over the years but they knew it was of some value so they held an auction a short time after her death at one of her homes in Rensselaer. My sister and I by chance happened upon the auction so we went and something told me to bid on the portrait so that it would not end up disappearing into someone's attic. By chance I was able to win the bid and I took Grandpa Shmoder home. I had the frame restored but didn't know where to put it so I donated it to the school during Dr. Johnson's time there in memory of Mrs. Fletcher.

There were some papers that went along with the portrait which I put away with the purpose of someday giving them to Dr. Johnson for a file to keep on the portrait. I have had copies made of the papers. I will drop off or send to you via USPS the originals and the Town of Sand Lake has a copy and I will hold a copy with my files.

I hope that this explains the portrait at your school and if Mrs. Rowe and Mrs. French would like to borrow the portrait to be used as part of an exhibit for the bicentennial that they will contact you directly and make the arrangements.

Thank you so much for your patience with the information on this portrait. It is an odd little thing that should not be thrown away but now that you know what it is perhaps you will be able to pass on the information to others so that they do not forget the history of our little town and remember people like Mrs. Fletcher who were so much a part of the lives of so many people. By the way, she also

left my mother a set of slides that she took on one of her trips to Mexico. I am trying to put them in a cultural book for the school library as a letter that Mrs. Fletcher sends to the children of WSLE. I will send it to you as soon as it is done.

FYI : Mrs. Rowe and Mrs. French's tle is 674-2026 Ext. 20.

Sincerely,

Pilar G. Dexter
674-2446 (In case you have any questions.)

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