

# Celebrating Vestal's 190th Anniversary

## 1823-2013

### No. 16—Vestal's 190th Anniversary Draws to a Close

Today Vestal's 190<sup>th</sup> anniversary draws to a close. During the year we've taken a fresh look at some historic topics and discovered new and interesting information. Articles and photographs focusing on Vestal's history have appeared in the Vestal Town Crier and the Vestal Life magazine. They're also available on the Town of Vestal website [www.vestalny.com](http://www.vestalny.com) under the Historian's Department and of course, at my office. Research and writing continues on a plethora of topics and people; for example:

- Old Home Day in 1924 – a town-wide celebration.
- Edgewood Park on State Line Road – where square dances and picnics were enjoyed by all.
- Vestal's numerous subdivisions – who built them, and maps showing where they're located.
- Crane's Grove – the site of picnics and other activities.
- The French Tract – why do other towns have a "French Tract" and what was that cabin in ours.
- L.A. Mason – a dairy farmer and town supervisor whose herd was decimated by tuberculosis.
- Charles Russell – Vestal's first undertaker.
- Vestal's early industry – the small cigar factory, tanneries, paint, shirt collar, safety pin, and fireworks factories, not to mention our mills.
- Early doctors who practiced in Vestal.
- The lives of early residents who contributed to Vestal's growth.
- The Vestal Theater, Taylor's Tiny Town, the Fruit Market, and the first Poncho's Pit.
- Businesses, big and small, that have occupied Vestal's plazas.

As children growing up in Vestal we were too busy with school and friends to pay attention to the history happening around us. As adults we long to see and hear about what we missed. Many who no longer live in Vestal enjoy the photographs and nostalgic conversation on Facebook groups such as "Vintage Vestal", "Historic Vestal Photographs", and "I'm from Vestal, NY".

One goal of all 1600+ New York State historians is to gather and preserve as many pieces of their municipality's history as possible. Items that appear to have no

particular value such as a store receipt from Sumner's Store in Vestal Center or a stock certificate from the Safety Pin factory are priceless to our collections. Photographs of old milk bottles, or long-gone barns, even those showing only street scenes make our hearts beat faster. Diaries and letters providing a glimpse into life long ago can make us swoon. Something as simple as a handwritten list of couples attending the 1941 Senior Dance that describes the gowns worn by the young ladies becomes a precious memory for someone's family history. It's all important.

Each of you can help preserve Vestal's history by allowing me to photograph, make a high-quality scan, or a copy of these items for the files. You retain the items and the ability to post the information to Facebook, pass the items to a family member, or even dispose of them (although I hope you won't) while making sure they are forever a part of Vestal's history.

Oral histories are another way to preserve first person accounts of activities such as attending a one-room school, playing on one of Vestal's first athletic teams, growing up on a farm or in one of our numerous neighborhoods. Please consider stopping by to tell your story. Or if you prefer, write it down to add to the files. Also keep in mind that both the Vestal Museum and Vestal Historical Society accept items pertaining to Vestal for their collections.

And, if you've acquired items from another municipality, consider contacting their historian to offer them the opportunity to preserve their history. I'd be happy to help you make that connection.

My heartfelt gratitude goes to the "history heroes" who have already shared their memories and treasures so that you and future generations can know the history of our community.

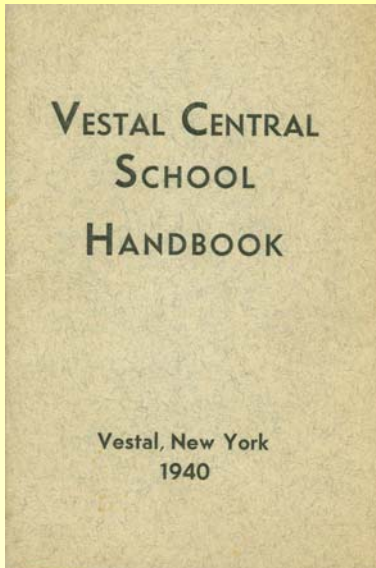
Our 190<sup>th</sup> anniversary may be ending but in nine short years Vestal will celebrate its Bi-centennial...we hope you'll be there to make history with us!

Additional information about sources and topics in this article is found at the Historian's office.

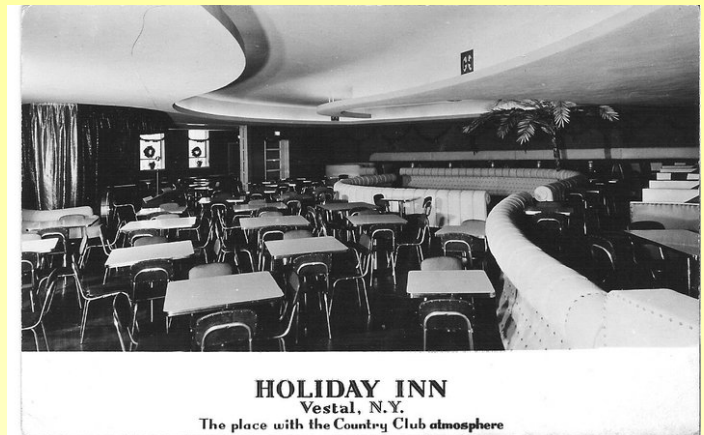
A few of Vestal's historic images from the 1950's and 1960's follow.

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This was Vestal High's first student conduct handbook.



The Holiday Inn was a white stucco futuristic building on Vestal Road in Vestal Gardens. Notice the long curving bar on the right in this photo.



The popular Frankie & Johnnie's on the Parkway.

Senior Dance - Vestal Central School

Attending	Descriptions of ladies' gowns.
Miss Betty Cole Arthur Guelle-Schub	Light green taffeta gown with a corsage of red roses
Reatha Lewis Robert Camp	Pink taffeta gown with a pink rose corsage
Miss Mildred Hubbard Eugene Workman	Light blue chiffon gown with a white rose corsage.
Miss Betty Cole Donald Clark	White chiffon gown with a corsage of small leaves.
Jan Davis William Langford	Green sequined - gardenia corsage.
Cheryl O. Fran Tommy Mc Brath	pink marquisette gown pink taffeta
Olga Parnick	pink (corsage)
Johny Blaha Cheryl White	(pink corsage)
Laurene White	yellow (corsage)
Dee Beaumont Bob Thompson	rose taffeta
Ann Marie DeBris Vee Rose	blue marquisette

1941 Senior Dance list of attendees complete with a description of what each lady wore and her corsage.

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Leahy's Barons of Beef Restaurant on the north side of the Parkway was a popular place for business lunches and family dinners.



VanDervort's Dairy Bar at the corner of Route 26 and what used to be Juneberry Road, now W. Sheedy was the place to go for ice cream.



Pee Tee's Drive In was a popular spot to go for French Fries and a Coke after the game.



The Vestal Center Fair about 1955...contests, music, and fun for all. Note the former one-room school on the right that was used as a Community Hall until being purchased by the Vestal Center Baptist Church.