

Historian's Report February 2024

Research: Examination of structural details in several Wells College houses, including the interesting partial spiral stair designed by Samuel D. Mandell in Wavebank. A curious discovery was long lists of local deaths and other notable events from the 1930s-1970s written in pencil by several hands on wallboard in the basement of Morgan House.

Queries: A query from a few years ago on Temple Rice Hollcroft - Professor of Mathematics (Wells) and Historian of the Village, College, and County - resulted in a fascinating article on his code-breaking work in WWII. The article appeared in the journal *Cryptologia*; title and authors are "T.R. Hollcroft's Problem" Chris Christensen, Sandy Zabell, Conner Ernst, Hanna Schmitt, and Matthew Henn. I continue to correspond with Drs. Christensen and Zabell.

Work continues in collaboration with Peter McConnell on the African-American Shorter family, freedom seekers from Maryland who came to this area probably through connection with Emily Howland's work with "contrabands" in Washington DC during the Civil War.

Other queries: The possible location of "Harvard St.," mentioned in a deed, of which I can find no record on maps; perhaps a nickname of short use. It seems to have been a lane between Main St. and the lake, possibly south of and parallel to Lafayette St. Extension. Information is welcome. On the use of fire by Indians in clearing land, from a researcher compiling a mapped database of various historic sources covering several Native nations.

Work for Committees: Providing historic information, from text, maps, and census data, in response to requests from CPP to assist in its mandated regular survey of Aurora for features worthy of Local Landmark designation.

Respectfully submitted,
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