

November 2025

Please Note: The first item on “Wells College Archives” includes study of a possible dual Village Hall/Archives location.

Wells College Archives: One possible barrier to the Village’s claim to elements of the Wells College archives and collections pertinent to Village history is the assertion by College lawyer Frank Patyi that the Village has no place to house these materials. However, several options exist. The questions are not whether materials can be housed, but *how much space is required and when*. The decision of Cayuga County Supreme Court Judge Leone next week should assist in clarifying these points.

When these (space and timing) are known, possible courses of action are as follows:

- The South Central Regional Library Council (SCRLC) has been very helpful in identifying possible storage locations, at least one is available now, and ALHS has a restricted fund set aside for moving and/or housing the materials.
- A purpose-built Village Hall on Sherwood Rd has long been considered. ALHS President Shirley Egan has solicited an architect’s design that includes space for a Wells Archive. This would be a large and expensive project. In addition, as I reported to you in 2022-23, grants available for archive facilities are few, small, and require a match; the above restricted fund could assist only partially.
- Several residents interested in this question have suggested that the former Wells College B&G building could serve as a Village Hall and Wells Archive as well as maintaining its use for the water plant. I have recently obtained approximate plans that show this would indeed be feasible. (A detailed evaluation waits for the Village actually to take possession, of course.) The present building layout has a great advantage that is in line with NYS recommendations for the security of municipal buildings: each element housed (water plant, municipal functions, and Wells Archives) can be isolated from the others. In other words, the water plant plus shop, two proposed archive rooms, and the municipal offices plus meeting room(s) each has a separate, handicapped accessible entrance and can be excluded from the others, and the office corridor can be closed as well. For the proposed possible Wells Archive (the former electrical and plumbing shops), the modifications required might even be within the ALHS restricted fund mentioned above.

I hope to bring plans to help explain this if you are interested. None of these three options requires a decision; the point is for you to have feasible options available for consideration.

Preservation: The disassembly and move of the Walter Wood Law Office was completed on Nov. 6. This important 1795 building is now in storage. Many interesting artifacts were recovered, some for immediate reuse.

Display: “From Main to the Kicking Tree: Daily Walks in Aurora Circa 1905” continues to attract enthusiastic visitors. This display was a cooperative effort with four Wells alumnae who are members of the ALHS. Its final day will be Tuesday, Dec. 2; open hours are Tuesdays, 4:30-5:30 p.m., and Saturdays, 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Village Celebration: Patrick Tavern will again offer artisan demonstrations and sales, food, and children’s activities for Christmas in Aurora on Dec. 6th, 11:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Schwab, PhD
Village Historian