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Historical Odd Fellows Curtain Now Hangs at the Pittstown Town Hall

by Christine Barton, Pittstown

A dedication ceremony held on April 23 from 2-4pm celebrated the restoration and installation of the historical Odd Fellows curtain. This curtain measures 17ft. 6 in. wide by 6ft. 9 in. high and is now displayed on the wall inside the Pittstown Town Hall, overlooking the meeting room. The curtain is painted with a central bucolic image surrounded by 27 ads from local businesses dating from the 1940's and 1950s.

The curtain was originally housed in the Odd

The curtain was donated to the Pittstown Historical Society by the Bornt Family just about three years ago. It was so unique we were not sure at first what to do with it says Connie Kheel of the Pittstown Historical Society. Upon receiving this curtain Kheel consulted with Kathy Sheehan, Rensselaer County Historian, who immediately recognized its importance of it. The exhibit committee wanted to ensure that something special got done with this unique piece of art. Sheehan thought that it was very special and would be a great

example of an artifact that reflects the culture of this time period. Efforts began to ensure that this very original piece was conserved and showcased in the community.

The Pittstown Historical Society spent many months researching the history of the curtain and the businesses that represented the advertisements that surrounded the artwork. They learned that the artist was Robert Brechstein from Averill Park. Brechstein specialized in creating these original commercial kinds of art. They also learned from their research that he did at least these three similar curtains that are still present in the area. Several members of the Bornt family were present at the dedication ceremony as well as the grandson and great grandson of Robert Brechstein.

This curtain is a "little slice of time," says Sheehan. Kheel and the members of the Pittstown Historical Society spearheaded the efforts to have this restored, enlisting the assistance of Christine

Puza of Hoosic Falls who spent many months restoring the curtain. Once restored the Town Board gave the approval to have it hung inside the Town Hall. Kheel wants to thank the Town Board for allowing this to be displayed as well as Bill Broderick for doing the work to hang it. "It is things like this that help us to remember and share the stories of our history," says Sheehan.



Pittstown Historical Society



Odd Fellows Curtain

Fellows Hall in Raymertown where many theatrical performances were held. Many people in the community were involved with the Odd Fellows Hall during that time period. The hall was a household name in the community well known for the great performances and events as well as the family's generosity and support for many charitable causes in the community.