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The Le Roy Weekend Gazette

Volume 2, No. 5 | www.thedailynewsonline.com/leroyweekendgazette | Saturday, November 29th, 2025 | FREE

Lemuel Wiles Painting Comes Home to Le Roy After Over 120-year Absence

Le Roy Historical Society efforts help restore "The Vale of Elms," formerly from Ingham University collection

By SAMUEL DRIBLUS
Associate Editor of Le Roy Weekend Gazette

After more than 100 years of being missing, an important piece of artwork returned home to Le Roy.

"The Vale of Elms," painting by renowned artist Lemuel Maxwell Wiles from Perry, was recently tracked down and restored to an effort led by the Le Roy Historical Society, the Genesee Valley Public Library and the West Side Conservation Center in Owasco, Cayuga County.

The painting first came to Le Roy in the 1880s. It was donated by Ingham University Museum and the Ingham University — the first women's college in New York State and first accredited women's university in Jonathan Ingham's Le Roy, Genesee County.

Wiles was also the director of Cornell University's fine art Ingham University from 1885 to 1890.

"It was a mystery — Jo carried in Le Roy — shut down operations, the painting was auctioned off in 1901 for $605, or $22,000 if adjusted for inflation, and was missing for a long time afterward.

"But was, until the painting recently resurfaced and was restored, now in the Ingham Museum."

Le Roy Historical Society Director of Collections and Site programs Noreen Tillotson knows described the process of finding the painting, restoring it, and bringing back to public display for the first time in more than 120 years.

"The Vale of Elms" came

Noreen Tillotson (left) and Tyler Angona (right) are "The Vale of Elms," by Lemuel Wiles, now on permanent display at the Le Roy House.

SAMUEL DRIBLUS/THE LE ROY WEEKEND GAZETTE

from rediscovered in Bergen, Maine, after some people inherited it as a part of their father's estate. They reached out to Tillotson and organizations in Perry and Le Roy to see if anyone was interested in purchasing it.

"We don't know quite how it got there or how it ended up people in Maine that had, a their father is the one who owned it and he had direct ancestors in Le Roy, so we don't know how it got to Maine," said Tillotson.

The estate reached out to the Perry Public Library and Town of Perry to see if either would be interested in buying it back, since Wiles was a native.

Eventually, the Le Roy Historical Society was included in these conversations between the various parties due to the painting's link to Genesee County and Le Roy tracking at the time.

"We really felt that it need to come back to Le Roy, the Le Roy Historical Society is the place for this painting to be," said Tillotson.

After the Le Roy Historical Society was contacted in October of 2023, "we had a lot of work ahead of us," said Tillotson.

"We had to contact other organizations to help us with the artwork, the members there were very helpful."

Tillotson said organizers were in the process of finding the painting when it was found in a hidden part of the county's barn, "and boom, it's back home."

In 1823, Herman's son Jacob would come to Le Roy to open a tailor shop (Jacob had agent for the Triangle Fire). Jacob's son Jacob Herman would be in Le Roy, living in Le Roy House on East Main Street, before he moved to New York City in 1837.

Tillotson said Angona's son helped "The Vale of Elms" return to Le Roy, fitting in perfectly in the Le Roy House on East Main Street, where it was found.

"It's kind of amazing to see everything coming full circle and coming back home. A lot of people being interested in it and being willing to give it a hidden part of the county's barn," he said.

Tillotson and Angona were on to emphasize that they were not the only people who helped bring it back home.

"We'd like to thank everyone who helped bring it back home," said Angona.

Tillotson said the family hopes would be very happy that it has back home," Tillotson added. "We think the painting or would be definitely happy that people are looking it."

Tillotson said Angona also emphasized what it means to them to have seen this process all the way through, saying he "bring it home. We have a huge group of people who have worked hard to bring it back home, and it's now it's all up to us to make it a home."

GUEST INSIDER TRACK FIELD

2024-25 second place in Section V Class B championship meet

Head coach: John Jones

Top athletes: Allison Vallone (jumper), Violet Blake (distance), Chloe Cosa (distance), Alaina Powers (sprints/hurdles), Ella Leach (sprints/hurdles)

Coach's outlook: "The Le Roy girls indoor team is coming off a second-place finish at last year's sectionals. With a large chunk of the team returning, they are set to be a competitive team and have enough talent on this team to be a very competitive small school team that will be tough to beat at the end of the year. We will need our athletes to continue building off of last year's strong season and hope for our newcomers reach their potential."

SWIMMING & DIVING (Bynum Rogers Le Roy)

2024-25 second (girls) 8-6, GR/SO champions

2024-25 second (boys) 8-6, sophomore champions

Head coach: Sam Stockwell

Top athletes: Carter Fix, Malacai McGrath, Gianna Graff, Anna Kent

Coach's outlook: "Fix's project both the girls and boys teams to carry on the legacies that they have started. We lost a lot of talented seniors last year, but the next wave of talented underclassmen are ready to take the reins and continue to build on the success we have seen in the past few years. We are strong in the sprints, having only lost one senior from last year and hoping for another sectional title."

GIRLS SOCCER

2024-25 second, 6-2, third place at Section V Class B championship

Head coach: Jason Carson

Top athletes: Daryna Sokytochenko (performer/midfielder), Zoey Pitman (performer/base/midfielder), Kylie Smith (performer/outlet/midfielder), Skylar Smith (outlet)

Coach's outlook: "Despite having a six-year winning streak, we knew this year would be a rebuilding year for our program. The remainder of our 12 girl varsity team was a mix of sophomores and freshmen, most of whom have 20 season. Although we had a slow start to our Ladders Ahead, we finished strong with a 7-2-1 record and injuries to finish fifth in Sectionals out of 17 teams. That success, along with our very successful Game Day Season, has this year's team hungry for more. They are working hard on their skills and chemistry and technique. You can never predict what will happen in a season, but the drive of this team has us excited to see what they can do."

GIRLS INDOOR TRACK & FIELD

2024-25 second, third in Section V Class B/D (girls), 12th place in Section V Class B (girls/boys)

Head coach: Dan Pressler

Top boys athletes: Sullivan Hoffman (1200-meter), Austin Cherubini (2-mile relay), Tyler Jones (long jump/triple jump), Gabriel Capparelli (1200-meter), Jaden Hoffman (1200-meter)

Top girls athletes: Gabi Elmore (long jump/triple jump/55-meter), Gaelyn Kaminski (long jump/55-meter hurdles), Ella Leach (400-meter/1200-meter), Tabitha Hoffman (1200-meter)

Coach's outlook: "Coaches and athletes have had unprecedented success from last season. Our athletes have worked hard in the off-season and have made great strides. Our athletes have set new accomplishments every one of this season. Looking forward to a lot of fun in 2026 Go Raiders."

WRESTLING

2024-25 second, 11-4; 1st place at Section V Class B championship

Head coach: Paul "Chip" Day

Top athletes: Jakob Bhojen, Patsnella, Colby Burns, Jackson Fox

Coach's outlook: "Last year's team was very young, but they gained valuable experience and grew tremendously. Some due to necessity and others due to injuries. As a team, we improved from match to match and passed our tests well. We had a lot of fun as a team. The experience a lot of the younger wrestlers gained last year brings excitement for this season."

Looking Back with Lynne Bellusso

Genesee Country Cookbook
LeRoy Central HS
LeRoy, New York

'Genesee Country Cookbook' Remains a Favorite for Area Families

By LYNNE BELLUSSO
Special to The Le Roy Weekend Gazette

In 1986, the Le Roy Central School Home Teachers Association gathered favorite recipes from the area's cooks and published "The Genesee Country Cookbook" which was dedicated "with love to the children of our community."

The cookbook committee consisted of several parents:

Rosalyn Falzarano, Kathy Fitzpatrick, Sue Ann DeFrancis, and their teachers — Stella Fort, Mary Ann Sauro and Leslie Laurie.

Like many organizations, the PTA hoped to raise some money by publishing a cookbook. The idea was borrowed from a cookbook that the PTA started collecting favorite family recipes.

"We didn't want to have trouble taking recipes from other cookbooks which some people do, so we decided the recipes were all handtested favorite family recipes," said former Le Roy Central vice president of the Le Roy PTA at the time the cookbook was published.

Over the years, beginners, teenagers, moms, working moms, cookies, cakes, pies, candy, salads, sauces, breads, and a special section for "Tiny Tots" emerged.

It's interesting to see that the Morris Press in Nebraska, which published the book in 1986, is still in operation to this day, having been in business for over 100 years. Other cookbook publishing companies have disappeared.

Bruno DeFazio said the book quickly sold out and although they thought of doing a second edition, it never came to fruition, "probably why the people that have the 'Genesee Cookbook' wouldn't part with them.

Folks that have scrapy memories that their copies are well-used, stained and dog-eared. Some have added recipes. Michele Shaughnessy who owns the Le Roy Bed and Breakfast in Mount Morris mentioned that her copies of the recipes are the real cake, coffee hours, and Thanksgiving dinners. Her 19-year-old son is a big fan of the favorite recipe in Reese Sobell's collection.

Lee DeFazio remembers his mom's "Italian cookbook, recipes from Italy."

Jeff Falzarano, "I remember my mom and grandmother's chicken pot pie, cabbage casserole and so many dessert including my Mom's Italian cookies."

Wendy Lynn Sobell's favorite recipe is her grandmother's cake.

Dorothy Hoffman's favorite recipe is Reese Sobell's coffee cake.

Lee DeFazio remembers "everything in the cookbook, gotta love the recipes from Italy."

Dave Sobell, "I'm a pretty decent cook, but I can't think there is a better example of a good cookbook than this painting," Tillinson said.

"It could have easily ended up in a lot of another. Because that's where it was headed when it was first published and it's been sitting there for years. It's been in the attic. And then it probably could have easily ended up in a garage sale. And it's been sitting there, it's been published up and around and it's been sitting there, and it's been sitting there, and it's been sitting there,