

A Tribute to Elsie Winterberger

from Sabina Toomey

I am very honored to be the current Town of Forestburgh's Historian. Elsie Winterberger, whom we honor tonight, was the real thing. She has been quoted as saying "I have lived through the days of the railroad, the old rural schools and circuit churches." And indeed she did. We honor her tonight for preserving all that information for us. Without her dedication, it would have been lost forever.

I did not get to know Elsie well, being busy raising my three young children. As neighbors, we shared a ten-party telephone line in the early 60's. Elsie was always on the line talking. To quote one of our past town supervisors, James Galligan; "It was easy to know Elsie. All you had to do was listen." I thank God she was a talker! She could move mountains, demonstrated by her campaign to replace the "H" to the end of Forestburgh's **name**. It was there in 1837 when our town officially began. Over the years it got "lost!" When our firehouse was finished in 1964, the large red plastic letters on the firehouse, were minus the final "H." Elsie prevailed when in 1976, in celebration of America's bi-centennial, the fire company added the final "H" to the sign. Elsie found her lost "H" at last. Elsie believed the "H" was important because it reflected the Town's Celtic heritage.

Thank you all for coming today to celebrate the lives of two special people who impacted our society so positively. Thank you to all the Board of Directors and all the volunteers who give their time documenting and sharing information in the wonderful exhibits they offer us. Thanks also to Donna Denman and Fred Fries of the Observer. So much information gets sent to our doors in the quarterly Journal. Our resident genealogist, Suzzane Cecil, helps people all over the USA seek their roots back to Sullivan County.

Pat Burns has a special place in my heart. It was she who invited me as a new RSVP [retired senior volunteer program] volunteer to come over and see the museum. "We'll find some things for you to do." She and Bill Burns welcomed me and I promptly fell in love with it all!