

# Schenectady County Historical Society Newsletter

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## FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

The search for where George Washington slept continues. George Washington had relatives living locally. Washington's mother's maiden name was Ball, and her cousin was the father of Eliphalet Ball, for whom the town of Ballston in Saratoga County was named. (If George's mother and Eliphalet's father were First cousins, then George and Eliphalet were second cousins.)

The Reverend Eliphalet Ball was an early settler of what is now the town of Ballston. He brought with him his Presbyterian congregation from Westchester County. They settled on land near Ballston Center, Charlton Road and Middle Line Road, in 1771. Preceding them to the area were two McDonald brothers who lived about a mile away on the northern end of Ballston Lake.

Eliphalet's house was four miles north of Burnt Hills along route 50. A hundred years earlier he and the McDonalds could have watched the Algonquin pass by on their way to Wolf Hollow.

In 1783 George W. was making an end-of-the-hostilities tour of upstate New York battlegrounds, e.g. Saratoga and Fort Ticonderoga. He stayed one night in the town of Ballston. Could it have been with his cousin Eliphalet? It was time for me to check out the state historical marker at the site of the Eliphalet Ball house.

So I drove up route 50 to read the sign. One is hard pressed to read even the first line of historical markers while driving at a moderate speed. After circling past a couple times, I finally pulled into the driveway of the "modern" house which adjoined the sign. Not a mention of Washington. Now I sort of remember there was a

Geo-W-slept-here sign on the Kingsley Arms, the old inn in the center of Burnt Hills. Back down route 50, past the McDonald brothers historical marker, to the center of old Burnt Hills. There are historical markers for Eliphalet Ball the Kingsley Arms, but no mention of George. And it turns out the Kingsley Arms was built in 1795, twelve years after Washington's grand tour.

It was time to go to the library and a nice book, *Saratoga County Heritage*, edited by Violet B. Dunn. Near the beginning of the book there is a listing of, yes, the historical markers in Saratoga County, including one for Washington's 1783 visit.

Home of James Gordon Colonial Revolutionary War Member of Assembly, State Senator First Supervisor Town Ballston Member of Congress Washington visited here 1793

In addition, James Gordon served as one of Washington's generals and had come home to head up the local militia. Their meeting house at the corner of route 50 and Outlet Road was fortified — against attacks from their neighbors who were Tories. There must have been an uneasy peace between neighbors who took different sides during the war, both politically and militarily. Many families moved out of the country to Canada or England. I

have a good friend who traces his family roots back to Stone Arabia by way of Canada. The crossroads just before Stone Arabia, Cook Corners, is named for his family.

I wonder if George ever did meet Eliphalet.

—*Bill Dimpelfeld*

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## **Calendar**

**Saturday, March 10, 2001 1:30 Refreshments 2:00 Program: *History of Anesthesia* Presenter: Dr. Derek Sayers**

**Tuesday, March 21, 7:30 PM Board of Trustees**

**Saturday, April 14 ANNUAL MEETING 1:30 Refreshments 2:00 Program: *Antique Cars* Presenter: Bill Massoth**

**Tuesday, April 17, 7:30 PM Board of Trustees**

**Society Hours-Monday-Friday 1:00 to 5:00 PM; Saturday 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM. *Tours by appointment*  
-Phone (518) 374-0263**

**The Newsletter is published six times a year. Deadlines are the second Monday of June, August, October, December, February, and April. Please submit material as early as possible.**

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## **Happy warm feet department.**

**Our office is modern and handsome, but the floor was a bit chilly for people working at their desks for hours at a time. Thanks to Bill Dimpelfeld who led the way, there is now a handsome rose-colored rug covering the whole work area.**

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## **Arent Van Curler - His Role in the Colonial Community of New Netherland by Frank Taormina**

***We 're always happy to see a new piece from the pen (computer?) of Frank Taormina because we appreciate his careful scholarship and his delight in his subject matter.***

**The observation of Arent Van Curler, the acknowledged founder of the community of Schenectady in the seventeenth century that "On the Mohawk River there lies the Most Beautiful Land the Eye of Man Ever Beheld" (John J. Birch, *The Markers Speak*, p. 14), is familiar to everyone with even the least interest in our local history. The question of why he was such an important man in the Colonial community of Beverwyck is revealed in the book *The Ordeal of the Long House: The Peoples of the Iroquois League in the Era of European Colonization* by Daniel K. Richter.**

**After mentioning several other individuals who played important roles in the relations between the Dutch Colony and the Iroquois, Richer goes on to tell us that his research revealed that "...a lasting improvement in Iroquois-Dutch relations awaited the arrival of a new comer who would revive and expand the role previously played successfully by a man named whom they call "Jaques." "The Ancient Brotherhood" between the Five Nations and New Netherland, late seventeenth century orators recalled, began with Jaques, and continued to the time of "Old Corlaer." *Corlaer* is an alternate spelling of the surname of Arent Van Curler, a grandnephew of Killiaen**

Van Rensselaer, patroon of Rensselaerwyck. In 1637 the patroon sent his young kinsman from the Netherlands to the new world to assist the commissary of his domains. By 1641 he had made Van Curler his *commies*, or chief representative and trading agent. The post was important because in 1639 the West India Company abandoned its monopoly of the fur trade and threw the business open to all comers. The company trading post in Fort Orange rapidly declined in significance and in 1644 closed its doors. Thereafter, the fort was simply the base for a collection of private traders. In the early 1640's, however, the focus of the upper Hudson River Indian-European trade was not those merchants, but Van Curler, who, on Van Rensselaer's orders, aggressively tried to comer the market.

By seventeenth century Dutch standards perhaps, and by modern capitalist ones certainly. Van Curler's business practice left much to be desired. In vain the patroon begged his commies to keep accurate accounts and to learn to write a proper business letter. "I hear you spend too much time in the woods," Van Rensselaer complained in 1640. "That ought not to be; you must stick to writing and never again neglect to copy your papers and accounts." Sloppy bookkeeping and the high prices Van Curler paid in his ultimately unsuccessful campaign to engross the fur trade threatened to impoverish Van Rensselaer. But the same attractive rates and the time spent "in the woods" endeared the figure they call Corlaer to the Mahicans and the Mohawks with whom he dealt. He paid extended visits to Mahican villages and learned the importance of such Indian customs as generosity and the routine offering of food to visitors; the commies was at considerable expense, the patroon noted in 1643, "to feed the savages and provide also for those who assist him faithfully."

There are strong hints, however, that more than generosity attracted Indian customers to Van Curler and that his sloppy bookkeeping was no accident. He was apparently deeply involved in a clandestine traffic in liquor and guns, two items that, despite official disapproval and occasional legal prohibitions, in the 1640's became staples of the Indian trade on the upper Hudson. "I am very much troubled...that my debt is computed at the sum of fl. 2408 without my knowing the items in detail, and without my receiving the least sign or notice from my *commies*," Van Rensselaer complained to Governor William Kieft of New Netherland in 1642. "According to what they tell me these debts arise mostly from the consumption of wine. Can it be that Fort Orange is a wine cellar to debauch my people?"

There is no direct evidence, but it seems likely that those being debauched were, not Van Rensselaer's tenants, but the Iroquois and Mahican trading parties of Corlaer. Nor are there more than circumstantial hints of Van Curler's involvement in the firearms trade, but Mohawks first began to acquire arquebuses that were so crucial to their military successes in 1639 and 1640, just as he was beginning his attempt to drive competitors out of business. And significantly, in 1644, Van Curler intervened with the colonial council on behalf of a suspected smuggler of arms and gunpowder from Europe. Legally or illegally, Corlaer acted the part of a generous headman and assumed the dominant role in Dutch-Iroquois relations earlier played by Jaques. His status was confirmed in 1642, when, with due regard for Iroquois customs, he paid a diplomatic visit to three Mohawk towns. "I carried presents there and proposed that we should keep on good terms as neighbors and that they should do no injury to the colonists or their cattle," he reported to the patroon.

*To be continued*

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## AMONG OURSELVES

The Society mourns the passing of Ruth Anne Evans. Those of us who have daily or weekly commitments at 32 Washington Avenue miss her profoundly. She felt keenly her duties as assistant treasurer and continued to show up to go over bills and checks, even though it became more and more evident that her health was deteriorating. We looked forward to her arriving in the afternoon, punching an emphatic blare on the doorbell, settling in with the ledgers, then joining us for a cup of tea before closing for the day.

We remember her hard work as President of the Society. That was the early '90's, the time of the building of the library, and outfitting it with tables and shelves and carpeting and file cabinets that had to meet Mandy Grems' approval. Ruth Anne worried over every detail, and, in the end, it was worth it; look at our splendid library. She also presided over Society meetings with her own special grace.

Her obituary revealed facts about an intelligent, multi-faceted woman: a graduate of Smith, a masters' at Columbia School of Library Service. As a research librarian she was epitomized by a colleague who said, "If Ruth Anne doesn't know it, it didn't happen." She was a faculty rated professor at Union College; she was a member of Phi Beta Kappa. Her list of volunteer activities is daunting, including, in addition to the Society, several library groups and the Literacy Volunteers of Schenectady.

Ruth Ann was a strong woman and a clear thinker. She was assertive without being strident; knowledgeable without being a know-it-all. Her passing diminishes us all; her example inspires us. We reprint below a poem taken from her funeral service.

**Those we hold most dear  
never truly leave us ...  
they live on in the kindnesses they showed,  
the comfort they shared  
and the love they brought into our lives.**

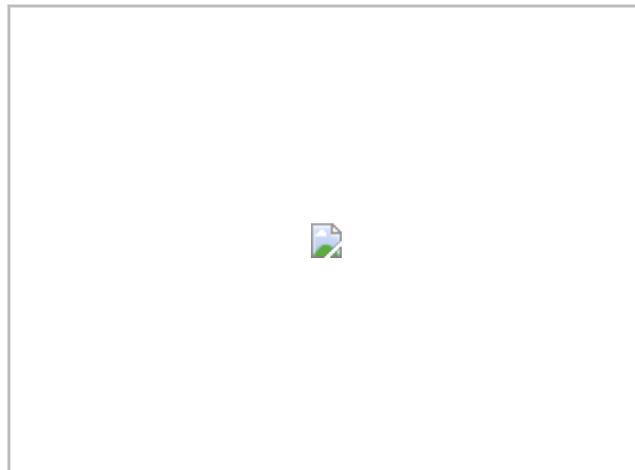
*-Isabel Norton*

**We Note also the Passing...** We are sorry to report the death of Charles Carl, a long time member of the Society, and a constant supporter, through the Carlilian Foundation, of the Society's activities. We extend our sympathy to the Carl family.

**Other Members Lost to us.** Two others who died recently are Norman Wright Fox and Herbert Philipp, each remember for their generosity and their interest in the Society. We extend our condolences to their families.

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## **THE-MABEE-FARM**



A picture is said to be worth a thousand words and that may be true of this picture, showing the rafters finally in place on the Nilsen Dutch barn. Some of the delay lay in the fact that a number of the original rafters had deteriorated over the centuries and could not be trusted to hold up the roof. The 36' length made a pair of problems. The first—obtaining 36 foot long logs from which to cut a dozen replacement rafters, and second—passing them then through a sawmill designed for standard length stock. Once done and on the job site, the work went well as one can see in the photo.

Roof boards go on next, then shake or shingle roofing, then the finished flooring and the last of the siding. Our thanks to Michael McGillycuddy, a Naval reservist, who noticed that Mabee Farm volunteers were struggling, weekend after weekend, to put siding on the two barns. He stopped in to offer a hand and connected us with LCDR Charles Reynolds and his SeaBee reservists who provided much needed help on the barns. A crew of up to 19 members worked during the summer and fall, and as a result we're way ahead on siding. Now all we need is to paint the English barn (the Dutch barn will "weather").

Fundraising is ongoing as we struggle to meet matching grants. Recently the Mabee Farm project received a contribution of \$15,000 from Kenneth T. and Thelma P. Lally to create a permanent display on colonial life for children. This fits beautifully with our vision for the Farm as a place where families and schools can bring children to learn of the richness and variety of the colonial period. We are deeply grateful to the Lallys.

George Franchere, the original donor of the Mabee Farm, helped us a long way toward matching the Schenectady Foundation grant with a generous donation of \$20,000. And the American General Corporation recently donated \$1,000 for which we are grateful.

*Rafters rise on the Dutch Barn.*

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## **VALE FEST THIS SPRING**

The Vale Cemetery Association, working with the Vale/State Street Corridor Association (VSSCA), in an effort to improve the central State Street area, has proposed a week-long festival—"Vale Fest." They have invited Sally van Schaick and Frank Taormina to accompany Superintendent Jack Sheffer to "highlight certain individuals interred" there and to deal with questions that might be asked.

**BOOK SIGNING** The Schenectady Massacre is the historical background against which *The Ghost from the Schenectady Massacre: A Haunting from the Dutch Settlers*, a novel by Jack Reber is set. Mr. Reber will be at The Open Door Bookstore, 128 Jay Street, on Saturday, Mar 3 from 1:00 to 2:30 to sign copies of his book. We always love books with Schenectady as a setting.

**NEW BOOK ON MOHICAN INDIANS** Those acquainted with Shirley Dunn's scholarly work on the Native Americans of this region will be delighted to know that her latest book, *The Mohican World, 1680-1750*, has been published by **Purple Mountain Press** of Fleishmanns, New York. Mrs. Dunn is also the author of *The Mohicans and Their Land*, now in its third printing. The two books detail the experiences of the Mohicans with the Dutch and English settlers; as peaceful landowners, the Mohicans had important influences on Hudson Valley history. Since a large area from the Catskills to Lake Champlain was once Mohican territory, European settlement in the Albany area and in today's nearby counties occurred in large part on Mohican land. Numerous Indian deeds given for land are included in the book, and many long-forgotten Mohican individuals are introduced.

**AT LAST! THE ULTIMATE ANCESTORS** (*From Family Chronicle, January/February 2001*)

The periodical *Science* reports that a mere 10 lineages account for almost 95 percent of more than 1,000 European Y-chromosomes examined.

The genetic researchers conducting the study have concluded that virtually all European men are descended from ten men who moved to Europe from Central Asia and the Middle East tens of thousands of years ago.

## **LOCAL ARCHITECTS MAKE CENTENNIAL HISTORY!**

The Schenectady County Public Library Building, designed in 1969 by Feibes & Schmitt, architects of Schenectady, was chosen as one of 59 notable buildings from across New York State by the American Institute of

Architects / New York State in their publication *Celebration and Reflection: 100 Years of Architecture in New York State*. The book showcases buildings erected within the last 100 years which are judged to be the most outstanding and significant buildings that have shaped the State of New York. The Institute, in singling out the Schenectady Library Building, noted it "is above all significant in its contribution to urban design in that the building provides a generous arcaded facade on the two street fronts and a grand two story interior reference hall." The central space is a magnificent interior, a triumph of modern architecture's ability to shape and direct interior space.

*Arcade, west side, Schenectady Public Library.*

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**LIBRARY DOINGS** - Virginia LaGoy, Librarian

**GIFTS TO THE LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES**

**DONOR**                      **ITEM**

Wayne Harvey              **Books:**

<i>Miller</i>	Colonel Park of Virginia
<i>Gallo</i>	Old Bread, New Wine: a Portrait of the Italian-Americans
<i>Wandel</i>	The German Dimension of American History
<i>Wright</i>	Letters of Robert Carter, 1720-1728
<i>Powell</i>	Puritan Village: the formation of a New England town
<i>Hieronimus</i>	America's Secret Destiny: Spiritual Vision & the founding of a nation
<i>Taylor</i>	William Cooper's Town
<i>Sprague</i>	So Vast So Beautiful a Land
<i>Blackburn</i>	The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Woodworking Hand tools. Instruments, and Devices Cooperstown Centennial Celebration 1907 The Union college I Remember 1902 by Charles Newman Waldron, class of 1906 American Heritage, Dec. 1991 American History Illustrated Nov/Dec 1991
<i>Johnson, Jerry Mack</i>	Down Home Ways
<i>Taylor, Ron</i>	Journey Through Inventions
<i>Greggio, Luciano</i>	Steam Locomotives
<i>Reed, Robert C.</i>	Train Wrecks: A Pictorial History Of Accidents On The Main Line
<i>Alexander, Edwin P.</i>	The Collector's Book of the Locomotive
<i>Shaughnessy, Jim</i>	<i>The Rutland Road The Mohawk River and Valley: its cities and towns (9 boxed Booklets)</i>

**Pamphlets:**

Brochure on Maqua Company

Brochures and articles on bricks

A History of the Schenectady County Council, Boy Scouts of America

*Small, Stephen J.* Preserving Family Lands: A Landowner's Introduction to Tax Issues and Other

Considerations Clippings and other materials on railroads: The Scotia-Glenville Journal Sesquicentennial

Special. Schenectady Gazette Salute to Rotterdam Sesquicentennial 1820-1970; New York Tribune, September 27, 1862; assorted newspapers; assorted clippings; 14 8x10 b&w photos railroad cars plus 2 5x7 photos

Ona Curran

**Photos:**

Paintings by Cornelius Van Patten  
Paintings by Ezra Ames  
Wemple family by an unknown artist  
Written material about McWilliam Family and Edward Henry Walton

John Van Schaick (author)     **Book:**

**New Netherland Van Schaick Settlers: Ancestries and Descendants of  
Three Men Who founded the Van Schaick Families in New Netherland**

Ranald K. Ratchford     **1 blank common stock certificate - Cohoes Bancorp**

Herman Mahler     **Books:**

*McDowell, The Revolutionary War*  
*Stirling, Indians of the Americas*  
*Langenscheidt's German-English, English-German Dictionary*  
*Langenscheidt New College German Dictionary*  
*Aliandro, Dicionario Ingles-Portugues*  
*Aronson, The Book of Furniture and Decoration*  
*Commager and Nevins, The Heritage of America*  
*MacLennan, The Rivers of Canada*  
*Skelton, Marston, and Painter, The Vinland Map and the Tartar Relation*  
**Three Hundred Years of German immigrants in North America**  
*Jordan, The Civil War*  
*Hislop, The Mohawk (Rivers of America series)*  
*Bain, The Clans and Tartans of Scotland*  
*Eckhardi, Pennsylvania Clocks and Clockmakers*  
*Covey, The Gentle Radical: Roger Williams*  
*Cooper, The Leatherstocking Saga*  
*Liebhafsky, William David Coolidge: A centenarian and his work*  
*Maine, A Book of Scotland*

Marilyn Bisgrove from the estate of Helen E. Scott Schneider

**Materials about the Tabernacle Baptist Church**

The library has also been the appreciative recipient of the funds necessary to purchase a new microfilm cabinet large enough to house all our microfilm with room to store many more. Each of its 11 drawers can hold 80 rolls of film! This wonderful gift came to us from the Schenectady Rotary Club, District 7190, Club number 4940. Thank you!

**A WORD FROM THE LIBRARIAN...WANTED!** Copies of Family Bible Records for our Family Files. P.S. We don't really want whole Bibles! Have you filled out your pedigree chart yet? A number of them have come in, but we sent out 600 and we'd love to have 600 new files.

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**The Grand Opening of the Grand Canal** by Bill Massoth

It was a crisp fall day on October 36, 1825, when the packet boat *Seneca Chief* left the Buffalo port at 10 a.m. The *Seneca Chief* was the First boat to sail the entire length of the Erie Canal. Yes indeed, it was the grand

opening of the grand Canal, the Erie Canal. On board the *Seneca Chiefs/ere* Governor and Mrs. De Witt Clinton, several of the Canal commissioners and their wives, distinguished guests and Jesse Hawley. Jesse Hawley? The jail bird? Yes, and Jesse Hawley, the jail bird.

Jesse Hawley was a miller and a good one too. However, Jesse was not a good businessman and he went bankrupt. At that time people who went bankrupt went to jail. So from his prison cell, Jesse Hawley, after studying maps and charts of the area, had come upon a feasible plan of building the Erie Canal. He even estimated the cost of building the Erie Canal at being \$6.5 million. It actually cost just over \$7 million. Jesse wrote newspaper articles for the *Genesee Messenger* about the Erie Canal under the pen name of Hercules. Yes, Jesse Hawley was one of the distinguished guests, complete with top coat and high silk hat.

When the *Seneca Chief* left Buffalo on her opening voyage on the Erie Canal, a cannon boomed in the background. All along the entire length of the Erie Canal and down the Hudson River to New York City were placed cannons every five or six miles. As a cannoner heard a boom from the west, he would fire his cannon, and so went the signal all the way to New York City. At New York City the process was reversed and the signal sent back to Buffalo. It took 81 minutes to send that message from Buffalo to New York City. Imagine that! In 1825 it would take a fast rider five days to do it under normal conditions.

As the *Seneca Chief* progressed down the Erie Canal, it was greeted with great festivities at each stop along the way. Well, at least *many* of the stops along the way. There was no celebration at Rome, New York. Instead, they dumped a barrel of water draped in black into the Canal because the Canal had bypassed Rome by one-half mile. At Schenectady, the *Seneca Chief* was met by only a handful of students from Union College, the infant engineering school that had just come into being in Schenectady. The rest of the city of Schenectady pretty much shunned the opening of the Canal.

At New York City a giant celebration was held. They dumped a keg of water from Lake Erie into New York Harbor, and bottles of water from oceans all over the world were dumped into the harbor. That evening they also had a giant fireworks display.

Getting back to Schenectady, it has long been said that Schenectady feared the coming of the Erie Canal. People in Schenectady were engaged in boat building along the Binne Kill. Boats that were used on the Mohawk River and on the Western Inland Lock and Navigation Co. were built here. Goods and people that traveled overland from Albany to Schenectady were transferred to Western Inland Lock and Navigation Co. 's boats at Schenectady. It was feared that these businesses would be lost.

Digging of the Erie Canal commenced on July 4th 1817. In 1819, Schenectady suffered a severe fire which wiped out its entire business district so that by the time the Erie Canal opened in 1825, Schenectady was still trying to pull itself up by its bootstraps. Not only that, the Canal commissioners had dug the Canal following the Mohawk River to the Binne Kill and along the Binne Kill to Frog Alley and out into Rotterdam, where they built a lock near the remains of old lock 23. (Old lock 23 is near the corner of Rice road and Schermerhonn road.) This lock was disassembled after it had been completed, and moved to Rexford piece by piece and reassembled on the north side of the River. This left a 40 foot wide by six feet deep ditch running through the business district of Schenectady. Is it any wonder that the people of Schenectady were angry?

Noble E. Whitford's book *The History of New York's Canals* tells about this change. Whitford claims that a man by the name of R. Gevins (Resolved Givens) talked the Canal commissioners into moving the canal from where it had been built in Schenectady to a site just outside of Schenectady where his hotel was located. That is the northeast corner of present-day State Street and Erie Boulevard. Yes, Erie Boulevard was located just outside of the city of Schenectady at that time. Lawrence E. Naylor in his writings, "The Affects of the Erie Canal on

Schenectady," puts it much more poetically. He says that because of the resolve of one Resolved Givens, and a cooperative Mohawk River that conveniently flooded at the time, Givens was able to convince the Canal commissioners to move the Erie Canal closer to his hotel and on higher ground.

Did Resolved Givens do this just for his own personal gain, or was he more observing in the ways of the Mohawk River that the city fathers were? At any rate, it is fortunate that they moved the lock down to Rexford, and raised the Erie Canal about six feet higher. Otherwise the aqueduct at Rexford and the canal along the Mohawk River and the Binne Kill would've been a constant source of problems from flooding.

If you look down at the Binne Kill from the Schenectady Historical Society's building, you can see an earthen dike-like structure. Also at the end of Cucumber Alley, you can easily see more of this dike-like structure. Is that the remains of the original Erie Canal berm?

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### **March Program**

The March Program comes to us from our own Derek Sayers who should know whereof he speaks, since for many years he was occupied as an anesthesiologist in the Schenectady area. Dr. Sayers is better known to most of us as a one time vice-president of the Society, and as an active member of the Mabee Farm committee from the beginning.

### **April Program**

Timed to coincide with the Schenectady Museum's display of Antique Cars, Bill Massoth will provide us with a program on the same subject. Bill continues to add to his repertoire of slide shows, and we look forward to enjoying his presentation.

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### **From Your House to Our House**

<b>Donor</b>	<b>Gift</b>
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<b>Jewell Buff</b>	
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- a. One clay pipe head found under her Green Street home.
- b. Small ABC plate, illustration of boys playing peg-top
- c. One broken ABC plate — dog's
- d. Eleven hand carved wooden marbles in small blue and white dish (Danish)
- e. Two bottles of aqua tinted glass (Dr. Hartshorn & Sons, Boston)
- f. Collection of handmade lace: Two squares of basket design, one white fichu, two white

dimity

- lace-trim aprons, one handkerchief sachet.
- g. Three Shaker round boxes; one used for transporting pies
- h. Four colorful lantern slides in good condition

Wayne Harvey

- a. One tin miniature railway waiting room, circa 1920
- b. One book of paper dolls by Susan Johnston
- c. One Heart shaped photograph frame made by the Mohawk Indians. Intricate beadwork.
- d. One drop-side typewriter table to be used for displays. ( I can always use an extra table.)

<b>Pat Schlauch</b>	<b>One daytime gown, early to middle Victorian in very good condition.</b>
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Thank you all for your generosity. Everything is useful and will add interest to our collection — *Jo Mordecai, Coordinator of Exhibits*

## **STROLLING THROUGH THE ARCHIVES ON A RAINY DAY..**

*Once there was a periodical in Schenectady called "The Cabinet." On November 24, 1819, it published the story, headed "Destructive Fire!!!" Here we reproduce the listing of the sufferers. It's a long list but is worth reproducing as it contains information that is of relevance to many of our present day citizenry.*

The following is a list, as correct as could be ascertained, of the buildings consumed, and of the persons by whom they were owned or occupied—to wit.

*In Water-Street* A building occupied by Isaac Hait as a carrier's shop, and owned by Nathan Gamsey, Jr.—Five houses and a store owned by John Brown, and occupied by A.R. Murford, D, and I, Vrooman, M. Crane and Wasler, and I. Sheffield and B. Miller and the Misses McClure and Currey.— A dwelling house occupied by P. Murray and owned by John S. Vrooman.—(indecipherable) by John Brown.

*In State-Street*—John H. Moyston's dwelling-house, store and barn,—John S. Vrooman's brick dwelling-house. A large brick dwelling-house, store and shop of John Brown. A store of William Lyman. A large brick dwelling-house, barn and outhouses of D. & H.R. Martin. I.D. Graff, Esq's, dwelling-house, barn and outhouses. A barn occupied by J. Wasson and owned by the heirs of James Bradshaw, deceased.

*In Church-Street*—John Prouty's frame dwelling-house, office and out-houses. A barn occupied by Mrs. Vredenburgh, and owned by the heirs of Dr. C. Vrooman. The Schenectady Female Academy owned by Joseph Horsfall. A barn belonging to the widow Elizabeth Vrooman, and one belonging to M. T. E. Veeder, Esq.

*In Union-Street*—A dwelling-house occupied by Milo Smith and owned by widow Nancy Beekman. A dwelling-house occupied by Mr. Petit and owned by the widow Cathalina DeGraff. A spacious building occupied by E. DeVeudel as a dwelling-house and boarding school, with a barn and outhouses, owned by a Mr. McVicar. At store occupied by Wm. B. Walton & Co., a brick dwelling house and barn occupied by Dr. Isaac Schermerhorn, all owned by Wm. Girvan, Esq. Widow Mary Teller's dwelling-house and barn, The Mohawk Turnpike Co.'s office, the Law office of N. F. Beck, Esq. DeGraff, Walton & Co.'s store, office and outhouses on the corner of Union and Washington Streets, all owned by Wm. Girvan, Esq.

*In Washington Street* —The dwelling-house, store and barn of Cornelius Van Santvoord. A store occupied by Henry Topping and owned by the widow F. Veeder. Two offices occupied by Henry V. Fonda, Esq. and by Vroman & Schermerhorn and owned by them. The dwelling-house of the widow F. Veeder, a blacksmith's shop owned by her and occupied by Jacob S. Vrooman. The tavern of Richard Freeman. The dwelling-house & County Cl'ks office of Jellis Fonda. The dwelling-house of the widow Nancy Beekman. A dwelling-house and barn of Stephen Lush, occupied by J. McMichael for a dwelling and Richard McMichael & Co as a store. A shop occupied by Giles Clute as a shoe store and owned by Stephen Lush. Eri Lusher's elegant brick dwelling-house, store and barn. A dwelling-house occupied by Mr. Hicks and Mrs. Stevens, owned by Eri Lusher. The dwelling-house, shop and barn, unoccupied, owned by Jacob S. Glen. A building, occupied by Toll & Brooks \*\*\* store and by Seth Thayer and R. C. Jackson as a dwelling-house owned by W. Walton. A dwelling-house occupied by Mrs. Sophia Willard, David Allen and Mrs. Wiley, owned by the heirs of John Fisher deceased. A dwelling-house, store, barn and several outhouses occupied by Mrs. Peek and J. B. Van Eps. A dwelling-house and store occupied by Josiah Stiles, owned by J. B. Van Eps. David Hearsey's dwelling house, shop, barn and outhouses. A store occupied by Kennedy Farrell, owned by D. Hearsey—The new dwelling-house and barn of George Cooper. The brick dwelling-house, store, barn and outhouses of Gen. A Oothout. Giles Clute's tavern and barn. The dwelling house occupied by Alexander Van Eps, E. Townsend and G. Van Valkenburgh, owned by widow Bradt.—The new house and barn of J. V. S. Ryley, Esq.

*Corner of Washington and Front Streets*—Andrew Van Patten's tavern, store, barn and sheds. M. Van Guysling's store.

*In Front-Street*—The bakery of Mrs. Gill. A dwelling-house occupied by Tobias V. Cuyier, owned by A. N. Van Patten. Doct. D. I. Toll's dwelling-house. A dwelling-house of A. N. Van Patten, unoccupied. The dwelling-house and barn occupied by John S. Ten Eyck, owned by Frederick Van Patten. A store occupied by Mrs. Hart as a dwelling-house, and a barn owned by Joseph C. Yates, Esq. A dwelling-house, store, barn and tannery, occupied by Henry R. Teller, owned by Charles Kane, Esq. A dwelling-house and outhouses occupied by the widow Van Ingen, owned by Gershom Van Vorst. A dwelling-house and outhouses owned and occupied by widow Elizabeth Prince.

The above account of the sufferers was furnished by a committee appointed for that purpose and we believe it to be generally correct.

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## **WE GET LETTERS...**

*The following are excerpts from a letter we received from Laura Lee Linder of the Colonial Schenectady Project. Since much of the research of Dr. Staffa's book took place in the Grems-Doolittle library, we want to share this appeal with our membership.*

The Colonial Schenectady Project, Ltd, invites you to . . .assist in the publication of the groundbreaking work of Dr. Susan Jane Staffa tracing the evolution of Dutch colonial Schenectady into an American city.

We are working to raise \$15,000 needed to make the first part of Dr. Staffa's manuscript camera ready for printing by August 1, 2001. **Purple Mountain Press** . . has chosen volume one of Dr. Staffa's *Schenectady Genesis: How a Dutch Colonial Village Became an American City, ca. 1661-1800* for publication this fall. The title of volume one is *The Colonial Crucible, ca. 1661-1774*.

The text has close to 350 pages, plus 14 maps, 33 tables, 3 charts, 24 illustrations, many crediting the historical society, a selected bibliography and index. Tax deductible donations may be made to The Colonial Schenectady Project, Ltd., Anneke Bull, Treasurer, 1127 Avon Road, Schenectady, NY 12308. For more information please contact Laura Lee Linder, 2115 Route 67, Charlton, NY 12019, 882-6866.

Dr. Staffa's work is receiving enthusiastic reviews by leading historic scholars. Please join us in bringing this work into print.

Sincerely,  
Laura Lee Linder

*Your editor had the privilege of reading the first draft of Dr. Staffa's work, and concurs with all that Ms. Linder reports. This is an extraordinary work of scholarship based on primary sources which should be the definitive word on Colonial Schenectady for years to come. The Colonial Schenectady Project, Ltd is a 501 (c)(3) private not-for-profit organization which means your donation would be tax deductible.*

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## **Jo Mordecai, Coordinator of Exhibits**

Wayne Harvey gave me an interesting heart-shaped photograph frame, made of felt and intricate beadwork with hanging tassels. Wayne told me it was made by Canadian Indians; because of the heart shape it is now part of the Valentine exhibit in the hall.

Curious, I found some interesting facts. Most of this type of bead work was done by the Tuscarora Indians who settled around Niagara Falls from about 1890 - 1910; a few examples date earlier than this but most were made around the turn of the century.

The Indians took what were basically traditional subjects and then enlarged them. Soon they realized that things made for their own use did not sell or function in other cultures, so they transferred their skills to such things as photograph frames, pin cushions, trinket boxes and the like.

At the Museum of the American Indian there are many examples of this type of beadwork, including watch pockets and pin cushions in many shapes: hearts, boots, and squares. Techniques varied, but the spot stitch where the

beads were threaded, then laid on felt or velvet in the design shape and then finally lazy-stitched into place, was the most used.

On the pincushions the raised technique was used; a variant on the lazy stitch. A cut pattern was first sewn into place to give extra thickness, then the beadwork would be used, mostly in flower shapes. It almost seems that the Indians copied the beadwork method of Victorian ladies.

During the 1850s and 1860s many patterns for these items were published in the popular ladies' magazines of that time: *Godey's and Graham's illustrated*. In the February 1859 issue of *Godey's* there was an engraving and directions for a watch case, and a photo frame in beautiful imitation of Indian beadwork. So that is how the Indians found commercial ideas for their "bead whimsies" and of course they sold better.

Thank you , Wayne, for giving me such an interesting piece. It was fun Finding out these facts, and the frame is an interesting part of our very varied collection. —Jo Mordecai

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### **NOSTALGIA DEPARTMENT** or Hey, why not? Marlene Dietrich and World War II

Associated Producers Group based in Los Angeles, CA, is searching for World War II Veterans who may have met or have seen MARLENE DIETRICH, the actress, touring with the USO and performing for the Allied troops. They are also looking for photographs or film footage. For more information, contact: Howard Leder, 9028 Sunset Boulevard, PH 1, Los Angeles, CA 90069 or e-mail: DietrichDoe@aol.com

*Your editor notes that a good portion of our readership served in WW II and may be able to respond to this bit of arcane research.*

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### **Stockade Walkabout 2001:** Dutch Theme Saturday, September 29, 10 AM to 5 PM

And yes, that means the Mabee Farm! As part of this year's Walkabout that highlights our Dutch Heritage, the Mabee Farm will be featured with afternoon tours. Also, Anastasia Burdy will coordinate the lovely complimentary tea and cookies in the Vrooman Room of the Society. As a special treat, there will be lots of Dutch goodies for sale. Anneke Bull will arrange for Dutch dancing, and Wayne Harvey will lead Stockade walking tours, highlighting Dutch architecture. And, our carriage rides through our charming streets will be repeated, along with a variety of live music throughout the day. This is a very exciting time in old Schenectady when the public can view the interiors of many 18th and 19th century homes along with our four historic churches. Save the date and plan to join us. Or if you would like to help out, please call the co-chairs, Sylvia Briber, 377-0469, or Anne Bernat, 393-5770. More in the next issue.

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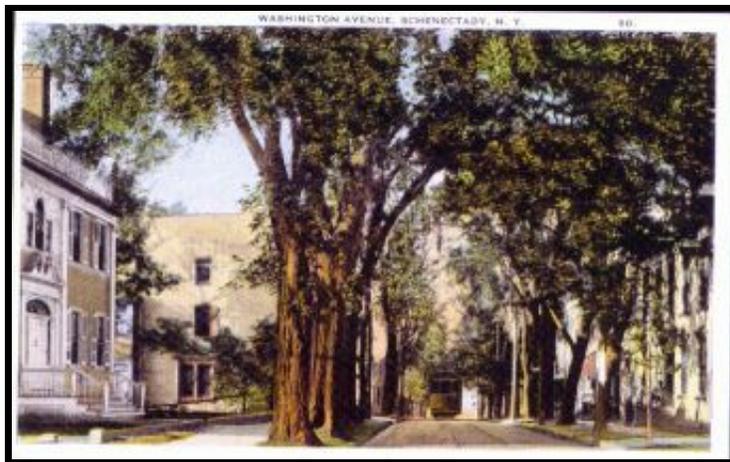
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**POSTCARD OF THE MOMENT**



**We love this 1912 shot of Washington Avenue, right in front of the Dora Jackson House. We especially admire the trees, most of them long gone. And there's the trolley in the distance. The postcards are for sale at the Society: \$8 a package, or \$8 for a poster containing all the photos. [ Add \$1 if ordered by mail. ]**

### **ANNUAL MEETING**

**The Annual Meeting of the Society takes place on April 14, 2001. There will be refreshments; the Speaker is Bill Massoth and his topic is Antique Cars. There will be a report from the Nominating Committee and the assembled members of the Society will vote on officers and Board members.**

