

## CALENDAR

**Saturday, November 11 1:30 PM Refreshments**

**2:00 Program: The Hudson River Day Line Presenter: Malcolm Horton**

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

**Saturday, December 9 1:30 PM Annual Holiday Party**

**Program: Postcards Presenter: Wayne Harvey**

**Tuesday, December 19 7:30 PM Board of Trustees**

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## FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

**I'm still impressed with "George Washington Slept Here" signs. There's one of these signs in front of a Schenectady Stockade house a block south of the Historical Society: "John Glen House 1740 - Washington Occupied NE Bedroom Second Floor on First Visit to Schenectady 1775"**

**(Most GWSH signs don't actually say he "slept" here. It's implied.)**

**Across the street from the John Glen house there's another sign:**

**"Robert Sanders House 1750 - Washington visited here in 1775. Later became Schenectady Female Academy"**

**Since this sign is so close to the first, and the same year, it makes you wonder if maybe George just came across the street for a glass of Madeira while he was staying with the Glens.**

**So I got a copy of "The Markers Speak: an Informal History of the Schenectady Area" by John J. Birch. This is a hardbound book published by the Historical Society and just about given away at the Society for \$10. Birch explains that John Glen was the quartermaster for the Northern Department of the Continental Army, and Washington's visit was part of a tour to evaluate military preparedness. The social call across the street for tea seems to be poorly documented.**

**My interest in where George slept relates to attending a Boy Scout jamboree when I was in my teens. At that time most scouts were teenagers. My scout troop hiked from Erie to Waterford, Pennsylvania. Our rallying cry was "it's just over the next hill," and eventually we were right. Waterford was the site of the French fort Le Boeuf which Washington visited when he was 21 years old. Not much older than we scouts were.**

**While we hiked 15 miles down a paved highway (the extremely quiet route 97), Washington's approach was 400**

miles cross country from his home in Virginia without benefit of roads. (However I now find out Washington was on horseback for most of the trip.) Our trip was in the good old summertime while Washington's journey started in October 1753 and ended in January 1754.

At that time in our history there were few roads beyond the coastal area. In the hinterland the byways for travel were still along the lakes, rivers and streams. British interests in Virginia heard about a French plan to secure the Ohio River drainage basin for their fur trading enterprises with the native population. The British interests sent young George along with a couple of interpreters to look for a site to locate a fort at the forks of the Ohio (Pittsburgh) and to tell the French to stay out of British territory.

The French were established along the St. Lawrence River valley and were already in control of the Great Lakes. They had Fort Niagara to control passage between Lake Ontario and Lake Erie. They had a secure harbor formed by Presque Isle (opposite Erie, PA). They were indeed looking to control the Ohio River basin and to extend their control all the way down the Mississippi River to New Orleans.

When the Erie was gouged out during the ice age, a ridge from the debris was formed a short distance south of the current lake perimeter. Streams south of this ridge had to dig deep ravines in order to get to the lake. For most streams the easier route was south to French Creek, then the Allegheny River and on to the Ohio and the Mississippi. The French started down this route from Erie. Route 97 followed along a creek flowing North and then within a short gap along a stream flowing South towards French Creek. Fort Le Boeuf was located along this stream; a smaller fort was located at the junction of French Creek with the Allegheny River. The French were waiting out the winter at Fort Le Boeuf before advancing on to the Ohio.

Therefore Washington found no French at the forks of the Ohio River to give his message to. He picked up some Indian guides and followed the Allegheny (actual route to French Creek was by a more convoluted route) up to French Creek. The French there were of low authority so they passed him along up French Creek to Fort Le Boeuf. The sight of the forces and supplies at Le Boeuf made Washington realize he was in over his head. But he delivered his message and got out as fast as he could. His flight home became a rout although there was no indication anyone was out to get him. The Indian guides were left behind along with the French interpreter. (He was Dutch.) The horses were injured crossing icy streams and were abandoned. This left Washington and the one interpreter on foot to ford the icy waters of a western Pennsylvania in mid-winter. Not a happy thought.

When the British Virginians heard of the French preparedness they rushed a construction crew of 33 to build a fort at the Ohio River fork. They also set about raising a militia of 300 to defend the fort. Washington was to be second in command. When half the militia was raised he set out for the fort only to meet the 33 man construction crew coming back. A thousand French soldiers had showed up and invited them out.

Washington stopped where he was and built a fort, Fort Necessity. Probably aptly named. While leading a scouting patrol he came upon a party of Frenchmen whom he attacked, only to find out they were diplomats looking to tell the British to go home. One of those killed in the attack was the leader of the French delegation.

1200 French troops and Indians now surrounded Fort Necessity. To make matters worse it rained and Fort Necessity flooded. Washington surrendered. In exchange for a signed confession that he had assassinated a French diplomat, he and his troops were freed to go home.

The French government was not happy that they had lost a diplomat, the British government was not happy at the ineptness of the colonists, but Washington's mother was happy to have George home, safe and sound.

Thus did a 22-year-old George Washington start the French and Indian War. Could this be where we get the expression "Let George do it."?

## **November Program**

The November program will be a trip down Memory River for some of us, and for others a delightful way to acquaint ourselves with a part of the not-too-distant past. Mal Horton sailed on the Hudson River Day Line many years ago and liked it so much that he became a member of a society that has worked to preserve the history of the steamboats that once provided transportation to New York City and back on the Hudson River. Mal acquired a set of the photographic slides used by the last president of the society when he gave presentations. Now it's our turn to see the pictures and relive the trip.

## **December Program**

Our December Program will be our usual Christmas party. Wayne Harvey will show us some of his fabulous 50,000 postcards; we'll have Christmas goodies; and Bob Sager will do his Christmas Carol schtick. Background will be another of Jo Mordecai's inimitable displays.

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## **MUSEUM NEWS -Jo Mordecai, Coordinator of Exhibits**

How time does fly - we are once again enjoying Autumn, such a bright, colorful time of year with the magic of the changing leaves. We're lucky to live in New York State, to see around us a carpet of dark green, orange, cardinal red and amber, glittering in the sun before the leaves fade.

Next the excitement of Halloween, with goblins and ghosts galore and the excitement of pumpkin picking time. Then, just around the corner --Thanksgiving! -- my American holiday.

Today, turkey and all its dressings do not seem to be the favorite meal for this day of celebration. I think it all depends on your ethnic roots. My Italian friends serve many of their spicy pasta dishes with seafood and octopus. My English friends choose roast beef and capons with good old Yorkshire pudding. One year we celebrated with a charming family from Bombay, and their cuisine was lots of spicy curries, rice dishes and fruits. It certainly doesn't matter what food you serve to celebrate this historic day: it's a day of pride to America.

Before you know it we will be preparing for yet another Christmas; such a special time of year, not just for children but adults. As long as we don't allow TV to guide us about what we should buy for our family -- somehow the mad dash to buy the latest toy advertised 20 times a day on each channel does rather take away the old spirit of Christmas Giving.

I came across some old Christmas sayings; a few go back to medieval times in England, and others are typically Victorian. So here is my Christmas present to you.

- A. Never repair your roof between Christmas and New Year's or the holes will come right back.
- B. Leave a loaf of bread on the table after Christmas Eve supper and you will have a full supply until the next Christmas.
- C. Eat an apple as the clock strikes twelve on Christmas Eve and you will have good health throughout the coming year.
- D. If you let a fire go out on Christmas morning, spirits will come to you then and later in the season.

**E. To improve your luck, wear something new on Christmas Day. But not new shoes -- they will hurt and may even walk you into a catastrophe.**

**So beware! but have fun.**

**A very merry Christmas to you all.**

**-Jo Mordecai**

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

**Donor Mrs. Louise Waterman An Antique Globe on decorative iron stand**

**Donor Mrs. Julia Geares Felz A Collection of pins: 4 H Club; World's Fair 1939; Blood Donors, silver and gold; Aircraft Spotter badge;Winged Orb, WWII.**

**A Red,ii Grange tie with the gold painted emblem of the Grange, worn by Werner Felz, donor's father.**

**Flags from the Duanesburg WWI Vets' Auxiliary**

**School books, Arithmetic and English, 1930's**

**Donor Mrs. Janet Breuer Collection of paper napkins collected by Mrs. Idella Heacox during 20 years of traveling. 1400 napkins**

**Thank you for your generosity -- Jo Mordecai**

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### **EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

**Some of the members of the committee are working on a slide show to accompany the Early American kit. Bill Massoth will lead the way in getting enough photographic slides to make a good program.**

**Several members of the committee displayed the Early American kit at Riverwalk, the annual Girl Scout-sponsored event on the bike path at the community college.**

**Elsie Maddaus, Rosemary Harrigan and Sally van Schaick explained the nature of the kit and showed off a number of the items included in the kit. Interest, as always, was lively; several of the youngsters were fascinated with the Jacob's Ladder and the set of "jacks".**

**The committee hopes to conduct a workshop later this fall to introduce local teachers to the two traveling kits and their possibilities for enhancing fourth and seventh grade curricula.**

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### **LIBRARY DOINGS**

**Among the items listed in our donations and acquisitions list this month, you will see that the library has received some scrapbooks compiled by the Schenectady City School District between 1930 and 1985. Most of the scrapbooks are 300 pages long with each page meticulously arranged and pasted. Although they are in chronological order, there is no other rhyme or reason to their arrangement. They are fascinating to pore over and browse through. The pages are filled with many photographs of individual students, both present and former, teachers, principals, and groups of students with their teachers or advisors. Any group related to the school is**

included--sports teams, debaters, prom queens and their courts, drama and music groups, and many others. Changes in the school policies, or proposed changes or improvements, items about buildings--every imaginable subject is included if it relates to education in Schenectady. Take a walk down Memory Lane. Spend a quiet afternoon revisiting your journey through school. You never know whom you'll meet.

Also, please note that we also received a number of yearbooks from a variety of schools.

If you have a yearbook you would like to donate, we would love to have it!

UPDATE: The Duanesburg Memorial Census is still in the works and will soon be available for a modest price.

## **DONATIONS TO THE LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES**

**Laura Cantini Book: The Hudson, Benson J. Lossing, 1866**

**Walter B. Stahr Booklet: The Dempster Family, 8/2000**

**Lissa Terpenning Notebook: Stevens-Hagadorn Family**

**Bill Dimpelfeld Book: Poingdestre-Poindexter Family**

**Marlena Amalfitano Grange memorabilia and papers**

**Schalmont High School literary magazines and year books, books and other materials**

**Barbara J. Weinheimer Photo: Nott Terrace Elem. School, class 5-6, 1965-66**

**Yearbooks: Terracian, June 1942, January 1943**

**Notre Dame-Bishop Gibbons, 1976**

**Montaneer, 1954, 1955, 1957, 1967**

**Scott Haefner Scrapbooks, Draper High School**

**Kevin McGrath Materials from the "Going Away" committee, 1950's Schenectady**

**Eva Chiamulera Thesis: The Van Antwerp-Mabee Farm, 1684-2000**

**Books:**

**Hansen, Kevan M. Finding Your German Ancestors, 1999**

**Humling, Virginia E. U. S. Catholic Sources, 1995**

**Johnson, Ken D. The Bloodied Mohawk, 2000**

**Keetz, Frank M. The Mohawk Colored Giants of Schenectady, 1999**

**New York Public Sector**

**Scott, Kenneth New York Alien Residents, 1825-1848, 1978**

**Settlers of Rensselaerswyck, 1630-1658, 1965**

**Robertson, James The Twilight of British Rule in Revolutionary America, 1983**

**Eager, Samuel W. An Outline History of Orange County, 1846-7, reprint**

**Booklets:**

**Schoharie County Churches**

**Obituary Index-Orange County deaths of people born in Schenectady**

**Recatalogued:**

**Selected Family Bible Records from Albany, Montgomery, Schenectady, and Schoharie Counties**

**Onesquethaw Cemetery: Town of New Scotland, Albany Co., NY, 1987**

**CDs:**

**1880 Schenectady County Census**

**New York Births & Baptisms, Southeast Region, 1660-1916**

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## **[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.**

## **[STROLLING THROUGH THE ARCHIVES ON A RAINY DAY . . .](#)**

**The-apple-doesn't-fall-far-from-the-tree department. We picked up a list of the Trustees of the Schenectady Patent in 1765, curious to see, as we did once before, how many of their names appear in today's telephone book. We'll start with Elders in the Dutch Church. Here goes: John Sanders -- 86 listings for Sanders (I'll just use surnames); Jacobus Myndertse -- 0; Jacobus Van Slyck -- 30; Nicholas Van Petten -- 53 (but they spell it "Petten"); Jacob Swits -- 5; Jacob Vrooman -- 56; Nicholas Groot -- 0 but there are 6 De Groots of various spellings); Tobias Ten Eyck -- 25; Abraham Mebie -- 0 but there are 16 Mabee's and 5 Maybee's); John Baptist Van Eps -- 19; Gerrit A. Lansing -- 63.**

**We showed the list of Trustees to the former president of the historical society, Bob Sager; turns out he's descended from 17 of them.**

**[THE YATESes, THE BRADTs AND THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION](#) by Frank Taormina**

**We welcome Frank back after a long absence from these pages.**

**"The storied streets of the Stockade" - Do their buried surfaces still bear the marks of the tread of the boots of Sir William Johnson? of Jeffery Amherst when he led his troops through Schenectady to Oswego and down the Saint Lawrence to capture Montreal in 1760? Of General James Clinton, when he gathered here the American**

force destined to join General Sullivan on the American march through the Iroquois country in 1799? If there streets had tongues, how many untold tales could they spin!

Certainly, many of these would be about members of the Yates family whose activities as political leaders of the community of the late Eighteenth and early Nineteenth Centuries fill the pages of the histories of those times. Perhaps, still awaiting the telling, is the story of the personal relationships between the Yateses of Schenectady and their Bradt relatives by marriage.

Two of the Yates brothers, Christopher and Jelles, who were destined to be distinguished for their service to the Patriot cause, married two Bradt sisters, Jannetje and Ariaantje. Christopher and Jelles were the sons of Joseph Yates who had followed his Uncle Robert to Schenectady in 1730, some twenty years after Robert had settled here. Joseph Yates and his wife Eva Fonda had nine children, of who six were girls and three were boys. The Bradt sisters they married were members of a family of six children, four girls and two boys, the offspring of Arent A. Bradt and Eva Van Antwerp. All fifteen were born between 1731, the year before George Washington was born, and 1747, four years after the birth of Thomas Jefferson. They were all clearly in the generation whose fate it was to take part in the American Revolution.

The six daughters of Joseph Yates all married men who were on the side of the Patriots. Presumably this made family get-togethers less stressful than they would have been if the opinions of the husbands of the Yates daughters had been divided with each other and with the Yates brothers-in-law on the issues of the day. Everybody was on the same side.

On the other hand the six Bradt children present us with a different set of circumstances. Arent, the oldest, was "a prominent Loyalist at the time of the Revolution. ... He was a Captain in the Militia under Sir John Johnson." [Bradt Genealogy, Schenectady County Historical Society, p. 123] Arent's sister, Catalina, the oldest girl, was married to John Butler, who " ... organized the infamous Butler's Rangers, a group of Loyalists .... who made raids in the Mohawk Valley together with bands of Indians. " [Bradt Genealogy, p. 124]

"Arent Bradt left New York with his family and spent his life in Canada. His sister Catalina was the mother of Walter Butler, notorious as the border raider whom The Gazetteer of New York State called 'one of the most inhuman wretches that ever disgraced humanity.'" [Bradt Genealogy, p. 124] Another sister, Helena, married Andries Wemple. "Andries Wemple was a Loyalist who fled to Canada, leaving his family (wife and four living children) behind. His property at Fonda was confiscated. Andries never returned." [Bradt Genealogy, p. 125] So out of the six Bradts in this family, one clearly sided with the British, and another two married men who sided with the British.

The contrast could hardly have been greater between Jannetje Bradt's husband Christopher Yates and her sister Catalina Bradt's husband, John Butler. John Butler was the person who persuaded the Iroquois to break with the colonists and to take up arms for the British on the eve of the Battle of Oriskany in August of 1777. Later he organized the Iroquois and the Tories of the Mohawk Valley into a force which conducted a series of devastating raids on his former neighbors from the Spring of 1778 until the Fall of 1781. Whereas Christopher Yates come down to us as "The best informed Patriot in the Mohawk Valley," his brother-in-law was stirring up the Indians in the western Mohawk Valley. Meanwhile Christopher was leading parties of woodsmen in the forests between the southern end of Lake Champlain and the Hudson River at Fort Edward. The delaying tactics he helped create played an important role in wearing down Burgoyne's Army and eventually defeating it. Christopher's activity in support of the American cause was almost as legendary as his brother-in-law John's was in opposition to that cause.

Among other things, Christopher Yates was one of the first to report on the effects of raids at Cobleskill and later at Cherry Valley - a raid in which his nephew Walter allegedly played an important role. What, one

wonders, was the conversation like at 26 Front Street when he returned home after witnessing what had been carried out under the direction of his wife's sister's son?

There is nothing that I know of that tells up what the Yateses thought about the Bradts or what the Bradts thought about the Yateses during those trying times. But knowing ourselves as human beings, and putting ourselves in their places, it would be difficult to believe that there weren't some stressful times within those families. Walking along tree lined Front Street among these beautiful Eighteenth Century buildings, one wonders what sounds of anguish and anger, of sadness and mourning must have once hung in the air there among the occupants of these homes as they tried to understand and cope with the news of what was happening to their loved ones.

Still, despite the horrors of the fighting in the Mohawk Valley, and the strains of political disagreements, the attraction which draws a man to a woman or a woman to a man proved more powerful than the memory of the recent past for at least four members of these families. Catalina Bradt's youngest son, William Johnson Butler, married Eva Yates, Jannetje Bradt's daughter in 1794. John Butler's son married Christopher Yates's daughter! And Myndert Wemple, the oldest son of Helena Bradt, whose Loyalist father, Andries, had gone to Canada, married his cousin, Elisabeth, the daughter of Ariaantje Bradt, whose father Jelles Yates had served in the Second Albany Militia in the Mohawk Valley.

Whatever colors the contending sides chose as symbols to represent their cause during that tumultuous period from 1775 to 1783, the complexity of the affairs and feelings of the families and individuals involved could certainly not have been fairly represented by black and white. No doubt, the members of the Yates and Bradt families much have had many perplexing moments as they struggled to resolve the conflicts between their roles as family members and as citizens of the newly emerging state and national communities.

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## **MABEE FARM NEWS**

We hope you were with us for the Fall Festival. Many volunteers worked for weeks to make it a success as indeed it was. Sue McLane coordinated the efforts including producing a great program telling all about the Mabee House and filled with messages of support from the community. A country dinner was served: good plain food like turkey and succotash and apple pie with cider to chase it. Andrea Becker presided over the food; Bill Massoth provided Indian bread.

There was a variety of entertainment: a horse drawn wagon not only gave rides to people but also pulled a couple of hapless vehicles out of the soft earth of the leach field to a chorus of "Get a horse!" from delighted onlookers. A spinner spun, a weaver wove, a quilter quilted. Charles Long made brooms while we watched. Reinactors recreated historic events. The trio "In Good Company" sang old songs a cappella, sweet notes floating lightly on the air.

Various members of the Mabee Farm Committee acted as guides or docents; they sold books, explained 17th Century architecture and ran the ticket office.

A humble but very necessary role was played by the new "comfort station" which is attached behind the English barn. Volunteers labored last Spring and Summer to bring the English barn from the adjacent property to a new home in the barnyard. The English barn has been reroofed but still needs additional siding. The north and south side aisles of the Nilsen barn are up and the roof may be on by the time you see this article.

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## **HOUSE COMMITTEE NEWS**

The House Committee has been working hard this summer finding the where withal for house improvements. As you walk down Washington Avenue you should be delighted to see the sparkling mellow yellow paint job. It happened just in time for the Walkabout. There's still a need for window repairs and painting shutters, but the building looks a whole lot better.

### **WHERE ARE THEY?**

Ten corduroy covers that were made by members of the Auxiliary have been misplaced. Please report any sighting to Jo Mordecai.

### **WALKABOUT**

The walkabout was successful as usual. It was a beautiful day and we have snapshots of the Victorian Fete in our back yard.

Historical material and comments, including letters to the editor, are welcome and may be submitted to the editor.

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### **CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING DEPARTMENT**

**Wanted!**

Someone to do filing in the library. Our librarian can never catch up.

Great opening for volunteer with unsatisfied clerical lust! Call librarian at 374-0263

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**Wanted!**

Someone to do data entry on one of our wonderful computers. You do not have to be a computer geek; you just need enthusiasm for the work of the society plus the ability to follow directions. Call librarian at 374-0263

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**Wanted!**

A real extrovert to organize boat and bus trips. There are wonderful places to go around here, but all the board members are maxed out and we need fresh blood, verve, muscle and know-how to plan trips. Call office at 374-0263

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**Wanted!**

A grant writer. We know the grants are out there; we just need that certain person with the time to ferret out where the grants are hidden so we can continue to enhance the work of the Society. Call President or office manager at 374-0263

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**Wanted!**

**Docents. A docent is a tour guide. We're running out of docents and we want fresh troops. Come now: you know that you've always secretly wanted to show people around the Museum. Follow Jo or Sally or Wayne or Ann a time or two and you'll get the hang of it. Call Jo Mordecai at 374-926 for further information.**

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