

Calendar: Saturday, November 8 1:30 Refreshments 2:00 Program: Grant's Cottage Beth Pfaffenbach

Saturday, December 13 1:30 Annual Holiday Celebration

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## FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK - Bill Dimpelfeld

The previous owners of our home in Scotia left us some mementos of their occupancy. There were various pieces of sterling silver tucked in a back corner of the kitchen cupboards. These we promptly returned. There were some sleeping bags which our children located in a boot storage nook under the backstairs. These were reluctantly surrendered when the previous owners came looking for them (the sleeping bags, not the backstairs)

And then there were the yellow tulips that appeared in former flower beds. These we got to enjoy for several years before they disappeared. At least the flowers no longer bloomed to welcome the spring.

Although for centuries tulip bulb production has been associated with the Netherlands, the origin of the plant was central Asia. The tulip was cultivated in Turkey for 150 years prior to being introduced into Europe in the mid-16th century. The name "tulip" was derived from the Turkish word for a turban, which the shape of the bloom resembled. Interestingly, the Turks have a different name for the plant: lalé.

In the mid 16th century Ogrer de Busbeq was an Austrian diplomat in Turkey. When he returned to Austria in 1554 he brought some tulips home with him. Some of these he shared with a friend, Carolus Clusious. The two men were trying to develop different flower characteristics. Clusious took some tulip bulbs and seeds with him when he moved to the University of Leiden in Holland.

It was a time of great wealth for the Dutch due to flourishing world trade. The general population of Holland had a strong interest in obtaining exotic flowers, including tulips, for their gardens. But Clusious resisted attempts to buy his tulips by demanding exorbitant prices. So some enterprising Hollanders bypassed Clusious. They stole his tulips. There were early ones and late ones, tall and short, solid colors and Rembrandts. Rembrandts are the multihued tulips of flaming contrasting colors which were featured in many of the Dutch floral paintings of the time.

The tulips flourished in the rich Dutch soil, and so did the demand to obtain new varieties. The demand for tulips got so out of control (tulipomania) that the government had to intervene and control the trading. 400 years later and the Holland growers continue to dominate the trade in tulips and other spring-blooming bulbs.

Since a medicine I (still) take is derived from the bulb of the autumn crocus, I wondered if a tulip bulb had any medicinal application. Nope. No mention in any of my herbal medicine books. But Johanna Woldring, the Society's office manager, informs us that during the food shortages of the second World War, the Dutch did resort to supplementing their diet by eating the bulbs. Think I'll leave that one up to the squirrels that frequent my backyard.

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## **Ettore Mancuso's World War I Experiences**

*A year or so ago three cardboard boxes of papers left by Ettore Mancuso were donated to the Grems-Doolittle library. Ettore Mancuso was a Schenectady attorney who started his law practice here in 1922. Among the papers was a letter dated January 15, 1924, addressed to "Dear Miss Root" and signed "Ettore" and a reply dated August 24, 1924, from Mabel V. Root who was living in Catskill New York, at the time. Their relationship seemed to be that of former teacher and pupil Ettore's letter is on the letterhead of Ettore Mancuso and Hannibal Pardi, Attorneys-at-Law, 428 State Street, Schenectady, NY and the subject is his experiences in the 2nd Pioneers, an army service and construction battalion. We will publish this missive in three installments. In the light of today's events it has a certain relevance.*

**Ettore writes: I'm going to try to keep my promise and write a long letter, although I hardly know where to begin. . . . You knew that I was attending law school before we entered the war. . . . I wanted to enlist immediately after the mid-year exams, but I could not get the permission of the draft board because they expected my turn to come from day to day, and then they would have had to look for a substitute in my place. At any rate, I went to Spartansburg, SC on May 24, 1918. I never had believed in a Hell in the hereafter, but after going to Spartansburg, and ever since, I have actually known that there is plenty of Hell here on earth.**

**After a short month of training under slave-driving officers, we went to Newport News and from there we sailed for France on June 30th, landing at Brest on July 13. I was terribly sea-sick the entire thirteen days of the voyage which was full of thrills owing to the submarine peril, and on the 4th of July, by way of celebration I suppose, we were given the thrill of thrills when some marine saw or thought he saw a periscope.**

**Our convoy consisted of 17 troopships including submarine chasers and destroyers for our protection. Every man was near his raft ready to jump in the water, and everyone was searching the waters for a torpedo traveling toward his own ship, just as though we could have sidestepped it if we HAD seen it coming out way. Suddenly all the war vessels opened fire simultaneously, and such fireworks I have never seen, before or since, on [the] Fourth of July. All the guns were spitting fire, and the depth-bombs created those beautiful temporary geysers one so often sees in moving pictures showing the fleet in maneuvers.**

**I was sent to sick-bay for the last three days of our voyage. We did land and I went to a hospital for a week. In the meantime my regiment had landed and its several companies had been assigned to different ports of France, my own company going to St. Nazaire, which was the base of supplies. It was at this port that most of our food and ammunition from America was unloaded; and here worked several thousand colored stevedores, Chinese coolies, and some German war prisoners who had been loaned to us by the French. . . at so much per day for each.**

**When I was released from the hospital I had lost track of my company because all troop movements were kept secret, and so I was sent to the classification camp in St. Aignon.. .about the 18th of July 1918.... I and another soldier from my company who had almost been put in a regiment which was to go to the relief of the boys who were fighting at Chatieau- Thierry, when the Adjutant of the Camp received a telegram advising him of the whereabouts of our company . . . [so] . . .we were called out and ordered back to our company at St. Nazaire doing guard duty. Thus we lost our opportunity to earn wound stripes and perhaps a grave in Flanders Fields, in the Argonne, or some other place in France.**

**During these travels we had been close enough to the front to hear big guns and little ones, and being in the gas zone we had even been issued gas masks, so that when we got back to the company we were the only ones who**

had gas masks and overseas caps, and everyone, including our officers, envied us our adventure ever so much. We had to put on our gas masks so many, many times to demonstrate how it was done in six seconds. . . . We had drilled with a company of marines for two weeks, and had had bayonet drill, so that we were experts, while the rest of the company had barely learned how to "fix bayonets."

The days just followed one another until September came, and with it the rainy season and the "flu." I was taken sick at that time due to exposure. I had done my six hours of guard duty and I was awaiting the buddy who was to relieve like an angel from heaven, when the corporal of the guard notified me that no relief had come for my post and that I must stand guard for another six hours. I stood it and I got worse and then I got off my post at the end of twelve hours in a pouring rain, I was fit for only one of two places, a hospital or a morgue. Fortunately I was taken to a hospital where for a period of two months I had in quick succession, if not simultaneously, bronchiitis, pneumonia ,the "flu" and pleurisy.

Late in October I was sent to a convalescent camp and there I learned that my company was preparing to go to the front. . . by the 20th of November 1915. I pleaded with the medical officer. .. and I was marked fit for duty during the first week of November and so I was once more on a train to rejoin my company for the great adventure of life in the trenches. But for a second time I was deprived of the great privilege. I was still en route when the armistice was signed on the 11 th of November . . . . There was no longer any need for troops for the front, and my company. . . had proceeded to Marseilles, on the Mediterranean. . . I started a chase, or rather, a search, during which I saw quite a bit of F rance, until I landed in Dijon, where I found the Headquarters Company of my Regiment.

[Continued in later issues ]

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## **AROUND THE COUNTY**

**Princetown** -Irma Mastrean, Town Historian

A portion of the land comprising what is now known as the township of Prince town was originally ceded to the Reformed Dutch Church of Schenectady, and the remainder belonged by right of patent to George Ingoldsby (who owned in the north). Ingoldsby sold out to William Corry and the settlement became know as Corry's Bush (later Currybush). Corry, from Ireland, was a trader in the Mohawk Valley. The land grant of 1737, of 10,000 acres, was the greater part of the town. In 1755, Corry sold his interest to John Duncan. Many title searches reveal the name of Duncan as original owner of the properties in Princetown. This deed was recorded in 1792: John Duncan of Schenectady to John Kennedy, cooper of Corry's Bush, consideration 46 pounds. Land bounded by the farm of Kennedy "joining on the Town line of Schenectady". . . . 50 acres, at the time in possession of John Kennedy who is to pay his majesty quit rent due thereon" from July, 1769. The quit rent was "one ear of Indian corn."

In March 26, 1798, an Act was passed to establish Corry's Bush, together with the Church land adjoining the patent of Schenectady on the south side of the Mohawk River as a separate town....Princetown. It was named for John Prince, then a member of the N.Y. State Assembly. Prince, a merchant who resided at 3 Front St., had a partnership with his brother-in-law, Myndert Van Guysling. The business failed, and when John died in 1801 his debtors retained the body for some time after his death.

**Scotia** -Elsie Maddaus

In "A History of Glenville" by Percy M. Van Epps, an early Glenville historian, there is a well-researched chapter of the Indian tribes who lived in the ScotiaGlenville area from the earliest times. They include the Mahicans, an Algonkian nation, and the Mohawks of the Iroquois. Present day reminders of these early tribes are a few historical markers. They may be found in "Historical Markers Past and Present of the Town of Glenville and the Village of Scotia" compiled by Donald A. Keefer, later Glenville historian. They include a marker at the junction of Barhyde Rd., Vley Rd., and Route 5. One half mile north of this marker is a Pre-Columbian cemetery, the burial place of the Mound Builders, once occupants of the Mohawk Valley.

On Touareuna Rd. off Hoffman's Hill Rd., is a marker that locates the site of an archaic Algonkian village - Kinaquariones; its corn pits remain yet. Through this vale ran a great and ancient path, trod by many races. Near the West Glenville Rd. off Sacandaga Rd., are two historical markers of the Primitive Path. Here ran a well-beaten path used by the archaic Algonkian and other nations, going between the sea coast and the interior.

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## **Museum Activity - Jo Mordecai**

### **The Walkabout - 2003**

The Walkabout went off very well on a practically perfect day-no rain, lots of sunshine. Our dining room was busy serving refreshments from 11 AM to 4 PM, according to our society tradition of the last 20 years. The Historical Society's Women's Auxiliary was always in charge of this presentation, busy in the kitchen preparing tea and coffee and making the cookies. They are sadly missed. Today most of the organizing and cleaning up is supervised by our Ann Karl, who works tirelessly all day; punch and cookies have been added to the menu and goodies are donated by Society members.

We were fortunate to have interesting docents in our rooms, explaining the many treasures we have. The Hugh Plat Garden Club as usual made the house look charming with their flower arrangements. Thank you to the following people for their help in making that day special.

**Docents:** Elsie Maddaus, Dr. Derek Sayers, Irma Mastrean, Ann Ross, Scott Haefner, Olive Berner, Yvonne and Richard Matthews, Barbara Weinheimer, Fern Lee, Larry Rainey, Elliess and Wolf Riemer, Beryl Grant, Vincent Versaci, Bill Milton, Bill Dimpelfeld, Vance Mordecai, Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Cozine, Peter Marquis, Jack Maybee, Anne Coggeshall, Jeff Parry, Richard Lewis, Rose Dixon, Gioia Ottaviano, Carol Kochis, Caroline Veeder, Ann Karl, Cheryl Pollock, Marie Rose, Lucy Nolan, Dot Valachovic.

**Cookie Givers:** Sylvia Hosgood, Ann Ross, Ann Karl, Elliess Riemer, Kim Mabee, Carol Lewis, Ann Eignor, Anne Coggeshall, Irma Mastrean, and Linda Lewis.

You were all GREAT! Thanks. Jo Mordecai

### **THE STOCKADE QUILT**

You have to see the quilt! Shirley Hedman, Sandy Henne!, Pat Kedick, Karen Kirstein, Sheila Slater, and Marilyn Smith have made a quilt by a unique process involving each one of them in the production of 1/7th of the quilt. The result is a disjointed but quite recognizable view of one of the Stockade Streets - Church Street as seen from the corner of Front Street. They have presented it to us on a sort of permanent loan as long as it is always on display and they are able to borrow it back for quilt shows. It hangs in the entrance off the parking lot and is a really creative gem.

## **ROSE, WE MISS YOU ALREADY**

Rose Fetter who had been working in the Grems-Doolittle Library from its first day is leaving us to live in Boulder, Colorado, where her son has his family. We understand the need for families to stick together, but we wish her son had decided to move his family here instead so we could keep Rose with us. We have marked this event with a celebration of Rose's 95th birthday, and wish her happiness

## **GEORGE FRANCHERE'S BIRTHDAY**

We don't get to see George Franchere very often and we hope he enjoys these reports of how his gift of the Mabee Farm is flourishing. We celebrated his recent birthday by sharing with you a picture of our benefactor, taken in Point 0' Woods, South Lyme, Connecticut on June 25, 1937.

## **DID YOU KNOW? -Elsie Maddaus**

Did you know that an early student of Union College wrote the Christmas carol "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear"? His name was Edmund Hamilton Sears. He was born in Sandisfield, MA on April 6, 1819. Beside Union College, he attended Harvard Divinity School. Later he was ordained in the Unitarian ministry and chose to serve in small towns in Massachusetts where he could study, think and write. At the age of 24, he wrote a Christmas carol, "Calm on the Listening Ear." Fifteen years later, in 1849, he wrote "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear." He became well-known because of his hymns and books. In 1871, he was awarded a Doctor of Divinity degree, after which he took a preaching tour of England. He died in Weston, MA on January 16, 1876.

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## **THE MABEE FARM**

At this writing we are about to close for the successful 2003 season. All our Special Events were well received, well attended and financially successful. Teachers expressed ever increasing interest in our school program as word of mouth spread from school to school. This fall we will have had five days of school programs with approximately 600 students. Even more are expected in the spring. It seems that there is no end to the activities at the Farm as one event runs into the next!

*The Fall Festival* was bigger and better than ever. With the increase in attendance we almost doubled last year's profits. A new feature, "The Kid's Corner," organized and supervised by Andrea Becker was a real hit. Thank you, Andrea.

*The Stockade Walkabout* was well represented by the Farm's volunteers and demonstrators who took an active part this year. I hope you had the opportunity to see our bateau "The "DeSager" in the water at the Riverfront festival. Kim Mabee had just finished the sail and it was the first time it had been used.

*"Sundae on the Farm,"* held on September 21st, was an unbelievable day. Working harmoniously together, the Montgomery County Farm Bureau and many other organizations joined in guaranteeing the success of this even. The weather was perfect. The people came and came and came! Expected attendance was 1,000-1,500. Over 3,000 people actually attended! 475 toured the House in a never ending line. (Thank you to the docents for

service above and 'beyond the call of duty). 67 gallons of ice cream were used for free ice cream sundaes. There were cows, horses, oxen, goats, sheep, pigs, llamas, chickens and rabbits. A 400 bale hay maze was the centerpiece of the many children's' activities. There were craft displays, farm and colonial demonstrations, tractors large and small, farm.equipment and a farmer's market. The chicken barbecue sold out before 3 PM. Although we were only the host site for this event, we were able to make almost \$1 ,400 for the Mabee Farm.

The one of a kind Hand Hooked Rug by Jennifer Parslow was another moneymaker. This beautiful rug featured the Mabee House and Dutch Barn. Jennifer donated this run to be raffled off as a fund raiser. The drawing was held during "Sundae on the Farm.. It netted \$1,346 for the Mabee Farm. (Geri Patenaude of Apple Junction in Rotterdam J unction was the happy winner.) Thank you, Jennifer, for this creative and very generous donation.

*Inn Restoration* progress continues on the Inn. The foundation work is finished. New sills, floor joists and hand planed wide board flooring have been installed. The missing siding has been replaced, closing in the building for the winter. The interior work, plastering and restoration of the hearth remain to be finished along with the restoration of the stairwell and chimney cupboard.

*Archaeology* around the Inn has been completed for 2003. Highlights of the findings were two silver spoons with JEM monogram. These initials are believed to be Jacob and Eva Mabee's who lived atthe house in 1800. The silversmith was Hutton, whose firm was very prominent in the City of Albany during that period. Also found was a thin silver disk with markings stamped on both sides. Archaeologists are researching whether this is a coin, token, or seal for goods. During the summer, Louise Basa and SCCC held a course for middle school aged children. They explored the foundation of the Methodist Church which stood on the western edge of the property in the 1890s. The building was moved to Rotterdam Junction approximately 1910.

Although regular hours ended on September 27th, the Mabee Farm Historic Site continues to be open by appointment. Call 887-5073 for more information.

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WE GET LETTERS. . . (From Timothy C. Sager of 6032 Chetwind Drive, Cicero, NY 13039.)

Editor,

I was with much sadness and regret that I learned of the death of Mr. Bob Sager. If I may, I would like to tell you my remembrances of this remarkable individual and my distant relative. Some years ago while on business in Schenectady I opened the phone book as I often do when traveling and started calling Sager listings. By pure chance I talked with Claire who said "You want to talk to my ex as he is the president of the Schenectady Historical Society. " Well, I couldn't believe my ears. My next call was to Bob who invited me over to his house in the trees. We talked for most of the afternoon and evening, closing his eyes often as he recited from memory the Sager history. I was spellbound as I listened to someone who knew our history with authority. I never noticed when the long afternoon shadows turned to night.

After Bob decided we were related, he brought out many documents, telling me stories about his study of Genealogy, his local adventures and the Dutch Society. Th one document that stands out in my memory was what he called a "Wheel Genealogy chart." On this document there was a common starting point ancestor, and, like spikes from a wheel, the many succeeding generations were charted. As I remember, it was rolled up like a map, showing much wear and tear, and when put on this dining room table the corners needed to be held down. From this document done in pencil you could easily see our lineage and common ancestor. I have access to large copy

**machines and would like to copy this document if it's in the Society's collection.**

**Later that evening we went for a ride in his pea-green Rolls downtown to the Society and later to his church. He said he needed to take the Rolls to a local mechanic soon as it was time to put on new brakes. Bob invited me back and of course I never found time. I will never forget my afternoon with Mr. Robert Sager.**

**-Sincerely,**

**Tim Sager**

**(We hope Mr. Sager gets a chance to copy the "Wheel Genealogy.")**

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**LIBRARY DOINGS -Virginia Bolen, Librarian**

**2004 Calendar Here**

**Schenectady Historical Society's 2004 calendar, with the theme "Industries of Schenectady," is available at the Schenectady County Historical Society. The calendar covers early mills of the Colonial period to Schenectady International of the 21st century. It is available to members for \$8; nonmembers for \$10; postage and handling \$2.**

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