

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK - Bill Dimpelfeld

Before there were television and radio, there were card games. Bill D. takes us on a nostalgic journey back to that less hi-tech time.

Occasionally recently I've watched some poker games on cable television's Travel Channel. You can see each player's hand, and watch and listen to their bluffs. I was surprised at the amount of talking which was used to sidetrack opponents. It reminded me of the games my family played when I was a kid. Those were the years before TV, and card playing was an awaited evening's distraction.

The poker players of my youth included my father, several of my mother's brothers, sisters and their spouses. My mother, one of eight siblings, was the second oldest girl and the oldest still at home when her mother died. While still in her teens, my mother became the family matriarch, and her home was the gathering place for many family get-together, including card games.

The poker games were always noisy. The deal rotated among the players, and the dealer got to call the hand: the number of hold cards, the number of draw cards, and which cards were wild. The changing rules added to the general confusion of what was going on. While the luck of the draw determined who had the best hand, the hype at the table resulted in it not always being the winning hand. The games were especially robust if my mother's youngest sister played. She told the wildest stories and had the loudest laugh. My father was the quiet one who delighted in provoking other people by critiquing their choices in politics. And my mother? My mother was in the kitchen.

Sometimes when my father and his brothers-in-law got together they played a fourhanded game of hard euchre. Each partnership kept track of its own score, using two cards, a 3-spot and a 4-spot. These cards were placed on opposite comers of the table with one card face down on the top of the other. The score was shown by the number of spots exposed. I don't have a clue what the rules of the game are. But when the winning point is scored, you have to slam the final card on the table, and with great gusto shout, "Gotcha!"

About the time my brother and sister were old enough to participate on the card games, the family was into rummy. The book, *Official Rules of Card Games* describes rummy as the best known card game in the United States because its rules are so simple. But my copy of the book is more than 30 years old, so that may not be true anymore.

The Unfinished Game

It was about 60 years ago and my parents were playing cards in our kitchen with my aunt and her husband. It was on a night which in today's terms had a severe thunderstorm warning. A bolt of lightning came through the screen door of the adjacent room, through the doorway into the kitchen, passed between the card players and sink, and

grounded out on the gas range on the far wall. The electric cord for the light on the stove left a burn mark of its path on the linoleum. After that, whenever there was a thunderstorm my mother unplugged every electrical cord in our house.

Calendar

Saturday, September 6 Stockade Art Show

Sunday, September 14 Mabee Farm Site Fall Festival 1 - 5 PM

Wednesday, September 17 Board of Trustees 7:30 PM

Saturday, September 20 The 44th ANNUAL WALKABOUT 11 AM - 7 PM

Sunday, September 21 Sundae on the Farm Mabee Farm Site

**Saturday, October 11 Refreshments: 1 :30 PM Program: The One Room School House 2 PM
Presenters: Irma Mastrean and Adrienne Karis**

**Wednesday, October 15 Teachers' Reception, 3:30 PM
Board of Trustees 7:30 PM**

Around the County

Princetown Tidbits -Irma Mastrean, Town Historian

The Short life of the Princetown Academy

One hundred and fifty years ago the Princetown Academy and Female Seminary flourished for three years in the little town of Princetown.

The Academy was sponsored by the town and the Presbyteri n Church! Faculty members from Union College taught there. . . . Eliphalet Nott was on the Board of Trustees. The Academy was said to have been built because the well-to-do people of Schenectady wanted a school fat: enough out of town for their children to escape the bad-influences and the wildness then prevailing in the city. The aim of the Academy was to have an institution of high moral and religious character. A letter written by a former student contained some interesting stories of the institution. She said the board was "more than terrible," hash was made in the wash boiler. One night some of the students hungered for oysters. They tied bedclothes together and let two boys down from the second story window. Somehow they got to Schenectady, purchased the oysters, and returned. They had to bribe the night steward to let them in by giving him some of the oysters.

West Glenville -Adrienne Karis

The Greens Comers One-Room School Museum, built ca.1825, will be open for visitors by appointment only, September 2 through October 15. It's a great place to take your grand-children to visit!

The school is located in West Glenville on Potter Road near the intersection with Greens Comers Road. Call Mrs. R. Karis, 24 Windsor Drive, Scotia, for further information or to make appointments - 372-6314

Scotia -Elsie Maddaus

"Going Back to School" in Scotia in the late 1700s meant going to private school. There was no "free" education in those days. The schoolmaster's fee for tuition was eight shillings per quarter term, payable by the parents. He also accepted payment in foreign coins, cider, bread or "soaling my shoes. The pupils were largely children of the families living in the area west of the Sacandaga Road called Reeseville. The first school stood near Maalwyck, 511 Mohawk Avenue, or may have been one of the several buildings clustered about the old farm. It was sponsored by the Toll family, "proprietors of Maalwyck for nearly two centuries. The second school was built in 1795 on the corner of Sacandaga Road and Mohawk Avenue. It stands to this day with a plaque near the door. John Hetherington was the first school teacher in the Village of Scotia. He taught at Maalwyck School from 1782 to 1795. Nowhere does it mention where he boarded but it is assumed that he either slept in the schoolhouse or stayed at the Maalwyck farmhouse. .

BATEAU DE SAGER TAKES MAIDEN VOYAGE

The sturdy bateau, De Sager, is seen here (in the actual newsletter) on its maiden voyage up the Mohawk river to the Gateway landing. Named for the historical society's former president, Robert Sager, the bateau will become an exhibit at the Mabee Farm Historical Site. We miss Bob Sager who was an exemplary ultimate member of the Society. He was a descendant of a number of the first settlers; furthermore as an assiduous student of local genealogy, he claimed kin with many society members who had no idea that Bob was a cousin of theirs. He was the ultimate volunteer, holding several offices, including president and co-chair of the Mabee Farm Committee. The many contributions in his memory made up the \$2000 that paid for the materials for the bateau which was built at the BOCES Marine Academy. The unnamed crew, propelling the bateau, are re-enactors who helped celebrate the launching of the boat.

ATTENTION CIVIL WAR BUFFS

The Honorable Austin A. Yates (1836-c.1915), author of History of Schenectady (1902), was District Attorney of Schenectady as well as County Judge and Member of the Assembly. He is probably most famous as Commander of the Regiment (Company F, 14th Volunteer Reserves) that caught John Wilkes Booth, the infamous assassin of Abraham Lincoln. The portrait of Major Yates in full Civil War regalia hangs in the Society's second floor stairwell and is in desperate need of conservation. Funds are needed to bring the portrait back to its former glory. Would you like to share in preserving a bit of Schenectady history? Estimated cost is \$1000. Tax deductible contributions to be applied toward restoration of this portrait may be sent to SCHS Art Restoration Fund, 32 Washington Avenue, Schenectady NY 12305. The Society thanks you for your continued support. Recent contributors to "Adopt a Portrait" are: Mr. and Mrs. Robert J. Ringlee, Mr. and Mrs. T. Edmund Webb, and Mr. George S. Schmidt. -Ona Curran

THE WALKABOUT

New this year, in addition to the usual Stockade homes being open, is a Waterfront Faire in the Stockade's beautiful Riverside Park. The completion of the Pump House area's renovation below North Ferry Street inspired this new addition to an already special day in old Schenectady. To celebrate the river and Schenectady's rich boatbuilding history, there are a reproduction of an 18th century bateau, river boat rides, and a parade of decorated boats from neighboring yacht clubs. Along the river banks artisans will demonstrate blacksmithing,

soapmaking and other ancient skills, in addition to crafters selling their wares. Downtown restaurants will sell their treats, and the YWCA will lead activities for children in the playground area. Entertainment will be on going at the cannon stage from 1 :00 PM to 7:00 PM, including the Union College Jazz Ensemble, canal balladeer George Ward, and family entertainers The Stringdusters.

Along with other historical figures, Frank Taormina will be host Governor Joseph Yates, strolling the streets, illuminating homes and the history of his family. At the Historical Society docents will show off the many rooms and treasures, and offer complimentary tea and cookies. Bill Massoth will give a tour of the site of the original Erie Canal; Frank Taormina will give a slide presentation on "The Schenectady County Erie Canal, Yesterday and Today"; and Ona Curran will have a self-guided tour showcasing the historic painting collection. Special exhibits in the Vrooman Room include "Looking Through the Erie Canal" and "Bellevue: The Story of a Hospital."

Carriage rides will transport visitors back in time. Three historic churches, First Reformed, First Presbyterian and St. George's Episcopal will offer a mix of tours, lunches, antique shops, and fun sales with St. George's hosting the historic play, "Victory in Defeat," performance at 8 PM. Special stops includes: tours of the newly renovated Stockade Inn, formerly the Mohawk Club, with special music and open for lunch; YWCA tours; Civic Playhouse tours, photo exhibits, videos, and complimentary cookies; the gardens at 109 Union Street, site of an archaeological excavation with hands-on demonstration by SCCC's Dr. Ronald Kingsley and Dr. Louise Basa. Free parking is available in the Schenectady County Community College parking lot, with a free trolley ride to the Stockade.

This year's event is organized by the Schenectady County Historical Society, the Stockade Association, and the Downtown Schenectady Improvement Corporation with major support from MVP, Fleet Bank, Time Warner Cable, The Schenectady Chamber, I Love New York, with additional support from Realty USA and Eastern Office Supply. Tickets are \$15 in advance, children \$7, and \$20 the day of the event. They may be purchased by calling 377-9430. Tickets can be picked up at the Historical Society the day of the event. Bill Massoth will give a tour of the original Erie Canal site

Mabee Farm Receives Work of Art: Handmade hooked rug precious item to be raffled off

The Mabee Farm Historic Site was recently presented with a beautiful handmade hooked rug by Jennifer Parslow of Canajoharie. This rug depicts a scene of the Mabee Farm, and house and barn, and is bordered with foliage in warm earthtones. Ms. Parslow says, "The portrayal of the Mabee Farm in this pictorial rug reflects her gratitude for those who built the farm, and the volunteers who keep it as a place we can all enjoy." She requested the rug be raffled with proceeds to benefit the Mabee Farm. Ms. Parslow used primitive techniques to make this rug similar to those used in the 1800's when this type of rug making was popular. Colonial women (also) used remnants of old and worn clothing torn into strips to make these rugs. Often pastoral scenes of the home or a pictorial of family life were depicted on the rugs.

Before the hooking process actually begins, special preparation of the material is necessary. Ms. Parslow hand cut wool cloth, much of it from vintage clothing, into 1/4 inch strips. Next she over-dyes the wool fabric with wash-fast acid dyes. These special dyes are color fast and fade resistant. She uses sturdier cotton rug warp backing instead of the old feed sacks that were used many years ago. This handmade effort took many hours to complete. While working on the rug, Ms. Parslow said she often thought of the picturesque historic farm setting and imagined the family who lived there. She imagined how different farm life was so many years ago. Ms. Parslow, a

local artisan, has been featured in Rug Hooking Magazine Rugs, X and XIII. She is a well-known rug hooking teacher and has completed commissioned works in the area. She estimates the value of this rug to be \$1,200.

Historically, handhooked rugs decorated walls, floors and even beds in 17th century colonial homes. The expression "Snug as a Bug in a Rug" came about with the use of these rugs on beds during the long winter nights. The Mabee Farm Rug will be raffled off at the Mabee Farm in late September. Raffle tickets are \$5 each with all proceeds benefiting the Mabee Farm Historic Site. Tickets are available at the Mabee Farm and Schenectady Historical Society Events. For more information contact: Mabee Farm Historic Site, 1080 Main Street Rotterdam Jet., 12150 Phone 518-887-5073 email: mabee@nycap.rr.com -Laura Gresh

MABEE FARM FALL CALENDAR

September

14th Annual Fall Festival
20th Stockade Walkabout
21st Sundae on the Farm

October

5th Hudson-Mohawk Tool Club
Meeting and Tailgate sale

FALL FESTIVAL

Attend the fall festival Sept. 14th, 1-5 Colonial Demonstrations, Craft sales, Refreshments, Children's activities and tours of the historic buildings.

Have a pleasant and entertaining afternoon while supporting the Farm. Admission: Adults \$5, Children \$2

TOOL CLUB TAILGATE SALE AND SWAP MEET

Starts at 11 AM with a tailgate sale of tools and related items. Ends with the fall meeting of the Hudson-Mohawk Tool Club. The public is welcome: anyone with interest in old tools or wanting to buy, sell or has questions is welcome. Admission is free

SUNDAE ON THE FARM

Sept. 21, 12-5 pm

The Mabee Farm has been chosen as the host site for the Montgomery County Sundae on the Farm. This will be a fun day for the whole family. Free ice cream sundaes; live animal and dairy displays; cows, pigs, horses, sheep, goats, elk. Farmers' Market, children's games; crafts; Colonial demonstrations; house and barn tours. Learn first hand how the products you eat come from the working farm. This event is sponsored by the Montgomery County Farm Bureau, Schenectady County Farm Bureau, Montgomery County Ag and Farmland Protection Board, Montgomery County Soil and Water Conservation, Hudson Mohawk Resource Conservation Development Council. Free admission and ice cream sundaes. Our usual \$3 donation will be requested for tours

of the Historic Buildings.

MABEE FARM HISTORIC SITE -Richard Lewis, Educational Coordinator

Presenters, demonstrators, and re-enactors have had a busy time this spring at the Mabee Farm Historic Site hosting students from a number of schools, both public and parochial, within a wide area of the greater capital district. We began on May 16th with 4th graders from Elsmere Elementary in Bethlehem, Glenclyff Elementary in Scotia-Glenville, and St. Patrick's School all the way from Catskill. On May 19th, 80 more 4th graders from Mayfield joined students from St. Ambrose School in Latham. The next Friday, about 120 4th graders visited from Green Meadow Elementary in East Greenbush and St. Helen's School in Schenectady. About 140 4th graders from Craig Elementary in Niskayuna and McNulty Elementary in Amsterdam pressed us to the limits on June 10th, and nearly 130 more from Jefferson Elementary in Schalmont, Glendaal in Scotia-Glenville, and another group from St. Ambrose kept us hopping (and churning, hammering, and flailing) on June 18th. We've also had two teacher groups visiting from Guilderland, a number of whom plan to bring their students within the next school year. Feedback from teachers, accompanying parents, and (most important!) students has been very positive. The word is getting out to schools about the excellent (and nearby) program we are offering. We expect to be hosting many more students this coming fall and spring.

LIBRARY DOINGS -Virginia Bolen, Librarian

The One Room School

The monthly meeting for October, sponsored by the Library and Archive Committee, will be "Remembering the One-Room School." Former teachers and students will be sharing their experiences. Come and share yours, too. Please contact the Society at 374-0263 if you are or know of a teacher or student who would be willing to come and participate.

Invitation! Calling (Schenectady County) teachers. Come to a reception to be held in your honor, Wednesday, October 15th from 3:30PM to 5:30 PM. Take a brief tour of our museum and library and learn how we can help you teach Schenectady's history to your students. Please call to reserve your place (374:0263).

NEW TO THE LIBRARY

CDs

1854 Map of Albany - C.D.G.S.

Books

Genealogical Resources in New York and Albany by the Jewish Genealogical Society
Pedigrees of some of the Emperor Charlemagne's Descendants

Church Records

St. Columba's Burials, 1909-1974

St. Columba's Baptisms, 1907-1974

Sacred Heart Burials, 1904-2001

Sacred Heart Baptisms, 1903-2001

Our Lady/Assumption, Marriages, 1903-2002

Our Lady/Assumption, Baptisms, 1933-2002

Old Documents Made New

Three old documents in our collection have been gently preserved and protected by the Northeast Document Conservation Center in Andover, Massachusetts. The funds for the conservation work came from a grant from New York State's Discretionary Grant Program. The documents are an 1856 Fagan wall map of Schenectady County, the Albany-Fort Hunter Plank Road survey by James Frost (nine feet long!) and a Civil War muster roll (NY 134th) found in an attic in Atlanta, Georgia and kindly returned to Schenectady. All of these documents will be available to view during our October monthly meeting.

2004 Calendar

Schenectady Historical Society's 2004 calendar, with the theme "Historic 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 \$9; non-members for \$10; postage and handling \$2.

Landmark Cemeteries of the Capital District

The Shaker Heritage Society announces *Burying the Dead. Landmark Cemeteries of the Capital District*, a four-part series of lectures and tours spotlighting historic cemeteries. The event includes lectures by historians and tours of such cemeteries as Albany Rural Cemetery, Watervliet Shaker Cemetery, and Oakwood Cemetery. Dates involved are September 10, September 11, September 17 and September 25. For more information about the series, Shaker Heritage Society membership or to register, please contact the Shaker Heritage Society at (518) 456-7890 extension 2.

THANK YOU LETTERS...

Dear Assemblyman Tedisco,

... We were pleased to receive payment of the 2002 legislative grant which you secured for supplying material towards building a carriage shed at the Mabee Farm in Rotterdam Junction. We appreciate your continued support of this historical site in our community. The carriage shed is up and has been used since this past fall for storage of some of our antique farming equipment. In addition we seasoned some freshly cut timbers in the shed for use this year in refurbishing our 18th century Inn. Except for masonry repairs most of the work on the Inn is by our own crew of workers. We even made the nails on site.

Sincerely,

William A. Dimpelfeld, President

AND

Dear Senator Farley,

... We were pleased to receive payment of the 2002 legislative grant which you secured for refurbishing the wood floors and sills of the Inn at the Mabee Farm in Rotterdam Junction. We appreciate your continued support

of this one-of-the-oldest historical site in our community. Over the winter we seasoned some freshly cut timbers in our newly constructed carriage shed for use in refurbishing our 18th century Inn. Except for masonry repairs, most of the work on the Inn is by our own crew or workers. We even made the nails on site and planed the floor board using antiques hand tools in our collection. Because the work on the Inn is being done by a Saturday--afternoon-only crew, progress is very slow. It's like watching a HGTV "Dream House" adventure that takes two or three times long than planned. We thank you for your support of our endeavor.

Sincerely,

William A. Dimpelfeld, President

Contributions during June and July 2003 **Without You We Are Nothing!**

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