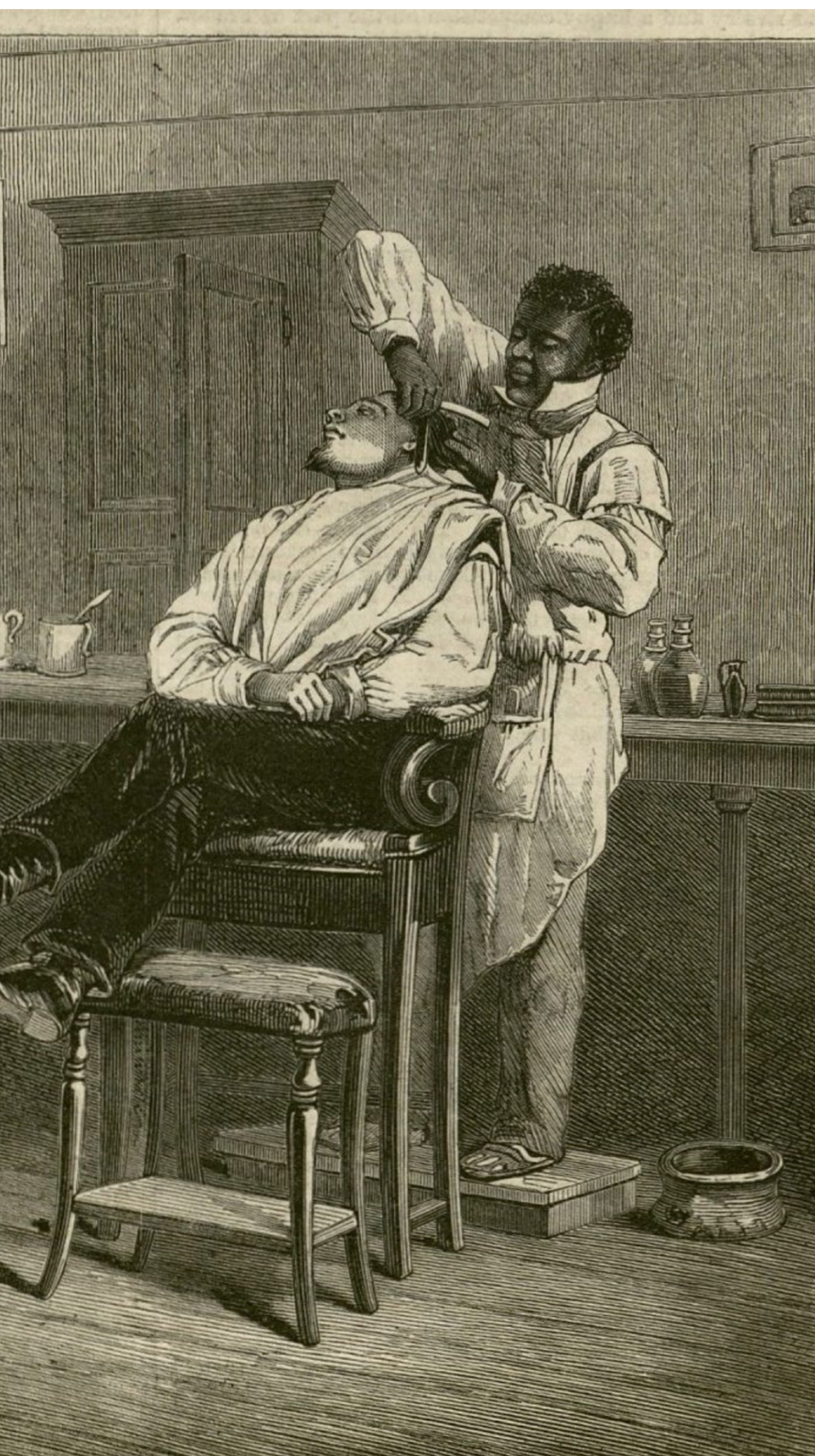


Schenectady County Historical Society



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John Wendell: Reconstructing Black Schenectady

by Michael Diana,
Education & Programs Manager

In the early 19th century, Schenectady played host to a distinctly American process through which hundreds of Black people received their freedom. Although here in the county there had been a small enclave of free African Americans through the late colonial period, the overwhelming majority of Black Schenectadians lived as slaves. And indeed, so had their parents and grandparents, for unknown generations lost to historical memory. As New York State legislation gradually abolished the institution of slavery by 1827, newly freed Schenectadians had to confront a new reality in which they were legally independent, but by no means legally equal. Their stories would surely provide an important perspective – perhaps even a counterpoint to – the ideals that today we like to think are timeless and essential to the American experience.

Unfortunately, the stories of these Black Schenectadians have either been lost in the documentary record, or were more likely never considered important by traditional institutions of public history in the first place. With the limited documents available to research, it may be impossible to truly understand the social realities Black Schenectadians faced in the early 1800s. So, in this article, I would simply like to tell the story of one man named John Wendell. For a variety of reasons we'll soon discover, John stands out

Continued on page 10

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Letter from the President

Remember ventilators? It was only a year or so ago when they were on all of our minds. As the Covid-19 pandemic was beginning to spiral out of control in March last year, Governor Cuomo declared that New York State needed thousands more of them to “overcome an acute shortage.” We needed ventilators badly, you’ll recall, because Covid cases in New York City were starting to double every three days, and hospitals there were running out of space to store the dead bodies.

Hadn’t anyone seen this crisis coming? “No!” said then-President Trump on March 6th. He called Covid “an unforeseen problem.” The president was wrong, of course. According to CNN, “the US intelligence community, public health experts and officials in Trump’s own administration had warned for years that the country was at risk from a pandemic. Some of the warnings specifically mentioned the possibility of a coronavirus pandemic.”

Back in New York, meanwhile, the New York State Department of Health had developed a 2015 plan entitled Ventilator Allocation Guidelines to be implemented in the event of an influenza pandemic. But it never was. As Jim and Marty Strosberg note in their timely new book, *Schenectady’s Battle against Contagious Disease: From Smallpox to Covid 19*, Cuomo instead issued an emergency executive order to redistribute ventilators without any reference to the state’s own 2015 guidelines.

The Strosbergs are, without doubt, authoritative experts in the field of public health. Marty is Professor Emeritus at both Clarkson University and Union College, and a specialist in the fields of health care management, public policy, organization theory, and bioethics. He has also chaired the Schenectady County Public Health Advisory Board for many years. And Jim is a past Chief of Medicine at Ellis Hospital and past President of the Schenectady County Medical Society. Not incidentally, both are familiar to SCHS members, having served in recent years as SCHS Trustees.

It’s a grand understatement to say that the Strosbergs’ book puts our ongoing battle with Covid-19 into clear and understandable historical context. The book connects Schenectady to the public health movement of the late-nineteenth century—when “pure water, sanitation, and personal hygiene became the order of the day”—and to subsequent crises with smallpox, cholera, typhoid, infant and child mortality, diphtheria, tuberculosis, the Spanish flu, polio, and coronavirus.

Understandably, Jim and Marty have struck a chord with Schenectadians and New Yorkers everywhere. The two were even featured on the front page of the June 20th edition of the *Albany Times Union*. The article focuses on the polio pandemic and the fear that was gripping nearly everyone in Schenectady and Saratoga Counties in the 1950s (remember iron lungs?). And it contrasts the response to the polio vaccine with the vaccine hesitancy that is currently forcing public health and government officials to “find creative ways” to “convince Americans to inoculate against coronavirus.” Polio, the article states, is “now considered eliminated in the U.S.” Covid-19 is, as we know, on the decline but still with us.

I want to thank Jim and Marty for giving SCHS an opportunity to associate us with their work by allowing us to publish it. *Schenectady’s Battle against Contagious Disease* is, I think, an important book. We would all do well to read it and recognize that the battle against contagious disease rages on. And as we’ve learned, often painfully, this is a deadly battle. So why not arm ourselves in this fight with the ammunition that scientists, historians, and other knowledgeable people have provided? My own feeling is that it would be foolish to ignore the triumphs and tragedies of the past and unnecessarily tragic to say we didn’t see the next crisis coming. That’s not something Confucius would have had us do. As you may recall, he recommended that we “study the past if you would define the future.” And when did Confucius ever give anyone bad advice?



Robert Weible, SCHS President



Welcome New Trustees!

This April, the Schenectady County Historical Society was pleased to welcome two new members to the Board of Trustees. **Professor Sheri Lullo** and **Hannah Rose Miller** join us from Union College and Partners for Sacred Places, respectively.

Sheri Lullo is an Associate Professor of Art History in the Visual Arts department at Union College. She specializes in the art and archaeology of early China, and teaches courses that explore the arts of China, Japan and India. She's also working on a research project focused on the history and rituals surrounding Union College's Chinese stone lion, known as "the Idol," which was gifted to the college by an alumnus in 1874 and is displayed on campus. She lives in Old Niskayuna with her husband, who works at GE, and their two young boys. Sheri loves biking, and any kind of walk or hike outdoors.

Hannah Rose Miller is a preservation professional presently working with Partners for Sacred Places. Prior to her current position she worked in several preservation nonprofits in both development and community outreach positions. Hannah holds a Masters of Art in Historic Preservation Planning from Cornell University. Hannah Rose has been associated with SCHS since 2016, first as an intern, and later as a Program Assistant. During graduate school she brought a group of Cornell preservation students to help SCHS with the re-interpretation of the Mabee Farm Historic Site.

What's Happening

New Exhibitions

REDESIGNING FASHION: TRANSGRESSION AND IDENTITY IN WOMEN'S HISTORIC DRESS

Through November 13, 2021

A partnership between SCHS and the Fashion & Textiles program at SUNY Oneonta in which students have been given the opportunity to research a historic garment from SCHS' collection, and based on that research, design its modern counterpart. The collaboration has resulted in an exhibition that explores the historical importance of women's clothing and fashion in the expression of cultural values and the creation of identity, and examines how those ideals change over time.

Yoga & Workshops

YOGA ON THE RIVER

Wednesdays at 6pm July-September | \$10, free for members

Energize your mind and body with this gentle Hatha Yoga Practice at Mabee Farm. Made for all levels, and designed to engage breath, body, and mind. With an aim of building functional patterns of movement and flexibility, while building strength, this class will prepare you to flow through the rest of your week! With instructor Mande Guzzo, Yoga practice is held inside the Dutch Barn.

WORKSHOP: LEARN TO WEAVE WITH SIZZ HANDMADE

July 31 at 10am @ Brouwer House Creative | \$50

In this weaving workshop, you will learn basic weaving techniques by making a brioche you can wear on a short sleeve blouse. With everything you need to complete the project, the kit is curated and crafted sustainably. The workshop is a great way to have fun, learn a new skill, and upcycle your summer wardrobe with a little something handmade.

Walking Tours

Walking Tours are free for members. Call or email us to reserve.

REVOLUTIONARY SCHENECTADY

Aug 12 at 5:30pm @ 32 Washington | \$11

The American Revolution is, of course, a pivotal moment in the history of our city and our nation. And while the generation of '76 looms large in our memory, the complex issues of the day often get lost over time. Come explore a conflict that sundered families and communities alike. What does it mean to be a Patriot?

GOSSIPS AND GADFLIES

Aug 26 and 31 at 5:30pm @ 32 Washington | \$11

Can you keep a secret? This tour explores the Stockade through the writings of Harriet Mumford Paige, an ordinary woman with an extraordinary penchant for peddling rumors. Together we'll air out all of her neighbors' dirty laundry!

SCHENECTADY IN THE CIVIL WAR

Sept 7 at 5:30pm @ Washington Ave | \$11

It's the middle of the 19th century and America has been fractured in two. As Union and Confederate forces battle, the fate of the nation hangs in the balance. In this tour we'll examine how Schenectady fit into this struggle. We'll walk the streets and meet the people who lived through this crisis.

SCANDALOUS SCHENECTADY

Sept 14 and 21 at 5:30pm @ Washington Ave | \$11

Every city has its fair share of scandal! Scandalous Schenectady recalls some of Schenectady's more nefarious characters. Bold bootlegging, cruel kidnappings and maybe even a few mysterious murders...this tour has it all!

SCHENECTADY'S GOLDEN AGE

Sept 28 at 5:30pm @ Washington Ave | \$11

At the turn of the 20th century, Schenectady was a booming industrial power: the city that "Lights and Hauls the World." This tour explores this period, the figures and factories that made it so dynamic. We'll look beyond the nostalgia and seek differing perspectives on Schenectady's halcyon days.

For Families

COLONIAL KIDS DAYS

Aug 11, Aug 25, & Sept 1 at 10am @ Mabee Farm | \$8/child

On these special dates, the Mabee Farm will be open just for kids! Tour the entirety of our farm with special demonstrations of colonial crafts. Butter making, barn-building, blacksmithing and meeting the farm animals are just some of the activities available.

Boats and Bikes

BIKE TOUR: ERIE CANAL CRUISIN'

Aug 10 at 5:30pm @ Lock 8 Park | \$15 BYOBike

Canals are what made New York the Empire State! For more than 150 years, the Erie Canal played a vital role in the industry and economy of our city. Today the canal is quiet, dry and largely forgotten by passing motorists. This tour uncovers the incredible history hidden right under our noses. We begin at Lock 8 Park and travel 10 miles round trip on the Mohawk-Hudson Bike Trail. Estimated tour time is 1.5 hours.

BIKE TOUR: ELECTRIC CITY HIGHLIGHTS

Aug 17 at 5:30pm @ Druthers | \$15 BYOBike

This tour begins at the Mohawk Harbor and takes you through some of Schenectady's historic highlights. From the shaded streets and spectacular architecture of the Stockade, to the booming growth of the industrial era, we'll see it all. Estimated tour time is 1.5 hours.

BEERS, BIKES, AND BARGES SCHENECTADY

Sept 2 at 6pm @ Druthers | \$20 BYOBike

Experience Erie Canal history by bike, then enjoy a pint in this statewide summer series along New York's Canals! On Thursday nights throughout the summer an hour long guided bike tour will take guests along the new Empire State Trail while also highlighting that regions' unique Canal history. Following the tour, join your fellow cyclists and brewery founders for a complimentary drink at our participating brewery. Participate for one night at your favorite local spot or try to complete the entire statewide circuit. Registration is at ERIECANALMUSEUM.ORG/.../PRODUCT/BEERS-BIKES-BARGES/

KAYAK THROUGH HISTORY: SCHENECTADY

Sept 25 at 10am @ Mohawk Harbor | \$26

Explore Schenectady from a different vantage point: the Mohawk River! Starting out from Mohawk Harbor, we'll paddle our way upstream to the Glen Sanders Mansion and back, passing under railroad bridges and around wild islands. We'll discuss the history of the river and its surroundings. Price includes kayak rental.

KAYAK THROUGH HISTORY: WATERFORD

Sept 4 and Sept 18 at 10am

@ Waterford Boat Launch | \$26

At the confluence of two mighty rivers, the historic town of Waterford has long been at the crossroads of history. This tour takes you past cascading canals, towering locks and beautiful islands. We'll explore how this tiny town played a huge role in shaping our state. Price includes kayak rental.

Festivals and Events

STOCKADE GARDEN TOUR

Aug 7 at 10am-5pm @ Brouwer House Creative | \$10-\$25

Our very own Brouwer House gardens will be featured on this year's Stockade Association Art and Nature Garden Tour. Cornell Master Gardener Christopher Kirksey has spent the last two years working in the Brouwer House's extensive shade gardens, creating a blossoming gem in the city's historic center. His work with native and rare plants and flowers is sure to dazzle and delight on the Tour. Elsewhere on the tour, you can stroll the charming historic neighborhood and be welcomed into private gardens normally hidden from public view. Tickets are on sale through Friday, Aug. 6. Purchase online at HISTORICSTOCKADE.ORG/BUY-GARDEN-TOUR-TICKETS or at SCHS.

MABEE FARM ARTS AND CRAFTS FESTIVAL

Aug 28 at 10am-3pm @ Mabee Farm | \$5

We're bringing together the very best of the Capital Region's handcrafted goods! Join us as dozens of artists and crafters spread out over the Mabee Farm grounds with their eclectic, beautifully handcrafted items. All items are handmade here in our region, and include jewelry, home decor, fine art, ceramics, artisan foods and wines, soaps, candles, woodworking, and more! Featuring live music!

SCHENECTADY COUNTY FALLFEST

Oct 10 at 11am-3pm @ Mabee Farm | Free

A celebration of all things fall! Join us for a free community festival featuring live music, boat rides, pony rides & petting zoo, hot cider, fall activities, craft fair, historic exhibitions, craft beer, and much more!

Music and Comedy

MOPCO PERFORMANCE

Aug 14 at 5pm @ Brouwer House Creative | \$12

Join us at the beautiful Brouwer House gardens for a special program with Schenectady's favorite (and only) improv comedy troupe- the Mopco! A brief history lesson will serve as inspiration for Mopco's talented comedians who will improvise a one-of-a-kind performance on the spot. You might learn a little, but you'll definitely laugh a lot!

HOWLIN' AT THE MOON CONCERT SERIES

7pm @ Mabee Farm | Free!

August 19: Running the River & Everest Rising

September 16: Rusticator & Everest Rising

October 21: Crabgrass Boys & Lost Radio Rounders

Howlin' at the Moon showcases regional bluegrass, Americana, folk and indie music while providing an authentic musical experience for both audience and musicians. Music traditions are meant to be fluid and evolving — this concert series nurtures regional musical talent while offering opportunities for cross-pollination and to share musical ideas, all in a 1760 Dutch Barn that inspires and reminds us of our place within history. We warmly invite you to come out and enjoy the music and tranquil scenery.

Pre-registration is required for most programs. Please visit schenectadyhistorical.org/programs to reserve your spot.



Weaving Through the Mohawk Valley: A New Project at SCHS

by Susanna Fout, Collections & Exhibitions Manager

The barn loom. A project that has been on my mind since the day we moved the mortise and tenon framed monstrosity out of the Mabee Farm's Dutch barn in the summer of 2019. I guess you could say it's been "looming" over me.

If you are unfamiliar with the SCHS' early 19th century four post "barn loom," there is a good reason why. The old girl sat for many years, tucked away in a back corner of the Dutch barn, surrounded and covered up by the various odds and ends which find their way into barns. And if you have been a part of SCHS for a while, perhaps you remember a time when the loom was actually in use. Looking through old photos from SCHS programs, weddings, and other events, you may see the old girl lurking in the background somewhere. For the last two years the loom has been sitting, unassumingly, in the Franchere Education Center, patiently awaiting the next phase of her life. So, where did this loom come from? Why is it at the Mabee Farm and how do we plan to weave it into our programming?

As with most collection stories I tell, the story of the loom (its "provenance") is shrouded in a bit of mystery. In 2005, the loom was transferred to the SCHS' collection from the Herkimer Home Historic Site located in Little Falls, NY – and that's about all we know. The loom is not original to the 1760s Georgian style home built for General Nicolas Herkimer of Revolutionary War fame; its construction dates to after the estate was sold out of the Herkimer family. Nor does the now-historic site know where it came from. While I can't regale you with an exciting tale of the history of the loom, what I can tell you is that this type of loom was commonly used in colonial Mohawk Valley homes throughout the 18th and 19th centuries. The Mabees themselves were active textile producers. Census records tell us that the Mabee Farm was producing large amounts of felled cloth, flannel, wool cloths, and linen throughout the 1800s. Many early rural farms would have had the means to process their own textiles from fibre to cloth, at least on a subsistence level. On farms such as the Mabees', four post frame looms like the one in our collection allowed home weavers to produce fabric more quickly and efficiently, earning additional income.

Typically, when a museum removes an artifact from their collection (called "deaccessioning"), it does so because that museum does not have the space or resources to house the

artifact, or because the artifact's provenance is unknown or does not relate to the museum's mission. Therefore, it is better suited to another organization. All museums routinely examine their collections and make these deaccessioning decisions, which is how the loom came to be at the Mabee Farm. When the loom first arrived here all those years ago, she was a star. Lovingly restored to working condition, an experienced weaver regularly sat at her bench, throwing shuttles back and forth, weaving all manner of cloth and textiles for curious and inquisitive visitors. As the years passed, and volunteers came and went, the loom's use fell to the wayside. Without a weaver to warp and dress the loom, it was no longer a part of our programming, but rather a hindrance to progress; her giant frame was constantly in the way and shuffled around the property, resulting in sore backs and many groans of discontent from staff.

Yet, it was always the intention at SCHS to resume using the loom; I remember discussing it with our Programs Manager, Mike Diana, on one of my first days at SCHS. At the time, the barn was still packed with collection items, outdated signage, and leftover exhibit materials. As we toured the barn, Mike talked with passion about all the programming he wished SCHS could be doing, if only we had the space, resources, and expertise. As an amateur fiber artist, I have always been fascinated with textile arts, and was instantly drawn to the loom. Even though mice had chewed through remnants of the old warp, and made a nest in the linen heddles, underneath the layers of dust and grime was a loom just waiting to be brought back to life once again. Mike's enthusiasm was contagious.

It has been almost four years since that conversation, and my colleagues and I have been diligently working to develop dynamic, engaging programs and exhibitions. One of these is a project converting a section of the Franchere Education Center's lecture hall into an exhibition and demonstration space. Dedicated to the textile history of the Mabee Farm and our region, "Weaving through the Mohawk Valley" will provide the barn loom with a safe, permanent home where it can be integrated back into our educational programming. There's only one problem: no one on staff had the knowledge and know-how to operate the historic equipment. So, I decided to go to the center for handweaving in the Northeast: the Marshfield School of Weaving.

Located at the foothills of the Groton State Forest in northern Vermont, Marshfield is one of the only places in the country where instructors are actively teaching and training students how to hand weave using historic barn looms. The school is run by Kate Smith, a former apprentice of Norman Kennedy, the master weaver who founded the school decades ago. Weaving since the 1970s, to say Kate is an expert in her field would be an understatement. Her knowledge of the artform applies not just to the techniques themselves, but also the equipment and its history. In June, I had the opportunity to spend a week under Kate's instruction, learning how to weave on these ancient structures.

My first day of class at Marshfield was both overwhelming and awe inspiring. The patience and dedication it takes to learn this craft, and the ingenuity needed to master it, were immediately apparent. A good cloth begins with a good warp, and so that is where our class began. One of the two basic components in weaving, the warp is the yarn threads which run lengthwise through a fabric and are held stationary, in tension, on the loom frame. The weft, or horizontal threads, are inserted over and under the warp, creating woven cloth. The way in which the warp is wound and threaded through the heddles and reeds determines the pattern and style of the fabric. This process is incredibly time consuming, requiring acute attention to detail. There are several dozen ways to mess up, a reality which I learned first hand. The margin for error is wide; corrections take a considerable amount of time and determination to resolve. It took me almost 2.5 days to dress the loom correctly before I could even begin weaving.

During the week I spent at the school, I learned a lot about frustration and patience. I also learned more about the majestic machines on which generations of women (and men) before me wove beautiful fabrics for their families and their communities. Handmade outside of the factory system, no two loom frames are exactly alike. In all of her years of weaving, and the tens of dozens of looms which have come through her studio, Kate has never seen two of the same loom. Lack of standardization is so prevalent that historians believe loom construction was carried out by individual craftsmen, rather than by specialists, and modified by the weavers for whom they were built. Barn looms are so named for their style of construction, which is similar to that of a barn, not for where they were stored. Indeed, it is far more likely that the barn loom in our collection, or any large frame loom used by the Mabees, resided in and was used in an attic space, rather than in an outbuilding. Regional style also played an important role in frame construction. For example, Dutch and Palatinate Germans settling in New York's Mohawk Valley used a timber framing style for their barns, which is perfectly mimicked in the loom frames documented from the area. Rounded tenons, which extend beyond the mortise and are pinned with wedges, are the hallmark of that construction. Both our loom and the Dutch barn at Mabee Farm exhibit this same style of mortise and tenon joining.

At the end of the class, I was proud to have completed three projects: a wool blanket, a small rag rug, and two yards of fabric. Once the warps were on the loom, weaving was an absolute joy. Though I got off to a bit of a slow start, once I found the rhythm of throwing shuttles and shifting treadles, it was (mostly) smooth weaving. As I worked through each project, I reflected on the history and importance of this trade. It is estimated that one-fifth of the working world is occupied with weaving and its allied trades, or in the distribution of its finished goods. Every civilization in the history of humanity has developed a process for turning organic material into thread, and weaving that thread into cloth. The foundations of weaving – the intertwining of the warp and the weft – are universally similar, wherever they are found. The practice seems to be almost ingrained in human nature, as these

underlying principles were used to create everyday necessities like shelters and baskets. The art of weaving was slowly perfected and refined over thousands of years, often involving the sharing of ideas and intermingling of cultures. Technology has merely created faster, more efficient methods for weaving. Even modern, computerized looms are just automated versions of their predecessors; the components are always the same. Though technology has increased the availability and access to woven goods, there is a drawback to this oversaturation: a lack of understanding of how products are produced, and a decreasing appreciation for the interwoven cycles of nature which create them. This is where the Mabee Farm can play a role.

While I am by no means an expert now, I am excited to continue to develop my hand weaving skills, and share what I have learned with staff, volunteers, and visitors. In combination with our shearing and spinning programs, we now have the ability to demonstrate textile production from fibre to cloth, just as the Mabees and countless early families did it. And, over time, perhaps we will be able to incorporate more programming such as flax and linen production, dying, and sewing into our repertoire.

Experience through hands-on activity is about more than just teaching history. Engaging with authentic objects—historic houses, artifacts, the landscape—is about creating an appreciation and understanding of the present through a connection to the past. By interlocking the importance of traditional crafts, trades, and agriculture with modern life, we preserve and improve our knowledge of the communities and environments in which we live. Giving students and visitors opportunities for hands-on learning allows them to participate in an important historical activity and to experience the success and failure of those processes. Working with our hands is important. Understanding the sources of materials and products which we consume is important. Creating and appreciating beauty from these is a good reason to live.

A special thank you to Mohawk-Hudson Weavers' Guild members Stephanie Morton, Joan Jensen, and Sarah Boink for their continued assistance in this loom project. We hope to complete "Weaving through the Mohawk Valley" by the end of the year.

Images: The looms at Marshfield School of Weaving; Suzy working on a barn loom; Suzy's finished pieces. All images courtesy of Suzy Fout.

From the Library

A Note from the Librarian

We all know that the library is a resource for genealogists and historians, but did you know we serve K-12 and college students as well? Over the past year, students at all levels have used our collections in their research and coursework. One fourth grader, for example, researched her school's history for an article in the school newspaper. Students at Siena College transcribed documents and wrote metadata for their virtual service-learning projects. Their work will be used to help researchers and create new digital collections. The library also hosted students from SUNY Schenectady, SUNY Albany, and St. John's University for internships and on-site service-learning projects. I look forward to working with students and faculty both virtually and in-person in the future!

- Marietta Carr, Librarian/Archivist

Recent Blog Posts

The Grems-Doolittle Library Collections Blog (GREMSDOOLITTLELIBRARY.BLOGSPOT.COM) is a great resource for discovering Schenectady County's history. Here are a few recent posts that you may have missed:

Book Review: "America's First Freedom Rider: Elizabeth Jennings, Chester A. Arthur, and the Early Fight for Civil Rights" by Jerry Mikorenda

by Dr. Marty Strosberg | April 2021

In 1854, Elizabeth Jennings refused to leave a segregated New York City horse-drawn streetcar. She was thrown off and roughed up by the conductor and driver. She sued. In *America's First Freedom Rider*, Mikorenda examines her case and the struggle for civil rights in antebellum New York. Marty Strosberg reviewed the book in anticipation of Mikorenda's virtual talk at SCHS.

Eleanor Dorcas Pond Mann, Schenectady Physician
by Gail Denisoff | June 2021

Dr. Eleanor Mann opened her private medical practice in Schenectady in 1903, making her the third female doctor in the city. In this post, Gail Denisoff recounts her life and work.

New Collections on NY Heritage

With the help of the library volunteers, we regularly add new items and collections to NYHERITAGE.ORG, an online portal which enables researchers to access historical, scholarly, and cultural materials from institutions across NY. Over the past year we've added three new collections:

Schenectady County Deeds - This collection contains 18th and 19th century deeds for land and property in Schenectady County. The documents are part of the Grems-Doolittle Library Historic Manuscripts Collection.

Documents About Enslaved People in Schenectady - This collection is composed of 18th and 19th documents that mention enslaved and formerly enslaved people in Schenectady County. The materials include wills, bills of sale, and deeds.

Pearson Street Books - The Pearson Street Books consist of four volumes of notes and sketched maps created by Jonathan Pearson, city historian, about property ownership in the city of Schenectady from the 1660s through the 1800s.

Visit the library blog or Collections and Catalog page of our website for more information on the materials available in our collection and how to do research in the library.

Image: Dr. Eleanor Mann and companion in carriage, circa 1910. Grems-Doolittle Library Family Photos Collection



John Wendell, Barber,
HAS removed from State-Street, to No. 4,
 COOKE'S ROW, in Ferry-Street, where
 he will pay the strictest attention to those who
 favour him with their custom.
Schenectady, Nov. 10, 1824. 21w3

Image, cover: A black barber shaves the face of a lounging white man in a barber shop. From The Illustrated London News, 9 March 1861. Courtesy of University of Missouri Libraries.

Image, above: Baber Ad from Schenectady City Directory. As an adult, John Wendel first appears in the record as a young barber, moving his business from State to Ferry Street. One might wonder, what prompted the move?

relatively well in written records. His story, while interesting in its own right, provides a valuable focal point to better understand the world he lived in.

Allow me to begin with a note on terminology because there might be some sensitive language in play here. Throughout this article, I might use terms such as “Negro” or “Colored” to describe non-white people. I might further specify between “Black” people and “Mulatto.” In the parlance of the 18th century, the former term refers to people with exclusively African ancestry while those in the latter category had some identifiable European ancestry. This is an editorial decision that begins with the unpleasant understanding that early American society was one strictly defined by racial categories. Whether it’s in census data, city directories, or everyday conversation, non-white people are almost always explicitly identified as such. The category that a person belonged to would follow one for life, with legal, social, and economic implications. Our goal here is to explore those. Thus, it’s important to carefully use the terms I’ve seen in the primary sources I’ve studied. By substituting more modern, sensitive language, I worry I might obfuscate historical realities. Just keep that in mind as we go along.

John Wendell was born into a scandal that no doubt had a profound impact on his life. As a result, the circumstances of his birth are surrounded in an extra layer of mystery. Key insights about John’s birth comes from an unlikely source in the person of one Harriet Paige, a Schenectady socialite writing nearly 60 years after the fact. Paige provides us with a brief portrait of John’s maternal family. His Grandmother Pye was enslaved by the Van Dyck family in Schenectady, while John’s grandfather, Tom, had been enslaved by the prosperous Bloodgood family of Albany. We may never know how Pye and Tom met each other; it’s entirely possible they were “married” even before they were free. In any case, it would appear these two began their new free lives

together in Albany. The Federal census of 1800 lists two men known simply as “Free Tom” living in Albany, but none in Schenectady. That might seem like a curious appellation but it was the rule at the time. Enslaved families were at constant risk of sale and separation, making generational ties ephemeral. Furthermore, surnames were superfluous for people with no legal standing. And so for newly freed people like Pye and Tom, their peculiar status was reflected simply by the designation of “free.” While we’ll never know for sure, it’s likely that one of the “Free Toms” of Albany was John’s grandfather. Later in life, Tom and Pye adopted the Bloodgood surname for themselves and, ostensibly, their children. Unfortunately, we know nothing about these children, including the daughter who would become John Wendell’s mother. We don’t know when she was born and, despite our best efforts, even her first name is lost to the record. For our purposes, at the risk of anachronism, we’ll call her simply Ms. Bloodgood. And the one thing we do know about Ms. Bloodgood is that she was of child-bearing age around the year 1800.

Now let’s look at John Wendell’s paternal family. The Wendell name is quite a prominent one and provides a telling contrast to the nameless Tom and Pye. Wendell family genealogy traces their roots back to Evert Jansen Wendell, who came to New Amsterdam from Germany in 1649. Through the colonial period the Wendell family would branch out, amass property, and marry into other prominent families like the Glens, the Lansings and even a Van Rensselaer or two. Their influence was such that, even today, you might recognize their name on street signs throughout Albany and Schenectady. But for our story, we’ll focus on Hermanus Ahasuerus Wendell. Where Tom and Pye are barely identifiable in the 1800 census, we can find Hermanus proudly listed at the head of his household. This included a wife, five children, and three enslaved people. Clearly, this was a family of considerable wealth, at the top of the socioeconomic order. How could their story intersect that

of the Bloodgoods who were effectively at the bottom? The answer involves Hermanus's son John Wendell; not the subject of our article but his father.

What exactly transpired will likely remain a mystery but at some point soon after the 1800 census, the Black Ms. Bloodgood and the white John Wendell conceived a child together. This child is the subject of our article and would also be named John Wendell. It is certainly anachronistic but for the sake of clarity, I'll hereafter refer to the white father as John Sr. and the mixed-race child as John Jr. The ever-vigilant gossip Harriet Page tells us that "John Wendell the mulatto was born when his father was 14 years old!!" Given the age of the father, the vast difference in status between the parents, and the fact that our writer does indeed use two exclamation points, we can imagine the scandal this affair caused. The incredibly young age of the father suggests to me that mother was also of a young age. Biologically speaking, she couldn't have been much younger. If she was, perhaps, a hired servant girl of the Wendell family, that might explain how these two children from different social spheres came into contact. It was quite common for poorer families, both white and Black to hire adolescent children out to make ends meet. But, perhaps, we shouldn't let our imaginations run too far with this. We must also wonder if this was a consensual relationship. Indeed, given the racial power dynamics in play, we must wonder if modern notions of consent are even intelligible to this time period.

Throughout the first half of the 19th century, we can see evidence that sexual liaisons between white and Black people are not uncommon in Albany or Schenectady. In another of her stories, Paige tells us of Dr. William Anderson, a white Schenectady physician who was "hand in glove with everyone down to a Negro Wench." One day, Paige tells us, "he got into trouble with a girl of Mrs. Campbell's and ran away on account of it." Anderson spent some years in exile in New Orleans only to die en route back to Schenectady. Furthermore, in a remarkable coincidence, in 1826 we see another white Wendell man worried about some "trouble" he was in. Our archive holds a letter in which a friend counsels a distraught Henry Wendell on how to handle a "sick" woman who was formerly in his employ. We should note that even in this confidential letter, this friend is unwilling to speak plainly about what happened or who the woman was. The veiled references and euphemisms used are a testament to the scandal of such a situation. Speaking broadly, the 1860 federal census shows us that of the 241 non-white people living in Schenectady, 60 are listed as "Mulatto." Among these 60 people, we find 15 unique surnames, suggesting at least 15 unique origin stories.

But even if sex happened, albeit under dubious circumstances, marriage between white and Black people was unthinkable. Federal census data for Schenectady does not list a single interracial married couple until the year 1900. And indeed, marriage was apparently not an option in our story with Ms. Bloodgood and John Wendell Sr. But as scandalous as the liaison was, it would be an even greater disgrace if the Wendells did nothing to support the baby. In Paige's accounts,

we commonly see young men needing to pay cash settlements to women with whom they had affairs, but no intentions of marrying. In the aforementioned case of 1826, Henry Wendell apparently had to make "satisfactory arrangements" with the family of the Black woman he got pregnant. Surely this would be the case in our story as well. On behalf of his young son, Hermanus Wendell must have come to some arrangement with the young Ms. Bloodgood and her parents to support a mulatto grandson he wouldn't otherwise acknowledge.

In the 1810 federal census, we find Pye and Tom now living in Schenectady having formally adopted the surname Bloodgood. We might wonder if Hermanus Wendell had the Bloodgoods leave Albany as a condition of their settlement. What's clear is that with a rough, full-day's journey between these two towns, John Sr. could hardly have played an active role in John Jr's life. There was another branch of the Wendell family living in Schenectady at the time but I doubt they harbored any fraternal sentiment for their young, mixed-race cousin. Of course, John Jr would go on to take his father's surname. Frankly, I'm not sure what to make of that but I imagine this rankled the white Wendells of the area. John Wendell Jr would be raised by his young mother and grandparents. We know from Harriet Paige that they lived in a house along Green Street, still unnumbered in those days. Tom had been a cook for the Bloodgoods of Albany and as a formerly enslaved woman, Pye would certainly have experience with domestic chores. It's likely that Pye, Tom, and John's mother used these skills to support the family, selling their labor to white families with disposable income. If we assume that the Wendells of Albany did indeed pay a cash settlement to the Bloodgoods, that might also have buoyed the family finances. Unfortunately that's where specific details end. The Bloodgoods and young John Wendell even disappear from the census record for a few decades, even in decades where other evidence suggests they still lived in Schenectady. Instead, we must look to more general legal and social trends to understand the world John Jr was raised in.

In 1810, there were 183 other free Black Schenectadians while still a further 318 enslaved people. Altogether, Black Schenectadians represented about 7% of the county's population. Of course, those who were still enslaved were legal chattel of the people who owned them. You'll recall that New York law required the manumission of all slaves by 1827. The Bloodgoods were at least free, and had some legal standing. Court documents from the period show that crimes committed by white persons against free Black persons were prosecuted. However, in many ways, the Bloodgoods were second class citizens. For instance, Black men without significant property were unable to vote. In spiritual matters, free Black persons were also treated unequally. We see this prominently in the memoir of Julia A.J. Foote, a Black evangelical born in Schenectady in the 1820s. As for the social realities of the day, we must return to the diaries of Harriet Paige. In the encyclopedic writings of this 18th century socialite, she only names a literal handful of her Black neighbors. These, and other unnamed Black Schenectadians, are described as domestic workers, food vendors, and general laborers. She

speaks of them in amicable yet noticeably distant terms. They're simply not a part of her social stratum. In one curious passage, Paige mentions a certain old building, then visible in a "Negro Lane." This is a term she uses so casually and without explanation that it must have been commonly understood in her time. After extensive analysis of this passage, I can only conclude that a "Negro Lane" was a rear alley way in which Black domestic servants could access a wealthy home without being seen or heard, much like we understand a servants' staircase today. And perhaps this might serve as a telling metaphor for the social realities of John Wendell and the Bloodgoods faced as Black Schenectadians in the 1800s.

As John Wendell Jr. grows into adulthood, we can see him take on a variety of occupations. Martlet's 1841 City Directory suggests he published something known as the *Globe Recess*. We know nothing about this periodical and it likely didn't survive for long. The 1861 directory describes him as a "fruit dealer." But he is best known as a barber. We know he ran his own business as early as 1824, when John took out an advertisement to alert potential customers that his shop would be moving from State Street to Ferry Street. At this time, John was in his 20s and had been in business for some time. How could such a young man, from a family of modest means, afford to start his own business? It's certainly possible his mother and grandparents had been able to save enough for this purpose. But I also wonder if the hush money from his father's family served as start-up capital. However he got started, by becoming a barber John Wendell entered the trade of the most prominent "colored" men in Schenectady.

Recall that at the time, Schenectady's public free schools were closed to Black children, which effectively closed off many professional career paths. Many Black men at this time were farm laborers, but few could acquire the acres of land needed to be a farm owner. Census data from later in the century shows that no Black men entered into artisanal professions that required an apprenticeship; trades like blacksmithing, broom making, or carpentry. While I can't find any stated rule to explain this, I would assume that prevailing racial attitudes of the day ensured white tradesmen would not take Black apprentices. And so, the barber's trade was a unique opportunity for Black men. It required no formal schooling, perhaps a little vernacular training and a relatively small initial investment for rent and supplies. Other well-known Black barbers from this time include such figures as Francis Dana and Richard P.G. Wright. But these men, remarkable as they were, came to Schenectady from out of state and did not stay for their whole lives. John Wendell's story is a truly local one, and tells us more about our local history. And even among this notable group of Black professionals, John Wendell proved to be particularly successful.

The 1860 census values John Wendell's real estate holdings at \$2,000 and his personal property at an extra \$100. This would make him the second richest "colored" person in Schenectady at the time. John used his position not just for his own benefit but in the service of Schenectady's Black community at large. He was wealthy enough to vote in New York, and was clearly

politically active. He served as one of the first trustees of Schenectady's African Methodist Episcopal Church. In 1840, he was the secretary at a meeting of Black activists seeking an expanded franchise. Through his writings, he advocated for greater equality for "Negroes" in New York. He petitioned the Common Council to better fund the City's segregated Black school. If nothing else, his work on behalf of the Black community shows us that despite having a white father, John Wendell was definitely considered "colored."

John and his wife Abigail had at least nine children together and lived in what must have been an impressive \$2000 home in the Third Ward of the city, near the corner of Pine Street and Fonda Street. This area had the highest concentration of Black families and property owners in the city; more than a dozen households in close proximity. Furthermore, the 1860 census lists most of these people as property owners. While some white families lived here as well, we might still consider this neighborhood to be a focal point of the "colored" community in Schenectady. Looking more broadly, we can find people of color living in every ward of the city in the 19th century. However, those living in the first and second wards tend to be domestic servants living in the home of white employers; there are few Black households there. Of course, this makes sense, as these areas were built in the colonial period at a time when most people of color were considered not property owners but simply property. Land in these wards would be passed down almost entirely through white families who had always been free to acquire wealth. The third, fourth, and later fifth wards of the city, while considered intercity today, were the newly developing "suburbs" of the early 19th century. For a generation of newly freed people, these would be the most accessible areas of town. The Black neighborhood where the Wendell family lived would eventually be consumed by the growth of the Schenectady Locomotive works at the end of the century. Today, Fonda Street is known as North Jay and was designated "Little Italy" in 2004. Walking through the area today, you see no evidence of what it may have looked like in John Wendell's time.

John Wendell died in 1875 at over 70 years old. His wife, Abby, passed away not long after. Many of their children remained in Schenectady for another two generations, and carried on the proud reputation of their parents. Two of their sons, Peter and Robert, followed their father in the barber's trade with similar success. It's unfortunate that, despite great effort, we can only construct this very basic description of the man's life. The everyday details of his experience have likely been lost forever. Worse yet, there are hundreds of other "colored" Schenectadians from the 19th century who we can find in the census, but whose lives remain a mystery. I imagine few of these people have as uplifting an epilogue as John. For them, the color of their skin served as an obstacle to personal progress. From the 19th century well into the modern period, they and their families were effectively sidelined from the central developments of Schenectady's story. We at the Historical Society will continue to work to uncover as much about them as we can.



Image, above: The approximate location of John Wendell's barber shop in 1824, the intersection of Ferry and State Streets.

36		Barney	"	1	M									36
37	135	Barney	Kelly	26	M		Lat							37
38		Ellen	"	24	F									38
39		Barney	"	13	M									39
40	136	John	Wendell	52	M	W	Barber							40
41		Abby	"	52	F	W								41
42		John	"	14	M	W								42

Dwelling-house number in the order of visitation.	Families numbered in the order of visitation.	The Name of every Person whose usual place of abode on the first day of June, 1850, was in this family.	DESCRIPTION.			Profession, Occupation, or Trade of each Male Person over 15 years of age.	Value of Real Estate owned.	Place of Birth. Naming the State, Territory, or Country.	Married within the year.	Attended School within the year.	Persons over 20 years of age who cannot read & write.	Whether deaf and dumb, blind, insane, idiotic, pauper, or convict.
			Age.	Sex.	White, black, or other.							
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1		Thomas Wendell	10	M	W			NY		1		
2		Blanchina	17	F	W			"				
3		Nancy	16	F	W			"				
4		Philetia	7	F	W			"				
5		Nancy Thompson	62	F	B			"				
6	137	John Almer	60	M	B	Lat		"				
7		Isabella	65	F	B			"				
8	138	Francis Thompson	48	M	B	Barber	2,000	"				
9		Sydia	46	F	B			"				

Image, above: Here John Wendell appears in the 1850 Federal Census along with his wife Abby, five children and an older woman whose relation is unknown. While the census does provide us valuable information, it can ultimately paint only a superficial picture of someone's life.

The Return of Small Ruminants

by Mary Zawacki, Executive Director

John Ackner, our Facilities Manager-cum-farmer-cum-blacksmith won't let me forget my second day at work at SCHS, over seven years ago. I think he delights in what he tasked me with that day, or, at the very least, he finds it endlessly humorous. I was fresh from "downstate" and out of grad school, and had never spent more than an hour on a farm in my life. "Wear strong shoes, tomorrow," John informed me. "We're hauling manure."

I'm generally a good sport about these sorts of things, despite not always knowing what I'm getting myself into. So, two days into my new job as Curator, I laced up a pair of red high top Converse, pulled on a fresh "Mabee Farm" t-shirt and headed in to meet John.

We rode up into the hills of Glenville in his pickup. I complimented John's taste in Baroque music; he scoffed at my footwear choice. When we pulled up to our destination -- a farmhouse scattered with rusted tractors, outbuildings, and cows -- I immediately understood John's ridicule.

Mabee Farm's small ruminants at the time, a cud-chewing goat and sheep, had just spent the winter cozied up inside the barn of a gruff local farmer. I suppose it was a decent trade off for her. The farmer housed Goat Girl and YahYah the sheep for the winter alongside her cattle, and in return, John and I cleaned the resulting manure out of the barn.

It took most of the day, and I was a little bit thirsty, but mostly confused about my new job. "Not in the job description" is an understatement. My sleek high tops were destroyed; I think I threw them out the next day. Life at Mabee Farm, with John, and Goat Girl, and YahYah, would take some adjusting.

In the seven years I spent with YahYah, I grew accustomed to her bleating, understood and cared for her basic needs, and made myself indispensable when it came to her annual shearing. YahYah and Goat Girl were living vessels that helped me understand farming. Caring for these two animals connected me to farm life, to the rhythm of the seasons, and ultimately to the history of animal shepherding and humans' relationship to livestock. And, to me, YahYah was everything a sheep should be: big and fluffy, a bit stupid, and totally

adorable.

YahYah's death on Easter morning of this year came as a surprise. YahYah wasn't supposed to die; she was always going to be there, our Mabee Farm mascot, greeting thousands of children every year, begging for dandelions. Yet, the following Monday morning, John, Mike Diana, and I solemnly lowered her body into the ground, in the woods along the Mohawk. She was still fluffy, but somehow so, so small. We pushed dirt over YahYah's body with our hands, and I moved a stone in place to mark her grave. "She was a good sheep," someone said. Maybe me. Then we dispersed into the morning mist, remaining silent.

Over the centuries, the Mabee family kept many sheep on the property. It's likely they kept goats too, as well as cattle, chickens, and rabbits. Yet sheep specifically are repeatedly mentioned in Mabee family documents. The Mabees raised them for milk, for meat, and for wool. Today, the animals at Mabee Farm are kept for none of these reasons. We're a

working farm in the sense that we grow crops and plan our days based on the weather and the seasonal chores in store, but above all, we serve a cultural and educational purpose. Our animals are pets: beloved and treated to what I hope is a life of peace and contentment, free from fear.

To that end, one thing was clear when YahYah passed. Ruminants aren't meant to live in solitude. Like any other herd or pack animal, goats and sheep are gregarious, seeking

companionship with others of their kind. The death of YahYah left Goat Girl a widow. A lonely old goat spending her nights alone, gazing out the window. Her sadness haunted me: we needed to adopt a new friend for Goat Girl. Perhaps another goat, this time? Or should we stick with sheep? After all, the sheep-shearing and spinning of wool from sheep fleece is an integral part of our education programs at Mabee Farm.

I started making calls to local farmers. "Do you have a young lamb we might buy?" The answer was no, again and again. In Upstate New York, most sheep aren't farmed for their wool. It's not lucrative. Instead, farmers raise sheep for lamb chops. And, with Easter having just passed, much of the local lamb population had been recently slaughtered. This only amplified my desire to find a new sheep for the Mabee Farm. Should one -- or two -- be somehow available, we could save them from the slaughterhouse, and give them a long, peaceful life on the banks of the Mohawk.

This is where the historical -- and indeed contemporary -- aspects of farming diverge from the reality of running a historic site. It is impossible that the Mabees purchased



livestock for the sole purpose of raising them as pets. Even today, this is a rarity. But I think our approach to livestock makes the Mabee Farm a little bit special. By no means are we an animal sanctuary; we're historians, librarians, and curators, after all. But we do recognize how valuable it is for children and adults alike to interact with the visceral parts of farming. Planting seeds, harvesting rye, and looking a goat in the eye contribute to an understanding of the land that is difficult to access in contemporary society. And that's what we're here for.

My search for lambs concluded about a month later, with surprising results. See, when you take a group of animal lovers out to a farm to pick out a critter, one whose life you know you'll be saving, it turns out you end up leaving with two. Or three. Or in our case, four.

We welcomed four baby ruminants to the Mabee Farm this spring. They're adorable, and I'm not just saying that because they're "mine." Families have been visiting the Mabee Farm all

year to meet the critters, with children delighting in the antics of the twin goats, and marveling at how small and woolly our two lambs are. A recent yoga class in the Dutch Barn was the stage for more caprine antics, and the opportunities for photos are endless. It feels good to have new, young lives here at Mabee Farm. It feels especially good welcoming these animals home after a year of such misery and grief.

All of this is a long-winded and roundabout way to say "welcome" to our new animal friends. Abby and Ellie are twin pygmy goats, just weaned from their mother's milk. Annie is a Katahdin and Dorper mix sheep, who grows hair instead of wool. And Finn, the baby, is a castrated Finnsheep, raised for his dark wool. Together the four small ruminants form quite the herd. They've already knocked me down once, hunting for wildflowers. I don't begrudge them.

Mostly, though, I hope you'll come out to Mabee Farm to meet them.



Images: A midsummer day at Mabee Farm as John Ackner expanded the fencing for the herd. Pictured here are the Pygmy goat twins and Finn, the Finnsheep, sharing a meal after grazing on the lawn. Opposite Page: The author with Ellie at Mabee Farm.

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Around SCHS



Around the County

with Bill Buell, County Historian

In 1921, his second year with the New York Yankees, Babe Ruth hit 59 home runs, batted .378 and had 168 RBIs.

Frank Mountain, an assistant chief with General Electric's factory fire department in Schenectady, was impressed, but not awe struck. He would have loved to have the opportunity to take the mound against the Great Bambino.

At least that's what he told reporters in June of 1921 at the age of 61, when his baseball career was well behind him. A Fort Edward native who moved to Schenectady as a young boy, Mountain was one of the best baseball players in the country during the late 19th century. While his first serious competition was as a member of the Union College baseball team, he left school before graduating and headed to the pros where he played for the nearby Troy Trojans, the Detroit Wolverines, the Cleveland Cavaliers, and the Columbus Buckeyes, as well as a few other teams. His best year was in 1884 when he went 23-17 for the Buckeyes and posted an ERA of 2.45.

My catalyst for looking back on the life and career of Frank Mountain was the July 6 ceremony at St. John the Baptist Cemetery in Schenectady where a headstone honoring his father, Civil War veteran David Mountain, was placed in the family plot.

Julie Mountain, Frank's great-granddaughter, did all the work researching David's life and death, and while much of what she learned was new to her, she had always been familiar with Frank and his exploits on the baseball field.

"He was one of the first to be credited with throwing a curve ball," said Mountain, a Scotia native who graduated from Union College in 1987. "Candy Cummings of New Bedford, Mass. gets credit for throwing the first curve six or seven years earlier than Frank, but it was Frank who really developed the pitch. There were a lot of people back then who believed that the curveball was nothing more than an optical illusion. What Frank did was have the Union College engineering professors set up some tests so they could prove his pitch was actually curving."

Mountain said that her athletic ancestor started playing baseball for Union when he was still in high school. Apparently, the rules covering such things were a little more relaxed back in those days, and while Frank never got his diploma from Union, he remained a member of the college community.

"He stayed very active with the college and was well liked by his classmates," said Julie Mountain. "We have pictures of him participating in many class reunions at Union, and our family has donated all those photographs to the college."

According to another old newspaper clipping, Mountain pitched one game for Union in 1879 and ten more in 1880 before officially enrolling at the school.

Another article suggests that it was Mountain who "discovered" the spitball, and that he would never think of taking direction from the catcher about which pitch to throw. That was his decision. He once pitched a no-hitter, and during that same stretch allowed just four hits over three games. Also, in very Ruthian style, Mountain hit a home run while picking up the pitching victory in the no-hitter.

"He was very gifted, and quite a character," said Julie Mountain. "He also sang in the choir at St. John the Evangelist and had a daughter, Rose Mountain, who went on to sing opera at the Met in front of then-governor Franklin Roosevelt. He sent her a greeting card during the holidays, and we have also donated that to Union College."

Mountain, who now lives in Westmore, Vermont, said she isn't done looking into her family's history. "We heard that we have a distant relative in the Schenectady area who has one of Frank's original bats," she said. "If I can ever get my hands on that, that will be donated to Union College, too."

Nicknamed Curly, Frank and his daughter Rose are both buried at the Holy Redeemer Cemetery in Niskayuna. Mountain played professionally for seven years, his career coming to an end after an arm injury curtailed his pitching prowess. In his last season he mostly played first base and, according to baseball records, he played his final game for the Pittsburgh Alleghenys on Aug. 17, 1886. He also managed the Toledo Maumees of the Tri-State League in 1888 before returning to Schenectady, where he landed a job with GE around 1895. He worked there for nearly 40 years before passing away on Nov. 19, 1939 at the age of 79. For more information on Frank Mountain, check out the Grems-Doolittle Library Blog at the Schenectady County Historical Society.

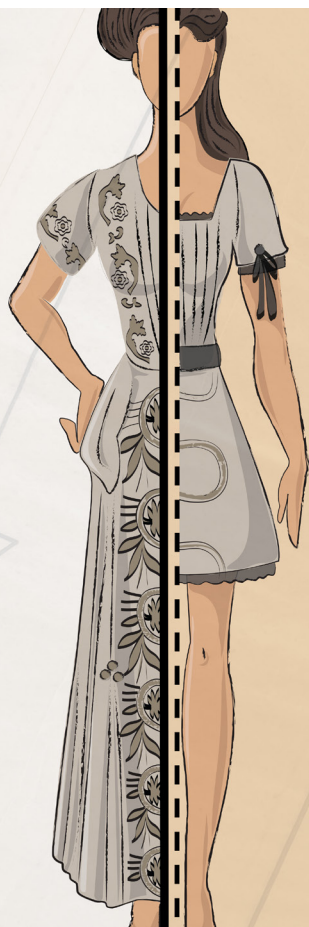


Image: A team photo of the Columbus Buckeyes from 1884. Mountain, with the moustache, is in the front row on the left.

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