

The House that George Built

By Cedric Taylor

This essay and accompanying photographs earned Cedric the 2015 George Hendricks Jr. Memorial Scholarship awarded by HSM and the Margaretville Fire Dept. Cedric has entered Bob Jones University in South Carolina and plans to study biochemistry.

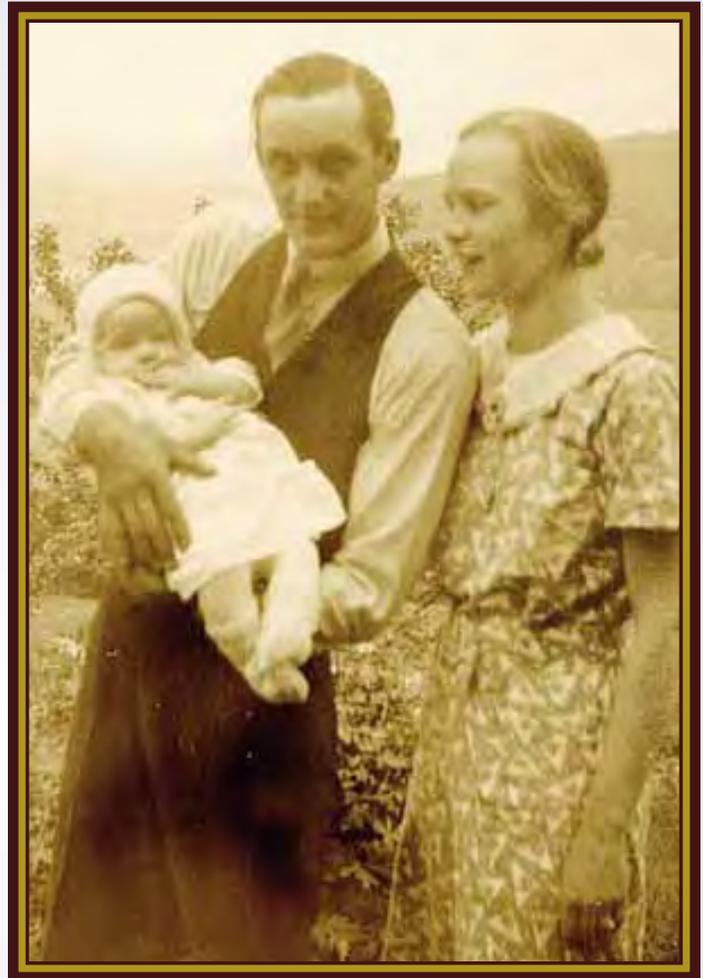
Some people spend their entire lives searching for something to love and call their own. My great-grandfather found both of these things in the house that he built in the Bull Run. Over the many, many years it took him to build the house, he never stopped his labor of love.

The history of my house dates back to January 22, 1948 when my great-grandparents, George and Ruth Fairbairn, purchased property on the Upper Bull Run in Margaretville. Their purchase resulted from the impending Pepacton Reservoir, which claimed most of the Dunraven area. For the house they lived in, they received \$1,000 from the City of New York, which they used to buy the property in Bull Run. They paid \$1,060 (including lawyer fees) to Willard Sanford for 137 acres of woods, pastures and wetlands.

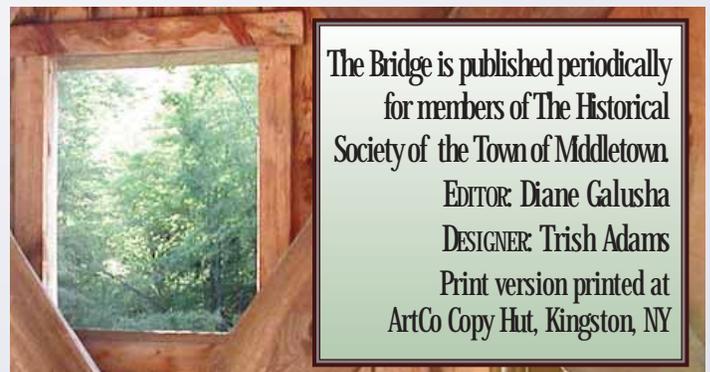
Immediately, George began a project that was dear to his heart: a several acre pond. His zeal didn't exclude his wife and family. He built a small cabin on the property to tide them over until a larger house could be built. Being an industrious man, George used materials that were readily accessible. He used his sawmill to mill logs harvested from his property, and with this lumber he built the house and cabin.

George didn't just work on the house, he also spent much of his time in the woods. He started and maintained a pine tree plantation, grafted and planted apple trees, built an additional cabin for hunting, built several small bait fish ponds, went suckering and trapping, milled lumber, and picked wild berries. On top of all that he somehow found time to build a sap house and produce maple syrup. Overall, he just enjoyed the nature around him.

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Cedric's great-grandparents, George and Ruth Fairbairn, with their baby daughter, Georgia.



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The house took about three years to be livable. From George's journal, he made reference on June 4, 1949, "I started to put in some footing, 6ft." Later that year, in October, he began working on forms for the basement as well as starting a sub-floor with joists and bridging. In November of that year, he sawed lumber for the house and continued to draw dirt out of the cellar. In December, George put in some second floor studs and put up rafters. In January of 1950 he made reference to putting sheeting on the roof. In February, he worked at cellar windows and continued to take dirt from the cellar. The chimney was started in September of that year. Later, in December he put a stove in the basement and spread sawdust on the floor to keep it from freezing.

George built the cabin and house concurrently. His journal entry of April 14, 1951 marked their official move to the property: "We all slept in cabin all night for the first time."

George and Ruth also kept livestock. He moved their cows from Dunraven up to Bull Run, and sold eggs and milk as a supplement to other jobs, including making wooden boxes for cauliflower grower C. Kauffmann. George also delivered feed for MJ Faulkner and worked at Dickman's gas station. At one point, he even started his own stone quarry on the property.

With the house completed enough that four rooms on the first floor were livable, George and Ruth spent their first night there on October 18, 1951. "Stayed all night in our new home for the first time." December 25, 1951: "Dave & Georgia (Taylor) came up for Christmas Dinner, first in our new house." (Georgia was a daughter of George and Ruth).



This is the house that George built. It is still occupied by his descendants today.

The house was built as George had money enough to buy supplies. It was not until the late '70s, or early '80s that he finished putting the siding on the house.

The amount of love and care put into the house by George can't really be separated from him. The house is the man and vice versa. His legacy and projects can still be seen today and the fruits of his labor are still being enjoyed by his great grandchildren, both figuratively and literally. While in truth George never finished the house, he left his mark on our family, and future.

Today, the house is occupied by Ken Taylor (grandson), his wife Amy, and their four children: Lil, Eli, Curtis, and Cedric. The history of the house is not without a bit of irony. The City of New York bought out George and Ruth, giving them enough money to buy the property on Bull Run. Then years later, employed by the City, their grandson Ken was able to purchase this same house on Bull Run.

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MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

The last two events this year at HSM Hall, 778 Cemetery Rd:
Sat., Oct. 24 • 12-2:30 PM HSM Annual Meeting & Luncheon.
Illustrated talk by John Duda on the "Delaware & Northern
RR and the Pepacton Reservoir Towns it Served."

Sat., Nov. 7 • 4 PM "The History of Lighting," by Paul Misko.
This illuminating talk on how lighting has changed how we
live will start with ancient oil lamps, then cover whale oil,
lard, and kerosene lamps, ending with early flashlights.

By Roger Davis

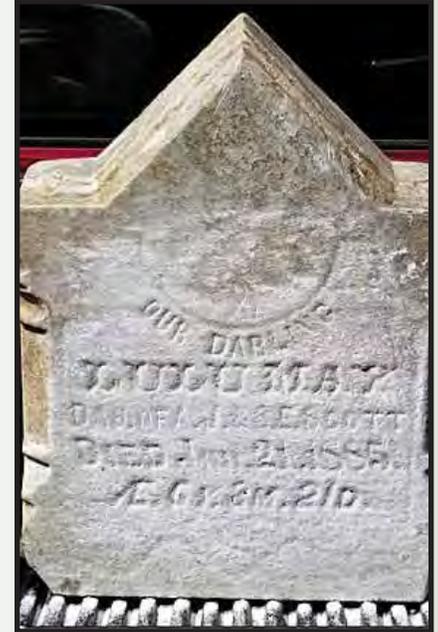
Lulu May Scott, the daughter of Adam J. and Sarah E. Scott, was born 1879 and died at the tender age of 6 years, 8 months and 21 days on January 21, 1885.

Recently a local bottle digger was busy at his task and happened upon Lulu’s headstone in the waters of the East Branch of the Delaware River. With some effort and muscle the digger was able to retrieve the very heavy marble stone and brought it to the attention of a member of the Historical Society of Middletown.

It turns out the stone originated in the Margaretville Cemetery. Inspection of the burial plot revealed that a newer and much larger stone for the Scott family had been erected and a smaller individual stone for Lulu had been placed along with one for her brother, Cecil. It is assumed that when the new stones were erected, perhaps by their sibling Araminta who lived until 1934, the older stone was discarded. The location where it was found may have been the Scott family farm, which a June 21, 1946 Catskill Mountain News article said was located about a mile from the Village of Margaretville.

Adam J. Scott was a well-respected contractor and builder who was born August 7, 1849 in Andes, coming to Margaretville in 1889. He had already constructed many buildings in the Andes area, and was equally prolific in Margaretville. He eventually designed and built more than 30 houses and commercial structures in the village alone.

Adam was a founder, Elder and faithful leader of the First Presbyterian Church. He married Sarah E. Hewitt of New



Kingston in 1872. She was the daughter of Jacob Hewitt and Clarinda Sprague. Born June 29, 1846, Sarah died in 1927, three years after husband Adam (May 22, 1924).

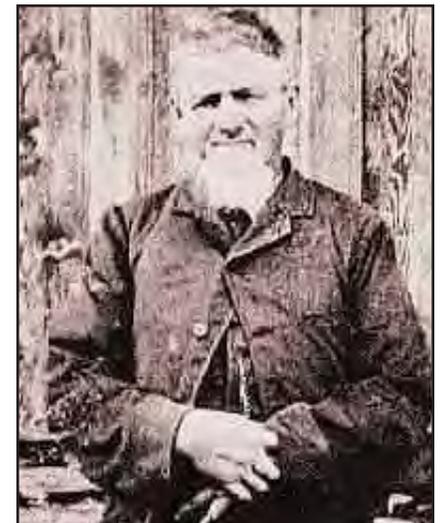
The Scotts had three children: Lulu May, Cecil H., and Araminta Scott Tetley. Cecil was only 19 years old when he died in August of 1906 at his parents’ home after a long illness. Like Lulu, we don’t know much about Cecil, except that he had been a member of the Margaretville Fire Department.

Araminta was born about 1875 and died October 25, 1934 in Ulster County. She was the widow of Rev. J.W. Tetley, former pastor of St. James Methodist Church.

Now, about that wayward cemetery stone: HSM trustee and Village Public Works Superintendent Henry Friedman and crew have returned it to the family plot, where little Lulu now has two headstones to lament a young life lost.

GONE SOLDIERING

HSM’s ongoing research into the lives of Middletown’s Civil War soldiers led us to Robert Webber Scudder, who served for a year in Delaware County’s own 144th Regiment. The 1880 Munsell History of Delaware County/Middletown described Webber as a successful dairy farmer, son of William and Phebe Betts Scudder and grandson of Deacon Jotham and Mary Embree Scudder. Born in 1832, Webber married Hannah, daughter of John W. Boughton, in 1856. He enlisted with Company G, 144th Regiment, and was afterward transferred to the 1st N.Y. Engineer Regiment. Webber and Hannah’s children were John, Abram, Carrie, Emma (Mina) and Sarah. Webber’s brother James, who had enlisted with the 146th NY, died of disease March 3, 1865 at Armory Square Hospital, Washington. (More Civil War veterans were casualties of disease than died in combat). Webber’s cousin, Jackson Scudder (son of Warren W.), was also a CW veteran, who served in the 8th NY Battery.



4 Fourth Annual Living History Cemetery Tour

The Fourth Annual Living History Cemetery Tour was once again a smashing success, drawing 135 people to New Kingston Valley Cemetery June 20. The occasional shower did little to dampen the interest of the audience or the enthusiasm of the stellar cast and awesome docents. Performers pictured are Anne Hersh (below right), Bill Birns (below), Fred Margulies (facing page, top) and John Bernhardt (right, shown with Valerie Day Liles, who came from Virginia to see him portray ancestor Charles Hallock). The table crew included Teddy Margulies and Jane Miller (facing page, center) and other stalwart volunteers. DVDs of the tour are available for purchase at HSM events this fall or by calling 845-586-4973. For details on the event, and many more photos, visit www.mtownhistory.org.





THE PAST AS A PRESENT!

Looking for a meaningful holiday or birthday gift for a loved one or a treasured friend? Consider making a donation to HSM or purchasing an HSM gift membership in their name. Our work to preserve local history will reflect the love they feel for their community and its heritage and we'll say so in a personalized card!

HONOR A LOVED ONE

Have you recently lost someone special? A donation to HSM in memory of a history-loving friend or relative will be gratefully received and acknowledged.

CONSIDER A BEQUEST

Please consider naming HSM in your will to help ensure the preservation of local history well into the future.

EASY WAYS TO GIVE

Do you shop on Amazon? Start at smile.amazon.com/ch/01-0834413 and name the Historical Society of the Town of Middletown, Delaware County as the beneficiary of a percentage of your purchase. It's simple and painless.

Are you a Freshtown shopper?

Find the HSM card hanging on the cash register at the checkout and on occasional visits ask the clerk to scan it to transfer 500 Greenpoints to HSM. At the end of the year, we'll get a check from this community-minded retailer.

Feeling generous today?

Visit www.mtownhistory.org, go to Support Us, and make a tax deductible donation through PayPal. We thank you!

6 Rock of Ages: Grave Scrubbers Strike Again!



Thirteen cemetery enthusiasts gathered at the Clovesville Cemetery in Fleischmanns for a gravestone cleaning workshop on August 8 led by Marianne Greenfield, (center in group photo) and hosted by cemetery caretaker Joanie Merwin (far left). Pam Kelly (above) drove more than three hours from Pennsylvania to attend, taking on the stone of British native Elizabeth Brindley as her project. Brock Warner (left) cleaned algae and grime from a lamb atop the stone of four-year-old Julia Francis, who died in 1859. Go to the HSM website, and click on the August 8 event listing for a gallery of images.





Lucy Wood and Joseph Mungavin of Walton were among partiers July 19 when HSM celebrated its 10th anniversary with a square dance and ice cream social. The Tremperskill Boys served up the music and a good time was had by all.



SAVE WAWAKA HOSE!

This classic structure, built in 1916 by Daniel Humphrey for Halcottville's first fire department, formed in 1910, housed a hand-drawn cart, 300 feet of hose, several ladders and other equipment. The little building on Main Street cost \$675 to construct. In dire need of stabilization and restoration, it will require much more than that to bring it back to its original reassuring splendor. Members of HFD and its Auxiliary have mounted a campaign to raise the funds to save this irreplaceable piece of local history. Send your tax-deductible contributions to HFD, PO Box 97, Halcottville NY 12438.



STITCHIN' TIME

Jenny Little found this quilt top in the attic of her house in Bragg Hollow, and solicited the talents of the Catskill Mountain Quilters to back and quilt it. After many Mondays of communal stitching, the group finished Emma Morse Davis' handiwork. As related in the Spring 2015 *Bridge*, Emma stitched these blocks in the late 1930s, when she lived with her daughter and son-in-law, Mary and Elmer Bussy on the Bussys' Bragg Hollow, Halcottville farm, now the home of Jenny and Dick Little. Emma passed away in 1945. Her quilted legacy lives on.

Meet Me at the Palace, Alice



Recognize this building on the corner of Main and Bridge in Margareville? When these photos were taken by Bob Wyer in 1947, it was known as the Palace Hotel, but would soon come to be called Murray's for Murray Schrier who had taken it over from his parents, William and Dora Schrier, proprietors since 1919. Murray later sold it to his sister and brother-in-law, Ceil & Abe Aronson, who ran it through 1965. They sold it to Betty and Byron Martin. Today, of course, it is home of the Cheese Barrel, owned by Fred and Sue Ihlo. The bar was located at the left side of the building, in what is now the

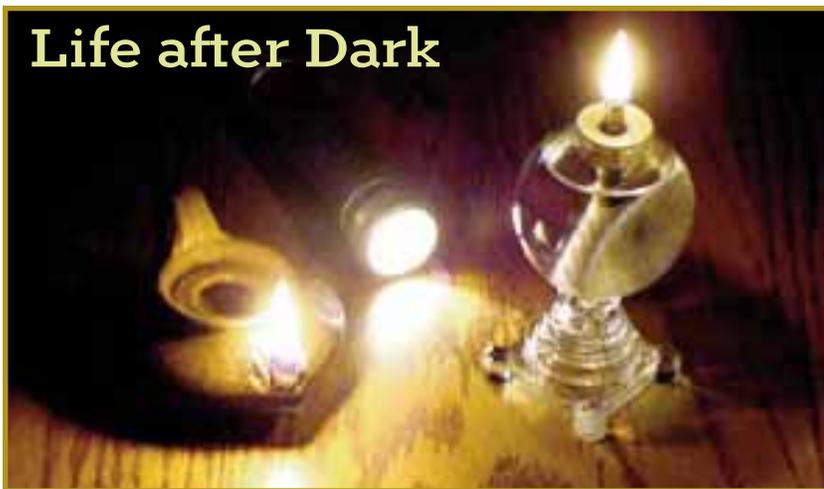


Cheese Barrel dining area. (Note the theater marquee visible through the window: "The Fabulous Dorseys" was playing, starring musician brothers Tommy and Jimmy Dorsey). The Palace and more than 40 other hotels and boarding houses were featured in a program on "The Hotels of Middletown" presented by HSM President Diane Galusha and Fleischmanns native Georgi Fairlie to a standing-room-only crowd of 65 people on August 16. Photos from the Bob Wyer collection at the Delaware County Historical Association.

THE 49¢ POST

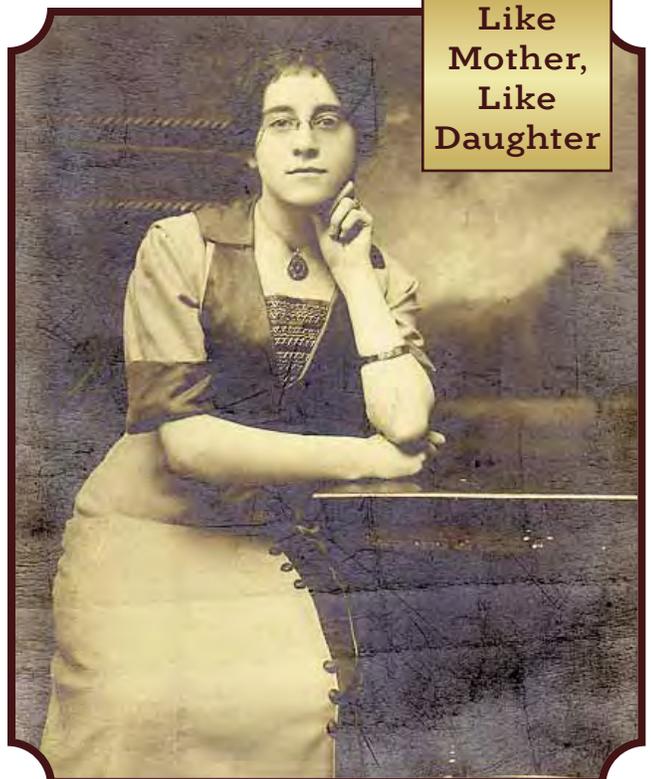
THE 49¢ POST is an exclusive feature for members who receive *The Bridge* via e-mail. Because your newsletter requires no postage or label, you get an "extra"!

Life after Dark



On Saturday, Nov. 7 at 4 p.m., historian Paul Misko will give a presentation of the history of lighting. It will be held at the HSM hall and is the final program of the season. This illuminating talk will start with ancient oil lamps, then cover whale oil, lard, and kerosene lamps, and end with early flashlights. We'll discuss how changes in lighting changed our lifestyles through the ages. Light refreshments will be served. Admission is \$2 for members, \$4 for non-members.

Like
Mother,
Like
Daughter



We incorrectly identified this studious young woman — shown in this lovely head and shoulders portrait — as Emmer Lucinda Hallock in our Spring 2015 issue. In fact, she is Eva Myers Day, daughter of Emmer Lucinda Hallock Myers. We apologize for the error.