

### Hope and Will: Richard Kittle's Legacy

*In observance of Veterans Day, we honor the family of Willard and Emily Carroll Kittle of Millbrook. Six of their 13 children served in uniform during three wars. The oldest, Richard, died in the Philippines in 1902. Frank died in boot camp in 1916. Harley, Ray and Hiley served in France during World War 1. (Harley and Ray were gassed; Hiley suffered three gunshot wounds but survived.) Their brother Olin served in World War II. This is the story of Richard Kittle, shared by his great-niece, Pam Kelly Johnson.*

Richard Kittle was born in 1882 on Catladder Farm, Millbrook. "Dick," as his family called him, was the second son in a family of 10 boys and three girls.

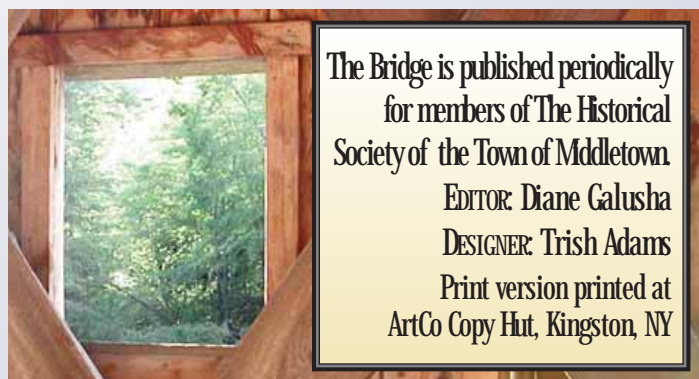
Dick joined the US Marine Corps one week shy of his 18th birthday in March 1900. Three months later he was sent to the Philippine Islands. From there he was dispatched to China with the multi-national China Relief Expedition, seeing action in three battles during the Boxer Rebellion in August of 1900.

Returning to the Philippines he found himself a member of the ill-fated 35-mile 'March across Samar,' an attempt by US Marines to find a suitable telegraph cable route across the island. Led by Major Littleton W. T. Waller, the expedition, from October 1901 through January 1902, was a disaster. Fifty Marines and a contingent of native guides crossed swollen rivers, climbed rugged mountains and became sick and blind with leech-borne illness. Weakened by reduced rations, their clothes in rags, their shoes and feet cut to ribbons on volcanic rock, ten men were left behind to die on the trail. The band split up with those in the best shape pushing forward to send back a relief party for the rest, which included Richard Kittle. Official accounts say that in spite of dire conditions, he "was a source of constant hopefulness and expressed determination" as he tried to lift the spirits of his comrades.

When Army rescuers finally found them, they were semi-conscious, nearly naked and on the verge of starvation. *continued on page 2*



Richard Kittle



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They were carried to a river where canoes took them to the post hospital at Lanang and on January 20, 1902 they were ferried by Navy gunboat to Taclaban on the island of Leyte.

There, on January 23, Richard Kittle, not quite 20 years old, died of malnutrition and “septic embolis”—blood clots caused by infection. In a letter to Willard Kittle, expedition commander Littleton W. T. Waller wrote, “He did his duty nobly and well, and even when dying, by his indomitable will, cheered others who were ill.”

The family was at first told there might not be enough money to ship his remains home for burial. He was, in fact, buried on Leyte. In March, they received his Bible, a pocket book and a packet of letters. In July they were told they'd be getting a check for \$83.33 representing Dick's remaining Marine pay, the amount due him for “undrawn clothing,” and \$3 “for the sale of his personal effects.”

It was 18 months before Richard Kittle finally came home. Exhumed along with his fallen comrades, he was returned to the States and then buried on September 1, 1903 at the

old Arena Cemetery. My grandmother, Nina Kittle Haynes, was six years old when he died. I wonder if she was present at the funeral. The service was held in the Arena Methodist Church. Full military honors were given in the cemetery, the volleys and “Taps” doubtless echoing off the Marine's Catskill Mountain resting place.

But that was not the end of Dick's journey. When the Pepecton Reservoir was built in the 1950s, his remains were once again moved, from Arena to the Clovesville Cemetery. It was his sister, Nina Kittle Haynes, who claimed him, and other family members, for reburial.



Jerome Balcom, who served in the Marines in Vietnam from 1967 to 1969, first read about fellow Catskillian Richard Kittle in “Honor in the Dust: Theodore Roosevelt, War in the Philippines and the Rise and Fall of America's Imperial Dream.” While attending a gravestone cleaning workshop hosted by HSM at the Clovesville Cemetery last year, he met a former Fleischmanns High School classmate, Pam Kelly, who showed him the monuments of her Kittle forebears, including, to Jerry's surprise, the military headstone of Richard Kittle. He took it upon himself to clean the 113-year-old stone and placed United States and Marine Corps flags beside it. Said Jerry, “Learning about Private Kittle has indeed been a life-enriching gem. I remain grateful to his family that I received the honor of respecting this Marine of distinction by cleaning the memorial of his death after service to our country.” Left, excerpt from one of Richard's letters to his mother.

October 4th 1901  
Dear Mother  
I will drop you a few lines to let you know I am well and hope this will find you all the same I am about to be transferred to Cavite I am sure the future now and am going to Morrow to join Major Waller.  
I am going to take his children and have and dishes up to him, I hope I will

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The Spanish–American War was a conflict fought between Spain and the United States in 1898 in the Caribbean and in the Pacific. Though it lasted just 10 weeks, it enmeshed the US in Revolutions in Cuba, the Philippines and China.

Hostilities began in the aftermath of the explosion of the USS Maine in Havana harbor, which at the time was blamed on Spain. The US quickly joined the Cubans in their fight for independence from Spain. Teddy Roosevelt rose to prominence with the “charge of the Rough Riders” up San Juan Hill. Through the 1898 Treaty of Paris that closed the conflict, the US acquired temporary control of Cuba. The US also got Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippine islands.

The treaty only led to more war, as the US became embroiled in the Philippine Revolution (which had begun in 1896) and ultimately in the Philippine–American War. On June 2, 1899, the First Philippine Republic declared war against the US. The conflict officially ended on July 2, 1902 with an American victory, though guerilla fighting continued for years. The Philippines did not gain independence

from the US until 1946.

The American annexation of the Philippines stimulated a growing American interest in China: The Philippines served as a convenient waypoint for trade with the Manchu Empire. But many Chinese resented foreign intervention in their country, giving rise to a guerilla group westerners called Boxers who attacked and killed hundreds of Chinese Christians and foreigners. More than 3,000 people were besieged at a diplomatic compound in Peking when an international relief expedition was launched in 1900 to rescue them and stamp out the Boxer Rebellion.

Some 2,500 US soldiers and Marines – many of them, like Richard Kittle, shipped to China from the Philippines — were part of this China Relief Expedition, which included a battle-marked drive to Peking in August 1900. While protracted negotiations ensued with the Dowager Empress, most US servicemen were withdrawn from China that autumn, only to be returned to face misery and death in the jungles of the Philippines.

## Marking Time at the Round Barn



The newest historic marker in the Town of Middletown was unveiled September 17 at the 1899 Kelly Brothers Round Barn in Halcottsville by HSM and the Pakatakan Farmers Market. Speakers included Diane Galusha, HSM president, who explained the Kelly family's ownership of the iconic structure; Iris Mead, who talked about the Meade family's operation of the farm from 1913 to 1963; Carol O'Beirne whose father served as clerk of the works when the barn was reconstructed in 1988; Jeanne George, who explained the establishment of the farmers' market; and Linda Smith of Sherman Hill Farm, one of the original vendors at the market who continues to sell cheese there. Frank Mann, whose Alta Industries donated the barn and four acres to the Erpf Catskill Cultural Center in 1984, unveiled the marker with son David. The event helped celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Pakatakan Farmers Market which for the past 20 years has occupied this landmark structure.



## 4 Fifth Annual Living History Cemetery Tour



**The tour, at Halcott Cemetery, drew 120 people on a glorious June evening.**

Sidney Asher (left), in character as Ellen Bellows, prepares for the audience's arrival at the monument to her mother, Lizzie Mead Bellows, who died in 1908 when Ellen was a child.

Docent Anne Hersh waits for her tour to begin. Anne was also a scriptwriter for this year's event, which was videotaped. DVDs are available for purchase at Home Goods of Margaretville, or by sending \$14 and your postal address to HSM, PO Box 556, Margaretville, 12455.

Jimmy Moseman (below left, in car) enjoyed a special performance by Cedric Taylor, portraying Jimmy's uncle, Marion Moseman, who perished at training camp during WWI. Jimmy's dad, Edgar, also served in the Great War.







John Bernhardt and Agnes Laub (above) portrayed Will and Sarah Johnson, ancestors of a long line of Johnsons in our area.

Lil Taylor explores the Scudder plot, where Anti-Rent War figure Warren Scudder is believed to be buried. Scudder died in Halcott in the late 1880s. Four relatives are listed on the large monument, but Warren is not among them. There are five small footstones though. Is one of them Warren's? He was portrayed by Erwin Karl in this year's tour.







*This story of a German refugee who escaped Hitler's Germany and found peace and pleasure in painting Catskill farmscapes, was submitted by his son, Michael Mendel, along with a few photographs of paintings which were lost to the flood of 2011.*

My Jewish father Julius Mendel, a banker in Berlin, was born a quiet, simple man on a German farm in 1902. Attaining his 20th birthday, he left his mother and stepfather to pursue other interests in a more cosmopolitan arena in Dusseldorf. One night in the Fall of 1938, with his wife and infant son, he fled the Nazi regime of Adolf Hitler.

A filled quota of immigrants into the United States forced them to reside in Cuba for two years before permission was finally granted allowing them entry here. He first toiled as a butler to French royalty in New York City by day and went to learn photography at night.

He discovered Fleischmanns in 1948, rented an apartment for eight summers on Main Street above Silverman's paint store and then bought an old farmhouse on Brush Ridge Road

in the Fall of 1952. After the death of his first wife, he married a widow from Fleischmanns in 1969, moved into her redwood ranch style home on Switzerland Avenue and died in Margaretville hospital in June 2002, a few months shy of his 100th birthday.

Although he made his fame in commercial photography (a story for another day), he dabbled in watercolor painting (self taught), meandering through fields, streams and villages throughout the Catskills for almost 60 years seeking suitable images to photograph, then paint. He gave almost all his paintings to family and friends, never considering them good enough for public exhibition.

The few remaining unframed art pieces carelessly stored in his basement were totally destroyed when Hurricane Irene flooded the place. I can attest to the fact that all scenes are from a small radius surrounding Fleischmanns. Andes, Roxbury, New Kingston, Margaretville, Halcott, Highmount were ripe with images he chose to capture on watercolor paper.



### Welcome, Kacey!

HSM members elected Kacey Chuilli to the Executive Committee at the 12th Annual Meeting October 22. Kacey, a resident of Margaretville, is a former editor and digital archivist whose experience will be put to good use as we work toward developing an archives for our growing collection of historic materials.

Executive Committee members who were re-elected to one-year terms as officers were Diane Galusha, Tina Greene, Marilyn Pitetti and Jackie Purdy. Fred Travis was re-elected to a three-year term as trustee.


Other trustees on the board are Amy Taylor, Anne Sanford and Henry Friedman.





This little one got a feel for farm life aboard Tractor Mac, the story-book character come to life at the Margaretville Village Park September 24. Creator Billy Steers led the tractor parade and signed books during the all-day affair.

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Kaitlyn Brybag (above, left) became Calli, the Spirit of the Cauliflower, a special new addition to the festival. The paper mache costume was created by Marlana Morales of Arm of the Sea Theater, with help from Beth Waterman of Big Indian. Kaitlyn, an MCS eighth grader, perched on HSM's cauliflower planter to greet the passing Deysenroth family. Inside the History Tent, an exhibit took viewers back half a century for a look at farm and community life in the 1950s.

### All in a Day's Work, c. 1860s

This 1867 directory (left) lists businesses, manufactories, hotels and other enterprises in each town in New York State. From country store owners to lawyers, house painters to milliners, tanners to tinsmiths, it offers a fascinating window into who was doing what in our town just after the Civil War. It also offers a time capsule spotlighting occupations and activities that have gone the way of the passenger pigeon. Business categories include "segar" dealers, starch manufacturing, staves and headings, manufacturers of hop presses and horse blankets, malters, rag dealers and lamp wicks, telegraphic instruments, ice dealers, artificial arms and legs, and something called "shoddy and mungo." Nobody in Middletown was selling or making that, whatever it was. See for yourself at the Hathi Digital Library, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=chi.102180768;view=1up;seq=13>. This site is a treasure trove of other rich New York State historical ephemera waiting for the diligent cyber-digger.



## Lost and Found on the History Trail

### All the Comforts of “The Home”?

Maud Barber Mihalko of Margaretville hand-stitched this quilt (far right) while a resident of the Delaware County Home (aka the Poorhouse) in the early 1950s. Betty Sherwood found Maud’s name in one of the Poorhouse record books which were exhibited by Delaware County Historian Gabrielle Pierce, the featured speaker of the HSM Annual Meeting Oct. 22. Helen Edwards of Walton loaned her great aunt’s quilt for the occasion.



### Mystery Written in Stone

This curious inscription – “A B E D &” – is carved into the stone foundation of a barn at the end of dead-end Sprague Road off West Hubbell Hill Road. The current barn is believed to be the third one to stand on the foundation. The second barn replaced one that burned in 1953 when the John Sprague family occupied the farm. The property was subsequently owned by Everett Herrick, Glen and Jackie Reither, and Joe Sopp, who sold to the present owners, Michael and Sheila Flaharty. They had the barn reconstructed by Jerry Mead in 2000. It’s not known who may have built the original barn, or whose initials were left for posterity to puzzle over.

### 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”!

### All in the Family!

David Edwards left, brought his mom, Helen Birdsall Edwards to the June 4 program on the history of Margaretville Telephone Company, which was started by Helen’s grandfather, John Birdsall, in 1916. The company passed to her uncle Sheldon Birdsall, and then to Keene and Dawn Birdsall Roadman, parents of Larry Roadman, right. The program, marking the centennial of the communications company, drew a standing-room-only audience.

