

OBJECTS AND MEMORY

What are the things in our homes and museums that mean the most to us? How are ordinary objects transformed into irreplaceable carriers of experience, aspiration, and identity? Historical objects excite the imagination as they illustrate the past, demonstrating that we are living through history this very day.

Filmmaker and historian Jonathan Fein will share excerpts from and material captured in the making of his award-winning documentary, *Objects and Memory*, on Saturday, May 30 at 3:30 p.m. at the Historical Society of Middletown hall, 778 Cemetery Rd., Margaretville.

This free multi-media program, part of Headwaters History Days, is made possible by the NYS Council for the Humanities and the NYS Legislature. It is sure to stimulate questions about contemporary history, material culture,

heirlooms and memory and help attendees see their world with deeper perspective.

Shortly after the events of September 11, 2001, Fein saw that historians and curators were working to document them as history was unfolding, and he started filming their thoughts and actions. This led to the 13-year journey of *Objects and Memory* and the book he is currently writing about it.

Speaker Fein's filmmaking credits include the award-winning documentary *Journeys to Peace and Understanding*; the Emmy Award-winning series *4Stories*; documentaries *The Competition*, *Death Row Diaries* and *A Change of Heart*; the PBS series *The Fred Friendly Seminars*; the Broadway musical *Nunsense 2*; and the Wisdom Channel series *Innerviews*.



HERE'S TO HILT . . .

Our friend Hilton Kelly passed away March 3 at the age of 89. We miss his magic fiddle, his inexhaustible supply of stories and his unfailing recollection of people, places and events from the Catskills of his youth. A farmer, trucker, builder, hunter and of course a keeper of the Catskill Mountain fiddling tradition, Hilt was one of a kind. He's shown here working with Ira McIntosh to pinpoint the locations of family farms in Red Kill, Bedell and Fleischmanns for HSM's family farm documentation project in 2007.



UNCIVIL WAR: BROTHER AGAINST BROTHER IN GEORGIA

After four years of events, exhibits, articles and tributes marking the sesquicentennial of the Civil War, here's a story we bet you've never heard: A son of the South recounts how his Georgia ancestor and many of his relatives and neighbors came to wear Union blue.

In 1864, as General William Tecumseh Sherman began his march to Savannah, there arose an unusual collection of Unionists and former Confederate soldiers in the mountainous northern section of Georgia. The result was the formation of the only homegrown Union infantry unit in the state.

Georgia was divided on the matter of secession, largely based on its geography. Several counties in the mountainous northern section of Georgia remained loyal to the Union in spirit, if not in fact; however, with the advent of the Confederate Conscription Act, most military-aged Georgians, whatever side of the issue they fell on, entered the Confederate armies.

Among these soldiers was John Gordon Coffey. One of six brothers, some fighting for the north, some for the south, he was drafted and assigned to Co. A, 34th Georgia Infantry Regiment. This regiment later found itself besieged at Vicksburg, where Coffey was severely wounded by artillery fire. After the city was surrendered on July 4, 1863, Coffey was paroled and went back to Pickens County. There he found hundreds of draft evaders, "Home Guard" units assigned to round up draftees, and a frightened and demoralized civilian populace.



John Gordon Coffey (1840-1920) in a 1915 photograph

Coffey, Unionist in sentiment, managed to stay out of the fray until Sherman's army entered the state and began to force its way toward Atlanta. Harassed by local Home Guard units, Sherman decided to take advantage of the Unionist support in the region, and authorized the formation of the 1st Georgia

Infantry. Coffey joined this unit, a regiment charged with suppressing the state's Confederate Home Guard, something they did to great effect. However, there was unleashed a Civil War all unto itself in north Georgia, where brothers were actually fighting brothers, and where families were torn asunder.

Neither the Home Guards or the 1st Georgia Infantry were known for taking prisoners; 1864 and 1865 became known as the "Hanging Time," largely because there was more revenge than military operations taking place. Decades after the war, families, including the Coffeys, were still settling these scores.

Happily, however, John Coffey reconciled with his brothers after the war. One brother named Martin Van Buren Coffey served as a Sergeant in the 1st Georgia Infantry. Another, Rufus, served in an East Tennessee Union regiment. Three other brothers were on the other side, in the CSA in Northern Virginia. They all attended family reunions after the war, and well into the 20th century, supposedly without rancor. John Coffey had 18 children in total; 14 lived to adulthood.

Bill Blankenship

Raised in Cherokee County, GA, Bill is a great-great-great-great grandson of John Gordon Coffey (1840-1920). A former public historian, author, historic preservation advisor and genealogist, he is now a grant consultant who has been helping Margaretville through the flood recovery process.

COMPLETING THE RECORD

The official Civil War Sesquicentennial may be over, but the effort to document the service records and personal histories of some 300 Middletown CW veterans goes on. If you would like to help with this project, contact Diane Galusha, 845-586-4973; cybercat@catskill.net

OUT OF THE ATTIC

This lovely quilt top is being batted and backed by the Catskill Mountain Quilters, who gather at the Catskill Center in Arkville every Monday to finish what an earlier needleworker started decades ago. Emma Morse Davis 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, Halcottsville farm. That's where Jenny Liddle, who now lives there with husband Dick, found the quilt top, along with letters and other remnants of family history. Emma, born in 1867 to James Abner and



Mary Morse, married Henry Davis. They had six children (Maggie, William, Thomas, Floyd, Mary and Hazel) before Henry died at age 50 in 1906. Emma spent the last decade of her life on the Bussy farm, which was occupied for many years after by grandson Ivan Bussy and family. Emma passed away in 1945, leaving a colorful quilt top to be rediscovered and completed nearly 70 years later. Quilters who have added stitches to this project include Peg Barnes, Eleanor Barrack, Wendy Brackman, Lucci Kelly, JoAnn Kittle, Jackie Purdy, Leslie Grey, Peg Stoll, Joan Holley, Roni Daley and Barbara Randazzo.



Party Central!

Looking for a place to hold a birthday party, family reunion or graduation celebration? The HSM hall on the outskirts of the Village of Margaretville may be just what you're looking for. It accommodates up to 75 people, has a caterer's kitchen and beautiful grounds for parking and a tent if need be. For info and an application form, visit <http://mtownhistory.org/about-hsm/>

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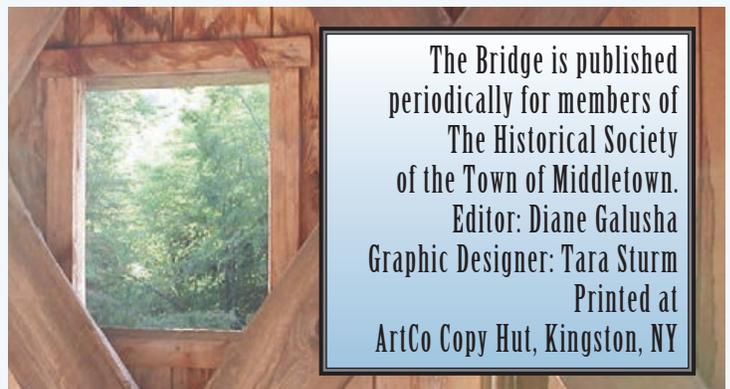
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PAKATAKAN'S LONG SHADOW

Ever since I laid eyes on it as young boy I have always looked at the mighty Pakatakan as 'our mountain.'

My parents, Tor and Tordis Roland, were drawn to the meadows on its northwest slopes because it reminded them of the farms that they grew up on in pre-war Norway. They befriended some local folks and in 1970 purchased "Keeney Hollow" as our family refuge from the busy suburbs.

We built a cabin and filled our weekends planting potatoes, grafting the old apple trees and building walls with the seemingly endless supply of bluestone. Keeney Hollow became my playground. The brook, caves and dilapidated old barn filled my weekends for the next 20 years.

But time moves on. The old barn was slowly reclaimed by the soil, building dams and exploring the forest morphed into hunting and skiing trips for my family and friends. Through the years Pakatakan was always there, though, holding the morning sun, looking down upon us.

History, I've learned, is a fragile thing. I began to realize this when we recently purchased the 'hollow' from my elderly parents. Questions led me on a new quest: Why is it called Keeney Hollow? Who built the old barn? How did Pakatakan get its odd name? My tools became the internet and its access to the stories passed down from local historians.

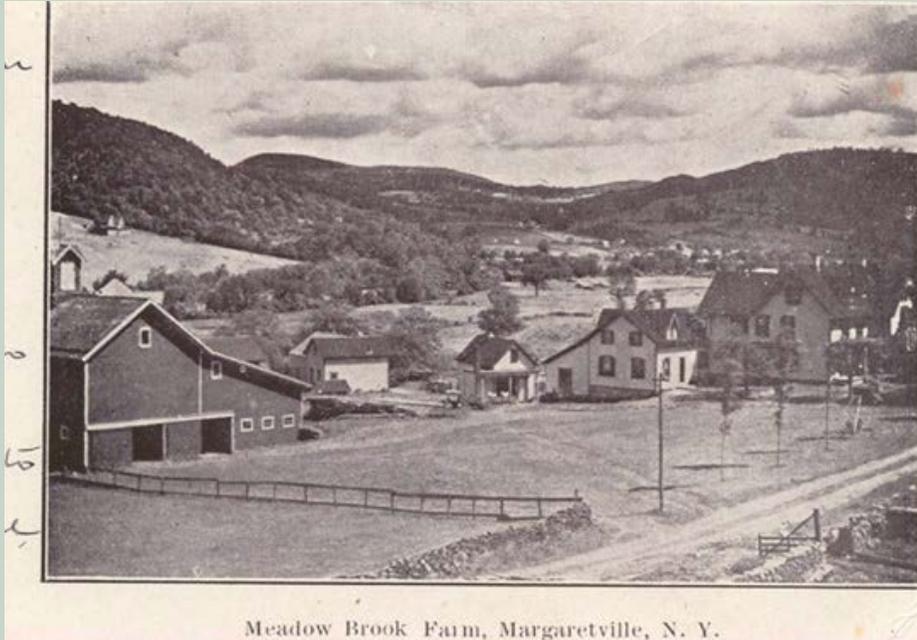
Amazingly, my first search, for "KEENEY/MARGARETVILLE," answered my initial question. An article in the Catskill Mountain News by Bill Birns told me of suffragette Emma Keeney, who with husband Eugene purchased our farm in 1896. After her husband died in 1898, she transformed her farm into a boarding house and over the next 40 years raised her four kids and established "Meadowbrook" farm as a summer retreat for hundreds of New York City families. (The City later claimed 20 acres

of the farm as buffer land for the tailwaters of the Pepacton Reservoir.)

Digging a bit deeper I discovered that in 1771, William Philip Yaple, son-in-law of one of the first settlers in Middletown (Harmonus Dumond) was the first to clear the land in the hollow and plant crops. After he moved to New Kingston in 1795 a succession of wealthy landowners bought and sold the land while tenant farmers tended livestock and raised their families. In 1865 the farm was purchased by Elias Carpenter,

son of local lawyer Albert Carpenter. For 25+ years he improved the farm, possibly adding the brookside barn and grain mill and transforming the property into Meadow Brook.

As for Pakatakan, the name roughly means 'meeting of three waters' in the language of the indigenous Lenape who hunted, fished and gathered in this vicinity for many



Meadow Brook Farm, Margaretville, N. Y.

generations.

I am so proud to own a little piece of local history, but I have learned that Pakatakan really belongs to all of us. I hope that some of you are inspired to learn more about the fascinating characters that have helped Middletown survive and at times thrive over the past 250 years. Good luck!

Lloyd Roland, Huntington, LI

Editor's Note: Emma Keeney was born in 1855 on a farm in New York City on or near what is now Park Avenue. It's not known what her husband did, but clearly they were looking for wide open spaces when they bought 200 acres on the south side of the East Branch a mile and a quarter from the village of Margaretville. With 3,000 feet of river frontage, and the Delaware & Northern Railroad passing right by the property, this was an innkeeper's dream. Find out more about Meadow Brook Farm, and other boarding houses like it, on Sunday, August 16 when HSM presents a program by Diane Galusba and Georgi Fairlie on "The Hotels of Middletown."

CHARLES HALLOCK, THE SINGING MAILMAN

My most interesting ancestor has to be Charles W. Hallock, born June 22, 1840, to David and Margaret McMullen Hallock of Unadilla. He enjoyed a long and successful operatic singing career on stages across the country and overseas, and was the family nonpareil.

Married in 1864 to Mary Frances Webb, Charles would sometimes take his young family with him on tour. In fact, his west coast tour was interrupted in 1878 by the arrival of Ethel, his youngest, whose birth necessitated a short hiatus from the stage and a temporary position as music teacher in Red Bluff, California.

After setting up household in New Kingston circa 1884, Charles turned his hand to a variety of occupations. Census records show him as a cooper (a barrel maker), but he was also well known as a music teacher, earning the epithet of "Professor" Hallock who held singing schools in neighboring towns and led performances in the hall above the New Kingston General Store.

And he was an avid horseman. His brown gelding, Duke of Dunraven, was a standout in what the Catskill Mountain News of October 2, 1903, referred to as a "genuine 'hoss trot'" on the Margaretville village fairgrounds, leaving "...the rest of the bunch over by the cattle sheds."

In April, 1909, Charles submitted a winning bid to become a mail carrier, purchasing a new horse for the route from New Kingston, via Dunraven, to Margaretville. Beginning an arduous career such as this, at the



We are still searching for a photograph of Charles W. Hallock, but these family images show daughter Emmer Lucinda, born in 1866, who married Andrew Myers, and their children, Burt, Fred, Thomas and Eva Myers.

isn't-it-time-to-retire age of 68, shows what a truly unique individual he was.

In February of 1914, a blizzard hit the Middletown area and stopped traffic with up to 30 inches of snow. According to the Catskill Mountain News, "The first rig to arrive in the village was the New Kingston mail which got here before noon [Saturday]. The driver, C. W. Halleck, said that he had to break a road all the way. His horse was about tired out when he arrived and after a rest the return trip was begun. At Dunraven it had to be abandoned, however, and the veteran mail man put up there for the night." He was 73 years old.

In May of that year, Charles' grandson, Bert Myers, began carrying the mail after his grandfather suffered an apparent stroke that left him partially paralyzed. Four months later, he fell and fractured a hip, subsequently dying at home on October 24, 1914. He is buried in the New Kingston Valley Cemetery next to Mary, his wife of 50 years, who followed him in 1935.

by Val Liles

Val Day Liles, daughter of Carlton and Virginia Day and granddaughter of Dewitt and Eva Day of Margaretville, was raised in East Greenbush, NY with siblings Michael and Donna. They were frequent summer and holiday visitors to Margaretville. Val retired after 20 years in the U.S. Navy and 25 years in Federal service, most recently with the Department of Homeland Security. Interest in antecedents such as her great-great-grandfather, Charles Hallock, has fostered a passion for genealogical research that keeps her quite busy in retirement. She lives with husband Gary Liles in Stafford, VA.

SATURDAY, JUNE 20

"Professor" Hallock (Halleck) will make a return engagement this summer at the Fourth Annual Living History Cemetery Tour, to be held at the New Kingston Valley Cemetery. Don't miss it!



DID YOU SELL CLOVERINE SALVE?



Milt Valk did, when he was an enterprising 12- or 13-year-old during the mid-1930s.

Cloverine salve, a petroleum-gel product, was made by the Wilson Chemical Company. It had earned the Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval, promising to remove wrinkles, heal cuts and burns and give your skin a glowing complexion.



William and Bertha Stahl Valk and their sons, Milton, Julian and Virgil, in the early 1930s. Their sister Marjorie came later.

The Wilson company had perfected an innovative marketing technique, recruiting children nationwide via advertisements in comic books and newspapers to sell their White Cloverine Brand Salve door-to-door. For 25 cents, customers would get a tin of salve, and a color lithograph of a religious scene or nature view. The salesperson could keep a certain amount of the profit or collect premiums, like air rifles, watches, cameras or bicycles listed in a catalog.

Young Milton Valk, who lived on East Hubbell Hill Road with his parents, William and Bertha, and siblings Virgil, Julian and Marjorie, peddled the product all over Hubbell Hill and Kelly Corners. He was a good salesman, good enough to claim a bicycle as his premium.

Like most farm kids of his day, Milt helped with the cows, cauliflower, poultry and all the rest. When he was 16 or 17, Milt helped store ice in the Sheffield Farms Creamery ice house in Halcottsville for 35 cents an hour. He graduated from Margaretville Central in 1941 and the following year married his high school sweetheart, June Close. In January of 1943, Milt was drafted into the Army, spending two years in the South Pacific. Brothers Virgil and Julian also served in World War II.

On Milt's return, he and June bought a house on Main Street, Fleischmanns. He pumped gas and polished cars at John Wolfe's gas station in 1946, then got a job with NYSEG where he remained for almost 40 years. June was the secretary at Fleischmanns High School for 30 years.



Milt Valk, photographed in March of this year, age 92

They raised three children, and in 1963, when skiing at Highmount and Belleayre was drawing big crowds, they opened the 12-unit Valkyrian Motel behind their home. Milt shared stories about his life in Middletown as part of HSM's ongoing oral history project. His recorded interview will be transcribed and preserved, along with many others, for future generations of researchers.

Attention students!



HSM and the Margaretville Fire Dept. are once again teaming up to provide two \$500 scholarships to a graduating MCS or home-schooled senior. The George Hendricks Jr. Memorial Scholarship honors the late George Hendricks who was a dedicated member of both organizations. In addition to academic performance and civic involvement, applicants for the scholarship must complete a history project of their choosing to add to the body of local history knowledge that will be available to posterity. Visit www.mtownhistory.org, or contact Amy Taylor, kenamyta@catskill.net for guidelines and an application.

Calling all collectors...

Do you have a passion for cast iron banks? Glassware? Postcards? Dolls? Maps? Would you like to show some of your prized possessions? Sell them? Talk about what makes them special? Consider exhibiting at the HSM Collectors' Expo **Saturday, Sept. 12 at the HSM hall.** Set up a table from 10 to 3 (there's a modest fee if you plan to sell anything). Antique appraisals will be offered by Richard Axtell, and refreshments will be available. Call 845-586-4973 if you'd like to participate.



NO NEWS IS BAD NEWS

One of the Historical Society's first major undertakings was to get the Catskill Mountain News microfilmed, digitized and placed online so that researchers everywhere can access this treasure trove of local history.

<http://nyshistoricnewspapers.org/middletown/>

The issues were from two collections – bound volumes (1902-37) held by Fairview Library and loaned by the newspaper's publisher, and microfilmed issues (1938-73) preserved by the New York State Library.

But neither source had complete collections. There are gaps in the record, and we'd like to fill them. If you have any of these issues stored away in a trunk or file cabinet, and they're in good shape (meaning they aren't torn, mildewed or mouse eaten and haven't been through a flood or fire), please consider donating them to us so that we can add them to the online resource.

Thanks to Roger Davis for compiling this list.

1902: Jan-June

1903: April 17

1907: Jun 21; Aug. 9, 16; Sept. 20, 27; Oct 4

1908: Jan. 3; May 15; Jun 12; July 3, 10, 24

1909: Jan 29, Jun 18

1910: July 1

1911: Nov 10

1913: Aug 1

1915: July 30

1916: December

1917: Jan-Feb, Mar 2, May 23, June-Dec

1918: Jan-Feb; Mar. 1, 8, 15; Apr 5, 12; Jun 7; Dec 27

1919: May 16, Oct 17, Dec 26

1920: All year

1921: Jan-Mar, May, Jun, Sept-Oct, Nov 4 and 25

1922: Jan 6, 13; Oct 13

1925: All year

1926: Feb 5, Mar 19

1927: Mar 25

1930: Apr; May; Dec; July 18

1931: Jan-Feb; Mar 6, 13; Apr 17

1932: Mar 11, July 22, Sept 30

1933: Jun 30

1934: Mar 30, Jun 8, Aug 31

1939: July 28

1943: Mar 5, Apr 23

1949: Sept-Dec

1968: All year



This beautiful child is Kenneth Warren Archibald, born in 1914 to Cecil and Lysabeth Archibald. He was named for his uncle Kenneth, who perished in a hiking accident in the Sierra Nevada mountains of California in 1908. You can read the story of the tragedy and learn a bit more about the Archibald family in the Tin Horn section of our website, where many more stories from Middletown's history can be found.
www.mtownhistory.org

Thanks to Shirley Davis for the photo. Do you have a photograph you'd like to share with our readers? Contact Diane Galusha or any member of the HSM Board.

Bulletin Board...

Have you checked out our FB page? Look for the Historical Society of the Town of Middletown Delaware County for event notices, history teasers and snippets from the past.

Did you know you can transfer Freshtown Greenpoints to HSM? It's painless! Find the Historical Society of Middletown card hanging at the end of any checkout register at the Margaretville store and ask the clerk to transfer your Greenpoints, in increments of 500, to HSM. We'll get a check for the cash value of the points at the end of the year! Thanks to Freshtown, and to our generous donors for their support.

TWO WEEKENDS OF HISTORY

Headwaters History Days, celebrating the history, culture, folklife and landscape of the Central Catskills, will include events, tours and exhibits during two weekends and covering an extended area this year. Some 20 sites in the East Branch Delaware River towns of Middletown, Roxbury and Andes, and in the Esopus Creek watershed towns of Shandaken and Olive, will participate May 30-31 and June 6-7.

Visit www.headwatershistorydays.org for a schedule of events and descriptions of historic sites, museums and activities.



The Old Stone Schoolhouse (District #10) has stood in Dunraven since 1862 when local men hastily built it to replace an earlier wooden school before they enlisted with the 144th NY Regiment and marched off to war. Volunteers will host an open house there during Headwaters History Days.



HISTORICAL
SOCIETY of
MIDDLETOWN,
Delaware County

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