

We Are Building History!

We're building history!

A Middletown History Center to be exact.

We have exciting plans to expand our hall on Cemetery Road in Margaretville to include a lobby, an office, two accessible restrooms, a reading/meeting room and most importantly, a proper archives facility.

We need to move our growing collection of historical materials from the Town Hall, where we have run out of space, to our own building where we can better preserve, interpret and share photographs, documents and other tangible remnants of Middletown's history.

Contractor/designer Gideon Stone, a native of Roxbury, and Michael Barnoski, licensed architect, are the partners in Trade Design Build of Ithaca. They developed the conceptual design for a 1,600-square-foot, year-round addition to our hall. This will include:

Climate controlled, secure archives storage and work space for steel shelving units, file cabinets, map drawers, countertop work areas with dedicated computer, scanner, copier and other equipment

A reading/multipurpose room where visitors may read from our library of local history volumes and examine documents and materials from the archives. This space can also be used for small group meetings.

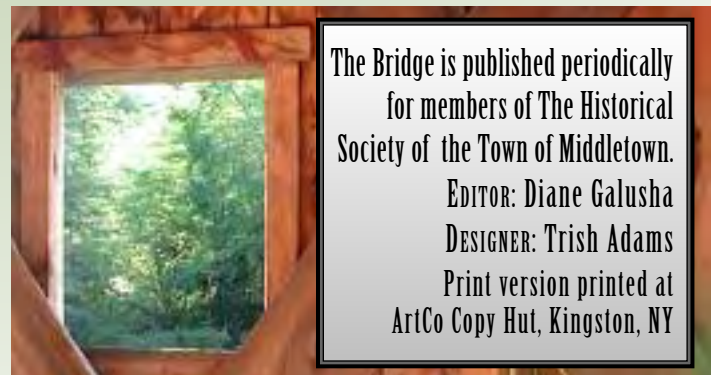
An office/lobby area with room for desk, cabinets and

The handsome design of the addition to HSM's Margaretville hall is a tribute to the many covered bridges that once carried horses, humans and vehicles over streams and rivers. It also symbolizes the bridging of past, present and future that we hope will happen at the new Middletown History Center.



equipment, and for display cases for artifacts and photos. Connecting the lobby with the reading room will be History Hall, a gallery where rotating wall exhibits can be accommodated.

Accessible men's and women's rest rooms will replace
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The heart of the addition will be the climate-controlled, secure and fire-resistant archives for storing and processing historic materials. Our growing collection will be catalogued, properly housed, interpreted and made available to researchers.

two tiny, substandard bathrooms in the current hall. These facilities will be centrally located to allow them to be used by archives volunteers and researchers as well as program attendees. (The existing hall will be renovated in Phase 2 of the project, and will continue to be used seasonally for HSM events and programs, and for private rentals.

We are committed to raising the approximately \$350,000 needed to build and equip the addition through targeted and public appeals, events and other means. We have received a commitment of \$50,000 already in state funds secured by Senator James Seward.

This is a major step into the future for HSM. We hope we can count on you, our valued members, to support this project! You will receive a special mailing with more information later this fall.



Charles "Teddy" Woolheater (above), who came from Charlottesville, VA to attend the MCS reunion banquet August 11, brought with him a smooth wooden peg retrieved by his father, Charles E. Woolheater, when the Arkville Covered Bridge was taken down in 1938. The bridge, which carried Route 28 across the Dry Brook stream for 90 years, was the last covered span on a New York State road. Mr. Woolheater donated the artifact to HSM. It is currently on display with a covered bridge photographic exhibit at our hall.

An example of the revealing and useful documents in our collection is an 1859 tax roll for the Town of Middletown (left), which contains hundreds of names of town property owners with the amount of acreage for which they were taxed.

An Inventory of the Real Estate and Personal Property in the town of Middletown with the tax thereon and Military tax for the Year 1859

Name	Acres	Value	Military Tax	Total
Angelo Paulino	25 000	600	162.00	1464.00
Edward				11.25
Allen Kings	46 175		114.50	139
Kings				
Avery John	70 250		252.75	186
Barnett	100 300		322.50	236
Allen's John	20 400		210.00	300
Albion Carter	115 400		1720.00	16.50
" " " "	60 60		60.75	47
" " " "	120 600		620.00	4.75

HSM EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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Does This Ring a Bell?

MORE ON THE MYSTERY BELL . . .

Remember our story in the Summer 2017 Bridge about the Margaretville Union Free School bell that wound up in a Baptist Church in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida?

A follow up story in the Palm Beach Post April 6, 2018 (sent by Frank Mann) described a recently discovered clipping from an unidentified 1962 newspaper that reported on an “open house revival” at the church. The story explained that the Margaretville School bell in the new belfry was given to the church by Charles and Frieda Affron.

Armed with that new information, we turned to the online Catskill Mountain News and found an article from 1958 headlined “MHS bell retires to Florida.” It said that Mrs. Charles Affron, a graduate of the school, found the bell in a Roxbury antique shop, bought it, and took it back to Florida (it appears the Affrons moved down there from Margaretville in 1950). “It has been installed as a dinner bell in her yard.” Four years later, the Affrons evidently gave the bell to the church.

The Kasses had the bell in their Kass Inn lobby in the 1940s — Peg Barnes, who lived at the inn with her mother, a baker, in the mid-late 1940s, remembers it being rung every New Year’s Eve. Max and Sadie must have sold it some time after that to the local antique shop where Frieda Affron found it.

Mrs. Affron was very involved with the conservative synagogue in Palm Beach. It is a tribute to community spirit and ecumenism that the bell wound up in a Baptist Church.

COMING UP!

SAT
SEPT
22

CAULIFLOWER FESTIVAL. Exhibit in the History Tent: “Guns and Butter: Food and Farms During World War I.” See vintage vehicles participating in the Catskill Conquest Rally honoring the 1903 Endurance Run that went through the region. Free. 10 am – 4 pm. Margaretville Village Park.

SAT
OCT
27

HSM ANNUAL MEETING & LUNCHEON. Charles Yaple, author of Jacob’s Land, “The Revolution Comes to Pakatakan.” Reservations required. 845-586-2860. \$20 Noon – 2:30 pm. HSM Hall.

Note
New
Date ↑

SAT
NOV
3

“MIDDLETOWN AND THE GREAT WAR,” an illustrated talk by Diane Galusha, with excerpts from soldier letters read by Open Eye ZTheater players. Donations welcome. 2 p.m. American Legion Post #216, Main St., Margaretville.

SUMMERTIME FUN, c 1904

Lions, tigers and elephants – trick donkeys, too! – arrived by train to set up an entertaining camp alongside the tracks at Arkville. Imagine the parade! The circus played in Stamford the day before, and in Phoenicia the day after. 1904 was the last year for this circus because producer Sig Sautelle’s wife had a stroke and he returned to Homer, NY to care for her. Has anyone seen photos of this event in Arkville?

The 6th Living History Cemetery Tour took place under a glorious blue sky July 7, when more than 120 people came to the Halcottsville Cemetery to enjoy plein air portrayals by ten talented performers. A huge thank you to the players, docents, directors, and the many volunteers who made this a very successful fundraiser for HSM.

A video of the event, produced by Alan Powell, associate professor of communications at Arcadia University in Philadelphia and a Fleischmanns homeowner, will be available for purchase at the Cauliflower Festival in Margaretville September 22.

On this page: Agnes Laub prepares to bring Jennie McKenzie Hewitt Doland to life. (below). Amy Taylor and Dave Truran were storekeepers Aurelia and Ed Griffin (right). Anne Saxon Hersh (below right) added some juicy scandal with her portrayal of Bertha Williams, one of the 'faithless four' in the infamous elopement of 1913.

Facing page, clockwise from upper left:

Burr Hubbell played his distant cousin, entrepreneur George W. Hubbell

Directors Joyce St. George and Frank Canavan, were accompanied by granddaughter Annajulia Canavan-Lima who served as videographer Alan Powell's assistant.

Volunteers extraordinaire Barbara Atkin, Glenna Herz and Jane Miller John Bernhardt, who has appeared in all six HSM cemetery tours, played hotel keeper Sherman Bussy, alongside Sherman's grandson, Winfield Bussy, played by Eli Taylor.

Brothers Rich, Terry and Tim Kelly were honored to portray their grandfather George Kelly and great uncles David and Norman, the original "Kelly Brothers" who created a farm and business empire in Halcottsville

Erwin Karl, who portrayed Andrew Moldovan, was thrilled to meet Andy's grandson, Bob Wood.

THE CEMETERY

The fields where the dead lay,
Where flags fly and flowers bloom,
Where the young run and play,
And some souls still loom.

The field where headstones grow,
Where trees stand solemnly,
Watching the field where they lay.

But there are those who still respect,
Those rocks still erect,

Where shadows linger and rocks stand cold,
But there are those who still respect.

— *Eli Taylor, age 13, written as he waited to perform in the tour on July 7, 2018*





The House on the Hill

Folks who've been around since the 1960s associate this beautiful house on the hill just south of Margaretville with famed photographer Art Kane who occupied it longer than anyone, from 1963 to 1991. But it has been home to many an interesting family. Here's a brief look at the lives of some of them.



This was how the house looked when William E. Finn owned it from 1907 through the late 1920s. The tennis court was later removed, and a pool was installed.

Gustav and Nannie Feder (left), shown here in passport photos, had the house built in 1899.

The next owners, Paul Pugh and John Knight, held the property exactly a year before S. L. Pakas acquired it. Two years later, in July 1907, Mr. Pakas traded the "country residence and 175 acres" as partial payment for a nine-story hotel on West 58th St. being sold by New York City real estate broker William Finn. The Finns summered there for the better part of two decades. In 1908 they hired Wilbur Kittle of Millbrook to work the farm. In 1910, A. D. Keator leased it to add to his own neighboring farm.

On a drive into Margaretville in August 1909, a broken bit caused the horse pulling the Finns' carriage to charge madly into town. The coachman managed to lower Mrs. Finn and their small daughter out of the careening wagon, and jumped after them, with Mr. Finn remaining aboard to try to stop the animal before leaping from the wagon, suffering a head injury. He was treated at the Pocantico Inn by Dr. Champlin, while two physicians and two nurses were summoned on the next train from New York. Mr. Finn recovered at his house on the hill. No word on how the horse fared.

In the summer of 1918, there was music in the big house, as violinist Artur Bodanzky, his wife and two children leased the place from the Finns for the summer. Bodanzky was the Austrian-born conductor of the Metropolitan Opera orchestra.

Gustave Feder had the house built around 1899. He was 50 years old, a German-born merchant from Cincinnati where he sold furnishings and household goods. We can only speculate on what brought him to the Catskills with wife Nannie and teenage daughter Elsa. Perhaps he was a friend or associate of fellow immigrant Charles Fleischmanns who also hailed from Cincinnati and had built a family compound in Griffins Corners.

Gustave bought part of the farm of Ransom Hull (later of Hubbell Hill), and had his 'cottage' built (builder unknown) at an estimated cost of \$10,000. The *Catskill Mountain News* recalled years later that "the lot in front of it was graded and seeded at an immense cost. He is said to have employed eight teams and about 40 men for around two months just putting that lawn in condition."

A "fine dairy of high bred cows" was part of the 'gentleman's farm' that was auctioned when the Feders sold the property in July 1904. The *News* reported that, although Mr. Feder loved it here, "Margaretville cannot afford the social advantage that Newport or the continent affords," the writer speculating that 16-year-old Elsa may have influenced her parents to leave for brighter prospects.

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Some of the Finn property was taken when the road was improved in 1921 (that was THE State highway then – today’s Route 28 on the opposite side of the East Branch was built in the 1960s). The family’s fortunes didn’t fare much better after that. Mr. Finn died and his widow tried unsuccessfully to sell the property. Household goods, and farm tools, wagons and livestock were auctioned in 1928. The bank foreclosed in 1931.

Enter Roy Leonard, a Tennessee-born farmer who bought and sold several properties in the area and knew a bargain when he saw one. He purchased the estate for \$8,000 in 1933. Leonard continued to work the farm for several years but sold the house on the hill to Irving Ponemon.

Ponemon, born in Brooklyn in 1894, was a son of Morris and Yetta Ponemon, Russian immigrants who supported their five children by operating a dry goods store. Irving grew up to make a name for himself as a radiologist. In 1940 he was an ‘X-ray specialist’ with a private practice in Jamaica, Queens where he employed a maid, a chauffeur and a housekeeper. Ponemon was involved in the super-secret Manhattan Project, developing the atomic bomb, according to grandson John Hoeko.

Irving and Martha Ponemon had two children, Audrey and Warren. Audrey married John Hoeko, a Fleischmanns contractor, in 1947. The wedding, with 160 guests, was held at the house on the hill, then known as “High Winds.”

Irving and Martha divorced, and Martha stayed on at the Margaretville house. In 1963 she sold it to Art Kane (pictured above right), a magazine art director turned photographer whose career was skyrocketing.

Traveling the world on magazine assignments, and developing ad and fashion campaigns, Kane occasionally used the house and grounds for photo shoots. But he mostly saw the house on the hill as a refuge from the demands of his busy life. He had a pool put in and hosted parties that got the locals talking during the ‘60s and ‘70’s, and kept his young sons, Anthony and Jonathan, entertained. In 1965 a fire believed started in a sauna heater was caught before it could cause major damage.

Kane sold the estate in 1991 to Robert Bruno, a pharmaceutical executive and his wife Laura. They occupied “High Winds” until 2014, when they sold it to Benjamin Breen, a concert violinist, and Sally Rowe, a filmmaker, who, after recently restoring it, are adding a new chapter in the long and colorful life of the house on the hill.



Focus on: Art Kane



An audience of some 40 people were enthralled July 21 at a presentation by Jonathan Kane, son of Art Kane, acclaimed as one of the most influential photographers of the 20th century. The slide show included many of the fashion, advertising, documentary and music images for which Art Kane was famous. Kane created many portraits of contemporary musicians, including Bob Dylan, Janis Joplin, the Rolling Stones, the late great Aretha Franklin, and The Who, pictured here in a classic image taken in Manhattan’s Morningside Park. The Kanes had a home in Margaretville from 1963 to 1991 (see related story). Sons Jonathan and Anthony performed locally as the Kane Brothers Blues Band many times in the ‘70s and ‘80s. Jonathan remains active in the music world with his band February, and is also an accomplished professional photographer. For more info: artkane.com.

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, you get an "extra"!

Picturing 'the takings'

This fall, Time and the Valleys Museum, 332 Main St., Grahamsville, Sullivan County, will open a re-created 1930s Catskill family farm. It will include a farm house, milk house, 1870s reconstructed barn, workshop (powered by a working waterwheel!), outhouse, well house and electric plant. In re-creating this farm, the museum will bring to life the story of the "takings," so that people today can understand and appreciate the sacrifice of the many families forced to give up their homes so that NYC could build the nearby Rondout and Neversink Reservoirs.

The museum is seeking photos of farms or farm buildings taken for ANY of NYC's reservoirs, like this one, of Perry Thomas' barn in Arena. If you would like your photos included in the Catskill Family Farm exhibit, contact Donna Steffens at 845 985-7700 or email info@timeandthevalleymuseum.org. Photographs and information can also be uploaded to the Museum's website at: <http://www.timeandthevalleymuseum.org/support/share-with-us/>.



All photos received will be available to visitors at the Museum's Catskill Family Farm either on display or on a searchable computer program. Credit will be given to all donors and families whose farms were taken.

Time and the Valleys Museum is open from Memorial Day to Labor Day, Thursday through Sunday, noon to 4 p.m. and weekends in September.

RE-CONNECTING

Alumni of Margaretville Central School Class of 1948 celebrated their 70th Reunion August 10 at the Margaretville Fire Hall, where some of them began their education when that building was a school (it closed when the current school was finished in 1939). Below: l. to r. Anna Carli Marsico ('49), Ginny Bloomberg Toner ('48) and Betty Hull Sherwood ('48).



Above: Peg (Margaret Kimball) Barnes ('48) and Bud (Harrison Jr.) Barnes ('46). Photos courtesy of Kathleen Hull, Ginny's daughter, who brought her mom all the way from Colorado for the affair.