



## Spring Programs Explore Prehistoric Middletown

A pair of spring programs on the theme "Reading the Land" will tell us about how our region was formed, and who may have walked these hills centuries ago.

On Saturday, March 29 at 1 p.m., Bob and Johanna Titus will present an illustrated talk, "Middletown: An Ice Age Origin."

Fast forward a few million years to when humans roamed the Catskills. On Saturday, April 26 at 1 p.m. we'll learn what turned up when a team of archaeologists dug deep to uncover evidence of Paleo-Indians and later hunter-gatherers in Middletown. "Arkville Underground" will be presented by Lynda Carroll of the Public Archaeology Project at Binghamton University.



The Tituses' deep knowledge of geology, and their accessible, engaging style, have made them popular speakers. Dr. Robert Titus teaches in the Geology Department at Hartwick College and Johanna Titus teaches in the Allied Health and Biological Sciences Department at SUNY Dutchess. They teamed up to write *The Hudson Valley in the Ice Age* in 2012 and are columnists for *Kaatskill Life* magazine, the *Register Star* newspaper chain and the *Woodstock Times*. Bob's previous books include *The Catskills: A Geological Guide*, *The Catskills in the Ice Age*, and *The Other Side of Time: Essays by The Catskill Geologist*.

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## HELP US RAISE THE ROOF



We need \$12,000 to put a new roof on the hall.  
Can you help us reach this lofty goal?  
Buy a shingle for \$10, or a whole bundle for \$500!  
Your contribution will keep history hopping at HSM!

Send your check to: HSM  
PO Box 734 • Margaretville, NY 12455  
or donate via PayPal  
at [www.mtownhistory.org](http://www.mtownhistory.org)



## Spring Programs Cont.

Dr. Lynda Carroll was part of a team of archaeologists and technicians who conducted a 2005 survey of a section of what would become the MARK Project's Mountain Laurel Gardens housing development along Delaware County Route 36 (the Arkville Cut-Off

Road). The researchers uncovered numerous points, tools and cherts, along with evidence of fire pits where carbonized wood and nut fragments were found that dated to more than 3,000 BC.

### A 1938 DIG

The formal survey of the Mountain Laurel Gardens site is not the first time the fertile East Branch valley has been examined for ancient artifacts.

In the summer of 1938, four Ralphs – Ralph Felter, Jr. and Sr. and Ralph Ives, Jr. and Sr.; Henry Purcell and son Dick; and a third Felter – Robert -- excavated a site where the Bushkill and Dry Brook streams meet the East Branch of the Delaware River. They found spear points, stone knives, hammer stones and a large cache of flint perhaps carried there from what is now New Jersey. According to the elder Ives, an attorney who wrote about it in a paper for the Bulletin of the NYS Archaeological Association, they found many pieces of pottery, and a piece of yellow ocher "which had been squeezed in someone's hand and left in that form."



stone had been rubbed smooth. I found this specimen sitting on its flat side on a good sized rock. It almost seemed as though someone had placed it in that position and had never come back to regain it."

Dick Purcell and Ralph Felter, Jr. were just boys in 1938, but they still remember the excitement of that summer's discoveries, the thrill of making fleeting contact with a long vanished people. "I started hunting arrowheads when I was 4 or 5 years old," remembers Ralph, now 87. "My father loved history, and he was a hunter. When we couldn't hunt, we hunted arrowheads. When we saw a plowed field, we jumped to get on it."

Dick still has his father Henry's detailed diary recording every find and its location over many years. And he has several cases of prehistoric artifacts.

And, wrote Ives, they found something else.

"At one point and at a depth of ten inches we came upon a turtle effigy, worked from a blue-gray native slate. Where the neck of the turtle was carved, the

A few of the treasures from the Davis flat remain with Dick and Ralph. But most have been scattered. To their deep regret, neither man knows for sure what their fathers did with them, or where they are now.



Dick Purcell (left) and Ralph Felter Jr. who helped their fathers with an archaeological dig in Margaretville in 1938.





HSM Trustees Roger Davis (right) and Henry Friedman, whose day job is Village of Margaretville Superintendent of Public Works, examined headstone repair work completed last summer at the Margaretville Cemetery. Village crews righted and repaired several stones that were damaged in the fall of 2012 by vandals who were never arrested for the desecration. Donations from the public helped make the work possible.

## HONOR THIS COMMUNITY'S HISTORY . . .

AND YOUR OWN . . .

WITH A BEQUEST TO HSM OR A MEMORIAL GIFT IN THE NAME OF A FRIEND OR LOVED ONE.  
YOUR CONTRIBUTION WILL HELP SUSTAIN THE ONLY ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO  
PRESERVING MIDDLETOWN'S PAST.

Bill Birns, newly appointed Middletown Town Historian, was the featured speaker at the unveiling of a historic marker in the center of Fleischmanns in October. The marker was procured by the Museum of Memories and Fleischmanns First to recognize the 100th anniversary of the incorporation of the Village, named for the famous Cincinatti-based family that summered there from 1883 to 1913.





# TALES OF T

## THE CARPENTER HOUSE

A Margaretville house that was used for more than 26 years as a community residence for developmentally disabled people was sold at auction in June 2013 and will once again become a private home.

The Victorian house on Church Street was sold by New York State to Michelle and Walter Fernandez of Shandaken who plan to live there with their six children. It was vacated in late fall of 2012 when Broome Developmental Center consolidated its properties and moved the residents to two other communities.

The home's history dates back to the 1890s, when it was built for Albert Carpenter, a Margaretville lawyer. He was born in 1829 to Richard and Charlotte Hicks Carpenter, early settlers and promoters of Griffin Corners and Middletown Center (later known as Margaretville).

Albert P. Carpenter was educated at the Hobart Seminary, and read law for one year with Munson & Gleason and one year with Samuel Gordon, of Delhi, after which he was admitted to the bar in 1853. In 1854 he moved to Margaretville and four years later he married Henrietta (Nettie) M. Coloney, the daughter of James and Melissa Coloney. They had at least two children, Adell and Nettie, and for 25 years shared their home with housekeeper Sarah Ackerley, known as "Aunt Sarah" to village residents.

Albert was on the first Village Board of Trustees in 1875, and was a director of the People's National Bank. He apparently also dabbled in commerce – the Catskill Mountain News of June 6, 1903 reported that his remedy for eczema was a "sure cure." He died in October, 1912; his wife followed him the following July. In August, 1913 the household goods, including a piano and attorney Carpenter's law library, were sold at

auction. The couple was buried at Prospect Hill Cemetery, Sidney.

Daughter Nettie Bouton Dimmick inherited the Church Street house, which was occupied by several people before it was sold for taxes in December of 1924 to Embree Johnson.

Johnson and his wife Martha had left a farm in Millbrook (where the Kelly Hollow trailhead is today), and moved to Dunraven, then to Margaretville, before buying the Carpenter house for \$4,100. He was an express and mail carrier between the D&N Railroad and

the local post offices and businesses. The Johnsons raised four children in the beautiful house on "Gill Hill Avenue" (as Church Street was known c. 1930): Tyrell, Embree, Jr., Margaret (Mead) and Russell.

The house, set regally on a small hill surrounded by tall pines, had a slate roof, a fountain on the grounds, and a circular staircase. Leonard Utter, whose grandmother was a sister to Martha Ward Johnson, said, "It was a

palace to me." Howard Etts, Jr. remembered that Embree Johnson, Jr. was a violinist who often practiced in a den that had been set up in a garage behind the house. Both Embree and his sister's husband, Percy Mead, served in WWII.

Martha inherited her family's home in Olyphant, PA and the Johnsons moved there in 1946, selling the village house to a couple named Apert of New York City. They used it as a summer retreat, and turned it into apartments occupied in the early 1950s by Charlie and Marsha Geehrer, Ivan and Mavis Ford, Art and Helen Sullivan, Francis and Peg Sweeney and others.

The property changed hands again in 1973 when Harold Smith purchased it. In 1986 it was acquired by Broome Developmental Services.



# WO HOUSES

## THE 1850 SCOTT HOUSE

The cornerstone of the Main St., Margaretville house recently renovated as Margaretville Telephone Company's (MTC) headquarters reveals a bit of history of the earliest days of the village.

Rev. R. S. Scott was Russel S. Scott, a Methodist minister, the son of Salmon Scott, a New England émigré and preacher who arrived in the late 1790s, ran a sawmill and was active in organizing Methodist worship sites served by circuit riding preachers like his son.

In 1843, Salmon sold his farm, mill and house – about the only buildings in what was then Middletown Center -- to Dr. Orson M. Allaben who was credited with promoting the development of the village.

Salmon moved away, but son Russell stayed and in 1850 built the house that still stands on Main Street.

A eulogy of Rev. Russel S. Scott written by William H. Moser in the 1900 Minutes of the NY Council of the Methodist Episcopal Church said he was born in Dry Brook Jan. 29, 1810 and married Julia Clum in 1833. Their only child was Salmon Fenton Scott (the 'S. F. Scott' on the cornerstone).

Russel became a licensed ME preacher in 1838 and served on the Windham, Coeymans, Deposit, Kortright, Charlotte, Gilboa, Middletown, Jefferson,

Andes and Bovina circuits. (See page 7)

It was son Fenton who probably enlarged or renovated the Main Street house in 1900. In 1869, he was a merchant of men's clothing, dry goods and groceries in a store located where NBT now stands. He also had a prosperous farm, owning land where the village park is now, and across the river opposite Bridge Street. Fenton Scott married Jane (Jennie) Ackerley, daughter of a Margaretville hotel keeper.



In his later years he had a large vegetable garden behind the Main Street house and peddled produce on foot all over the village.

Fenton and Jenny Scott both died in 1917.

In the late 1920s, Margaretville native Jane M. Ackerley retired from her job in NYC, returned

to her hometown and purchased the house. She and New York friend Viola Sowers, a former accountant with J. P. Morgan. Co., operated it as a tourist home known as The Playhouse for 35 years. Jane died in 1963, Viola in 1964.

For several years the house served as offices of surveyor Robert Allison and Rettew Engineering. MTC acquired it in 2012. Renovation revealed beams believed to date to its construction, c. 1850, when Margaretville was new.



# COLLECTION VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

HSM continues to collect documents, photos and small artifacts pertaining to the history of the Town of Middletown and contiguous areas of neighboring towns. Recent acquisitions include a 1928 Margaretville High School yearbook donated by Betty Baker; a framed memorial for Halcottsville Civil War soldier Jerome Morse donated by Jenny Liddle; an album of photos and clippings of golf pro Lou Pedulla donated by Gary Marks; a booklet of hand written profiles and photos of World War I veterans from the Town of Hardenburgh, donated by Dot Borden; and a small binder of photographs of Arena, contributed by Barbara Pellet.



The HSM Archives in the Town Hall Records Room is fair to bursting with treasures such as these. This year, we will be concentrating on organizing the materials and prioritizing future preservation efforts. An initial meeting at the archives will be held in mid-March, and work sessions will continue twice a month through the spring and summer.

If you would like to help with this important work, please contact Diane Galusha or Roger Davis.



## *Let the good times roll!*

Planning a meeting, a party or a special event? Looking for a distinctive venue that's big enough for 75 people, easy to get to, with plenty of parking and outdoor space? Look no further – the HSM Hall is now available to rent!

The hall can be rented between April 1 and Nov. 15 on non-holiday dates when it is not being used by the Historical Society for a program or function. The fee is \$100 per day, plus a \$50 refundable deposit. Go to our website, [www.mtownhistory.org](http://www.mtownhistory.org) for use rules and an application form, or call 845-586-4973 for more information.

## SAVE THE DATE

Sat., June 21

Third Annual Living History Cemetery Tour

Sanford Cemetery, Dunraven • County Route 36, New Kingston Rd.

We need volunteers for this event! If you'd like to participate in any way, call Diane Galusha • 845-586-4973



## RUSSEL S. SCOTT: A 'HERO OF THE SADDLEBAG'

"These were the days of the horse and saddlebags. When our brother was appointed to the Deposit Circuit, the charge comprised no less than twenty preaching places and measured about 60 miles from one end to the other, thus making a journey of 120 miles around which must be covered every four weeks. In the light of these facts our brother stands with those who are styled the "heroes of the saddlebags."

Among the hardships of the itinerant's life in those times was the fording of streams. Bridges were then unknown to the

Delaware River. In December of 1844, when the streams were high and full of anchor ice, it became necessary for him to ford the Delaware in order to reach a stated appointment. The water was so high that the horse which our brother was riding succeeded in crossing only by swimming, and hence our brother could not save himself from the chilling waters of the

river and was drenched to the waist. Here he contracted a cold which left him with lung troubles. He never again regained strength sufficiently to enter the active work, and in 1861 was enrolled among the superannuates.

From that time to the day of his death, though always feeble in health, his zeal for the propagation of the

G o s p e l never grew less but kept him b u s y preaching whenever his physical condition would permit, and to his efforts are



largely due the founding of Methodism in the villages of Dry Brook and Arkville."

From *Official Record:*

*Minutes of the NY Council*

*of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1900*

### HSM EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Diane Galusha • PRESIDENT

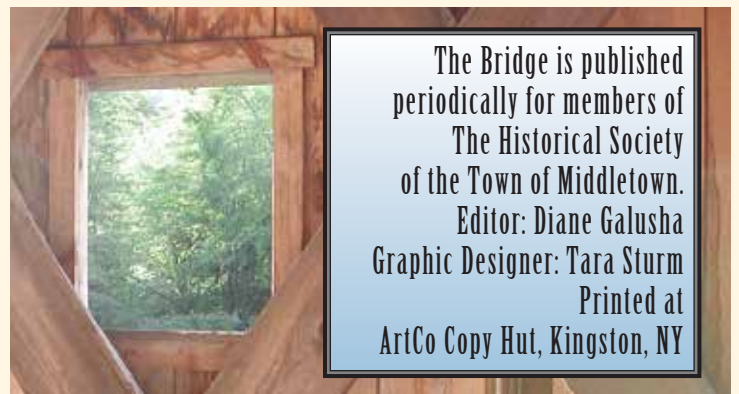
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# A nod to our many friends!

We could not operate without help from many, many volunteers. Sincere THANKS are owed to several people who gave freely of their time and talent over the past several months to help the Society:

- Ann Hoffman planted two beautiful perennial gardens at the hall, using her own plants, and those contributed by several members (thank you, donors!)
- Gary Atkin meticulously constructed a stone wall around one of the gardens.
- Ken and Amy Taylor donated a pair of apple trees in memory of George Hendricks, Jr.
- Jim Gohlke has logged countless hours researching Civil War soldiers and creating a database of their service.
- Jenny Liddle, Steve Miller, Lucci Kelly and Nick Verni helped set up the Civil War exhibit, which was staffed by several volunteers on Saturdays last summer.
- Terry Johnson came to the rescue with plumbing and lighting repairs, and organized local Scouts to provide a flag ceremony for the exhibit's opening day on July 4, raising an American flag they donated.
- Doug Odell is our volunteer snow plower.
- Gretchen Balcom is helping with fundraising, and our Building Committee includes Tom Jeffers, Chuck Mager (lawn mower extraordinaire), Gary Atkin and Steve Miller.
- Al Weiss donated a beautiful book cabinet to house our library of history books, and Adam and Nate Hendricks moved it from Al's home to the hall.



Gardening volunteer Ann Hoffman

*Thank you one and all!*



Stone wall builder Gary Atkin



HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY of  
MIDDLETOWN,  
*Delaware County*

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