

Welcome

THIS INAUGURAL NEWSLETTER OF THE Historical Society of the Town of Middletown (HSM) takes its name from our logo, an image of the Margaretville Covered Bridge spanning the East Branch of the Delaware River and symbolizing the link between Middletown's colorful past and our busy contemporary lives. If you're not a member, please join us! You'll find a membership signup form inside.

We've planned a full schedule of programs, preservation activities and research projects for 2006, and we could use your help.

ENJOY TIME TRAVEL? Volunteer to transcribe some of the fascinating diaries, account books and letters that have been donated to the Society so that the names and information they contain can be shared with genealogists and other researchers.

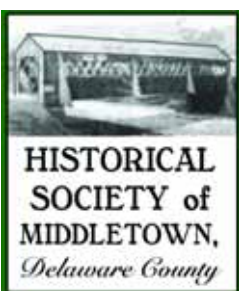
DIG OLD GRAVEYARDS? Help record and restore the history they contain by joining the Friends of Middletown Cemeteries.

LIKE TO GOSSIP WITH NEIGHBORS & RELATIVES about the old days? Consider taping those conversations and contributing them to our growing oral history archives.

ARE YOU A BAKER? How about contributing cookies for our public programs? We'd also love to have someone coordinate refreshment-bringers for the whole season.

ARE YOU A COLLECTOR? Let us know if you'd like to exhibit or talk about your collection.

Contact any HSM Executive committee member (listed on the next page) for more information.



Future issues of *The Bridge* will be sent to HSM members only. Please indicate on the membership form whether you prefer to receive it by regular mail or e-mail. If you are already a member, we'll send the newsletter by e-mail if possible. If you'd rather receive a hard copy in the mail, let us know.



This year marks the 75TH anniversary of the founding of
MARGARETVILLE MEMORIAL HOSPITAL
a milestone that will be celebrated at the annual
HARVEST MOON BALL
SATURDAY, SEPT. 16

Mark your calendars!

HOSPITAL ADDITION WELL UNDER WAY

Six Rooms Will Allow Institution to Take Care of Large Number of Patients

Work on the addition to the Margaretville Hospital is under way and it will be but a short time until the addition of six new rooms will greatly add to the number of patients that the institution can take care of. The successful bidder for the work was Henry Townsend of Fleischmanns.

The bids for the erection of the addition were as follows:

Henry Townsend ...	\$2,164.00
Clark Hait	2,300.00
E. J. Kittle	2,448.28
Edward Hill.....	2,666.00
John Dickman.....	2,765.00

During the summer of 1931, the *Catskill Mountain News* ran frequent updates on a new hospital addition. The hospital opened earlier that year and was already overcrowded. In those days, the paper also sported a column about who was in the hospital and what was being done to them!

HSM has applied for a State Library grant to microfilm the first 35 years of the *News* (1902-1937), thereby preserving these fragile chronicles of local life in the early 20th century.

HOW TO HUNT THE HISTORY OF HOUSES & THE PEOPLE WHO LIVED IN THEM

Two workshops offering guidance in tracing the history of your home and your family will be offered Saturday, April 8 at the Catskill Center for Conservation & Development in Arkville.

HSM will sponsor the double-header, which begins at 10 a.m. with a House History workshop led by Virginia Scheer, followed by a 12:30 p.m. Family Genealogy workshop led by Edward R. Stewart.

There is no charge for either workshop but donations to HSM are welcome. Those who intend to participate in both workshops are invited to bring a bagged lunch. Beverage and cookies will be provided.

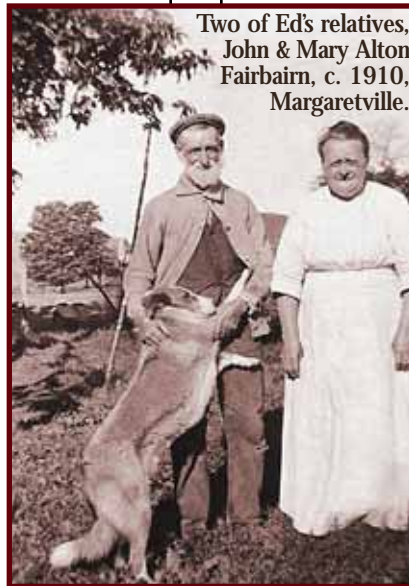
Ginny Scheer is a long time Roxbury resident, director of Manhattan Country School Farm, and a folklorist who specializes in vernacular architecture. At this workshop she will share techniques she used to decode the documentary and material evidence that revealed the history of an 1828 stone house, including the U.S. and New York Censuses, early publications, maps, and a

letter written by Walter Stratton, the man who built the house. The use of oral history to glean information about a house will also be discussed.

Ed Stewart lives in NYC and maintains a home in Arkville. He works in the development office of the Maryknoll Fathers in Ossining. Through his grandmother, Irene Todd,

he is descended from many of the pioneer families of the area. While not a professional genealogist, Ed will draw on 25 years of experience tracing his ancestors through family lore, cemetery visits, published genealogies, census records, local histories and court records. A virtual tour of the Delaware County Genealogy and History Web site and its remarkable storehouse of resources will be offered.

Those interested in searching for their Irish ancestors are welcome to linger for a specialized discussion on that topic.



Two of Ed's relatives, John & Mary Alton Fairbairn, c. 1910, Margaretville.

DO YOU RECOGNIZE THIS MAIN STREET, Margaretville house? Come to the House History workshop April 8 to learn more about it.



ROCKS OF AGES Storied Veins in Strata

LONG BEFORE HUMANS ARRIVED TO LEAVE

their mark on the landscape and then to write about it, nature had recorded a far more ancient story in stone. On Saturday, May 13 at 3 P.M. noted geologist and author Robert Titus will discuss "The Geological History of the Catskills" in Margaretville Central School auditorium.

An engaging, entertaining speaker, Prof. Titus teaches at Hartwick College's Geology Department. He is a paleontologist who has done professional work on patterns of evolution in the fossil record. He is the author of *The Catskills: A Geological Guide*, and *The Catskills in the Ice Age*, and has become well known for his magazine and newspaper columns which breathe fascinating life into the stone beneath our feet.



HSM EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Diane Galusha ♦ PRESIDENT
 Carolyn Konheim ♦ VICE PRESIDENT
 Marilyn Pitetti ♦ TREASURER
 Andrew VanBenschoten ♦ SECRETARY
 Philip O'Beirne ♦ TRUSTEE

PO BOX 745 MARGARETVILLE, NY 12455

MARDI GRAS in Middletown?!

This invitation to a private Masquerade Ball to be held on February 1, 1898 at the East End Hall in Griffin Corners (later named Fleischmanns) was sent to Hanford Shultis. It promised Mr. Shultis "and lady" a goose and oyster supper at George Lasher's Hotel and "first-class music furnished by Kelly Brothers' Orchestra of five pieces." The invitation "committee" of



GRAND
Masquerade Ball,

-AT-
GRIFFIN CORNERS N. Y.
-ON-
TUESDAY EVENING, FEB. 1
1898.

Crosby Kelly and William Murray assured the invitee that "No pains will be spared to make this Initial Ball a grand success," and that "if the weather is stormy, dance will be postponed until the first pleasant evening following, without fail."

Admission? \$1.50

Thanks to Bob Vredenburg for donating this to the Society.

YES! SIGN ME UP AS AN HSM MEMBER!

Choose your membership level:

- Individual **\$20** Student or Senior (60+) **\$10**
- Family (2 or more household members) **\$30**
- Business/organization **\$40** Non-profit **\$30**

{ Good Through September 2006. }

NAME _____

LOCAL ADDRESS _____

TOWN _____ ST _____ ZIP _____

LOCAL PHONE _____

PERMANENT ADDRESS (IF DIFFERENT FROM ABOVE) _____

CITY _____ ST _____ ZIP _____

PHONE _____

E-MAIL _____

Members receive the HSM newsletter, The Bridge, three times a year. Please indicate whether you prefer to receive it via E-mail US Mail. (Don't forget your e-mail address above to receive the newsletter and HSM updates.)

I can contribute to/present a program/exhibit on: _____

Enclosed is my additional donation* \$ _____

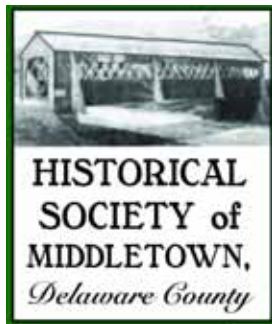
Please make your check payable (and mail) to:

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF MIDDLETOWN

P.O. Box 745 ☎ Margaretville, NY 12455

*DONATIONS ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE TO THE FULL EXTENT PERMITTED BY LAW.

About Our Logo



Our logo features the Margaretville covered bridge and was designed by Ellie Verni.

THE BRIDGE WAS CONSTRUCTED IN 1865, connecting what is now Bridge Street with NY State Route 30. The builder, Robert Murray, a Scotsman, is credited with constructing nine covered bridges in the county, including two of the three public covered bridges that still stand in the county, in Downsville and Hamden. The Margaretville bridge was a Town Lattice design, its planks held together in a lattice pattern with wooden pins called trunnels. It served the community as an ideal fishing spot, a playground on rainy days, a hideaway for young lovers, and as a sturdy thoroughfare, for almost 70 years.

In its final year, the bridge endured a double whammy. In July 1932, the state announced that it would replace it with a new steel decked bridge. A few days after this announcement a 25-ton milk truck crossed the covered bridge, ripped the top apart and damaged the timbers. (Heavy milk trucks had agreed to use the sturdier Austin's Bridge on the Arkville cut-off, but a new driver hadn't gotten the message.) Frank Mead repaired the bridge, and traffic continued to cross it – carefully. Then on October 7, 1932 a major flood carried a tree into the bridge. Once again, repairs were made and the old span served as temporary bridge while the new one was under construction. When the new steel bridge was opened in 1933, the timbers of the old bridge were bought by Dr. Gordon Maurer, who used them to build a hunting cabin. Middletown Supervisor Len Utter has donated a timber from the original bridge to the Society. You can see it at our Open House on October 14!

SHARE YOUR PHOTOS, MEMORABILIA & YOUR MEMORIES!

WE'VE BEGUN A COLLECTION OF PHOTOS, videos, stories and interviews related to the Flood of 1996, which so changed our area. If you have something to share, please contact an HSM board member.

Diane Galusha is researching what people experienced on the homefront during World War II for a November program. Remember ration cards, tin collections, blackouts, air raid drills? Please call Diane with your stories. 845-586-4973.



VILLAGE OF MARGARETVILLE SEEKS A VILLAGE HISTORIAN

The Margaretville Village Board is looking to appoint a Village Historian. If you have some knowledge of and interest in village history, and have time to answer inquiries from genealogists and other researchers, please contact the Village Clerk, 586-4418. Pay is minimal (\$350 per year) but the rewards are great!

Store Which Served Arkville in Early Century Still Operates



The general store built by C. C. Cammer in 1902 or 1903 has changed ownership several times, but is still serving Arkville. Now being operated by Sherwood Griffin, it has been expanded to take in an adjacent building. Mr. Cammer is seated at table with ledger at left of stove. His clerks are Ralph Hoorbeck, left, and Jay Nixon, right. None of the three is living. Note barber

chair covered in left foreground. Several Arkville residents recall how they had to wait in the chair half shaven or with haircut in-completed while Mr. Cammer had to attend to a grocery customer. Old photograph is remarkably clear and well preserved for its age. It was contributed by William Frevert of Roxbury.

THE 39¢ POST

"THE 39¢ POST" IS A feature exclusively for members who receive *The Bridge* via e-mail. Because your newsletter requires no postage or label area, you get an extra feature — 39¢ cents' worth, to be precise!

This photo was culled from the *Catskill Mountain News* of February 17, 1956, when this store was still in operation. The caption reads in part "The general store built by C. C. Cammer in 1902 or 1903 has changed ownership several times, but is still serving Arkville. Now being operated by Sherwood Griffin, it has been expanded... Mr. Cammer is seated at table with ledger. His clerks are Ralph Hornbeck, left, and Jay Nixon. None of the three is living. Note barber chair covered in left foreground. Several Arkville residents recall how they had to wait in the chair half shaven or with haircut incompleted while Mr. Cammer had to attend to a grocery customer. Photo was contributed by William Frevert of Roxbury."

The store was destroyed by fire in 1979. It was located where the *Catskill Mountain News* office is now. That 1979 fire also destroyed the home of Helen Forsman.