

## “Wish You Were Here”: The Grand Hotels of Middletown

### “WISH YOU WERE HERE”:

The Grand Hotels of Middletown, a slide show by Georgi Fairlie, will highlight the Historical Society's Second Annual Meeting Sunday, Sept. 10 at Hanah Country Inn.

The event begins at noon at Hanah, which is located on West Hubbell Hill Road off NYS Route 30 north of Margaretville.

For \$15, you get Sunday brunch and a fascinating program on the major hotels and boarding houses of Fleischmanns, Highmount and Halcott.

In the 1902 directory of the Ulster & Delaware Railroad, there were no fewer than 50 hotels and boarding houses listed at those stops. Boarders came to the mountains in the 1800s on the Dayliner boats up the Hudson to Kingston, transferring there to the U&D for a scenic ride to points west.

At the small town train stations along the way, travelers were met by horse-drawn carriages which took them to their hotels (\$12 to \$15 per week) or boarding houses (\$5 to \$7 per week).

Georgi Fairlie, a life-long resident of Middletown, has compiled images of a time when Fleischmanns-area hotels and resorts attracted thousands of visitors every summer. Fleischmanns had only 250 year-round citizens at one time, yet by the 4th of July there would be more than 1,200 people in town. Anyone with a room or two

Milton Berle performed and golfed at the Takanassee (now the site of Fleischmanns' wastewater treatment plant).



to rent did so to get their share of the tourist dollar.

Included in the program will be the Grand Hotel, which straddled two county lines and catered to wealthy railroad patrons; the Switzerland and the Takanassee Hotels, and several homes of the Fleischmann family of the yeast and gin fortune who ultimately gave the community its name.

If you have memories or memorabilia from the days of the grand hotels of Middletown, please consider sharing them at the Historical Society's annual meeting.

### STAND UP & BE COUNTED!

The current HSM Executive Committee plus one new candidate will seek voter approval at the Annual Meeting Sept. 10. Candidates may also be nominated from the floor.

Diane Galusha, Carolyn Konheim, Marilyn Pitetti, Andy VanBenschoten and Phil O'Beirne are running for re-election. Fran Faulkner of New Kingston also hopes to join the Executive Committee.

Fran is the retired postmaster of New Kingston. With her late husband Doug, she's been an enthusiastic antiques collector and proponent of local history. She has been active in various HSM projects and programs.

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Designer: Trish Adams  
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# MIDDLETOWN HISTORY EXPOSED!

OUR TOWN'S HERITAGE WILL BE ON EXHIBIT at Middletown History Day Saturday, October 14 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Margaretville Central School. The gym will be filled with photographs, memorabilia and artifacts as history lovers from all over town and beyond share their personal collections with the public.

The Historical Society will display some of the items donated to its collection, including an exhibition marking the 10th anniversary of the Flood of 1996. The Town of Middletown and Village of Margaretville will also exhibit priceless historic documents from their vaults.

There will be a workshop on preservation techniques for paper items and other objects by Jennie Rosenzweig of the Upstate History Alliance; a primer on postcard collecting by John Duda of Fleischmanns; and a virtual tour of the treasures awaiting on the amazing Delaware County Genealogy and History Web Site.

A "Scanning the Past" station will allow visitors to drop off their post cards and photographs for scanning while they browse the displays, and pick them up when they leave.

## WRIT IN STONE

THE FRIENDS OF MIDDLETOWN CEMETERIES have completed two projects this spring.

Fourteen volunteers endured a cold, wet morning in early May to inventory the Arkville Cemetery located on the Arkville Cross Road. Working from a list compiled by Amy Gavette in the 1950s, the group re-canvassed the deteriorating stones to correct and clarify the existing record.

Six volunteers spent another cold, wet morning in June gathering as much detail as possible on old grave markers in the Faulkner/Archibald Cemetery in New Kingston. This cemetery was more of a challenge as it is surrounded by private and NYC-owned land and hasn't been maintained. Several stones are in such a state of disrepair they are illegible. In addition, one corner of the cemetery is missing as the embankment collapsed during the flood of 1996. Again, the volunteers had notes from Amy Gavette which provided clues to missing and illegible stones.

The final, corrected inventories of these two projects will be posted soon on the Delaware County Genealogy and History website ([www.dcnynhistory.org](http://www.dcnynhistory.org)), where 22 Middletown cemetery inventories are listed.

Scanned photos will be archived by the Historical Society.

### Also on display every day . . .

An antique display case once used in Bussy's Store on Margaretville's Main Street has been installed in the Middletown Town Hall and will be used to exhibit historic memorabilia.

Currently on display are calendars, ledgers, advertisements, photos and other ephemera reflecting Middletown stores of the past from the collections of Middletown Town Historian Shirley Davis and Fran Faulkner of New Kingston.

Fran and her late husband Doug acquired the wood and glass display case from the Bussy's Store attic many years ago. Fran has generously provided it for the Town Historian to showcase rotating historic displays, which will change every few months.

Area residents who would like to share their Middletown-related collections with the public in this way are encouraged to contact Shirley at 586- 4618.



### Next up, Margaretville!

The group's next project will be inventorying the Margaretville Cemetery's nearly 2,000 grave stones. This major undertaking will take several months and require many volunteers. Anyone interested in "adopting" a section should contact Tina Greene at 586-2029.

This is one of Middletown's cemeteries that is not on the county website. Stone inscriptions will be electronically linked to an on-line map of the cemetery, so researchers can see not only who is buried there, but exactly where in the cemetery they are, and who is buried nearby. This project will be a major contribution benefitting genealogists and local history researchers everywhere.

## IN THE GOOD OLE SUMMERTIME!

FOUR BOYS DOING WHAT COMES NATURALLY on a hot summer day in Halcottsville, c. 1930. L. to r. Lloyd Roberts, Percy Mead, Arnold Cartwright and Frank Logwin cooled off in Lake Wawaka, with the Red Rose Hall and the very edge of the old grist mill (now Susan's Pleasant Pheasant Farm B&B) seen at right. Route 30 (visible in background) went directly through town then. Photo courtesy of Lloyd Roberts.



M. J. FAULKNER'S STORE, NEW KINGSTON What is it today?

## REMEMBERING THE GOUNTRY STORE

"THE STORE WAS A MAJOR PART OF MY formative years. I worked there, played there, and was given love there. The town's activities revolved around it. It was the focal point of everyone's life. . .

"About 9 every morning, except Sundays, the wagons and the trucks stopped at the store on their way to the creamery to deliver their milk. They stopped with their grocery lists. We packed the groceries while the farmer delivered his cans of milk to the creamery just down the unpaved street. Along with groceries, lamp chimneys or drugs, the list might call for nails, staples, or a length of rope . . . Dad (also) had me pack a little sack with candy – a lollipop for each child and some chocolates for the adults. . .

From *For the Love of Dolls and Roses*, Autobiography of Mildred Seeley, whose widowed mother, Carrie VanValkenburgh, married Myron J. Faulkner, proprietor of the New Kingston general store, in 1928.

## WHAT'S IT WORTH? FIND OUT SEPT. 30

HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED HOW MUCH THAT VINTAGE item in your attic is worth? You can find out September 30 in the History Tent at the Fourth Annual Margaretville Cauliflower Festival, where an antiques and collectibles appraisal clinic will be offered from 10 to 2 by Bob Connelly, an internationally renowned appraiser based in Binghamton.

An authority on antique furniture, china, glassware, decorative arts, clocks and watches, sports memorabilia, military items and artwork, Bob has appraised everything from a life-sized model of a German plane to Babe Ruth's 1922 Pierce Arrow automobile to Aristotle Onassis' teeth! Come hear about it firsthand from this entertaining accredited senior appraiser of the American Society of Appraisers. Bob also serves on the board of the Appraisers Association of America.

Bring your items, or pictures and documentation to Bob, who will offer a Verbal Opinion of Value for a mere \$4 an item (three items for \$10). Proceeds benefit the Society.

Perhaps you'll discover a rare treasure you never knew you had!

Another History Tent feature this year will be an exhibit on cider making. Cauliflower wasn't the only cash crop for Catskill farmers — apples were an abundant, versatile fruit and making cider an ideal way to make some extra money.

Festival goers are encouraged to stop by the tent to learn about this rural enterprise, then hop over to Hubbell Homestead Farm, 4 miles north of Margaretville in Kelly Corners, to see the process as it's been performed on this landmark family farm since 1865. Bob Hubbell and other family members welcome visitors to see and hear the remarkable wooden apple press powered by a "one lung" (one cylinder) 1918 15HP Fairbanks Morse engine.

The Cauliflower Festival is sponsored by the Greater Margaretville Chamber of Commerce. Free admission is made possible by the generous donations of individuals and area organizations. The festival runs from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on September 30 in the Margaretville Village Park. For festival information, and to find out how to donate to this special event, go to [www.cauliflowerfestival.com](http://www.cauliflowerfestival.com).

## BACK TO THE FUTURE: HSM LOOKS DOWN THE ROAD

WHILE HSM'S FOCUS MAY BE ON THE PAST, WE ARE thinking of the future as we prepare a strategic plan for the organization.

In June, using a "Get Ready" grant from the Upstate History Alliance, the HSM board and committed supporters met to discuss our young society's strengths and weaknesses. With guidance from historical consultant Joann Lindstrom, we reviewed the successes of HSM's first year, and prepared to develop some goals and a blueprint to reach them over the next three to five years.

That process involves all of our members, and interested residents of the Middletown community. We will be soliciting your input in the coming months and truly want to know what you think the Society should do and be. We are at a critical stage in our development as an organization and we need your help and advice.

Watch for a separate mailing and opportunities to voice your opinions at public meetings and events. This is your chance to direct the future of the Historical Society of the Town of Middletown.

Meantime, renew your membership by completing the enclosed flyer!



HSM's planning process began last winter with a site visit by Jenny Rosenzweig of the Upstate History Alliance. Rosenzweig takes a look at local history collections and advises historical groups about their most logical next steps. HSM, she said, was more than ready to undertake a strategic planning process to chart a clear plan for future goals.

### 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**

## 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!

### Déjà Vu All Over Again!

The drowning of the Firemen's Carnival in Margaretville this year was a sad sight to behold. But it wasn't the first time Mother Nature called a halt to the community's annual summer frolic.

## RUIN WROUGHT BY RAIN

The Margaretville Fair that opened on Wednesday of last week with such bright prospects went to pieces in a drenching rain on Friday and became a dismal wreck on Saturday... The horsemen sat around like buzzards on the edge of a swamp and watched the mud deepen on the track, while the hucksters looked solemn and sold out their raw material for anything they could get. About noon Friday the superintendent discharged the cattle and their owners at once started a funeral procession homeward while the bedraggled animals bellowed a forlorn accompaniment to their splashy footfalls. Saturday showed no improvement. At 9 a.m. it was a sick little crowd that gathered in the secretary's office to devise ways and means for burying the corpse. A motion to "abandon the Fair of 1903 on account of rain" was carried with a gusto that knocked the mourners off their seats.

*Catskill Mountain News, Sept. 4, 1903*

## STAY TUNED

HSM was unsuccessful in its application to the NYS Library for a Preservation Grant to microfilm 30 years of the *Catskill Mountain News*. As this excerpt shows, the News is an invaluable historical resource and must be preserved. So we will proceed to Plan B, soliciting foundation and community support for this important microfilm project. Watch for information to come later this fall.