



Sample life before the Civil War Sept. 9



Nancy Cannon, Associate Librarian at SUNY Oneonta and creator of a website titled "Voice of the People, Daily Life in Antebellum Delaware County," will be the featured speaker at the Third Annual Meeting of the Historical Society of the Town of Middletown Sunday, Sept. 9.

The program will follow Sunday lunch at Hanah Country Resort in Margaretville. Lunch starts at noon; reservations are required. Call Marilyn Pitetti, 586-2860 by September 5 to claim your seat (\$15 each).

Ms. Cannon became acquainted with the fascinating stories of the men and women of Delaware County while work-

ing as an archivist for the Delaware County Historical Association (DCHA) in Delhi. During a sabbatical from her position at SUNY Oneonta, she scanned and transcribed excerpts from hundreds of first-person accounts of pre-Civil War life found in DCHA files, and placed them on the web with a great deal of background, interpretation and illustration. She will offer an overview of this treasure trove at the September 9 meeting.

Excerpts from some of the accounts will be recited by volunteer readers.

Letters, diaries, business journals, sermons, mortgages,
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YOUR HSM MEMBERSHIP IS ABOUT TO EXPIRE!

Please use the form inside this issue to renew your membership through September 2008.

And if you're looking for a birthday, anniversary or holiday gift for the person who has everything, consider giving a membership to the only organization dedicated to preserving and presenting Middletown history! A special gift card will be sent to the recipient, who will get *The Bridge* three times a year, along with discounts to coming programs and activities.



Many of the Middletown area's over-80 elders gathered for this group portrait prior to the Roxbury Brass concert in Binnekill Park on July 12. (L. to r, front) Ila Faulkner, Virginia McCumber, Wanda Lanzi, Howard (Bonnie) Etts, Jr., Fran Roberts, Louis Kole Sr., Berna VanBenschoten, Bill Sanford. (Back) Willis Marks, Nina Johnson, Milton Valk, Betty Griffin, Jean Judge, Terry Cohen, Howard Witteborn, Nancy Ackerley, Doris Stahl and Bill Stahl. Photo by Dick Sanford

MATTHEW GRIFFIN'S WORLD

The 1845-1861 diary of Matthew Griffin, discovered under some hay in the corner of a carriage barn in Fleishmanns in 1916, will be among the works excerpted at HSM's annual meeting September 9 (*see story page 1*).

Griffin was postmaster, storekeeper, lawyer and a hotel owner in Griffin's Corners (later named Fleischmanns).

He was an "Up-Renter," disapproving of the Anti-Renters who agitated for the abolition of the feudal system of land ownership in the Catskills during the 1840s.

Griffin's diary is being completely transcribed for HSM by Innes Kasanof of Halcott. The following excerpt indicates how the drama of the Anti-Rent conflict took place amid the ordinary activities of everyday life:

"August 27th: [1845] The posse have just returned from a place called Dry Brook where the Indians have threatened to shoot, etc., but met with no resistance suc-

ceeded in capturing and taking 2 prisoners. One of them is one of my neighbors who had fled there for safety. He had come out of the woods to carry in some provisions. A few of the posse laying in ambush saw him and watched him going to the other company. They carefully pursued him and got near enough. Called to him to stand or they would shoot. He trembled before the man and surrendered: had on 3 shirts, 2 coats and a knapsack of provisions. This afternoon we have had two showers of rain so the streams are considerably swollen. The Sheriff's posse have again this afternoon been in Dry Brook and captured 2 other prisoners. The evening is fine, quite dark and I am this evening taking eels in a rack which I have prepared in the stream. Caught during the evening 10 fine eels so now I retire. Good night."

By-law and constitution changes, exec committee elections

It's been two and a half years since the founders of the Historical Society drafted the organization's By-laws and Constitution. Since then, we've found that some revisions are needed, and we'll be asking for the members' approval of those changes at the Annual Meeting September 9.

The changes to the Constitution include making all officer terms for one year, with a limit of six consecutive terms, and trustee terms for three years (initial terms at this 2007 election to be staggered for one, two and three years). There may be up to seven trustees and four officers, for a total of 11 people on the Executive Committee.

The list of standing committees was enlarged to include Governance (to compile candidate slates and consider structure and policies of the organization); Communications (to handle newsletter, public relations and advertising); Education (to develop history education programs and projects for students and adults), and Audit (to review any financial audits of the society).

Proposed changes to the By-laws include making a majority of the Executive Committee constitute a quorum; requiring the President or the treasurer to sign checks for amounts up to \$100 (both must sign for more than that amount), and to remove the requirement that candidates for appointment or election to the Executive Committee must be members in good standing for six months.

Sample life before the Civil War Sept. 9

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receipts, broadsides and other previously unpublished or generally unavailable material brings to life this "history by the people, for the people" in eight "chapters" on the website: Family Life, Education, Reform/Conflict, Health, Transportation, Business, Religion, and The Outside World.

"Voice of the People" can be found at

www.oneonta.edu/library/dailylife.

Elections

HSM members will be asked at the Annual Meeting on Sept. 9 to approve a slate of four officers and three trustees to serve on the Executive Committee.

Nominations may also be offered from the floor. Candidates must be paid members of HSM.

Candidates for re-election include President Diane Galusha, Vice President Carolyn Konheim, Treasurer Marilyn Pitetti and Secretary Andy VanBenschoten. All will serve for one year upon re-election. Current trustee Fran Faulkner has opted to serve again for one year, trustee Phil O'Beirne will serve for three years, and a newcomer to HSM, Lori Rosa, will round out the slate as a two-year trustee. Beginning in 2008, all trustee posts will run for three years.

Lori Rosa is a history buff who lives in New Kingston. She teaches 10th grade Global History and Geography at Walton Central School. She and husband Gary have four children, three of them in college. She has long been involved with 4-H and Pony Club, owns and rides horses with daughter Katie and likes to ski, hike, sew, knit, weave, and do needlework when time permits.

HSM Mission Statement

The purpose of The Historical Society of the Town of Middletown, Delaware County is to build awareness and appreciation of the heritage of the Town of Middletown by discovering, preserving and making accessible historical information and materials related to the Town and its environs. These objectives will be achieved through educational programs and preservation projects, and through cooperation and collaboration with other local organizations.

Contact us: 845-586-4973. PO Box 745, Margaretville, NY 12455

Board of Directors

Diane Galusha, *President*

Carolyn Konheim, *Vice President*

Marilyn Pitetti, *Treasurer*

Andrew VanBenschoten, *Secretary*

Phil O'Beirne

Fran Faulkner

SIGNED GLASER POSTER COULD BE YOURS!

A signed poster created by famed graphic designer Milton Glaser for a 2000 event spotlighting Catskills food products is being raffled to benefit HSM.

The “Wonderful World of Catskill Cuisine” poster publicized an event held at Windows on the World restaurant at the World Trade Center in NYC. This highly collectible poster was donated to HSM by the Catskill Center for Conservation and Development, which along with the Watershed Agricultural Council and others co-sponsored the Windows on the World event. It was professionally matted and framed courtesy of Fran Faulkner.

Milton Glaser is best known for his simple but powerful “I (heart) NY” logo for the NYS Department of Commerce, the most frequently imitated logo design in print history. He co-founded *New York Magazine*; served as design director of *Village Voice Magazine* from 1975 to 1977, and, helped design more than 50 magazines, newspapers and periodicals, including *The Washington Post*, *Paris Match* and *Esquire*. Born in 1929, Glaser was awarded the 2004 National Design Award by the Smithsonian’s Cooper Hewitt National Design Museum.

The Catskill Cuisine poster can be seen at the Margaretville Street Fair on Aug. 25, at Pakatakan Farmers Market Sept. 8, at the HSM Annual Meeting Sept. 9, at the Halcottsville Grange Hall benefit Sept. 15, and at the Margaretville Cauliflower Festival Sept. 29.



A farming snapshot

For a glimpse of a time when there were more cows than people in Middletown, come to the History Tent at the Margaretville Cauliflower Festival Sept. 29. A group of town residents of a certain age have put their heads together to map the locations of family dairy farms circa 1950 to provide a snapshot of local agriculture at the mid-way point of the 20th century. The map, coordinated by Ira McIntosh, will be on exhibit, and folks are encouraged to bring photos and information of their Middletown farms.



The Arkville Cut-off Road (aka County Road 38, and at the time of this photo, the Roxbury Road), was a sleepy thoroughfare in 1911. From the collection of Bud Barnes.

Three ways to have fun, and help HSM!

Bring your collectibles and treasures to the Margaretville Cauliflower Festival September 29 and find out what they’re worth. Bob Connelly will return to the History Tent with his entertaining and very popular **Antiques “roadshow.”** Auction value estimates will be offered from 11 to 3 – put your name on the list and listen to the expert describe your neighbors’ items while you wait your turn!

Have you reserved your seat on the bus for our **October 18 tour of the 19th-century homes of artists Thomas Cole and Frederic Church?** For \$50 (\$60 for non-HSM members), you will ride through autumn colors to Catskill and Hudson, tour Cedar Grove and Olana, see an exhibition of Asher B. Durand paintings, and enjoy lunch at scenic Creekside restaurant on Catskill Creek. Call Dale T. Reithaway, 607-326-4780 for information and reservations.

A village Victorian, a restored country farmhouse, a gristmill-turned-bed and breakfast, a blacksmith’s shop-turned-artist’s studio, and a venerable church will welcome visitors at a **Halcottsville Holiday House Tour** Saturday, Nov. 24. Mark your calendar for this festive, second annual HSM-sponsored tour. Tickets are only \$15 (\$20 for non-members), and they make great gifts! Call Fran Faulkner, 586-4448, for advance tickets and information.



MAC IS BACK!

The original Mountain Athletic Club was a baseball team owned by Julius and Max Fleischmann. Julius was the mayor of Cincinnati and the owner of the Cincinnati Red Stockings. His passion for baseball inspired him to create a team to play at his upstate New York retreat in Griffins Corners.

His wealth allowed him to seed the team with some of the greatest players of all time, including Ty Cobb and Honus Wagner who played here in 1895. There were intense local rivalries especially with the Roxbury Nine as well as competitions with outside teams that were paid handsomely to come and play.

The Fleischmanns eventually donated the Wagner Avenue athletic field to Griffins Corners in 1914, and the community's name was changed to Fleischmanns to thank them.

A 2007 version of MAC was established to help revitalize Fleischmanns with heritage baseball. The team will play the Roxbury Nine Sat. Aug 18 at noon in Kirkside Park, Roxbury, and again on Sat. Aug 25 at noon in Fleischmanns. Opening game of the Keator Tournament in Roxbury will be Friday, Aug. 31 at 5:30 pm in Kirkside Park, with MAC squaring off against the Nine.

Current team members include Mike Maxim, Brian Balcom, Adam Hendrix, Rich Scalla Collin Miller, Bruce Sines, Frank Manon, Jesse Voecks, Dustin Gavette, Lucus Maxim, Lucus Bouton, Matt Santiago, Todd Pascarella, Steve Sines, Brian Conine, Jody Mathis, Bill Brainard and Alex Jarette.

Ty Cobb, rear, once played on the Fleischmanns ball field where Todd Pascarella, (front, photographed by Jonathan Bokor) now plays with the re-born Mountain Athletic Club.

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EDITOR: Diane Galusha DESIGN: Dan Flanagan/Silvertop Graphics

That old house . . .

Several pieces of what was purportedly the oldest house in Middletown were salvaged by HSM in July from a barn about to be dismantled.

Kingdon Gould, the new owner of the barn on the Arkville cut-off road, offered the boards and beams of the former Hollis Straut home to HSM prior to the barn's removal to make way for a community pool and recreation center.

The house, believed built by Solomon Scott near the Binnekill stream in Margaretville in the late 1780s, was one of many Main Street homes damaged in the Flood of 1996. It was taken down as part of the federal Flood Buy Out program and was saved in hopes that it might be resurrected as a history center.

The deteriorated condition of the materials after seven years of storage, and the lack of a legible "map" for putting the pieces back together, prompted the Society's Executive Committee to opt for saving some of the remnants for possible use as educational and/or architectural elements of a future museum or history center.

Our thanks to Mr. Gould for giving us time to organize the removal, to Dick Little and Doug Reeser for their professional guidance, to Ira Lawrence for providing photographs, to Leonard Utter, Bill Russell and the Town of Middletown highway crew for transporting the materials, and to Joe Moskowitz for storing them.

Credit also belongs to former Town Historian Vesti Snyder and others who coordinated the initial salvage operation in 2000.



THE 41¢ POST

"THE 41¢ 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 — 41¢ cents' worth, to be precise!