

Songs of camp and hearth Sept. 2

The Windham-based 77th Regimental Balladeers served up some history with the stirring tunes of the Civil War era when they performed at the HSM hall on Monday, Sept. 2 at 1 p.m.

This concert of the "heart songs of America" closed out a summer in which the Society paid tribute to the 150th anniversary of the Civil War with an exhibit on Middletown's experience during this epic period, and with several programs on various aspects of the war.

The Balladeers are celebrating their 17th year of preserving the songs, history and spirit of the Antebellum and Civil War period. In that time they have presented more than 350 performances. The band uses the original musical arrangements and lyrics to capture how our ancestors talked, their rhythms, accents, beliefs, their spirituality, motives and patriotism.

The troupe has been recognized by the Gettysburg National Military Park for their outstanding and authentic portrayal of the music of the period.

The original 77th New York Regimental band was comprised of military personnel from Fulton, Essex and Saratoga Counties who fought in the Civil War. The group banded together in 1872 as part of the Survivors Association of the 77th Regiment. These heralded musicians kept alive the memories and spirit of comradeship they had experienced during the war. A

military note was dominant in many social events of the period and the troupe was foremost in every event given for the interest and betterment of the community.

The 77th New York Regimental Band flourished into the early 1900s.

The members of the group today perform with fiddles, guitars, banjos, harmonicas, tin whistles, harp, bodhran, bones, bass, trumpet and dulcimer.

The troupe performs regularly at encampments, muse-

ums, schools, colleges, historic sites, private parties and living history events.

Band members include John and Sharon Quinn, Bill and Barbara Lonecke, Jim Broden, Gisella Montanez-Case, Joyce Cockerham, Jennifer Brylinski, Frank and John Swarthout, Ray Smith, John Kenosian, Steve Gubler, Gus Truin, Ron Burch and Peter Krug.



Scholarship Winners

The first George Hendricks, Jr. Memorial Scholarships, provided jointly by the Margaretville Fire Department and the Historical Society, went to Raeann Bond and Caleb Todd.

The MCS seniors were presented their awards of \$500 each at graduation ceremonies in June. They were recognized for academic achievement, volunteer activities, and for their essays on how local history has affected their lives.

The award is named for former chief and HSM trustee George Hendricks who passed away in 2012.

Congratulations and good luck to Raeann and Caleb!

THE WHOOP-DE-DOO RETURNS!

The New Kingston Whoop-De-Doo has gained almost mythical status in the decades since it drew huge crowds to beautiful downtown New Kingston in the 1970s. But in the beginning, no one really expected it to be big. The idea as recorded in the church session book in 1969 was simple: "The New Kingston Valley Community Whoop-De-Doo provides an opportunity for the expression of the art, culture, history, tradition, ecology and social relationships of this section



behind the Whoop-De-Doo, but everybody in the community worked hard to make it special. Each summer, there was a three-day extravaganza -- a parade with floats, kids, animals. Art and quilt displays, a barbecue, square dancing, concerts, theater, old time skills practiced and appreciated. It struck a chord, and people came. By 1976, some say there were too many people, and insurance issues were raised. So the Whoop-De-Doo ended, fading into



Images from one of the Whoop-De-Doos, taken by Isabelle Robertson, now in the collection of Shirley Davis.

of the Catskill area and of the New Kingston Valley in particular. . . the fundamental purpose of the Whoop-De-Doo is the recognition and encouragement of local culture and skills."

Admission and parking were free, and while there was food and other stuff to buy (it was hoped the church could make a little money to keep the lights on), the founders said " . . . ideally, a person should be able to stroll through the village and enjoy the Whoop-De-Doo without having to spend a cent." Rev. Bill Harter and Isabelle Robertson are remembered as driving forces

local legend.



Famed songster-director Mitch Miller, center, with Billy Shepard (left) and Howard Raab at the event in 1975 or 1976. Courtesy Howard Raab

The Blue Deer Center resurrected the event which was held Sept. 2. There were traditional activities and some new ones, food and music of course. It was one day instead of three, and it wasn't free. But fun was a guarantee. "The original Whoop-de-doo is a tough act to follow," says organizer Ted Finkle, "but I'm glad my children will get a little taste of it as well."

FMI: www.bluedeer.org

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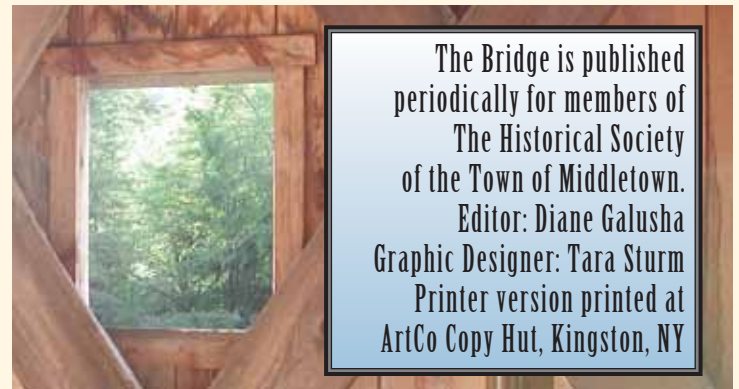
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75 YEARS OF SERVICE: BY CATHY HINKLEY

The Rotary Club of Margaretville is marking its 75th anniversary in 2013!

The club was organized on April 5, 1938 and admitted to Rotary International on August 19 of that year. This was 33 years after Rotary was born in Chicago in 1905. Their weekly meetings were originally held in the Elm Tree House on Main Street in Margaretville every Tuesday at 12:05 PM sharp.

Other long-time Rotary meeting places included Kass Inn on Route 30 owned by the Kass family and the Binnekil Square Restaurant in Margaretville, owned by Walter and Jackie Keller. Currently the Margaretville Club meets on Wednesday evenings at Hanah Moun-

Roswell Sanford, Joe Essel, Nathaniel Lattin, Demas Mead, Merle Randle, Harold Finch and Elton Shaver.

In 1989 women were admitted into Rotary. Today, women make up nearly 50% of the local club's membership.

Adhering to the Rotary International motto of "Service Above Self," the local club over the years has provided scholarships to graduating MCS students; sponsored the American Legion youth baseball team; donated books for use at Head Start, and sent students to Rotary Youth Leadership conferences.

The club also has supported community projects such as constructing a gazebo on wheels for community use;

donating to Irene's flood victims, sponsoring a yearly community Halloween parade and party, assisting annually in the Community Christmas Project, supporting the local food bank, selling ice cream to raise funds for Margaretville Memorial Hospital, and organizing the Election Day pancake dinner.

The club has supported International Rotary projects such as Polio Plus, which has nearly eliminated polio from the globe; collecting eyeglasses for use in needy countries; sponsoring wheelchair purchases in Honduras, and sending and

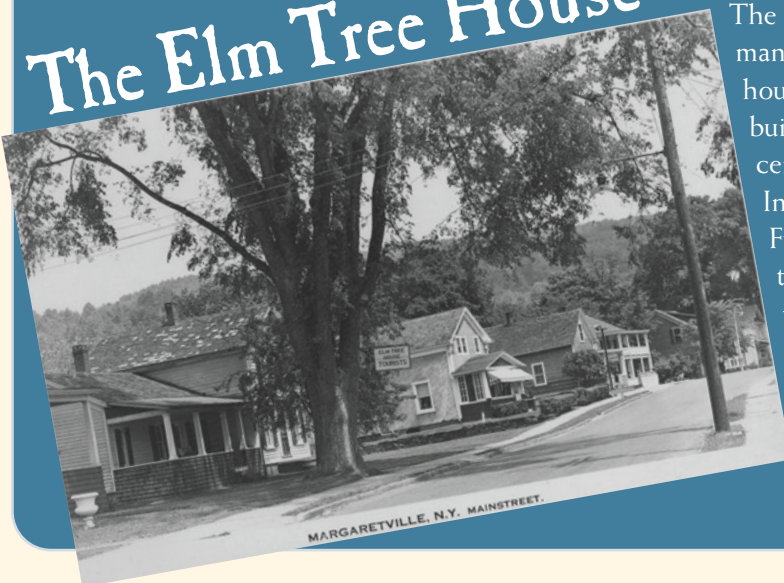
receiving more than 20 students in the international Rotary exchange program.

Willis Marks, a 58-year member of the Margaretville Rotary Club and twice its president, is the longest serving member of the organization.

tain Country Inn and Resort, successor to Kass Inn.

Charter members and officers in 1938 were President William Kavanaugh, Vice President VanWert Ellis, Secretary Myron Wiltsie, Treasurer Dietrich Cordes, Sargent-at-Arms Ralph Sanford, Directors Harry Miller, Clarke Sanford and Dr. Clarence Holcomb, and

The Elm Tree House



The Elm Tree House where the Rotary Club met for many years is remembered by many as Oby Atkins' house and antique shop. That house on Main Street was built as a Methodist Church c. 1850. In the early 20th century it was used as a boarding and rooming house.

In the 1930s, Myra Ruff and her daughters (Addie Fulmer and "Mrs. McIntosh") ran a tourist operation there, and opened a "tea room" and luncheonette that was apparently a popular place for local groups, including the Rotary Club, to meet. In 1957, the big elm tree for which the house was named was cut down, along with all the rest of the beautiful trees in the village, when the sewer system was built.



THE WAR FOR THE UNION

LETTERS HOME

Edward Easton of New Kingston and Marcus Marks of Millbrook, Town of Hardenburgh, were two of nearly 300 Middletown area men to serve in the Civil War. Their letters home to loved ones were among many read by Open Eye Theater performers at a special program at HSM August 22. Musicians of the Delhi-based Delaware Dulcimers provided period music. All of the performers, and Open Eye Artistic Director Amie Brockway, contributed their time to benefit the Society.

Easton, who was born in Scotland in 1838, was 23 when he enlisted in the 56th NY Regiment. He served for four years, and despite a shoulder wound, survived to marry Janette Henderson and father three children. He lived in Roxbury, where he died in 1923. He left a record of his service, and his

Marcus Augustus Marks was 45 when he died of complications from pneumonia at King Street Hospital, Alexandria, VA on June 5, 1864, just six months after he had enlisted. His wife Sarah Lavina, raised their five children, and, with 16-year-old Edgar's help, carried on the farm. Three letters he wrote to his children from his hospital bed during May of 1864 have been treasured by his descendants. Excerpts from two of them follow:

startlingly honest feelings about it, in letters home to his mother, preserved by descendent Shirley Davis

June 18, 1862, Chickahominy River

Dear Mother,

I now take my pen to write you a few lines. We have had another great battle at Richmond and I was in it. You had better believe it looked a little hard to march right up before the cannon. But one can easy dodge the cannon balls. The little ones you have to run your own risk. It looks very hard to see your comrade shot down by your side, but after you get into it you don't care for anything at all. We went into the fight with 600, we have 315 men now. It was a sad day for us, I tell you. I don't care if I never see another.

I remain your most loving son, Edward A Easton

August 10, 1862

Harrison Landing, Virginia

Dear Mother, Your letter suited me very well, but it is too full of love. There is nothing but war suits me now. I once was a man that did know what love was, but now all I care about is war and all I love is the roar of the cannon and the sharp rattle of the rifle. I don't want to come home till this war is over, I like it now well and I would not exchange it for the peace and quiet of home. Here is country, and honor. It is true, I can never raise higher than I am now.

I am well. Your loving son, Ed Easton

December 1864

General Hospital, Hilton Head Island
South Carolina

Dear Mother . . . as you see, I am in the hospital. The night of the 4th of this month we got orders to move. We went up another river and on the 6th we landed again and started for the rebels. We did not have long to hunt for we found them and the battle commenced. As both were in the open field it was not long before there was plenty of dead and wounded men on every side. James Y Thomson, Charles W Reading were wounded. Old Will Elliot's son was killed dead. For my part I am glad that I am hurt no worse than I am. I had a ball shot through my left shoulder but it broke no bones and I think in the course of a month that I will be able to do duty again. But it has cheated me out of a furlough this winter and so you need not expect to see me home.

I remain your son,

Ed A. Easton

January 14, 1865

Hilton Head, SC

My dear Mother, I am well in health, but my arm is very stiff yet. I don't think I will be able to do anything yet for a long time. And I am very sorry, for the regiment is going with General Sherman and they will have a good time. I think the war will not last a great while longer. Sherman has started through South Carolina and has ordered everything to be burnt to the ground. Every house and shed is to be burnt, and I think it is right, for it is the first place that commenced this war and it ought to be destroyed.

King Street Hospital

Alexandria, VA

May 1, 1864

My dear Harriet,

It was with singular emotions of joy and pride that I read your letter, joyful because it seemed to breathe forth such an earnest sympathy for a sick and absent father. I felt proud that I had a daughter that could write such a good kind letter. . .

I suppose by this time you are all through making sugar and molasses so you can tell me how much you have made. Is there any more lambs? Well you must write about everything you think will interest me.

George, I must write a few lines to you. You must be a good boy to help Edgar all you can. Try and see how much you and Edgar can raise this summer.

And little Mary must be a good girl and help mother and be good to little Marcus Dwight. When father gets well enough he means to come and see you all, but it will be a good while as I have been very sick and gain very slow and it is a long way to travel. One wants to be pretty strong to stand the journey.

Well good bye for this time and be good children.

Marcus Marks

King Street Hospital

Alexandria, VA

May 13, 1864

To Edgar & Harriet & George and Mary B. Marks,

Last week I received letters from each of you and to day some more from you. It does me good to read them. I think Edgar you are getting along with the work well. If you can have Dwight plow you had better get it. You must sow grass seed on your oat ground. You must not burn the big fallow till you have a good dry time. The plank for a stone boat put in the barn with the sled runners. Keep everything where you know where to find them. Get the manure all out if you can. You must not let the heifers' hide spoil. You had better have it tanned.

Now a few words to my blue eyed George. You are a good boy to write to father. I know you will try and help Edgar all you can. Do the best you can and if Father lives to get home you shall all have a nice present . . . Mary must be a good girl and help mother.

To my dear daughter Harriett, I hope my life will be spared so that I can come home. I will get my discharge in the course of a month I suppose, perhaps in half that time. I don't know how well I will stand the journey but I will try it. Whilst Mother is after me you must do the best you can.

I must stop for I am getting tired, so good bye my dear children and may God grant that we see one another again.

From M. A. Marks, to his dear beloved children.

BACK TO THE BEGINNING

The 250th anniversary of the first European settlement of the Town of Middletown back in 1763 was observed with the dedication of a historic marker at the Town Hall July 12. HSM is proud to have facilitated the marker's placement, and pleased to have had a small part in the ceremony. It included comments by former Supervisor now Town Historian Len Utter; former Town Historian and current New Kingston Presbyterian Church pastor Shirley Davis, and retired English teacher and local historian Dr. Bill Birns.

Other speakers were Nate Hendricks, 9th generation descendant of one of the original settlers, and State Assemblyman Pete Lopez. Current Middletown Supervisor Marge Miller organized the event.

The occasion recalled the emigration of a troupe of five Hudson Valley Dutch men: brothers Harmonus and Peter Dumond, Johannes Von Waggoner and Peter Hendricks and his teenage stepson Frederick Kittle. The initial 'settlement' was made up of their four farms, all along the East Branch of the Delaware River that had until then been the seasonal domain of the Lenni Lenape (Delaware) Indians.

Several more families came in the years leading up to the Revolution, but conflicts among Indians, Tories and Whigs sent them all back to the Valley until hostilities ceased. After the war, emigration began in earnest and folks arrived bearing surnames that still identify Middletown families: Yaple, Carpenter, Green, Utter, Craft, Mead, Ackerley, Grant, Delameter and many others.



Adam and Nate Hendricks, and Lori Hendricks Ballard, descendants of Peter Hendricks who was among the five men who settled in our area in 1763, pose with the historic marker noting the 250th anniversary of the pioneers' arrival.

A TASTY CELEBRATION

In 1963, the dawn of the space age, Middletown celebrated the 200th anniversary of settlement with a parade and events. The "Belles of the Bicentennial" (aka "Sisters of the Swish") produced a recipe book as a souvenir, "with some recipes as old as our township, and some as new as our twinkling satellites."

Though John F. Kennedy was in the White House, Shirley Valk submitted a recipe for:

Mamie Eisenhower's Million Dollar Fudge

*4 and 1/2 C sugar 2 T butter
1/8 t salt 1 tall can evaporated milk*

Stir this mixture for 6 minutes. Put into large bowl one 12-oz package semi-sweet bits and 4 squares bittersweet chocolate. Add 1 pint marshmallow cream and 2 C chopped nutmeats. Now pour the boiling hot syrup over these ingredients. Keep stirring until chocolate is all dissolved. Pour into a large greased pan and let set for a few hours before cutting.

Thanks to Marge Miller for sharing this book that includes recipes from her mom, Dotty Miller, and many other friends and neighbors.

CEMETERY TOUR A BIG SUCCESS!

The Second Annual Living History Cemetery Tour drew more than 150 people to Clovesville June 29 when 10 area residents portrayed long departed local folks. The stories they told of loss, joy and struggle opened a fresh window into Middletown's past. The event, supported by 17 sponsors, was blessed by great weather and fueled by energetic volunteers. Registration headquarters was in the 1842 church that

was built by Methodists and now houses the congregation of Cornerstone Baptist Church. A DVD of the tour, by videographer Nick Bibbo, will be available for sale in late September. Pick up your copy in the History Tent at the Cauliflower Festival! More photos of the event can be found at mtownhistory.org



The phenomenal cast and docent crew, l to r: Ward Todd, Agnes Laub, Joe Hewitt, Anne Sanford, Brian Walsh, Jackie Purdy, Niamh Walsh, Barbara Atkin, Ken Taylor, John Hartner, John Bernhardt, Anne Hersh, Fred Margulies and Harriet Grossman.



John Hartner and Ward Todd, as Sam and Augustus Todd converse across the generations.



A tour group follows the docent through the picturesque cemetery.



Niamh Walsh, as Maggie McGuire, peaks from behind a monument as her dad, Brian Walsh, portrays Thomas Dwyer in the Irish burial ground across the road from the main Clovesville cemetery.



Ken Taylor as stage coach driver Tallman Beadle, in a wagon supplied by Dick Hunter.



The exhibit **“MIDDLETOWN IN THE CIVIL WAR”** reveals that several landowners in town held slaves prior to 1820. It is on view at the HSM hall, 778 Cemetery Rd., Margaretville, through September 2.



Reenactor **KEN NICHOLLS** portrayed a Civil War surgeon in an outdoor talk July 13.



ROY TODD was among exhibit viewers on opening day July 4.



CHRISTIAN HEIDORF LTC (Ret) brought his Morgan horse Rebel to HSM on July 13 to explain how horses were used and cared for – and how more than a million died – in the Civil War.

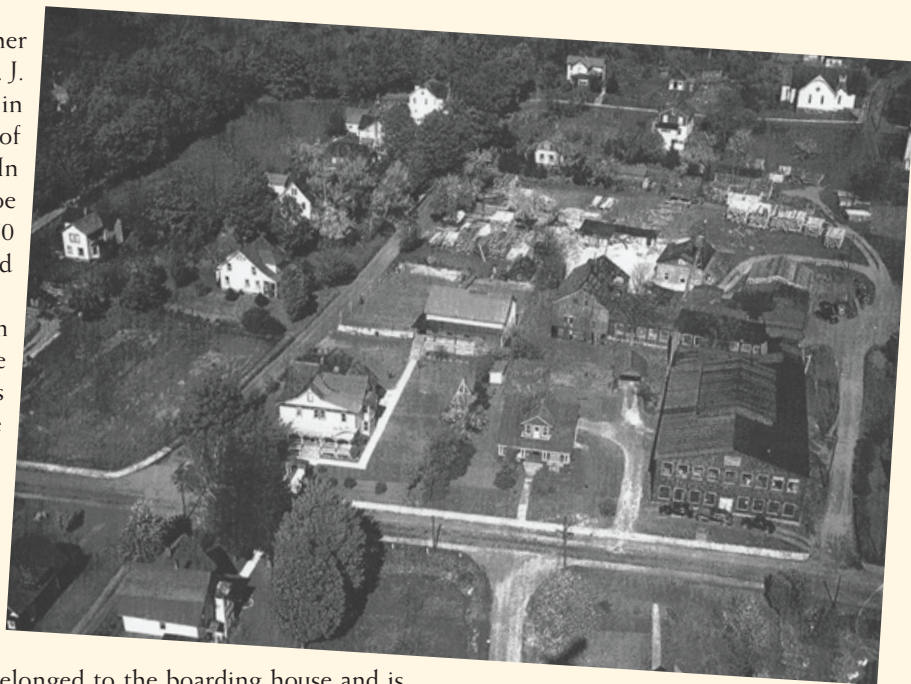
“WOMEN’S ROLES AND WARDROBE DURING THE CIVIL WAR”

was the topic when Juanita Leisch spoke August 10.



ARKVILLE FROM THE AIR

This intriguing aerial image was taken by photographer Bob Wyer in the mid-1940s. It shows the expansive B. J. Harrison Chair Factory at lower right. It burned in March 1948 and was rebuilt on the same foundation of concrete block, reopening in August the same year. In 1951 the plant was purchased by Union Fork & Hoe company to make wooden tool handles and in 1960 was turning out baseball bat blanks as Arkville Wood Products.



The Arkville Cut-off Road (County Rd. 38) runs from left to right across the near bottom. At far left of the photo is the current Charles Mami home on Barnes Street. George Street runs up the left side of the photo. On the left side of that street, the vacant lot is the current site of the Bud and Peg Barnes home. Opposite is a large boarding house that burned and is now the site of the Roxanne Norton home. Next on the left side of the street is the current home of Roger and Margaret Davis, then the homes of Kyle Holden, Betty Fitzgerald, Harold Bouton and Peg Sweeney.

Across from the Davis house is a building that had belonged to the boarding house and is now occupied by Larry Norton. The house on the Cut-Off Road between the factory and the boarding house the factory was once the Glen Mills residence; current owner unidentified. The former Methodist Church on Church Street is at upper right.

From DCHA Collection, identified by Roger Davis



HISTORICAL
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