

THE BRIDGE
Dispatches from the Historical Society of the Town of Middletown,
Delaware County, NY
Index of history articles in Nos. 1-50

No 1. March 2006

Inaugural issue of The Bridge. Article on **Margaretville covered bridge**, the HSM logo, and photo with caption about the **Cammer/Griffin store in Arkville**

No 2. August 2006

Wish You Were Here: The Grand Hotels of Middletown. Advance story on program by Georgi Fairlie about hotels of Fleischmanns and other areas of Middletown; also photos from Halcottsville and New Kingston with captions.

No 3. January 2007

Doris Stahl's Book of Days. Excerpts from diary of Doris Stahl who has been keeping track of things on their Hubbell Hill farm since 1966.

No 4. May 2007

A Moment in Time. 1909 diary excerpts by student Mary Leone Archibald of Margaretville on the issue of women's suffrage.

No 5. August 2007

Photo of 18 Middletown residents over age 80 with names.

Matthew Griffin's World. Excerpts from diary kept by Fleischmanns attorney and civic leader 1845-1861

MAC is back! Mountain Athletic Club re-organized in Fleischmanns

No 6. February 2008

New Kingston Makes History. Hamlet listed on State Register of Historic Places

1916 photo of Johnny Cake Lane School, District 13, with children, identified

No 7, Summer 2008

Searching for Maurizio: Was it suicide, or murder? By Elizabeth DeLorenzo Dale, great grand-daughter of Maurizio DeLorenzo, Italian immigrant woodcutter who died of a gunshot wound in Arkville in 1905.

Just the Acid Facts Please: Arkville Acid Factory 1900-1920. Dan Myers presentation on his book "The Wood Chemical Industry of the Delaware Valley."

No 8. Winter 2009

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Running on Kerosene, a Trunkful of Trout and other Adventures. Recorded oral interviews of Howard Etts Jr, Marian Connell, Bob VanBenschoten, Sindy Becker, Bill Sanford

Eyewitness Account Made Legible. Article about completed transcription by Innes Kasanof of diaries of Matthew Griffin with many references to Anti-Rent War.

On this spot in 1845. Historic marker installed at Highmount where flagpole called local farmers to action in Anti-Rent War.

No 9. Summer 2009

Those Amazing Young Men and Their Flying Machines. Collection of photos and articles about Loren Shultis, a Kelly Corners airplane builder and other local aviators including Basil Rowe, Arthur Bussy.

Voters once gathered at annual Town Meetings, by Mary Sive who reviewed the diaries of Jennie McKenzie Hewett from 1877-1928 which included surprising information about annual town meetings in Middletown.

No 10. Winter 2010

A Tale of Two Solitudes. A property between Arkville and Clovesville once called "Solitude" and Marguerite Walker Westinghouse from Roxbury who named her Pittsburgh mansion (she was married to inventor/industrialist George Westinghouse) after the pretty house (later Locust Grove Hotel) she'd remembered as a child.

Middletown once has its own "police" of privies. A set of rules from 1906 Town of Middletown Board of Health regarding privies, cesspools, burials, birth and marriage registrations, infectious diseases and other public health matters.

No 11. Summer 2010

The Halperns and Their Houses, by Robert Halpern. Three Halpern brothers (Simon, Albert and Maurice) came up from NYC and married three Goldman sisters from Pine Hill and opened Halpern Department Stores in Margaretville and Fleischmanns in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

The Little Red Hose House with a History. Wawaka Hose No 1 built in 1916 in Halcottsville by Daniel Humphrey housed the fire company until a new building was built in 1976.

T'was a Grand Affair. Report of program on the Grand Hotel in Highmount with photos and brief history of hotel operating from 1883-1962 and torn down in 1964.

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No 12. Winter 2011

Hides and Hemlocks: The Tanneries of Dunraven. History of several tanneries from 1817 until the 1870s operated by Samuel Smith, Abram Schultz;, and Dr. Adam Clark. Hemlock forests provided the tannin needed for the final stage of tanning hides into usable leather.

Upright at Last. Brief story of restoring the monuments and gravestones in the Arkville cemetery. Brian Wheaton coordinated the two-year project.

Vols complete Sanford Cemetery Inventory. Inscriptions from 300 monuments dating from 1803 at the Dunraven cemetery on County Route 6 posted on Delaware County History and Genealogy website (www.dcnynhistory.org go to Cemetery Compilations)

No 13. Summer 2011

Century-old Fleischmanns School lost to fire. History of the school built in 1909 and destroyed by fire June 21, 2011.

“Captain Osborn’s Legacy” by Patsy L. Redden tells story of Russell Osborn and his grandfather Nathan who came to Middletown in early 1800s and history of his family.

Historic Highmount home celebrated. Articles about opera star Amelita Galli-Curci (1882-1963), her home called Sul Monte in Highmount, and the theater built by Clarke Sanford where both she and Estelle Liebling performed on opening night in 1922.

No 14. Autumn 2011

Add another flood to the History Books – Tropical Storm Irene August 28, 2011 and summaries of other floods with detailed piece on major flood on Jan 7-8th 1996.

No 15. Spring 2012

Home Sweet Home – Donation of New Kingston Valley Grange Hall clubhouse and 7 acres on Cemetery Road to HSM for events, programming, exhibits and office space. History of the building, constructed in 1938 by Izaak Walton League, later moved to present site.

Uncover the Pleasure of Treasure by Roger Davis Explanation of Geocaching. Among more than 1,000 ‘treasure’ sites in NY State is the new HSM home.

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History, Rising. HSM first live 'Cemetery Tour' with costumed actors playing 8 men and women from the past at Margaretville Cemetery including Orson Allaben, Erastus Clute, J.Francis Murphy and Margaret DeSilva.

In a Blaze of Glory. Story of 1927 fire and destruction of Briarcliff Lodge built in 1908 by Mary McKrill.

No 16. Summer 2012

The Way West, by Keith C. Brimhall. Westward migration to Illinois in 1830s from Middletown area recounted including families of Osterhoudts, Roberts, and Kittles.

No 17. December 2012

Taking the Measure of Middletown for Jay Gould. Born in Roxbury in 1836 Jay Gould helped survey a map of Ulster County at age 16 and had formed his own surveying company. He contracted with several other youths including John Champlin to create a map of Delaware County, completed in 1856. Excerpts from Champlin's 1853 diary are included.

All Aboard the Delaware and Northern. Photos and some details of the RR based in Margaretville from 1905-1942 that ran West to Downsville and East Branch. HSM recently purchased an album of photos of the railroad.

Breakfast with Adah: A Remembrance by Robert Rowe. Memories of a summer (1948) the author spent working as a house boy for Adah Murphy at Weedwild, her home in Arkville Pakatakan Artists colony she'd help found with her husband J. Francis Murphy .

No 18. Spring 2013

Re-Discovery of a Cemetery: Old Beadle Burying Ground, by Roger Davis. (Abandoned cemetery near the Clovesville Cemetery. Birth dates go back to the late 1790s with names such as Osterhoudt, Person, Ballard, Crandall and Bortle.

Tribute to Immigrant Roots by Mary Ellen Cantwell, recounting the stories of Irish (Edward Cantwell) and Hungarian (John and Rose Kallay Tirpak) ancestors and their farms and businesses in the area.

The Smiths and the Silbermans. Stories of Olney Smith (Gledsmere Lodge and farm on Route 6 in Dunraven, now the Blue Deer Center) and Max Silberman who migrated with his parents from Russia in 1899 at age 13. Max bought/sold/built over 87 different buildings in the area.

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No 19. Late Summer 2013

The Whoop-De-Doo Returns – History of New Kingston Whoop-de-doo, a 3 day event celebrating local cultures and skills that started in 1969 and ended in 1976. It was ‘resurrected’ this year at a one day event at Blue Deer Center.

75 Years of Service by Cathy Hinkley. History of the Margaretville Rotary Club started in April 1938. With the motto “Service above self,” the article lists projects the Rotary has supported through the years.

The War for the Union – Letters Home. Letters from Edward Easton of New Kingston and Marcus Marks (2 of over 300 area men who enlisted to fight in the Civil War are reproduced.

Back to the Beginning. The 250th anniversary of the first European settlement in the town of Middletown (1763) was celebrated and a historic marker placed at the Town Hall. The original settlers included the Dumond brothers, Johannes Von Waggoner, Peter Hendricks and Frederick Kittle.

Arkville from the Air. Aerial photo of Arkville in 1948 with structures listed.

No 20. Winter 2014

A 1938 Dig—Dick Purcell and Ralph Felter Jr. recall findings in an archeological dig they did with their fathers and Ralph Ives at current site of Mt Laurel Gardens (Route 36) in Arkville.

Historic Marker honoring 100 year Anniversary of incorporation of the Village of Fleischmanns (1913) was unveiled. Village was named for the Cincinnati-based family that summered there from 1883 to 1913.

Tales of Two Houses. Histories of the Carpenter House (1890’s Victorian) on Church Street and the 1850 Scott House on Main St., Margaretville.

No 21. December 2014

Down the Slippery Slope into History. History of various Catskill Mountain Ski Centers. Jay Simpson Memorial Ski Slope (Phoenicia) ; Highmount 1946-1997; Belleayre 1950-present; the Colonial Inn in Pine Hill 1940-1950; Tom’s Tow/Shayne’s Bellaire in Highmount from 1950-1957; Bearpen/Princeton Ski Bowl, Prattsville 1955-1959; Roxbury/Big Bear/No-Name ski Center in Vega 1958-1971; Andes Ski Center 1963-1968; Bobcat Ski Center Andes 1963-2006; Elliot Lodge Arkville 1961-1964.

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Another Look at Holmes Mill: Arena. Former Grist Mill in Arena is visible when waters in Pepacton Reservoir are low. Operated from 1890 to 1932.

Barn Again on Margaretville Mountain. Restoration of a 1915 barn originally owned by William and Thankful Vanbenschoten was restored by current owners Peter and Carol Molnar of the Margaretville Mountain Inn.

No 22. Summer 2014

The Banker House Revealed. House presumably built by Dr. John Banker around 1890 who founded the Margaretville Fire Dept. is being restored by Kingdon Gould Jr. The original Victorian house at Maple and Main had been obscured by a commercial building that has been removed.

Happy Birthday Fairview. History of Fairview Library, founded in 1974.

Where a Fly-Fishing Master Got His Start. Story of A.J. McClane (1922 -1969) who was editor of Field and Stream Magazine was introduced to the sport in Dry Brook as a teen.

Sanford Siblings Recall Life on the Farm. Three of Myron Sanford's 6 children (Mary, George and Betty) recall stories of growing up on the dairy farm which also grew cauliflower in New Kingston.

No 23. May 2015

Here's to Hilt. Memorial for Hilton Kelly (1926-2015)

Uncivil War: Brother Against Brother in Georgia by Bill Blankenshio. Story of Georgia's Coffey brothers – some fighting for the North and some for the South

Out of the Attic. Quilt top started in 1930s by Emma Morse Davis found in Bragg Hollow home of Jenny Little who brought it to the Catskill Mountain quilters to be restored.

Pakatakan's Long Shadow by Lloyd Roland. History of Keeney Hollow in Margaretville.

Charles Hallock, The Singing Mailman by Val Liles. Highlights of life of Charles Hallock of New Kingston (1840-1914) -- opera singer, cooper, music teacher, horseman and mailman -- as written by his great-great granddaughter.

Did You Sell Cloverine Salve? – Excerpts from recorded interview with Milton Valk of East Hubbell Hill and then Fleischmanns including his selling "Cloverine Salve" at age 12

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for 25 cents a tin. He married June Close in 1941, worked for NYSEG for 40 years and opened the Valkyrian Motel in 1963.

No 24. Autumn 2015

The House That George Built by Cedric Taylor- Essay by great-grandson about George Fairbairn who from 1948 to 1951 built the house his family still occupies on 137 acres on Bull Run Rd.

“Our Darling: Lulu May”: **A Tale of Two Stones** by Roger Davis. Investigating the story behind a headstone for Lulu May Scott, found in the East Branch of the Delaware River.

Gone Soldiering – Civil War soldier Robert Webber Scudder b.1832 served one year in the Delaware County 144th Regiment. His brother James Webber died of disease while enlisted in the 146th regiment and cousin Jackson Scudder served in the 8th NY Battery.

Meet Me at the Palace, Alice. 1947 photo of Palace Hotel on corner of Main and Bridge Streets in Margaretville. Later became Murray’s (for Murray Schrier) and after several other ownerships is now the Cheese Barrel.

No 25. Winter 2016

The Sad Story of One Arm Joe, The 1928 Prohibition arrest of Joe DePuysseilier of Margaretville.

A Tale of Two Families at the Crossroads. Evidence of family of Solomon Steenrod having lived in area of Arkville cut-off with his family from approximately 1800-1820. The 120 acre farm was then bought by Elias Osterhoudt and family including John, Zachariah and Solomon.

Remembering the Catastrophic Flood of '96. Called a 100 year flood when waters of the East Branch crested to 14.9 feet. Ten people died and 40 businesses and homes were destroyed. Twenty-one other homes were eventually removed mostly on Main Street Margaretville in the Federal Flood Buyout program.

Winter in Margaretville circa 1913. Photos of ice hockey played on the Binnekill and horse and cart team doing snow removal on Main Street.

From cows to commerce in 50 years. Dairy farms on Route 28 between Margaretville and Arkville (Purcell farm in 1870-1920 then operated by Frank DeSilva until 1938 then bought by Glen Vermilyea who sold off parcels for 45 mobile homes and cabins (Glen Acres) and commercial buildings along Route 28.

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Local Justice c. 1890's. 19th Century System of community policing called 'whitecapping' where local citizens took it upon themselves to 'enforce' certain morality standards. Luther Dimmick of Halcottsville was one so threatened.

No 26 June 2016

That Was Then, This is Now by Roger Davis – Home of Jennie Searles on Main Street in Margaretville pictured on 1909 postcard. Later site of International Harvester dealership of Doug Kelly, and son Don.

Pepacton gravestone rehab underway. Over 1,000 Unclaimed bodies from 21 cemeteries drowned by the Pepacton and Cannonsville Reservoirs were reinterred in the 1950s in the Pepacton Cemetery on the former farm of Ken Sprague. Restoration of 300 of those gravestones has begun.

Play 'Sentimental Journey' for Me. Photo with names of the Dela-Teers, a band formed by Dr. Gilbert Palen (saxophone) that played at local events in the 1940s and 1950s.

Who was Emma Keeney? Emma Keeney (1855-1942), born in Brooklyn operated Meadowbrook Farm and boarding house on Southside Road in Margaretville She was an activist for women's suffrage and one of the first female poll watchers in Middletown in 1915.

Bonnie Bridges, Booze and those Builder Scots by Marjorie Miller. Beaverkill Covered Bridge (1865) built under direction of brothers John and Thomas Davidson by Irish and Scot laborers. Now part of Beaverkill State Campground near Livingston Manor.

Masons Now History in Margaretville. Margaretville Masonic Lodge #389 vacated its Main Street home after 100 years The 42 members plan to merge with Masonic Groups in Delhi and Walton.

Joe Hewitt, Catskills Character. Photo of Joe and new book by Bill Birns about him and John Burroughs.

No 27. November 2016

Hope and Will: Richard Kittle's Legacy, by Pam Kelly Johnson. Richard Kittle (1882-1902) born to Willard and Emily Kittle of Millbrook, was one of 13 children of whom 6 served in uniform in three wars. Richard died in the Phillipines.

Marking Time at the Round Bar. Historic marker installed at Kelly Brothers Round Barn in Halcottsville Operated for 50 years by the Meade family, the barn was reconstructed in 1988 and became home to the Pakatakan Farmers Market in 1991.

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An Eye For Beauty: Julius Mendel, by his son Michael Mendel – Julius Mendel (1902-2002) was born in Berlin and fled Hitler with his wife and infant son in 1938. He discovered Fleischmanns in 1948, studied photography and also created watercolor paintings of local barns/livestock and nature.

No 28. April 2017

Before Belleayre: Living High on Highmount. Stories of the rich, famous and nearly-so who spent summers in Highmount. The Weinstein Institute, the Grand Hotel, and homes of Amelita Galli-Curci, Julia Marlowe, Alexander Skene and others are covered.

Necktie Parties and Waffle Clubs: Mary Robinson Sive summarizes Jennie Hewitt Doland's Halcottsville diary 1890-1920.

Storing Ice 1919 Style Photos of Ulster & Delaware RR icehouse on Lake Wawaka, Halcottsville.

Cauliflower Festival and Mud Larks. Story of commemoration of 1903 Automobile Endurance Run from Weehawken, NJ to Pittsburgh, Pa (800 miles) along Route 28 now the Catskill Mountains Scenic Byway. The cars making the Endurance Run this year will stop at the Cauliflower Festival.

No 29. September 2017

Life on the Farm: No Place for Sissies by Pam Haynes Johnson Kelly. The story of Nina Kittle Haynes, related by her granddaughter, from early years on the farm called Cat Ladder Farm, to raising a family with Orson Haynes on Forge Brook farm in Dry Brook.

Dry Brook's Heart and Soul turned 150 this summer. A short history of the M.E. Church, built in 1887. It uses the bell taken from the Arena ME Church when it was torn down to build the Pepacton Reservoir.

Hard Work and Solace on Hubbell Hill by Amy Metzner Grois. The story of Bruno Metzner, who served in WW1 as a German soldier and later became a stonecutter and sculptor, and his life with his family as an immigrant farmer on Hubbell Hill.

A Belluva Mystery. How did the bell from Margaretville Union Free School, founded in 1893, make its way to a Baptist church in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida?

No 30. December 2017

An Iron Constitution. History of blacksmith shop on Main Street in Margaretville owned by Sylvester "Vet" Walley (1864-1952) .

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Soda Fountain Memories on Tap at HSM- Photos and soda fountain pieces of Christian's Drug Store (1934) on corner Main and Walnut Streets in Margaretville were donated to HSM this year.

Civil War Veterans Reporting forHistory – HSM has posted on its website details and photos of the lives and service records of 242 Civil War Veterans from Middletown.

The Elliots of New Kingston Valley: Still Farming after All these Years by Sally Elliot Scrimshaw. 200 year history of the Elliott Farm initially leased by Thomas Elliott, born in Scotland in 1776. Jim Elliott and his wife Andrea still operate the homestead dairy farm now known as Crystal Brook Farms.

Arena VFD is Still Answering the Call. Celebration of 125 years of service (1892), originally called Hubbell Hose Co. #1 after its founder and benefactor Willis Hubbell. The fire hall was 'rebuilt' at Wickham Farm in the Millbrook Valley after the Pepacton Reservoir claimed the original site in Arena in 1954.

No 3. April 2018

Newsprint in the Attic: Clues to a Life by Holly O'Connor. Highlights of the life of Etta Mann, born Ruth A. Glennon in 1877 and adopted at age two by Abram and Lucinda Mann of Union Grove though the American Female Guardian Society of NYC. Etta was a teacher and married twice, Andrew Easman and James Welch.

FORE! History of local golf courses: Pakatakan Country Club in Arkville and the golf course at Kass Inn on Route 30 which open in 1949.

Margaretville Baseball Team. Photo and names of the players on the 1924 team which won 24 of their 29 games.

"Away with the Drudgery on Washday!" – Ad for the Rip Van Winkle Sanitary Laundry Co., in the CMN Nov 1, 1912 with info on commercial laundries in Arkville and Fleischmanns.

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No. 32. September 2018

We are building history! Details of plan for expansion of HSM hall on Cemetery Rd, to include proper archive space available for research.

Does This Ring A Bell? Update on story from Summer 2017 about the Margaretville Union Free School bell which ended up in a Baptist Church in Palm Beach Gardens, FL.

Summer Fun c. 1904. Sautelle's Circus comes to Arkville with lions, elephants, aerialists and more.

The House on the Hill. History of ownership of this gracious Margaretville house built in 1899 by Gustave Feder, a German merchant. It was also owned by William Finn, Roy Leonard, Irving Ponemon and photographer Art Kane, famed for images of musicians, in the 1960s and '70s.

No 33. December 2018

The Story of a Man-ieri with a Dream. Domenico Manieri left Italy in 1914 with a dream to come to the land of opportunity. He joined the US Army in 1917 which qualified him for citizenship. He pooled his money with Ralph Ruffini, another immigrant, and bought a dairy farm on Brush Ridge Road, working 70-hour weeks to support his family.

Murder at Pakatakan. A story of the American Revolution in the Margaretville-Arkville area where divisions and suspicions between Tories and Loyalists led to the death of settler Harmonus Dumond.

Clearing Fallow. Description by Verner Marks from his memoir "The Early Families of Millbrook Valley" about the process of cutting trees in winter and burning them in spring to clear the land for planting in the mid-19th century.

No. 34. April 2019

A Grand Daughter Remembers, by Ginny Harmelink. Account of the lives of Margaretville merchant and civic leader George Decker (1824-1903), his wife Catherine and their children Susan Maria (Marvin), Alice Augusta (Swart); and William and their families. Excerpts from the memoir of granddaughter Eleanor Decker Marvin describe the grand Decker house on Main Street.

F. W. Beers: The Man Behind the Atlas, by Lloyd Roland - Account of life of F. W. Beers (1839-1933) surveyor turned map-maker who published atlases for over 20 counties in the Northeast, including one for Delaware County, NY in 1869 (150 years ago).

No. 35. August 2019

Mr. Doolittle's Mill. Details the work of four generations of Doolittles and their impact on industrial development in the Clovesville/Fleischmanns area. Wool, grains, lumber, even electricity were produced by Doolittle mills. Maps and photos of mills and family included.

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No 36. December 2019

A Ruston Family Remembrance, by David Loaring. The author's grandmother, Ellen Ruston Loaring (1918-1972), lived in Kelly Corners as a child, the daughter of Old School Baptist Church Elder George Ruston. The article includes fond memories of her early years and of her parents helping many parishioners at OSB Churches in Roxbury, Ashokan, Union Grove and Vega.

Skipping School to Load Silos, by George Kelly. Memories of helping local farmers load silos with corn silage each fall in the 1940s, taking off from school in Roxbury (with permission!) and earning \$5-\$10/day. Photo of George at the Kelly Brothers Round Barn built in 1899 by his ancestors In Halcottsville.

New Kingston Through a Boy's Eyes, by Thomas Snyder, MD. Author's memories of living in New Kingston 1952-1955. Aerial photo of Vogt Dairy which was bought by Newark Milk and Creamery Co. in 1951.

No 37. April 2020

The Flu by Any Other Name. With the onset of the Covid 19 pandemic in March 2020, this article described past flu outbreaks and quarantines and how they effected this area.

Art Bussy, Arena Aviator. Art Bussy (1903-1969) born in Arena, learned to fly in 1927 and was a barn stormer, test pilot and airplane racer. In 1936 he carried aviator Beryl Markham from Cape Breton Island to New York after the first successful solo flight traveling from East to West across the Atlantic.

MAC is 125!, by Collin Miller. The Mountain Athletic Club player/manager tells the story of Charles Fleischmanns who created a baseball field for his sons to play the game in 1895, starting the Mountain Athletic Club. Today's MAC still plays ball by vintage rules on the Wagner Avenue field.

Hamming It Up In Arkville. Tom Hill's Eats and Drinks, which opened in the early 1930's, was owned by Thomas and Viva Hill in Arkville. Their restaurant was famous for smoked Virginia hams. In 1938 the Catskill Mt. News reported that Teddy Roosevelt Jr. was motoring through the Catskills and stopped to eat at Hills. The eatery was later known as Frankie's Place, then McDaniels and in 2002 Oakley's, famed for their wood fired pizza.

No. 42. December 2021

The Doctor, the Preacher and the Body in the Barrel. A mystery involving the body of Louisa Sears Phoenix of Millbrook, found in a barrel in the Bull Run stream; Dr. Aaron Reed, a minister named J.P. Cowles. Cadavers for study of medicine were often taken by grave raiders, but in this instance no one was ever charged with the crime.

No. 43. Spring 2022

The Barber Houses of Fleischmanns. George F. Barber (1854-1915) was an architect born in Dekalb, IL whose residential designs in the Queen Anne style were

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marketed through a catalog first created in 1890. Several Barber designed homes built in Fleischmanns are identified in this article.

Mr. Hysham's Middletown Brides. William Hysham from Red Oak, Iowa sought a bride from the East and found Etta Palmateer from New Kingston. They were married in 1900 in Omaha. Etta died two years later and left her New Kingston farm to William. When he came East to manage the property which had been rented by Ward DeSilva, he met and married Ida Chamberlain of Margaretville. William and Ida acquired 400 acres in Wyoming and continued to 'commute' between their Eastern and Western homes until William died in 1913 and Etta's heirs then sold her farm in New Kingston to Ward DeSilva.

Notes from a Laundry Spotter, from the memoir of Richard Arthur Blish ("A Day on the Farm") recalling the conflict between laundry hanging on the line in the mid-1900's and dust stirred up by cars passing on the unpaved roads. Motorists avoided driving on Monday in respect for neighbors and Arthur recalls being asked by his father to 'spot' hanging laundry so he could slow down and limit dust.

No 44- August 2022

Margaretville At the Movies. This history of the Galli-Curci Theater, built in 1922 by Clarke Sanford, covers silent movies, "talkies," vaudeville shows, concerts, plays, graduations and other celebrations. The building later housed the plant of the Catskill Mountain News. The article details subsequent owners. In 2011 the Galli-Curci Theater was named to the State and National Registers of Historical Places.

No 45. December 2022

Three Elizas. This is a family story of Eliza Rebecca Romeyn, who died a teenager in Denver in 1817, and of two subsequent Eliza Romeyns named in her honor. She was a daughter of Rev. Jeremiah and Rebecca Meyer Romeyn who had come to Roxbury where the latter had inherited thousands of acres of Hardenburgh Patent land.

Sportin' and Spoonin' in 1900. Excerpts from the diary of a very social 25-year-old James Allaben Utter of Drybrook. In 1905 at age 30 James married Nina Blakeslee of Shandaken, ending his carefree partying days.

No. 46. April 2023

Vroom Vroom! Remembering the Denver Speedway. This go-kart track from the 1960's was built on the Lloyd Finch Farm in the Denver/Vega valley. Races were held for men, women and kids, several of whom offer their memories in this article.

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Murray Mayes: A Weaver by Design, a tribute by his daughter Marilyn Mayes Kaltenborn. Murray Mayes (1919-2009) was a prominent figure in Fleischmanns (among other things, he was Mayor for 14 years). When he retired from a successful family business that made hardwood veneers, Murray became interested in weaving. The article chronicles the evolution of his craft for which he won many awards.

In Halcott, It Was Always “A Good Day To Fly,” by Peg Reynolds DiBenedetto. The daughter of Ward and Ruth Frankling Reynolds recalled the improbable story of her parents who both flew planes during WWII and later established an active air strip in Halcott where they operated a dairy farm. Their twin Piper Cubs, “Betsy” and “Patience,” were frequently seen flying above this part of the Catskills. Peg DiBenedetto’s young adult novel, “Silver Dollar Girls,” is based on her mother’s experience with the Women’s Air Force Service Pilots (WASP).

No. 47. August 2023

Summer at “The Shanty.” An intimate look at beginnings of Pakatakan Artists Colony in Arkville from the diary of Arabella Locke Wyant who with husband and fellow artist Alexander Helwig Wyant was among the first to take up summer residence there in 1887. Several other residents and artists are mentioned. The Pakatakan Artists Colony Historical District was named to the State and National Register of Historical Places in 1989.

No. 48. December 2023

Silent History Among the Trees. James Carrol (1777-1837) was an Irish immigrant who settled with his family in the Millbrook Valley. A lone headstone in the forest on the current property of the Tuscarora Club marks his grave. Other Irish families (the Kellys, Wards and Cantwells) also came at that time to work in tanneries and mills. A sidebar, “The Ruffest Time ..” excerpts letters from Alexander to his sister Jerusha Akerly in Arena during the Civil War. Alexander died in 1864, two months after he was wounded at the Battle of Cold Harbor fighting with the 47th NY Regiment.

A Waltz for a Blacksmith. The music “Pakatakan Waltz” was written in 1900 by Alexander Grant Jackson of Margaretville and was dedicated to William Laidlaw, a friend who was a blacksmith down the street. Local pianist Kent Brown performed the piece and a second one by Jackson at the HSM annual meeting in November 2023.

Hurray, Halcottsville! On May 20, 2023 Halcottsville made history by earning an entry into the Guinness Book of World Records for the longest chain of plastic ring-pull tabs, stretching 1,133 feet 8 inches (16,069 tabs collected from donors near and far). It was also

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a tangible reminder of the evils of plastic proliferation worldwide. Thanks to organizer Sharon Suess and “The Chain Gang” for putting the community on the map.

No 49. April 2024

Cold War Shivers in Arkville. Helmut Rosenstain, son of German immigrant physicians, operated two farms in Arkville for almost 20 years. In 1962 Helmut’s sister Gabrielle, an opera singer living in West Berlin, was arrested as a spy by Russian authorities. She was imprisoned for two years, bringing world tensions to the doorstep of Middletown. Helmut moved to the new state of Israel where he died in 1984.

The Hermit of Haynes Hollow. In late autumn of 1960 a hunter in Hardenburgh broke through the forest floor and fell into what was a hermit’s cave. A skeleton found there with a hole in his skull and a rusted pistol in his hand sparked rumor, gossip and mountain intrigue. The article includes entries from the diary of Nina Haynes who lived nearby. The mystery of the hermit’s life and death was never solved.

The Solar Eclipse of 1925. The article recounts local reactions to a total solar eclipse on Jan. 24, 1925 in Roxbury.

To Montana and Beyond: Asahel and Anna Gould Hough. Anna Gould (1829-1919) was a sister of the better known Jay Gould of Roxbury. She followed a very different path and married Asahel Hough, a minister, trekking with him to Montana to be a missionary in the time of the gold rush. They later headed to California where Asahel helped found the University of Southern California in 1880.

No 50. August 2024

History’s New Home. After years of planning and 13 months of construction the Middletown History Center was formally opened June 9, 2024. The article describes the expanded HSM facility and the donors, board members and contractors who made it happen.

The Diaries of Nelly Bly Ballard. The unexpected discovery of the diaries of Nellie Bly Shultis Ballard from 1932 to 1946 prompted this series of articles, highlighting the mid-life of the woman who would later gain fame as a primitive artist, “Grandma Moses of the Catskills.” “‘Back Than’ as Nellie Lived It,” recounts the process of transcribing Nellie’s daily entries by volunteer Janis Benincasa. A second sidebar, “Bad News at the Ballard Farm,” explains the devastating impact on cows and farm families of Bovine Tuberculosis as described in Nellie’s diaries.

THE BRIDGE

Dispatches from the Historical Society of the Town of Middletown,
Delaware County, NY

Index of history articles in Nos. 1-50

Remembering Gramps and Bull Run Summers. This article by Jerry Kittle, grandson of Ed Kittle (1885-1983), shares his memories of Ed and the camp he built at end of Bull Run Road, a sanctuary enjoyed by his family for more than 30 years.

Happy Birthday Fairview Library. The article celebrates the 50th anniversary of Margaretville's library and relates its history prior to the 1994 move to the former home of Joe Christian on Walnut St. in Margaretville.