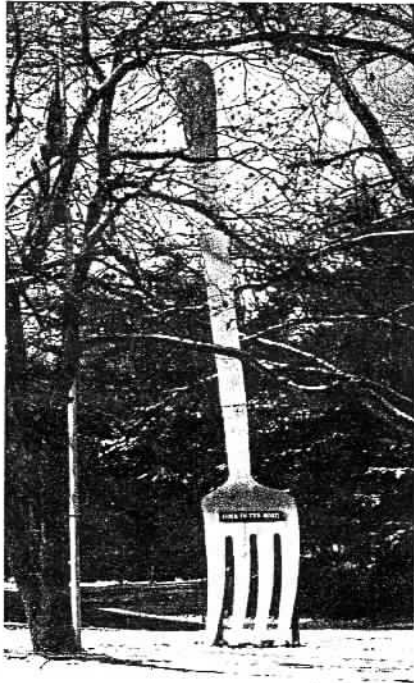


THE CLINTON HISTORIAN

The Town of Clinton Historical Society Volume XVI Number 1 Craig Marshall, Editor 266-5494 January/February 2003

The Fork in the Road



by Patrick Higgins

What do you do when you come to a fork in the road? In the words of the great American philosopher, Yogi Berra, "You take it." If it is the fork at Rock City, neither Yogi nor anyone else will take it; the fork is 31 feet tall.

When I first saw the fork I wondered what giant had dined at Rock City and left the fork behind him. I knew if I spoke to the local sage, Steve Schreiber I would get my answer and I did.

The fork was Steve's creation, it was a dream he harbored for many years. The dream came to fruition when Sam Lore demolished the defunct cement factory at Rock City. In the rubble Steve saw the material for his creation.

Steve discussed his project with the mayor of Rock City. The mayor thought

it was a wonderful idea, as it might boost Rock City's sagging tourist business. The mayor advised him to present his project to Rock City's Council of the Arts for their approval. The Council Chairman congratulated Steve on his marvelous concept, and said it would surely propel Rock City into the twenty-first century as a pioneer in the art world.

Steve assembled a team of artisans needed for the project. Jack and Mike Evans, expert welders, willingly agreed to be part of the undertaking. They were joined by Joe Basil whose expertise in mechanical design was a great addition to the team. The project took nine months to complete and the fork was erected on January 2, 2000 without any fanfare or brass bands. In spite of its height, the fork is anchored six feet into the ground with reinforced steel girders. Steel girders also run up the back of the fork to give it the strength needed to stay erect.

As Steve talked about the giant fork he thought of it as more than a spooof; he saw it as a philosophy on our existence. It is a symbol of the forks in the road of life which we all travel. We are forced to make a decision at each diversion, and often wonder what it would be like if we had taken the other path.

Robert Frost talks about the same decision in his poem, "The Road Not Taken". M. Scott Peck wrote a book about it, "The Road Less Traveled", and Steve Schreiber created his Fork in the Road. Each in its own way tells the story of life's decisions.

I asked Steve if he had any future plans for the fork. He said, not at present, but he has given some thought of putting a large plate of spaghetti around it.

Patrick Higgins is Town of Milan Historian, writes for the Taconic Press, and is a member of the Clinton Historical Society.

2ND ANNUAL
CABIN FEVER
NIGHT
JANUARY 25TH
8:00 PM



GET OUT AND MEET YOUR
NEIGHBORS AND ENJOY
THE MUSIC OF SOME OF
THE HUDSON VALLEY'S
BEST TALENT

RON GLUCK

From 1956 to 1960 Ron sang with a group called the Harvesters who recorded for Folkways. From 1960 to around 1967 he played with various groups doing folk rock music. He then laid off for some 30 years, and coinciding with semi retirement started doing open mikes in Brooklyn and with the Hudson Valley Folk Guild. Ron has a CD in the works. Sit back, relax and listen to the syncopated finger picking style and smooth vocals as Ron entertains with a combination of blues and light jazz sure to please.

JEAN VALLA McAVOY
and JAIME RICKERT

Jean Valla McAvoy and Jaime Rickert have quite a bit of experience between them, but are just beginning to perform together.

Jean has lived in Clinton Corners for more than 20 years and is the mother of 2 teenage daughters. An interpretive naturalist by trade, her first love

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Preserving Clinton's Heritage

Cabin fever (Continued from page 1)

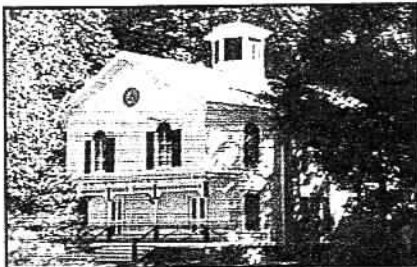
is music and she has been writing and singing songs about life, work, family, and the Hudson Valley for more than 25 years. Jean has been a member of the acoustic quartet "Betty and the Baby Boomers" since 1985.

Jaime is a singer, songwriter, storyteller, juggler, clown, magician, workshop leader, retreat director and not a bad cook. He spent his twenties in the seventies making all the wrong choices for all the right reasons, and his thirties in the eighties trying to recover from his twenties. He skipped his forties and now, at 53, has given up and started over. He is based in Ossining NY, and commutes to Clinton Corners regularly.

Come enjoy an evening with friends and music in a comfortable atmosphere at the Schultsville Music Hall located at Centre Road and Fiddlers Bridge Road in Schultsville, N.Y.

A donation of \$10.00 per person will go to the restoration of this wonderful historic building.

For information or directions call 845-266-3899



DID YOU KNOW?

After the Civil War, many soldiers who had nowhere to go wandered the country looking for work as farmhands. They often carried their own tools, and so became known as "hoe boys"...which is where we get the term "hobos." James Michener, the Pulitzer Prize-winning writer was a hobo, as was Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas.

.....
No American president has been an only child.
.....

What do the colors orange, silver, and purple have in common? They do not rhyme with anything. Try to do it!

SNOW CHALLENGES



by Bill Bartles

Wind-driven snow plus below zero temperatures, coupled with non-existent or inadequate snow removal equipment, made winter travel pretty difficult, if not hazardous in the 1920s.

My first observation of snow plowing on the highways was an ordinary land plow strapped to the side of a horse drawn bobbed. It was always fastened to the right side in order to throw the furrow to the outside of the track. The team of horses, as long as the snow was not too deep, would pull this rig, guided by the driver, down the center of the road. At the end of the run, they would reverse direction and come back, guessing at what they hoped would be the wheelbase of a car.

Cars soon developed ruts that were almost impossible to get out of when you met another vehicle. You had to shovel out a spot to let the other car pass, and then back up into the track. I can remember in later years, when I was driving an old model T Ford to Rhinebeck, meeting a Central Hudson line truck. I couldn't get out of the ruts. That line crew picked the model T up to let the truck pass by, and put me down again.

Another time we had a vicious blizzard and the winds piled up the snow into unbelievable drifts. The road east of our house passed through a cut approximately 10 feet from stonewall to stonewall and the snow drifted into this cut so that it was level with the walls on either side. The Vee plows, mounted on crawler tractors, were helpless in this deep, hard-packed snow. The Vee

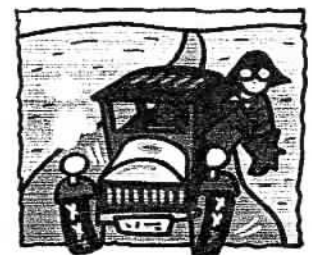
plow would get stuck and had to be dug out by hand.

After the storm raged all day and most of the night, it let up and all able-bodied men and boys (I was 16) tackled that huge drift with steel shovels. We dug a swath about 20 feet wide and 5 feet deep. That was the first path. Then we came back and shoveled the second 5-foot depth, throwing the blocks of snow up along the edges of the first swath we had cut. The width of the bottom cut was barely wide enough for a car. The snow, under blizzard conditions, was always hard and firm, and easily supported the weight of a man. We barely sank into the surface. We shoveled all that day and through the night until 5:00 a.m. the next morning. After a short break, we were back at it and shoveled that day to finish the cut.

Every year in the late fall, snow fences were set up at all of the known drifting spots in the hope that at least some of the snow would accumulate on the wind side of those fences. Today, with our powerful snow blowers and vastly improved highways, the drifts can be controlled quickly.

In later years, when driving to high school, it was often necessary to leave the road, drive through a barway (an opening in a fence), and then along the windswept ridges, and out the far barway. Usually we had to shovel at the barways and in some places where the snow drifted in the fields. Even so, it was better than bucking the three-foot drifts, which often formed across the roads.

In the spring we still had problems. Due to the deeply frozen roads, and
(Continued on page 3)



Snow (Continued from page 2)

the lack of proper gravel base, and also poor drainage, the roads were a sea of mud. A fast start and hope that we would make it across those real bad spots did not always do it. That's when the axe came in to play. A nearby sapling was cut as a pry pole and the rear wheels jacked up. Stones off the nearest stone wall filled in under the tires, and we worked our way out to firm ground. It was slow progress. Every case was a challenge. I guess that is why farm boys made practical engineers. They had to be.

When one reads about the ancient Roman roads still in good shape, it is because of their deep base plus excellent drainage. Labor was cheap in those Roman years. Probably the laborers were prisoners or slaves. While I do not advocate slave labor, I have to admire the durability of the old Roman roads.

Bill & Maud Bartles are members of the Historical Society. The Bartles Farm was in the Town of Clinton at Silver Lake.



VALENTINE'S DINNER

Mark your calendar now for **Saturday February 8th** to attend our very popular annual Valentine's Dinner buffet at the Masonic Hall. Come greet your neighbors. The committee is once again planning special Valentine decorations, which will add to the festive atmosphere. For everyone's comfort, **seating is limited**...so make your reservations early. Call Fran Sassano at 266-8936.

To help make this a fun event and successful fund raiser, the committee is seeking articles for the gift basket raffle, desserts, and help with decorations, food dishes, bartending, and set-up/clean-up. If you wish to help in any way, please let Fran know. Thanks!

Help Maintain our National Landmark

Our Society is proud to be the steward for our headquarters building, the 1777 Creek Meeting House, which is listed on the National Historic Register. To help maintain this landmark, we are asking for help with light housekeeping chores, such as cleaning of floors, rest rooms, and kitchen area. We have a checklist of tasks, and if shared among several people, each would only need to spend a few hours a year to get the job done. If we're unable to find volunteers, then we will have to hire a cleaning service. The task schedule is very flexible and can be suited to your personal schedule... you choose the time. We can even team someone up with you. **Please help!** For more information, contact our Housekeeping Chairperson Glenda Schwarze at 266-5203. Thank you!



Holiday Dinner



*Wearing costumes of the 1700's
Ruth Greenwood, Paul Schwarze, Joann Schmidt, Dave Schmidt*

More than 50 people attended the December Holiday Dinner, featuring smoked salmon, venison lasagna, shrimp and rice, pork loin, chicken, fresh ham, delicious veggies and a myriad of salads. It was topped off with yummy desserts. Candle lit tables were decorated with holiday baskets of pine and holly designed and donated by the Friendship Garden Club.

Some members were attired in 1777 period costumes (see picture) in keeping with the 225th anniversary of the Creek Meeting House.

Following the dinner, auctioneer Craig Marshall, wearing Kelsey Wirehouse's vintage straw hat, encouraged bids on a number of holiday gifts donated by the members.

Fun was had by all, and a big thank you goes to Glenda Schwarze for chairing the event.

Did You Know?

As far back as the 1600s, women always kept their hair covered while men shaved their heads (because of lice and bugs) and wore wigs. Wealthy men could afford good wigs. The wigs could not be washed so to clean them, the men would carve out a loaf of bread, put the wig in the shell and bake it for about 30 minutes. The heat would make the wig big and fluffy, hence the term "big wig". Today we often use the term "here comes the Big Wig" because someone appears to be powerful and wealthy.



Clinton Historical Society presents

CABIN FEVER LIVE MUSIC

featuring

- * Jamie Rickert
- * Jean McAvoy
- * Ron Gluck

SAT. JAN. 25
8:00 PM
MASONIC HALL

 \$ 10.00 per person at the door 

Info: 266-3899

-- Shuttle parking at the Town Garage-- Proceeds to M. Hall restoration --

February Program

Friday, February 7, 7:30 pm
Creek Meeting House
Salt Point Turnpike

Shirt-tail cousins, Macy Sherow, Don Bowman and Alan Mueser, well known active Clinton residents, have lived in the Town of Clinton all their lives. They are, in fact, cousins. At our February meeting, they will be sharing with us an oral history; a history of their childhood, stories of "long ago" when life was simpler, and when Clinton was truly a "rural" area. All three have a whole lot of life experience in this community. Added together they can give us over 200 years of history but, of course, none of them are THAT old!

Prepare to be entertained and enlightened. Come to the meeting with questions, and maybe bring along something for the next day's breakfast, for these gentlemen can really TALK!

The Town of Clinton Historical Society is a not-for-profit organization established to preserve, maintain, promote and educate on matters of historical significance and interest in the Town of Clinton and Dutchess County.

OFFICERS AND TRUSTEES

- President: Mike Appolonia
- Vice President: Bill McDermott
- Treasurer: Clint Kershaw
- Secretary: Richard Collier
- Richard Collier
- George Greenwood
- John Lacey
- Edna Lachmund
- Craig Marshall, Past President
- Mike Spitzer

TOWN HISTORIAN: Bill McDermott

CHS Meeting Reminder:
Friday, February 7
Featuring Clinton cousins
Macy Sherow, Don Bowman,
and Alan Mueser

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