

# THE CLINTON HISTORIAN

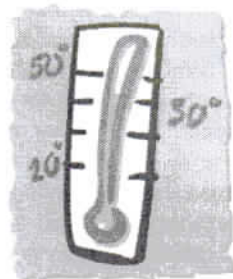
The Clinton Historical Society

Volume XVI Number 8

Craig Marshall, Editor 266-5494

November 2003

## THERMOMETER STOPS AT 30 BELOW



by Bill Bartles

In August 1922 the Bartles clan moved to Silver Lake in the quiet, rural town of Clinton, leaving behind the hustle and bustle of New York City. We had no electricity, no inside plumbing. A single wood furnace with one large floor radiator was our sole source of heat. It fought a losing battle every winter with the outside cold, at times 30 degrees below. It may have been colder, but our thermometer only went down that far.

No one seemed to mind. It was all new to us. We just bundled up a bit heavier.

The summers and the lake were more welcoming: swimming, rowing and fishing, although we weren't allowed to take out boats until we'd proved we could handle them.

School in fall was another new experience for a city boy. We walked 3/4 of a mile to the little one-room schoolhouse at Bulls Head where all eight grades were taught. When I read today about the fleets of buses in school district budgets, I think back to my early days in Dutchess County. We had no buses in Clinton. It was--get there the best you

*(Continued on page 2)*

## TRAIN TREASURES Archives Grow



by Bill McDermott

Recently, Austin McEntee's daughter Rebecca donated the premier Dutchess County railroad collection of photographs, papers and scrapbooks to the Society. Austin was a long time collector and an expert on Dutchess County railroad history. Meticulously catalogued and labeled, each item meets museum collection standards. Among the items are a rare remnant of the rail track from the Rhinebeck & Connecticut Railroad (built in 1872) and rare photographs.

Austin did not intend his collection to be private; he shared it with rail buffs, historians, and others (such as writers and newspaper reporters) researching the early Dutchess County rail system. Railroad fans from all over the country approached Austin, in person or by mail, seeking answers to their questions. His photographs, both old and new, are found in many recently published rail histories. Indeed, the Clinton Historical Society's first railroad exhibit, which owed much to his collection and knowledge, was dedicated to Austin.

On most weekends, winter as well as sum-

mer, Austin escorted visitors along the county's rail beds and recounted the history of the five principal rail lines. His camera was always with him as he documented the course of every rail bed, even the specially built short spurs to serve warehouses and the like. Most of the beds were barely visible but none escaped Austin's trained eye. Although it was never built, he could even trace the path of the proposed New York, Boston & Montreal Railroad through Dutchess County in the 1870s.

Accompanying him on his lectures was his famous homemade prop: a map of the county on which he traced the growth and demise of each railroad, using several color-coded yarns. This personal reference is included in the extensive collection donated to the Society.

This is a timely acquisition by our Society. We have just finished installing 750 linear feet of shelving barely in time to receive Austin's collection. Photographs, diaries, maps, genealogical transcripts, historical manuscripts, oral history videos, and our own already substantial railroad collection are now strengthened by Austin's collection.

Recently added to our collection are the town's manuscript tax rolls from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. We are also the repository for several town organizations that have placed their manuscript material in our care for safety and future reference. Our collection policy includes all of Dutchess County but its principal focus is on the Town of Clinton and central Dutchess County communities.



## Preserving Clinton's Heritage

## From the Editor:

We hope you are enjoying the new format of the *Historian*, with more informative stories, research, and photos. We thank our several member contributors for their articles this year, and **invite all members and friends to send us your stories and information** that would be of interest to Clinton residents. We will be happy to provide consultation, editorial services, and guidance on any research needs. The *Historian's* goal is meant to be a forum for sharing information related to Clinton's history and heritage, not only for current readers but also for researchers in future years. What better place to capture your information and recollections? Please call Craig Marshall at 266-8261 if you would like to contribute an article. Thanks!



## Thermometer *(Continued from page 1)*

can--and we did just that--on foot in all kinds of weather, plowing through snowdrifts in the winter and wading across flooded meadows in spring. We enjoyed it!

The highlight of walking home from school was the mill, which was powered by water flowing from the lake. The mill ground corn and oats for cattle feed and pressed apples for cider in the fall. We were always welcome to use the big dipper attached to the cider vat to take a sip. No one wondered if the Health Department would object. In fact, no one even wondered if we had a health department.

On a nearby stream a creamery separated cream from milk. Its cans were sterilized by steam heated from water from the stream.

The last stop on the way home was the blacksmith shop. To a boy just up from the city, the sights, sounds and smells of that shop were compelling--especially the forge that heated the iron to a red hot glow and the anvil on which the smithy pounded the hot iron into shape.

The blacksmith, when shoeing a horse, would heat the iron horseshoe and then touch it to the horse's hoof to mark the hoof's high spots. He would then cut away those spots until the shoe fit perfectly, all the while straddling the horse's leg between his own. Some of the horses didn't really care for the process, but the blacksmith just went about his way, talking soothingly to his "customer." When the shoe fit properly, it was nailed to the hoof. I'd wince at the sight of the nails going in...but not the horse.

Then, the ends of the nails were cut off and the hoof smoothed with a large coarse file called a rasp; and the job was done. In winter, sharp cleats were attached to the shoe to give the horse better footing.

That blacksmith was a master craftsman. He could build almost anything out of wood and iron. Ash and oak were his favorite materials. Ash was used for wagon spokes and just about anywhere lightness and strength were needed.

Of course, by the time we got home from

school, much of our daylight was gone, leaving little time for work. We'd make up for that on the weekend, despite the lure of swimming.

The sights and the sounds of that first year at Silver Lake will always be with me. Spring, summer, and fall were enticing. Winter with its sub-zero cold and howling winds, was something else. Those who love to talk about the "good ol' days" probably never had to sit on a frost-covered seat in a two-holer out in the back yard with a gale blowing through the slats.

I've done it many a time, and I'd do it all over again if only I could. The good times always outweighed the bad.

*Written in 1990 by former Dutchess County Executive and CHS member Bill Bartles, who passed away this year.*



## IT'S THE LAW

Earning income was limited by law to a six day work week. "Be it enacted... that there shall be no...servile laboring or working (work of necessity... excepted)...on the first day of the week commonly called Sunday." Non-compliance risked a court appearance and a 75 cent fine, an amount equivalent to more than a day's pay earned by unskilled laborers. Individuals unable to pay could be placed in the stocks for two hours. "An Act for Suppressing Immorality" passed March 20, 1801.

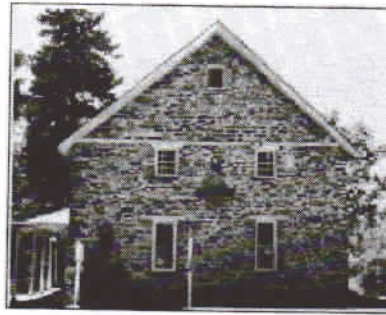
*Source: Laws of the State of New York (Albany: Charles R. & George Webster, 1802)*



## "PYGG" BANK BOWL

Ever wonder why so many coin banks are shaped like pigs? Here's the story. In ancient times, a lump of clay was called a "pygg." A clay bowl formed from this lump would often be used to hold loose change, and it was called a pygg bowl bank. According to legend, at a later point in history, a potter unfamiliar with the term received an order for several of the pygg bowl banks. Instead of the bowls, he made coin banks shaped like pigs; they became such a hit that they are still around today.

## 1777 Creek Meeting House



by Bill McDermott, President

If you missed that wonderful one man photographic exhibit, recently closed, you will have another chance beginning the Friday after Thanksgiving and running throughout the Sunday before Christmas. It was well attended, thanks to Edna Lachmund and her committee's bang up publicity campaign. With additional photographers included, we expect excellent response to the upcoming exhibit (see box announcement for details).

The Dutchess County Municipal Historians Association met at our 1777 Creek Meeting House on October 4 for their quarterly meeting. Accolades for what has been accomplished were many with some expressing amazement that our membership has provided such strong support for our building, its recent renovations, and the development of our archives, particularly the recent acquisitions. Some envied our computer facilities, our *Historian* newsletter and our microfilm collection. Perhaps being in the middle of it all, we fail to appreciate how far we have come in just a decade.

Our oral history program is ongoing. Kay Smith's life in Clinton, shared with the membership at the September meeting, is on tape and is available to members on loan.

The October meeting was also especially informative. Dr. Cynthia Koch, director of the FDR Presidential Library and Museum, presented an audiovisual program on the Old Barracks Museum in Trenton (which she directed from 1979-1993) and its role during the Revolutionary War. As an added bonus, she shared anecdotes about FDR, heard others from the membership, and discussed the new Henry A. Wallace Visitor and Education Center—presently under construction and due to be open to the public in November.

Some "Promise Tree" items, described in the previous issue, are still available. Call Louise at 266-3819.

## HELLO!

To welcome our new members, the *Historian* will begin listing their names, starting with this issue. They are joining an organization that boasts more members than any other local historical society. Statistically, CHS members represent almost 10% of the Town's population. We have grown three-fold since the year 2000. Preservation of our historic buildings, interesting programs, and our updated newsletter have all contributed to the unprecedented growth.

We are pleased to welcome: Eloise and Bob Crabtree, the Adam Deixel family, Patricia Dykas, Judith and Michael Grabowski, Edward Haas, Walt Kuhn, Sabato Leggiere, and Richard and Joyce Morse.



## IMMIGRANT SURVIVAL STRATEGY



When Cecelius Calvert, the second Lord Baltimore, was recruiting Englishmen to emigrate to the US in 1633, he wanted to avoid the problems suffered by the Jamestown and

Plymouth colonists, many of whom had died of starvation. He decided to set sail not in the spring, but in winter, so those settlers would arrive in time to plant spring crops.

He loaded the two ships, the ARC and the DOVE, with food, including wine, beer, flour, cheeses, dried fish and vegetable seeds. He also required that each man and

woman take clothing for one year plus extra shoes, one shovel, one ax, one grindstone, nails, six bolts of canvas, one frying pan, one spit, one pot, one gridiron, one flask, one belt, one sword, one bandolier, one musket, 10 pounds of powder and 10 pounds of lead.

The colonial settlers tackled the problems of survival and three years after Jamestown was settled, the population of the new land was approximately 310. By the end of the century, it had risen to 250,000. By 1775, with the prolific birth rate and constant flow of immigrants, the population had reached 2.5 million.

## Photography Exhibit



by local  
photographers  
including Bill Boxer

**November 29 thru  
December 21  
Weekends 1-4PM**

At the  
1777 Creek Meeting  
House

**Free admission**

Opening celebration  
Friday, November 28

**OPEN MIC  
LIVE  
MUSIC**

Coffee House at the  
1865 Masonic Hall,  
Schultsville, NY



JOIN US FOR OUR 5<sup>TH</sup> SEASON

**Features for 2003**

Saturday, October 25

**Barebones & Wild Flowers**  
(bluegrass and jazz)

Show starts at **8:00pm**

Open mic performers sign-up at door 7:30.

Shuttle parking at the Town Garage.

Proceeds to restore the  
Masonic Hall landmark.

Home baked treats and beverages  
available.

Donation: \$ 5.00

Info: 845-266-3899



**FOUND IN ENGLAND**

Remember man, as you walk by,  
As you are now, so once was I.  
As I am now, so shall you be.  
Remember this and follow me.

*To which someone replied by writing on the  
tombstone:*

To follow you I'll not consent  
Until I know which way you went

Susan B. Anthony, famed suffragist, tried to  
vote in the presidential election of 1872.  
She was fined \$100 for her audacity.

**November Meeting**

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

Art Church, President of the Hudson  
Valley Bottle Club, will speak about  
"Bottles of Dutchess County" on No-  
vember 7 at 7:30 PM. He will explore  
the use of glass and stoneware used by  
businesses in Dutchess County during  
the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. A variety of bottles  
will be on display including milk,  
soda, mineral water, whiskey, medi-  
cine, pharmacy ware and others. He  
will discuss how to determine the age  
of bottles, their types, shapes, color  
and uses and the historical develop-  
ment of bottles and their stoppers.

He is currently working on a book and  
has been a curator for many bottle  
exhibits. Bring your bottles for identi-  
fication and come see bottles identi-  
fied as 'Dr. Barnes of Pleasant Plains'  
and 'Beakes Dairy of Clinton Corners'.

**DATED MATERIAL - PLEASE DELIVER PROMPTLY**

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Permit #122

The Town of Clinton Historical Society  
2433 Salt Point Tnpk  
PO Box 122  
Clinton Corners, NY 12514  
(845) 266-5494

**CHS Meeting Reminder  
Friday, November 7  
Bottles of  
Dutchess County**

**OFFICERS AND TRUSTEES**  
President: Bill McDermott  
Vice President: Craig Marshall  
Treasurer: Clint Kershaw  
Secretary: Vacancy  
Michael Appolonia, Past President  
Richard Collier  
George Greenwood  
John Lacey  
Edna Lachmund  
Frank Mazzella  
Mike Spitzer  
Eliot Werner  
TOWN HISTORIAN: Bill McDermott

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

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