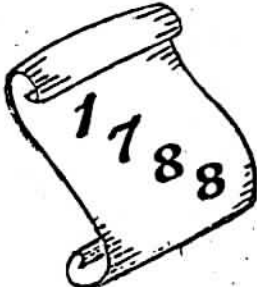


Clinton Historical Society  
Clinton Corners, N.Y. 12514

The Clinton  Historian

TOWN OF CLINTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Sure we have talked about preservation a lot - that's one of the tasks a good historical society should do. Therefore, it pleases me to tell you that Marjorie Corbalis, the Town Clerk, is presently reviewing Clinton's records to determine which records need to be preserved. Some of Clinton's records are of historical significance and Marjorie will consult with the SOCIETY about these. Also it appears Marjorie has a secret weapon - Barbara Dickett. She has already done a bang-up job organizing the town vault and doing a review of its records. A microfilming step is planned to follow.

And the SOCIETY will also go ahead with its microfilming project. MACY SHEROW, the chairman of that project, has already met with a representative from a microfilming company to discuss procedures and cost.

The museum has been on the agenda every meeting since September. At present Alan Mueser, the representative from Warren Lodge, has sent a letter to its members in which he discussed the feasibility of transferring the Lodge building to our historical society. We await the vote of that group before we negotiate the details of this new partnership.

The next important step you can do now is come to the next meeting to discuss the new constitution and by-laws. Please mark your calendar right away.. Friday--Feb. 1--7:30 PM--Library.

Ordinary people and the lives they lived has been my primary research interest for the past three years. At the coming meeting I will share with you some findings on several ordinary people who have lived in Clinton. I believe some will surprise you.



## BEHIND THE SCENES

To help keep our historical society programs both interesting and productive, the Steering Committee has been meeting periodically to raise and discuss issues, ideas for events, propose goals for the organization, and other matters relevant to our society. These matters are then brought before the general membership for further discussion and approval at the monthly meetings. Our recent museum endeavor is one example of this activity. Current members of the Steering committee are Bill McDermott, Tom O'Shea, John Pruitt, and Craig Marshall. For better awareness by the membership, the following topics were covered at the Jan. 16 Steering Committee meeting:

1. Membership campaign - creative ideas to draw new members; add focus on neighboring towns with no society.
2. Town records - Marge Corbalis project beginning (see President's Corner); Historical Society role; Macy's microfilming project.
3. Road historical markers - need ideas and support.
4. Landmarks brochure - priority project, to assist membership and fundraising campaigns.
5. Video taping - advice sought to help improve taping and editing.
6. Museum acquisitions - ideas to encourage contributions/loans; easy process to copy papers/photos/post cards on short-term loan.
7. Nominating committee - needed for elections in April.
8. Newsletter - ideas for upgrading; addition of photos; laserprint.
9. Monthly meetings - popular topics for upcoming meetings.
10. Annual Dinner - 1st week in April; location/awards/program - seeking suggestions.
11. Society organization - bylaws, constitution, tax exempt status forms.
12. Museum - Masons' status; alternatives; fundraising; planning.

See Bill on how you can assist in one or some of the above.

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# PSST! WANNA MAKE A BUCK?

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"I did," admitted silversmith Charles Hamilton when he was arrested in the fall of 1759. The charge was counterfeiting. He had made and sold Spanish milled dollars, a silver coin used in New York in the 17th and 18th century.

Charles was an enterprising fellow. On August 27, 1757 he purchased a parcel of land in the Nine Partners Patent once owned by Elizabeth Johnson, the daughter of David Jamison, one of the original Nine Partners. He paid a pretty good buck for it, £1000. What did he buy? MINES and the right to dig, blast, batter, build smith's shops, forges, trenches to carry water, etc. But Stephen Herrick, the one who sold it to him was no dummy. He sold only a quarter of the parcel. Hamilton was also pretty sharp. A couple of years later and the year after he was arrested in New York City, Charles sold a one sixty-fourth share of his holding for £25 to John Wilson, a shopkeeper in the Nine Partners Patent. At that rate he was earning a 60% return on his money. But perhaps he was simply trying to raise a bit of money. Only a few months earlier he had raised £23 by mortgaging his holding to a New York City merchant.

This guy was a gutsy guy. In January 1760 he jumps bail on the New York City arrest. Three months later he raises that £23 and then three more months go by and he is selling the share. Perhaps, this sharp city boy thought he could hide away in the country. But a probable need for money and those business transactions, together with the notice in the New York paper (which often was brought to Dutchess Co. by merchants traveling between the two points) of his bailjumping began his downfall.

But it was really his flashing the counterfeit money he admitted to having made recently from another mine he had in Cornwall, Connecticut that did him in. Lewis Bennet, a shoemaker, turned him in. He said he had seen the fake money on Saturday night, April 18, 1761, at the

home of James Ryan in Beekman precinct. Sunday morning Hamilton sold nine of those fake coins to one Gersham Hubble, not too swift a character. He was caught with them and admitted buying them for one "good dollar" from Hamilton right outside Ryan's door. Hubble got off but Hamilton was arrested. They probably planned to throw the book at him for selling counterfeit pieces and jumping bail and God knows what else.

He was brought to Poughkeepsie, examined in the house of Baltus Van Kleeck before three justices of the peace. Initially, he denied any responsibility, saying he was drunk and had gotten the coins from a known counterfeiter, Samuel Cogsdale. But when good old Gersham Hubble was examined, he revealed the transaction in front of Ryan's house and remembered that Hamilton said he could make even better fakes. Of course, when Judge Noxon found a bottle of Quick Silver on Hamilton, Hamilton's story held little weight.

The whole matter was a greivous one and took on an ominous note twice over. New York's Attorney General Kempe was apprised of Hamilton's arrest and sent a stiff warning to Dutchess County Sheriff Charles Everitt. Reminding him that criminals had escaped from several county jails, he wrote to Sheriff Everitt that regardless of the poor condition of the Poughkeepsie jail, "I should be very sorry should you be liable to be punished so Severely as the law directs for the Escape of a Felon."

With that warning Hamilton knew he could not escape again. The case never came to trial. The New York Merury dated July 13, 1761 explained why. "We hear from Poughkeepsie that about a Fortnight since, one Hamilton, a Silversmith, was committed to Goal there on suspicion of making Spanish milled Dollars; but in a few Days after he was put in, to save any further Trouble, he hang'd himself with his own Handkerchief, by making it fast to a Spike that was drove into the Goal Wall."

-Bill McD.



## A CLINTON TOUR

\*\*\* REMINDER \*\*\*

NEXT MEETING:

FRIDAY FEB. 1

7:30 PM

TOWN LIBRARY

-FEATURING-

"ORDINARY

PEOPLE IN

EARLY CLINTON"

-ALSO-

\* CLINTON TOURS

\* CONSTITUTION

& BY-LAWS

A Clinton Historical Society tour of historic houses in the Town of Clinton has been suggested for late summer or early fall. The day-long event probably would include a morning slide lecture showing the houses to be visited, followed by lunch and then the afternoon tour. The event would probably begin at 10 AM and end at 4 PM.

The proposal raises many questions that only members can answer. How many members are interested? Which and how many houses should be visited? Should a bus be hired? How much will the event cost? Should non-members be invited? Should it be a fund-raising event?

These and other interesting ---and important--- subjects will be discussed at our Feb. 1 meeting. Be part of the action! Join us on Feb. 1!



### MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

The Clinton Historical Society year runs from April 1 to March 31. If you have overlooked sending your 1990 dues, please clip out the following application for renewal and send it with your check payable to "Clinton Historical Society" to:

Florence Smith  
RR2 Box 63  
Clinton Corners, N.Y. 12514

Family \$8.00

Individual \$5.00

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_