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FRIDAY JUNE 7

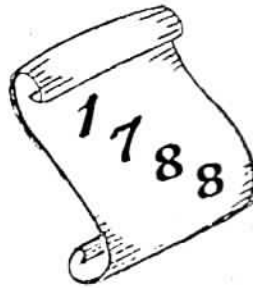
NEXT MEETING:

*** REMINDER ***

Clinton Historical Society
Clinton Corners, N.Y. 12514



The Clinton



Historian

TOWN OF CLINTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Vol. VII

No. 7

May 1991

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

They'll do it every time...that is, the membership will support the Society when it is called on. Thanks to all of you who provided material for the micro-filming project. It is complete. And what a project it was! Over 7,000 frames of material were shot and many of these were 2 pages to a frame. In most cases the quality is excellent. As one might expect, age and fading ink impaired a few frames, but we have an excellent and SAFE archive of Clinton's history in public and private records. More material came to us after the deadline, so we will have to do another run. If you missed us the first time, call now and we will include your material this time. And... a SPECIAL THANKS to Macy Sherow for his help in bringing this project to fruition!

It turns out that our concerns about the proposed Zoning Law were quite proper. Not only did we note the absence of strong commitment to the historic character of the hamlets, but we uncovered language which essentially would hamstring the Planning Board in that regard. The result would be to leave it up to each developer to protect the hamlet as he saw fit. It would be a mistake to impose such limitations on the Planning Board. But let's give the Proposed Zoning Law Committee time to respond to our inquiries.

Next stop, the Board of Regents. Our appeal to Albany regarding our charter and plan to develop a museum has passed through the critical stage. The Board of Regents usually adopts proposals which have the required recommendation which ours has just received.

Unfortunately, I will miss the next meeting. Last year, my excuse was the paper I delivered at the New York History Conference. This year I have been a member of the planning committee and not attending the major address of the two day meeting would not be good form. Why don't you consider coming? On Friday June 7 all day and a half day on Saturday at Bard College there will be 32 papers exclusively on New York history. Plenty of subjects to choose from. See you there?

LOTS A ROCKS

Tell you what...those rocks sitting on your property ever so quietly record Clinton's earliest history. Sometime soon, stop by the Town Hall, and look at the tax map. Surely, you will see many, many straight lines. Along these lines are stone walls which demarcate one parcel of land from its neighboring parcel. Next compare the tax map with the surveys made by the Nine Partners Company in 1734 and 1740. You will also see straight lines, many fewer than on the tax map. Most of these line up precisely with a number of lines on the tax map.

The initial five divisions made in 1734 were in approximately 3600 acre parcels. These were further subdivided a few years later into parcels ranging in size from 300-900 acres. Along all of these lines were constructed stone walls by the earliest settlers. But their practical methods of disposing of litter in land they began to cultivate left us an important historical legacy to preserve. Little did they realize how this simple but backbreaking labor was an act of historical preservation. On the other hand we, now two or more centuries later, do appreciate their labor and realize the importance of preservation - our legacy to the future.

WHAT DO WE NEED TO DO? Ideally, we would rebuild every stone wall in town because most of them are parts of the walls described above. But for now I would like to see just the corners of walls rebuilt to save them from completely disappearing. Now I am not talking about a beautiful work of art - simply pile the stones securely so they reach a height which can easily be detected. This need not be a major undertaking - an hour or two on a couple of cool weekend mornings would make a whole lot of difference. Even if your property has only one or two acres, your walls may be the critical walls in the area because they may be the very ones aligned with the 1734 or 1740 divisions. Also, while you are rebuilding, take a minute or two to muse on how it might have been for those early settlers who unknowingly performed the same act of preservation then that you are doing now.

GARBAGE ?

"Do you see any garbage here?: This reply stunned into silence the ten year old boy who had simply inquired what had been done with the garbage.

The scene of this event was the kitchen in a recreated early 19th rural village located on the grounds of the New York State Historical Association. The young woman who had replied was depicting the role of women, particularly her domestic activities, during that early period.

And sure enough when one looked around there was no evidence of garbage. Where had it all gone? First of all she explained that much of what is known in the 20th century as garbage did not even exist at the time - paper. To begin with, there was not junk mail to fill waste baskets. Nor were there those wrappers which enclose everything one purchases now. Forget the paper bags, or is it plastic now? One didn't need a sanitary wrapper to keep shoppers' hands off the chicken, when one simply stepped out the kitchen door then to select a chicken "on the hoof."

The woman demonstrated how most of the discard during that period found other uses, often in feeding pigs or compost, etc. This is not particularly new information but presented in the way it was certainly puts the issue of garbage, one mark of our modern world, into perspective. That boy's silence got my attention. How about yours?

Oh, by the way, I went in my capacity as Town Historian to examine the content of ten ledgers from an early store near Bullshead which had been placed in their research library years ago. Mission accomplished. But to gather the information on deposit will take a great many trips. I have asked them to investigate methods by which they might provide us the information or copies of the originals. I am not hopeful but I will follow up. These are real important ledgers.



"GARBAGE -

THE RIGHT STUFF"

One person's garbage is another person's data. What? Middens are simply garbage heaps from long ago. We don't identify with their initial function but rather as new opportunities to study the past. And so it is with our speaker for the June meeting.

Bethia Waterman's archaeological research of Tivoli Bays, which can be reached through the Bard campus, includes examining the contents of shell middens. It is from these she plans to add to the understanding of the paleo-environmental character of Tivoli Bays during the prehistoric period. In addition to her research she was one of the supervisors of Bard College's Archaeological Fieldschool during the summer of 1990. The slides of her work and the bay area are likely to be spectacular. Don't miss this special treat!

The title of Ms. Waterman's talk is:
"The Prehistoric Archaeology of Tivoli Bays"

WHERE ARE THEY ?

That's what we'd like to know and with the encouragement from the New York State Museum, in their recent mailing to Town Historians perhaps we ought to find out. Who are we looking for? Native Americans who traveled through Clinton before the appearance of the Europeans. No doubt they were here, probably not as settlers but as hunting and fishing parties which lasted for weeks and sometimes months. The Little Wappingers Creek which runs right through Clinton would have been particularly attractive as would the big Wappingers Creek which only touches Clinton slightly in its southeastern corner.

The NYS Museum properly observes that in most local histories, time is "artificially foreshortened by up to 10,000 years" because the Native-American period is overlooked. Is Clinton guilty of this? We sure are!! Lets begin to fix this. How? There are people in town (Ruth Hoyt is one) who have hearsay information about the Native-American presence. If you are one who know, take a minute to say "I DO!" Put those words on a postcard and send it to this newsletter. Or if you prefer, call us at 266-3819 and we will come out to see you. Any tidbit, even the one you are not sure of will do. Lets hear from those "I DO's!"

HELP WANTED

The Society has 5 unpaid but uniquely rewarding positions open for the right persons. No experience is necessary for this newly created opportunity. All kidding aside folks, we do need a little help. It serves a two-fold purpose:

- a) to act as the eyes and ears in each community
- b) to actively encourage new members

In the first role we are looking to connect with people in each corner of Clinton who have been long time residents and who have not yet had the chance to contribute to our oral history project. Although we try, no one person can be connected to everything going on in town. Also, we would like to have someone in each community available to gather information, old or new, about that community which we could include in a library of information on each community.

In the second role, which is really sales, we are facing a reality early. With the likelihood that we will have a museum, we will need help. The larger the pool of members, the more likely we will have the help we will need.

As the designee of your community, you would be the contact person for your neighbors who might have a neat story, a useful piece of current information, or a little known piece of history to tell.

Contact Bill Mc D. at 266-3819 if you are interested. I am told that recently an individual who started in small roles became President of the country. One never knows where opportunities may take one.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

The new membership year for our Clinton Historical Society has begun, starting April 1. Dues for the new year should be mailed to treasurer Florence Smith now if you did not send payment with Annual Meeting/Dinner reservations. Please make your check payable to "Clinton Historical Society" and mail it to:

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

Family \$8.00 Individual \$5.00

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

* NEXT MEETING *

*** REMINDER ***

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FRIDAY JUNE 7

7:30 PM

TOWN LIBRARY

-FEATURING-

"GARBAGE - THE

RIGHT STUFF"

by

BETHIA WATERMAN

* 1991 *

MEMBERSHIP DUES

PLEASE MAIL NOW !

- THANKS -