

FRIDAY OCT 4

NEXT MEETING:

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

Bill/Louise McDermott  
Salt Pt Turnpike  
Clinton Corners, NY  
12514

Clinton Historical Society  
Clinton Corners, N.Y. 12514



# The Clinton Historian

TOWN OF CLINTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Vol. VIII

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*October?*  
September 1991

Community Day - Before Community Day leaves our mind for another year, let me tell you we closed with interesting plans for next year. First, we proposed that organizations which have an educational or preservationist focus have their booths located next to each other. Therefore, next year our Society, the Library, Scenic Roads, and Clinton's farmers will be together. Across the road will be the historic machinery demonstration. This arrangement should make an interesting stop for visitors to Community Day.

Additionally, the Society has obtained a commitment from the recently reformed 150th Dutchess County Regiment to camp near the group mentioned above. This regiment is a group of individuals who present the Civil War as "living history." They research and reproduce uniforms, stories about Dutchess County men who fought in the Civil War, camp conditions, battle locations, etc. Perhaps by next year they will have some information on John and Isaac Lawless, two young men from Clinton ages 21 & 19 who enlisted just a few months after the war began and were killed in action. Neither one returned to Clinton. John was buried on a slave holders plantation in Virginia and Isaac was buried in Arkansas. Apparently, though I have not seen them, their lengthy obituaries appeared in the New York Tribune.

Lotsa Rocks - The history of a town is everywhere. Often we overlook the most obvious - the landscape. Larry Arno and Ray Oberly are two members of the Society who do not overlook the significance of the landscape as an historical record. Both have observed and researched their own farms regarding the past. Now as leaders of two separate groups, they are extending this interest beyond their own boundaries to the stone walls, some of which were built as long as 250 years ago. They and their group members are going to locate and document the stone walls along the large lot lines which were laid out by the Nine Partners Company when they subdivided the land in 1734. Not only is this a nice project but it is the first time it has been done in Dutchess County and will serve as a model for other communities. The intent is to preserve these walls and to protect them as an historical record during the years when development in Clinton is likely to increase.

Thanks to Lily Shohan for noticing in the last newsletter our information on the Clinton Mutual Insurance Company. She is presently its representative under a different name. She has received its ledgers which go back a number of years and promised to give them to our Museum when we open its doors.

Now that the town vault has been put in order, the result of many hours of careful work by Barbara Dickett, information about Clinton's past is more accessible. Folks, if you are looking for interesting projects to do during those winter months, you could copy some of this information so it could be entered into a computer. What a good substitute this kind of project would make for those days when you can't get out or instead of those television programs which have become tired and boring.

Thanks to Viola Schoch for her willingness to serve as Society representative in the Pleasant Plains area. Viola and others who could represent the Society will be the eyes and ears of the Society. They will be on the lookout for important information about the town's history, people who should be interviewed, and items which should be acquired for the Museum. There are openings for this wonderful job in other hamlets. We would be glad to have you join us.

Also, thanks to Ruth Estes who has agreed to help sort through some material found in the town vault which probably could be discarded. We plan to be careful here - one never knows what will be of value to later researchers of Clinton's history. I am reminded of the dog licenses which we pay very little attention to. Yet, there are records which tell us how many dogs were in Clinton shortly after the Civil War and who the owners were. By the way, the cost of a license was 50 cents, a significant fee at that time. On the other hand, many of these dogs played a role in the economy of the family and thereby earned their keep.

You know, I have wondered why our newsletter editor, Craig Marshall, has made the type smaller. I thought it was just to fit more into the newsletter, but now I believe he is simply accommodating the wordy president's column. Thanks, Craig, not only does the newsletter always look good, but our members appreciate the work that goes into it and look forward to receiving it.

See you at the next meeting - Friday Oct. 4.

The piece below was copied from the Poughkeepsie Journal several years ago. We thought you might find it interesting. Certainly, Clinton has been a "dry" town aside from the bootleg brew manufactured and sold during prohibition. (Get Len Kinney to tell you that story.) But Clinton wasn't always a dry town. We do know that taverns were licensed while Hyde Park and Pleasant Valley were still part of the town. But even as late as 1838 licenses were issued by the Commissioners of Excise for the town of Clinton to grocers and tavernkeepers to sell liquor. In the case of grocers the five gallon limit had an additional restriction. Drinking on the grocery property was not permitted and violations would result in stiff fines levied against the grocer.

Drinking was permitted in the tavern but it appears it was only to accommodate travelers. The Commissioners made it clear when they issued a permit to Samuel Swartout in 1838 that his inn or tavern shall not suffer disorderly behavior. Additionally, "cock fighting, gaming or playing with cards or Dice or Keep[ing] any Billiard table or other gaming table within the tavern" or on the property was not permitted. This implies that Clinton was a "dry" town in that one could not drink in a public establishment. Sometime prior to 1838 the Temperance movement began and we do know that many Clinton residents were strong supporters right up into the 1950s.



## Town of Clinton Ends 100-year Drought

A liquor license was granted Stanbrooke, Inc., resort hotel and dude ranch located on Silver lake, formerly known as Pink's pond, in the town of Clinton, and William J. Baler, executive secretary of the county ABC, disclosed it marked the first time in 100 years that a license had been issued in that township.

There were repercussions. Mrs. Ivy Chapel Fish, president of the county Women's Christian Temperance union, declared the license had been granted secretly without any of the people aware the application had been filed. "The wets," she said, "slipped one over on us and I am confident this is the only manner in which the license could have been obtained."

Mrs. Fish said a campaign would be launched immediately to hold a local option vote as quickly as possible.

The WCTU leader said she had been assured by the ABC board several years ago that "our town is dry and there is no danger of a license being issued."

Mr. Baler expressed doubt any such assurance had been given, adding "No one can assure a township that a license will not be issued unless that town adopts a local option law." Although there has been no license in Clinton, the township has shared in the distribution of alcoholic beverage tax, drawing a total of \$16,834 since repeal in 1933, County Treasurer Miller disclosed.

Supervisor Wright of the township considered the issue one for the voters to decide, asserting flatly "I am not taking any sides in the controversy." He pointed out, however, ABC funds provide the town with about a third of its general fund from which salaries of town officials and other miscellaneous expenses are paid. If a local option law were adopted and the township lost this income, a sharp increase in town taxes would result, he said.

**\* NEXT MEETING OCT. 4 \***

Our next meeting on Friday Oct. 4 at  
7:30 PM in the Town Library will be:

"An Interview With Bob Hancock"

Clinton, in its earliest decades and right into the 19th century was a multi-ethnic town...Germans, Dutch, English, and a few Scots and Welsh. Among these town residents were a number of negroes. Initially, most were slaves. In 1790, a Dutchman, John DeWitt had 9 slaves, while German John Crapser had 4 slaves, and the English family of Cornelius Radcliff had 6 slaves. When New York law outlawed slavery, some of the newly freed slaves remained in Clinton. However, by 1835 only 14 "colored" remained and thirty years later there were only three, 2 of which were over 70 years of age. Fifty years would pass before black families would again become full time residents in Clinton. These new families who arrived from the South became contributing members of the community. They attended local schools, worked in town, founded a church, and generally were woven into the fabric of the community.

To understand a community one must understand how each group participated in it, how the group was received, what limitations its members faced, and a variety of other questions too numerous to list. This is an ambitious undertaking. It is much too ambitious for this meeting, nor could we treat these questions effectively without a great deal of research. Yet, we may get a peek at how black families who arrived in the 20th century became part of the Clinton community.

Robert Hancock, who you have seen at our meetings and whose family is mentioned in our published history, has agreed to be interviewed at our October 4th meeting. We could not have made a better choice. Bob was raised in Clinton and although he now lives in Poughkeepsie, he is familiar with a number of the long time residents in our town.

DON'T MISS THIS ONE - -  
YOU MAY NOT HAVE ANOTHER CHANCE !!

**FUTURE MEETING TOPICS...**

WHAT WOULD

**You**

LIKE TO SEE ?



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

NEXT MEETING:

FRIDAY OCT 4

7:30 PM

TOWN LIBRARY

-FEATURING-

"BLACK FAMILIES  
IN CLINTON -

AN INTERVIEW  
WITH  
ROBERT HANCOCK"



\* WANTED \*

"TOWN VAULTERS"

- SEE BILL -

- THANKS -