

Est. 1975
Town of Clinton Historical Society
THE CLINTON HISTORIAN

Volume XXXIII, Number 4 • Craig Marshall, Editor, 242-5879 • WINTER 2020

YEAR OF WOMEN'S VOICES AND TALENTS
2020 marks the 100th anniversary of women's national suffrage.

The Dutchess County Historical Society has launched a year-long program to celebrate this event by focusing on women's voices and talents. Throughout the year, CHS has participated in the program with featured articles of notable Clinton women in this year's newsletters.

OPHELIA AND NINA: ACTIVISTS FROM CLINTON HOLLOW

by Craig Marshall

In January 2018 the Dutchess County Historical Society received a photo album of a ca. 1915 carriage trip taken by a grandmother and granddaughter from Poughkeepsie to visit their birthplace in Clinton Hollow. The discovery of this album led to more research into the lives of these two women, which revealed that both achieved significant fame and importance during their careers that focused on improving women's lives.

Ophelia Shadbolt Amigh (the grandmother) was born in 1839. In a 1936 news article, she recounted her early life in Clinton Hollow that included attendance at the hamlet one-room schoolhouse. In 1858 she married Oscar Amigh who later fought in the Civil War. Ophelia joined him in Missouri, becoming a nurse in the field and army hospitals.

Ophelia and Oscar appear to have separated in 1866. Ophelia returned to Poughkeepsie with her two surviving children and directed her reform energies by joining the Women's Christian Temperance Association as secretary, and later as matron of an organization that provided lodging and meals to needy homeless men and boys. By 1882 Ophelia had moved to Chicago to become involved with an organization that maintained a refuge for delinquent girls, including prostitutes. Her work in Chicago was noted by the founders of the new Illinois State Training School for Delinquent Girls, and in 1893 she was appointed the first superintendent. Ophelia became well known and respected in this field of rehabilitation, traveling extensively and writing articles on the topic.

After 29 years in this position, Ophelia was unfairly dismissed and returned to Poughkeepsie to renew her welfare work as president of the Women's Christian Temperance Union. Just one year later, at age 74, she was offered the position of superintendent of the Alabama State School for Girls, which she held for ten years. She then retired and became a parole officer. Notably in 1914 a former superintendent of the Illinois Children's Home and Aid Society

declared Mrs. Amigh to be "the first great pioneer leader in the United States in the work of reclaiming girls."

In January 1939 Ophelia died just five months before her 100th birthday. It was estimated that as superintendent in Illinois and Alabama, 15,000 young women passed under her care and guidance. Because of her service in the Civil War, she was buried with honors in a military funeral—the first ever held in Alabama for a Civil War nurse, with flags at half-mast.



Image from photo album, believed to be Nina

Nina McCulloch Mattern (the granddaughter) was born in Clinton Hollow in 1882. She took an active role in promoting women's suffrage for the New York State vote in 1915 and was a featured speaker at many major suffrage events in the county. Despite widespread

lobbying, the referendum failed by 57 to 43 percent. Nina continued her activity the following year along with nationally famous suffrage leaders. She wanted women to be treated equally and have control over their own destiny, and not be ruled "by standards which heretofore have been set by men." That same year, with the U.S. entering World War I, Nina was featured in a national short film that encouraged women to support the war effort at home by preserving food through canning. On November 6, 1917, women won the right to vote in New York State.



Ophelia Amigh

The year 1918 brought the end of the war, but also the worldwide pandemic known as the Spanish Flu. With a dire need for nurses in Poughkeepsie, and following in the footsteps of her grandmother Ophelia, Nina volunteered as a nurse and was put in charge of the temporary hospital set up in the Masonic Temple on Cannon Street. Sadly, she contracted the disease and died on October 31, 1918, at the age of 36.

Nina's many achievements included recognition as one of the foremost workers for suffrage in Poughkeepsie, a founder of the Women's City Club, and executive director of the Women's Branch of the Home Defense League. In his tribute to Nina, the city mayor

Continued on page 3

NEWS & NOTES

Members are encouraged to submit information of interest to the Society at large. Please send your emails to us clo_craigmarshall266@aol.com.

CHS New Virtual Programs

Attendance and feedback for the online presentations by Cynthia Koch (FDR, WPA) and Craig Marshall (Town Center, Wing's Hall) have been very positive. Several non-Clinton residents have participated, indicating a broad reach.

Our thanks to Bill McDermott, who provided the primary source material for the story of national peace activist Amanda Deyo, in the last issue.

Special thanks to Daniel Clark of Prime Print Shop, Poughkeepsie, for the donation of 100 picture note cards and envelopes.

Board of Trustees

Cynthia Koch, president
Craig Marshall, vice president
Cathy McMahon, secretary
Frank McMahon, treasurer
Carol Burns
Rise Cross
Marge Fountain
Rich Morse
Mary Jo Nickerson
Lisa Noval
Jim Pellegrino
Glenda Schwarze

Newsletter Team: Craig Marshall, Judith Grabowski, Trip Sinnott, and Eliot Werner.

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.



Friend us on Facebook at Clinton Historical Society and follow us on Instagram, [clinton_historical_society](https://www.instagram.com/clinton_historical_society).



1934 Upton Lake Grange Officers: seated: Bessie Van DeWater, Ethel Allen, Ivy Fish, Fred Morris, Henry Burkowski (president), Marshall Knapp, Cora Allen, Mabel Burhans, Ethel Travis; standing: Alton Finch, Oscar Burkowski, Herbert Allen, Irene Burkowski, Francis Olson, Sarah Morris, Tris Van DeWater, Fred Hall, Marcus Van DeWater.

GRANGE HISTORY

by Cynthia Koch

*To be granger good and true
We must hustle and work the whole year through;
Let's take up the task with a cheerful smile,
And make this grange year truly worth while.*

[UPTON LAKE GRANGE PROGRAM, 1937]

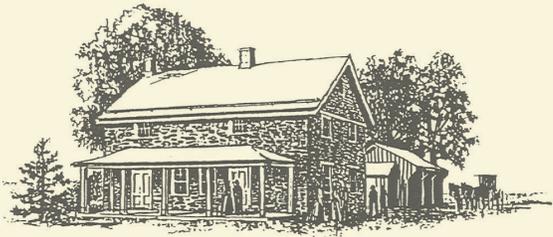
Did you know that the Creek Meeting House was home to the Upton Lake Grange from 1927 until 1992? Many old-timers in our town remember it well—not only the Grange meetings, but also dances and other meetings held in the Grange Hall.

The Grange was a national farmer's association founded in 1867 as a way for farm families to come together socially, share information on agricultural practices, benefit from economic cooperatives, and engage in political activism on behalf of farm issues. The Town of Clinton had four Granges; the Dutchess Grange was organized in Schultsville in 1874 by Gilbert Bentley and met at the Masonic Lodge. It was the first Grange in Dutchess County but went dormant—along with two other early Granges—in the 1880s. The 1890s–1900s saw a resurgence and by 1938 there were 26 active Granges in Dutchess County, three of them in Clinton.

We are delighted to have received a collection of ten annual programs for the Grange meetings in Clinton (mostly) during the 1930s and a 1966 list of officers, programs, and members. There is also a very interesting ledger containing the chairmen's reports on Community Day gatherings held between 1932 and 1952. All were donated by Ryan J. Orton, Secretary of Dutchess County Pomona Grange No. 32, who found them while organizing their archives and thoughtfully gave them to the CHS. The lists of officers include many familiar names from old Clinton families.

Included in the collection are six annual programs from the Upton Lake Grange #802 (1932–1937), which met at the Creek Meeting House; two from the Fallkill Grange #882 (1939 and 1974), which met in Pleasant Plains; and two from the Silver Lake Grange #1009 (1935 and 1933), which met at the Masonic Lodge, Bulls Head Hall, and the Town Hall. The Fallkill Community Pavilion (recently sold to a private party) still stands on the site of the Fallkill Grange, which burned in 1972.

Mr. Orton has kindly supplied all the information on local Granges for this brief article and will speak at our First Friday program on January 8, 2021, at 7:30 p.m.



CHS STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE

by Craig Marshall and Cynthia Koch

In late November the CHS Board of Trustees unanimously approved a Strategic Plan to guide our organization for the next 3-5 years and beyond. This highly focused effort took several workshop sessions via Zoom and in-person (socially distanced) meetings and garnered 100% participation by the Board. We received professional guidance from David Ringwood of the New York Council of Non-Profits, whose services were provided by the grant announced in the previous newsletter. The Board is indebted to David for his patience, valued suggestions, and clear guidance throughout the process.

In preparation for the planning process, the CHS Board and key volunteers participated in a survey that analyzed CHS, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats, operations, and governance. Using the results of the survey, the planning process included an update to our mission and vision and a focus on six key areas.

- Creek Meeting House maintenance and upgrades.
- Volunteer base.
- Archives management.
- Programs and exhibits (educational and social).
- Communications and marketing.
- Fundraising.

One of the initial tasks in the work plan is to redefine our committee structure and committee job descriptions to ensure that the volunteer resources needed for this Strategic Plan are identified. We will be informing our membership where gaps exist and what volunteer opportunities are available.

With the many discussions and topics involved, President Cynthia Koch noted, “This planning activity has brought new energy and focus to our mission to improve our operations, preserve our historic building, and continue to be relevant to the interests of our community.”

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Town of Clinton Historical Society is to preserve, educate, and encourage an appreciation for the history of the Town of Clinton (*founded in 1788*) and its historic sites and structures with a focus on preserving and restoring the 1777 Creek Meeting House. The purpose of this effort is to benefit our town residents, visitors, and all future generations.



VISION STATEMENT

The Town of Clinton Historical Society will be a community hub and recognized authority on local history and local historic buildings. It will maintain an archive and museum collection, publish historical materials, offer exhibits and educational programs, and provide events to encourage social interaction using the Creek Meeting House as its headquarters.

Remember 2021

➤ DUES ARE DUE ➤

*Your CHS membership is important!
The address label on this newsletter
shows the most recent year
of paid dues.*

| | |
|-----------------|---------|
| Student..... | \$10 |
| Individual..... | \$20 |
| Family | \$35 |
| Friend..... | \$75 |
| Donor | \$150 |
| Patron | \$250 |
| Benefactor..... | \$500 |
| Visionary..... | \$1,000 |
| Life..... | \$5,000 |

Please make checks payable to:

Clinton Historical Society

and mail to:

PO Box 122

Clinton Corners, NY 12514

We Welcome Our New Members

John Caccia and Tom Ward
 Byron and Kathryn Calame
 Marc and Rosemary Daniels
 Golden Russet Cafe
 Kevin Jaycox
 Frederic and Penny Putnam
 Wes and Diane Smith
 Erich and Mary Pat Sternberg
 Terra Shane Farm
 Glen White

Ophelia and Nina...continued from page 1

noted, “She knew the danger of service, but with sublime devotion, offered herself in the crisis. She has made the supreme sacrifice and stands today among those heroes who have given their lives for humanity.” As was done with her grandmother, whom she saw as her mentor, flags were flown at half-mast. Her name was added to the Roll of Honor in the city.

(Thanks to the Dutchess County Historical Society for the primary content used in this article.)



Season's Greetings

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

2021 FIRST FRIDAY PROGRAM ZOOM MEETINGS

Members will be sent the link for the Zoom programs in advance, along with information on how to download the necessary app.



January 8, 7:30 p.m.
The Grange or the Order of Patrons of Husbandry
Presented by **Ryan J. Orton**,
Secretary of Dutchess County
Pomona Grange #32

What is the Grange? Most people think it's a farmer's organization. Not so! The Grange has been a political and social force for rural America since its organization in Washington, in 1867. At one time Dutchess County had 26 Grange units, with the Town of Clinton having the most with three in the hamlets of Clinton Corners, Pleasant Plains, and Schultsville. This program will outline the Grange historically and today, as well as its influence nationally and locally.

February 5, 7:30 p.m.
"Across the Creek": Quakers and Antislavery in Eastern Dutchess County
Presented by **Peter Bunten**, chairman of the *Mid-Hudson Antislavery History Project*. A native of Poughkeepsie, he lectures on the local history of slavery, the antislavery movement, and the Underground Railroad.

In the middle decades of the 18th Century, Quaker communities – such as the Creek Meeting – were spreading across eastern Dutchess County and to points beyond. The area would go on to boast the largest settlement of Quakers outside Philadelphia. Almost from the beginning, these Quakers – along with their neighbors – found themselves at the forefront of the slavery-antislavery debate. We'll explore some of the cultural and political aspects of this development, which link our local history to national events.

March 5, 7:30 p.m.
Lucretia Mott's Heresy
Presented by
Mott historian
Professor Carol Faulker.



Lucretia Mott was viewed in her time as a dominant figure in the struggle for equality. She was the "moving spirit" of the first women's rights convention at Seneca Falls and envisioned women's rights as an extension of the universal principles of liberty and equality.