

Est. 1975  
*Town of Clinton Historical Society*  
**THE CLINTON HISTORIAN**

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## Summer Exhibit Voyage

by Craig Marshall

After a year's absence (the first in 25 years) due to the pandemic, the Society's annual summer exhibit returned with "Steamboats of the Hudson River" and attracted a large turnout of 250 visitors. This display filled our exhibit center and documented the long history of steamboating between New York City and Albany, which began with Robert Fulton's *Clermont*—the first commercially successful steamboat—in 1807 and continued until 1971.

Visitors began a simulated voyage on the steamboat *Town of Clinton* that took them to ten different "landings" illustrated with over two hundred images and descriptive captions. Each "landing" covered a topic in the 164-year history of Hudson River steamboating including early steamboats, the "Golden Age" (1860s–1920s), decline, disasters, destinations, and more.

The Hudson River Day Line was highlighted, being the most successful steamboat company with famous boats such as the *Mary Powell*, *Albany*, *Hendrick Hudson*, and *Peter Stuyvesant* that could accommodate as many as six thousand passengers. As products of the Golden Age, these crafts boasted Tiffany stained glass windows, polished mahogany woodwork, framed artwork, lush carpeting, and dining that rivaled the finest New York City restaurants. A mannequin of Absalom Anderson (captain of the *Mary Powell*) stood at his ship's wheel, greeted visitors on their voyage, and posed with some of them for pictures.

Several visitors were asked as to what interested them most. A history buff from Hyde Park took copious notes, especially regarding the fascinating past of the *Mary*



Two families pose with Captain Absalom Anderson of the steamboat *Mary Powell*.

*Powell*, the most famous Hudson River steamboat. He also found the story of Woodcliff Amusement Park, built in 1927 on the current site of Marist College, to be fascinating—particularly the huge Blue Streak roller coaster with a speed record that remained unbroken for fifty years. Woodcliff had the world's largest outdoor swimming pool with a capacity of three thousand bathers.

A Montgomery visitor found the large steamer trunk (circa 1920) with drawers, hangers, and original Los Angeles baggage sticker intriguing. Marcia from Clinton Corners never knew about the pleasure park at Upton Lake (circa 1902) and that six trains a day carried steamboat passengers from Poughkeepsie to the site to enjoy balloon ascents, boating, performances, and more. When 8-year-old Riley was asked her favorite artifact, she pointed to the six-foot steamboat model *Berkshire*, the largest river steamboat ever built in the world.

At the "Destinations" landing, the

images of several amusement parks that were steamboat stops—like Bear Mountain and Kingston Point Park—revealed an aspect of turn-of-the-century fun unknown to a Newburgh visitor. A grandmother recalled being a child on the top deck of the *Albany* steamboat and was impressed with the displayed extensive food menus and wine lists. "Incredible" was the summation given by Julian from New York City, a senior at Brown University, noting the detail and layout by theme of the display. "I thoroughly enjoyed it," remarked Julian.

In 1971 the Hudson River Day Line steamboat *Alexander Hamilton* made the last voyage of a Hudson River steamboat, ending the era. Visitor Gene Dauner of Hopewell Junction was on that last voyage between NYC and Poughkeepsie. He is seen pointing to where he was on deck in a large photo of that trip on display. Gene recalls that the company specifically did not advertise the trip as being the last because of fear of souvenir hunters. "The boat was in very good condition and was planned to be a floating museum." Gene



Gene Dauner points to where he stood on the last voyage of the steamboat *Alexander Hamilton*.

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](mailto:clo_craigmarshall266@aol.com).*

## PROGRESSIVE DINNER

The Board has voted to cancel for this year due to COVID-19 health concerns.

We're very much looking forward to having this popular social and fundraising event next year.

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Judy Behrens  
Ron and Katherine Mustello  
Carol Yakubowski  
Alessandra Zorogniotti

## POSITIONS OPEN

We are seeking a corresponding secretary and chair of our new Volunteers Committee. We can meet your scheduling needs and help is available. For more information please contact Craig at [craigmarshall266@aol.com](mailto:craigmarshall266@aol.com). *Thank you.*

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Cynthia Koch, president  
Craig Marshall, vice president  
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**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  
[clinton\\_historical\\_society](https://www.facebook.com/clinton_historical_society).



## TOWN OF CLINTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

1777 Creek Meeting House • 2433 Salt Point Turnpike • Clinton Corners, NY 12514

I am delighted to report that the Board of Trustees has approved hiring the historic preservation architecture firm John G. Waite Associates of Albany to conduct a Building Condition Report on the Creek Meeting House.

You may recall that the Historical Society completed a strategic plan in early 2021 and our most important goal was to draft an overall preservation plan for the Creek Meeting House. The Building Condition Report is the first step toward accomplishing that goal.

The report will be based on a thorough examination of the building by skilled preservation architects and engineers who will assess the condition of the roof, walls, floor, foundation, structural systems, crawl spaces, HVAC systems, and accessibility code requirements. Any problems uncovered will be described and categorized according to severity.

Waite and Associates is highly respected and has worked on some of America's most significant historic structures. I have personal experience working with the firm, which prepared the Historic Structure Report and preservation plan for the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library when I was director. The report was preliminary to the full renovation of the Library completed in 2013.

Another goal of our strategic plan is to continue to improve the management and accessibility of our historical collections. We are grateful to volunteer archivist Paul Contarino, who is creating digital lists of all the 19th century Town of Clinton tax records in our collection. Paul also prepared a group of original documents for digitization at the request of Dutchess County Historian Will Tatum.

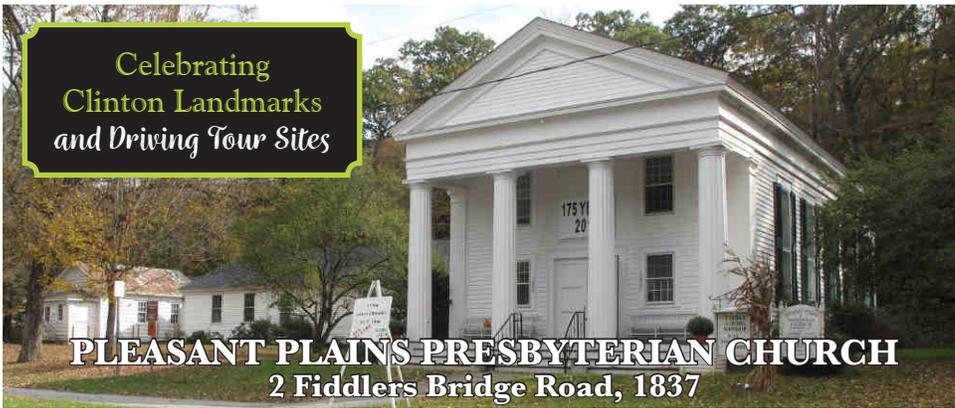
The Clinton Historical Society is entirely run by volunteers and our strategic plan places a high priority on recruiting a more numerous volunteer corps. Please notice under the News and Notes section that we are looking for a corresponding secretary and a chair of volunteers. We also need people willing to work on education programs, in the archives, and on fundraising events.

I thank all of you who have renewed your membership for 2021 and hope you will renew now if you have not done so already. Your support is vital, especially during the continuing pandemic, which makes fundraising events so challenging.

With all best wishes,

Cynthia Koch  
President

**Celebrating  
Clinton Landmarks  
and Driving Tour Sites**



**PLEASANT PLAINS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**  
2 Fiddlers Bridge Road, 1837

by Cynthia Koch

The Pleasant Plains Church is a fine example of the Greek Revival style that was popular from 1825 to 1860. The Greek Revival style is characterized by a wide band at the cornice line that represents classic entablature, including a prominent pediment (as in this building). Most Greek Revival buildings have front porches (either full length or partial) supported by rounded or square columns.

Dramatically located at the intersection of Fiddlers Bridge and Hollow roads, the Pleasant Plains Church was founded in March 1837 by thirteen members of the Pleasant Valley Presbyterian Church who petitioned to build a church in Pleasant Plains. Six members of the founding group were LeRoy family members who had been meeting in the home of John LeRoy (later known as Toad Hall). LeRoy, owner of LeRoy's Mill (located at what is now Frost Mills), gave significant financial support.

An earlier place of worship and school stood at the site. Congregants met in a schoolhouse erected on land donated by Richard Alsop, a large landowner living in Queens. Seeking a place of worship close to their homes, members of the community surrounding DeWitt's Mill apparently petitioned Alsop, who in 1784 deeded two acres from his holdings in Lot # 4 of the small division of the Great Nine Partners in Dutchess County to a group of local trustees for the "Express Purpose of having House Erected for the Worship of the Almighty God & a School House for the Education of Youth upon the Premises." The trustees built a schoolhouse in 1785 and began holding worship services as well as school there.

At first the early building served both Dutch Reform and Presbyterian denominations, but from 1791 to about 1840 people of the Reformed Church of Holland tradition met there, while those

of the Church of Scotland (Presbyterian) met in homes in the hamlet. In 1837 the group that had been meeting in Toad Hall organized the Presbyterian Society of Charlotte Precinct, and with money supplied by LeRoy, built the current Greek Revival Church.

By 1841 there were over a hundred members, largely as a result of revival meetings held in the two years after the founding. The Reverend Sherman Hoyt became resident pastor in 1843 and continued to serve as pastor (at intervals) for eighteen years. He resigned to open a private school and his home is still standing at 46 Fiddlers Bridge Road.

The church was enlarged in 1859 as membership increased, but as the farm population declined in the early 20th century, church membership fell off and the building deteriorated. After World War II, as new residents arrived who commuted to work in Poughkeepsie and Kingston, the church was restored and a Sunday School building was added in the 1950s.

**Pleasant Plains Schoolhouse**

Built in circa 1852, this schoolhouse replaced the earlier church-related schoolhouse built in 1785 and was located to the south and east of the church. The Pleasant Plains school district was founded in 1813 following an 1812 state law that established a statewide system of common (public) school districts. It is the earliest district in Clinton for which records remain extant. In 2005 the schoolhouse was moved southward from its original foundation and incorporated into the Hondorp Hall addition to the Pleasant Plains Church.

Over the years the schoolhouse took a turn as the local firehouse and as an apartment for Vietnamese and Cambodian refugees, before returning to its educational purpose as a Sunday School room.

*Summer Exhibit continued from page 1*

said. "Unfortunately, it was later moored off the ocean coast of Sandy Hook, New Jersey when a violent storm caused it to sink, leaving a wreck that was not restorable."

Many very complimentary comments about the exhibit were received from visitors, including kudos from the Board presidents of the Dutchess County Historical Society and Mount Gulian (Beacon). We are very grateful to Stewart's Shops for financial support and Prime Print Shop (Poughkeepsie) for its substantial donation of printing advertising, and exhibit material. This exhibit would not have been possible without the generous loan of special artifacts from the Hudson River Maritime Museum and private collectors Robert Jordy, Gerry Mastropaolo, and Glenn Morris.

An informal poll of visitors revealed that about 80 percent learned of the exhibit through the *Northern Dutchess News/Southern Dutchess News/Beacon Free Press* and we thank editor Curtis Schmidt for his front-page and ongoing coverage. Thanks also to our devoted volunteer docents who greeted and helped our visitors, and to our exhibit committee. We received record donations from generous visitors that will help us develop future exhibits, and we are very grateful for their support. ☀



**Fri. & Sat., Oct. 8 & 9**  
**9 am - 4 pm**

**2433 Salt Point Turnpike, Clinton Corners**

**Rediscover the fun at our Fall sale...  
Columbus Day Weekend!**

*Please donate your unwanted household items of value for our fall tag sale. Please leave donations on the CHS porch beginning Oct. 1 – but please no electronics, clothing, or upholstered furniture.*

*Donations of homemade baked goods are also needed; please drop them off the day of the sale.*



**October Events**

**Fri. Oct. 1** American Cider:  
A Modern Guide to a  
Historic Beverage  
at Golden Russet Cafe

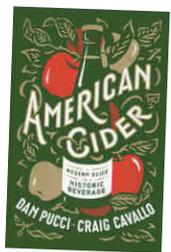
**Fri. & Sat. Oct. 8 & 9**  
Tag & Bake Sale at CHS

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR** \*COVID-19 rules of mandatory masks and 6' social distance seating.

**2021 First Friday Program Meetings\***

**OCTOBER 1, 7:30 PM** In person & Zoom  
Talk (& Tasting) at Golden Russet Cafe  
835 Fiddlers Bridge Road, Schultsville

*American Cider: A Modern Guide to a  
Historic Beverage*  
Presented by **Craig Cavallo**  
and **Dan Pucci**, authors.



New York's Hudson Valley is home to commercial apple growing in the United States. With a moderate climate and a quickly developing urban hub in what became New York City, the region was primed for supplying local markets with fresh eating varieties. Today the Hudson Valley produces nearly half of New York State's total apple production, and some of the best cider in the country is made right in our backyard. Listen in as Craig and Dan explain how this came to be and where orchards and cider are heading in the future. **After the free talk a Cider Tasting at \$15 per person to benefit the Society.**

**NOVEMBER 5, 7:30 PM** In person & Zoom  
*Invisible People, Untold Stories:  
The Role of the Non-Native Community in  
the Recovery of Voices of Native People*

Presented by **Bill Jeffway**, Executive Director and  
**Melodye Moore**, Chair of Collections, Dutchess  
County Historical Society

Only Native People themselves can share the perspective, values, and history of their community. But there is a role for the non-native community as well in helping to protect and preserve archaeological sites and ensuring that our history is inclusive of a variety of perspectives. In addition to preservation priorities and methods, we'll examine iconic examples of the "one story, one truth" model and discuss the tensions that can arise when balancing a wish to unite in a common identity involves the erasure of distinct communities.



**December Events**

**Holiday Potluck & Gift Auction**  
Friday, December 3  
6:30 PM

The evening is filled with good food and merriment. Please bring a covered dish to share, your 2022 membership dues, and a wrapped gift to auction.

**Holiday Craft Fair**  
Saturday, December 4  
10 AM - 4 PM

Featuring local crafters selling their handmade wares. CHS volunteers will sell member-donated crafts, seasonal tag sale items, homemade soups, and baked goods.  
*For more information please contact Judith at [judithgrabowski@verizon.net](mailto:judithgrabowski@verizon.net).*