



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

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## CHARLIE LUHMANN GROWING UP IN CLINTON

by Craig Marshall

**C**harlie Luhmann was born in his family home on Jameson Hill Road in Clinton Corners in 1934. He currently resides in Plattekill with his wife Marilyn, whom he first met at Millie's Cascade Tavern in Salt Point. Charlie and Marilyn recently celebrated their sixtieth wedding anniversary (they were married in 1962) and have three children.

Charlie is the youngest of five children of John and Emma Luhmann (John lived to be 100 years old). His sisters include Jean Burkowske (age 99) in Clinton Corners and Doris Hamilton (age 96). His mother was adopted and raised by four Smith sisters, who lived in the house that became the Luhmann home in 1947 when the last surviving sister died. The sisters operated the local telephone exchange in the home from circa 1910 through 1941, Emma taking over telephone operations when they aged. It was a party line system, and when a fire broke out Emma had to interrupt the current conversation and phone the fire department members.

*continued on page 2*



*Marilyn and Charlie Luhmann*



Members of the Clinton Town Board presenting the American Rescue Plan Act check to Clinton Historical Society Board Members at the Creek Meeting House on March 15.  
L-r: Dean Michael, Katherine Mustello, Michael Whitton, Lisa Noval, Glenda Schwarze, Eliot Werner, Cynthia Koch, Chris Juliano, Craig Marshall, Frank McMahon, and Cathy McMahon.

## REPORT FROM PRESIDENT CYNTHIA KOCH

### FANTASTIC NEWS!

The Clinton Town Board has approved a grant of \$17,225 to compensate the Historical Society for fundraising losses sustained as a result of the pandemic. The funding comes from the American Rescue Plan Act funding approved by Congress to help states, municipalities, and nonprofits offset the economic damage done by COVID-19. The Society has been engaged in strategic planning since 2019 and our top priority is renovation of the Creek Meeting House. We are dedicating the ARPA funding toward this goal.

One of the most important renovation initiatives is an application to the Dutchess County Community Development Block Grant program to make the Creek Meeting House accessible to people with disabilities. We are hopeful that the county will approve a grant providing for the installation of handicapped-accessible exterior ramps, parking, restrooms, and emergency alarms. This grant will be a big step toward improving the availability of this Clinton landmark for use by the community. If our CBDG grant is approved, the funds from the Town's ARPA grant will provide the required match.

### MORE GOOD NEWS!

We are returning to in-person events! For the first time since 2019, we will be holding our annual meeting and potluck supper on Friday, April 1, at 6:30 PM at the Creek Meeting House. I will also be providing guided tours of our archives on the second floor during the evening.

### SAVE THE DATE!

On June 4 we will be holding our second Driving Tour, an event first held in 2019 to bring new awareness to Clinton's architectural heritage and the houses and other buildings recognized as Clinton Landmarks. Watch our website [clintonhistoricalsociety.org](http://clintonhistoricalsociety.org) and your email for updates.

# NEWS & NOTES

*Members are encouraged to submit information of interest to the Society at large. Please send your emails to us c/o craigmarshall266@aol.com.*

## WELCOME NEW MEMBER

Roberta Brodie

## REQUEST FOR NOMINEES

The CHS Board of Trustees is seeking nominations for trustees.

Interested persons should contact [info@clintonhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:info@clintonhistoricalsociety.org) before March 28 for more information.

## CHS SUMMER EXHIBIT

### *Early Farm Life 1890–1920*

will be the theme of the exhibit to be held weekends in July at the Creek Meeting House. Vintage images and artifacts documenting the era before electricity and tractors will be displayed. More information will be noted in the Summer newsletter.

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Cynthia Koch, president  
Craig Marshall, vice president  
Cathy McMahan, secretary  
Frank McMahan, treasurer  
Rise Cross  
Marge Fountain  
William Holman  
Richard Morse  
Lisa Noval  
Jim Pellegrino  
Robert Schoch  
Glenda Schwarze  
Barbara Sweet

**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).

## GROWING UP IN CLINTON *continued from page 1*



*The Luhmann house on Jameson Hill Road*

Charlie remembers being frequently awakened by the whistle of the nearby train. During World War II he and his friends collected scrap iron at the train depot. Interestingly, the horse water trough that still stands (reconstructed) at the hamlet intersection was originally fed from a spring at his house.

Charlie attended the one-room school in Clinton Corners when it had grades 1–6 and only five or six students. His grade school teacher was Ruth Wooden, who taught there for many years. Charlie remembers some of the special activities that Ruth provided for her students, such as staging plays for parents and singing songs while she played the piano. A special treat occurred at the end of the school year, when Ruth took the class on the back of a rack truck to the Taconic State Park for a day of swimming and picnicking.

Recess was always fun. In the summer there were outdoor games, swinging on the swing set, and bouncing on the seesaw. Sleighs were brought to school in the winter and he remembers guiding his sleigh through the apple trees on the Tousey estate across the road from the school. School was never closed in the winter, no matter how much snow fell.

At the annual Clinton Community Day, the school had a float—one of many floats sponsored by community organizations. The parade float was a hay wagon pulled by a tractor or truck. Charlie was enthralled by the appearance of the modern large tractors being showcased in the parade by the H.O. Penn and Reardon Briggs companies. His father spent most of the day preparing large pots of clam chowder, and his mother was one of several church members setting up the community dinner under a large tent.

Charlie attended Sunday School at the Clinton Corners Friends Church and

appeared in church plays. He remembers one particular pastor who frequently took the children on bike rides, with one special trip taking them all the way to Route 199 in Lafayetteville.

Charlie remembers enjoying ice cream at Roy Wing's store and listening to Roy play the piano. Later he and Marilyn enjoyed square and round dances in the second floor of the Upton Lake Grange Hall (now CHS Creek Meeting House). He recalls that new indoor restrooms replaced outdoor privies when the dances began around 1950. He was a member of the Grange and enjoyed the many dinners and meetings of the group.

One of his earliest jobs (at age 21) was as a farmhand at the Lovelace farm near Friends Park, which had sixty cows that he helped milk. At the age of 23 in 1957, Charlie was drafted into the Army and served two years in Germany as a tank driver. He started his thirty-year career with Wiltse Brothers Contracting Company as a truck driver in 1959 but worked as a bulldozer operator for many years.

Charlie was a longtime active member of the East Clinton Fire Department. His father John Luhmann was chief when the company purchased its first new fire engine, a 1941 LaFrance, and drove it from the railroad station in Poughkeepsie. Older folks may remember the blue fire engine ("Ford Grabber Blue"), which was originally painted red. The department featured dances as fundraisers, contributing to the social life of the area.



*1941 LaFrance fire engine painted Ford Grabber Blue*

"Growing up in Clinton Corners was fun, always something to do. Everyone knew everybody, and the social events made for a close community," noted Charlie. "I have great memories!"

*(Editor's note: This article is from a recent interview with Charlie and Marilyn Luhmann, and we thank them for adding to our knowledge of local history.)*

**STOUTENBURGH HOUSE, CIRCA 1790  
194 OLD BULLS HEAD ROAD**

*by Cynthia Koch*

**D**ue to the complicated early ownership history of the property, this residence might more properly be called the Stoutenburgh–Hoag–Farmer House. Located at the east end of the hamlet of Bulls Head, land records for this property date back to Lot #1 of the Great Nine Partners patent owned by Jarvis Marshall from 1699 to 1734.



By 1742 Lot #1 had been divided and the property was owned in common by later members of the Nine Partners: John Croke, Jacobus Stoutenburgh, and Richard Alsop. The present homeowners—Johanna Triegel and Vincent Teahan—have a fragment of an indenture dated 1747 indicating the land was rented to Pieter van Benthuyesen. In the early 18th century, the van Benthuyesen family owned large tracts of land in Red Hook, including the land that now comprises Bard College.

Subsequent land transfers are difficult to trace, but by circa 1800 the property was shown on the composite map created in 1987 by the research of William Benson, Jr., trustee of the Clinton Historical Society: “Jacobus Stoutenburgh, May 25, 1786 to William Hoag, Apr. 6, 1790 to John Farmer, 167 Acres.” William Hoag may have been a member of the Hoag family of Quakers who lived in Dutchess County in the late 18th century and was associated with the founding of the Creek Meeting House in Clinton Corners.

Later maps indicate ownership by Bentley (1858), P. Benscoten (1867), and D. Brazee (1876).

This may have been an investment property owned by Gilbert Bentley, who was a prominent farmer (195 acres) in Bulls Head and held many positions as a public official. Bentley lived in a large German Classical Revival House, known as Bentley Hall, now standing at 43 Field Road. Benscoten was probably a member of the van Benschoten family of Poughkeepsie—possibly a variant of van Benthuyesen, as mentioned in the 1747 indenture.



Dennis Brusee (Brazee, Brusie), a farmer (230 acres) in Bulls Head, was born in Massachusetts and settled in Dutchess County in 1869. The present owners have a piece of wood—found when a Victorian-style porch was removed—that is inscribed “Dennis Brusee lived here 1873.” They also have a photo of the house with the porch; its scrollwork decoration is very similar to that on Bentley Hall.

**Federal Style**

The main part of this house is in the Federal style that was fashionable in the early years of the new nation (1780–1820). Stylish architecture of this period reflected Americans’ pride in their new country as successor to the Roman republic. The Federal style in America was a neo-classical style, but it imposed a simplified and symmetrical order on the earlier Georgian neo-classical style (imported from England) that had been popular in East Coast cities before the Revolution.

American Federal architecture typically uses plain surfaces with long, relatively flat, narrow details, usually isolated in panels, tablets, and friezes, such as seen in the door surround and cornices over the symmetrically placed windows on this house, which is a plain, country version of the style—possibly showing influence from the Quakers in the area.

**FIDDLERS BRIDGE GHOST SIGN  
INSTALLATION**



A celebration of the installation of a new historic road marker on Fiddlers Bridge Road is set for Sunday, May 8, at 2 PM near the mailbox for number 469. The Clinton Historical Society obtained a grant from the W. G. Pomeroy Foundation to purchase a permanent metal sign commemorating the local legend of the Fiddlers Bridge ghost. The legend notes the 1808 murder of a local fiddler on his way home after playing at a dance. His body was found under a bridge (long gone) on what is now Fiddlers Bridge Road.

The celebration will include a portrayal of the fiddler reciting the legend, local musician Vito Petrocitto performing his original song “The Legend of Fiddler’s Bridge Road,” light refreshments, and the unveiling of the sign. All are welcome to attend this free event hosted by the Society.

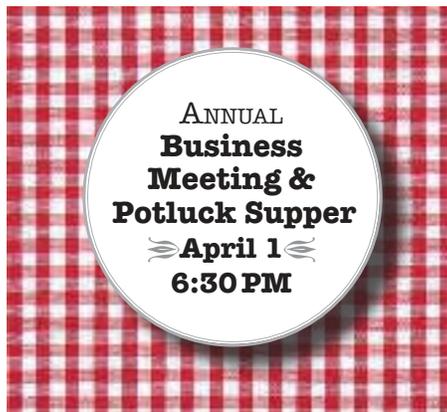
For more information please email Craig at [craigmarshall266@aol.com](mailto:craigmarshall266@aol.com).

**2022 DUES**

*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



**SPRING TAG SALE**  
Fri. & Sat., April 8 & 9

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

### 2022 FIRST FRIDAY PROGRAM MEETINGS

**FRIDAY, APRIL 1, 6:30 PM**

**Annual Business Meeting & Potluck Supper**  
at the Creek Meeting House, bring a covered dish to share.



**FRIDAY, MAY 6, 7:30 PM In person & Zoom**

**History of the Walkway Over the Hudson**  
*Presented by Fred Schaeffer*

When he served as chairman of the Walkway Over the Hudson, Fred Schaeffer led the organization's efforts to convert the abandoned railroad bridge into the Walkway

Over the Hudson State Historic Park. Fred's presentation will include a history of the Poughkeepsie-Highland Railroad Bridge and it's conversion to the Walkway.

**FRIDAY, JUNE 3, 7:30 PM In person & Zoom**  
**Clinton History Projects**

*Presented by Crystal Middleton & Bob Schoch*

A joint presentation by Crystal Middleton, program coordinator at the Clinton Community Library, and Bob Schoch, owner of Primrose Hill Farm, on local history in Clinton. Crystal will show a children's educational program that she developed and Bob will talk about plans to permanently preserve the farm, its collection of farm equipment, and historical records of the Cookingham family.

### Other Spring Events...

## TAG SALE

**Friday & Saturday, April 8 & 9**  
**9 AM to 4 PM**

Donations may be dropped off on the porch of the Creek Meeting House starting April 2.

**No upholstered furniture, clothing, or electronics.**

For more information and to volunteer, call Glenda at 845-266-5203.



**Sign Installation Celebration**  
**Sunday, May 8, 2 PM**

*Music, merriment, and more, see page 3 for details.*

**Saturday, June 4**

**Celebrating Clinton Landmarks:**  
**A Driving Tour**

*A self-guided tour of historic buildings recognized as Landmarks by the Clinton Historical Society.*