

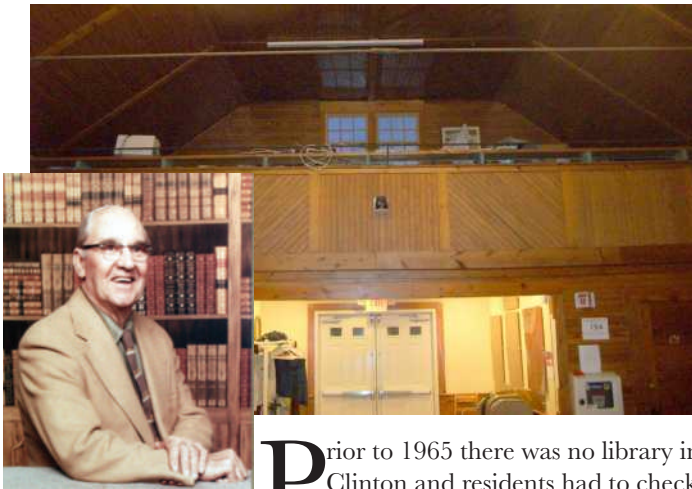


Est. 1975  
*Town of Clinton Historical Society*  
**THE CLINTON HISTORIAN**

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## HISTORY OF A TOWN TREASURE: THE CLINTON COMMUNITY LIBRARY

by Craig Marshall



*Horace Kulp*

**P**rior to 1965 there was no library in Clinton and residents had to check out books from libraries in other towns. In that year Clinton residents Ruth

Green and Dacie Kershaw proposed to the Town Board that a “reading room” be established in the loft of Town Hall. Under Town Supervisor Horace Kulp’s leadership, the board voted to fund the reading room through the Mid-Hudson Library System (MHLS), which donated two thousand volumes for the start-up.

On April 3, 1965, one hundred residents attended the opening of the reading room. Because it did not have a full-time paid and trained librarian, the reading room was named the Town of Clinton Community Library Reading Center. The staff consisted of 25 part-time volunteers trained by MHLS, and by July the center had 170 adult and 86 junior members.

Between 1965 and 1973, more books were added to the shelves, revealing a growing safety problem—the floor of the reading center loft and the bookshelves began to sag. In addition, the loft could not hold all the available books and many were stored in the attics of private homes. In December 1973 a group of residents formed a committee to replace the reading center and raise funds to build a standalone library. The plan was to erect a separate 1,200 square foot structure next to Town Hall with a connecting passageway. A compromise was reached with the Town Board. The Town would build the basement, install a furnace, and use the space for town offices. The library would occupy the floor above, which was on the same level as the Town Hall meeting room. The library portion (estimated to cost \$35,000) would be financed entirely by donations. Former Town Supervisor

Horace Kulp and the Town’s County Representative Putnam Davis visited every house in Clinton, securing \$10,000 in pledges for the proposed building. Many fundraiser events were also held, including sales of wood-framed prints handmade by Kulp.

Later, with \$12,000 in pledges from two hundred donors and income from fundraisers, the decision was made to begin the project. A gala groundbreaking event attended by Congressman Hamilton Fish and County Representative Putnam Davis was held on April 27, 1974. Building commenced with a decision to contract the framing, roofing, and heating. Many services were donated—including the building design by Dutchess Community College architecture student John Bon; installation of ceilings, window frames, and electricity; and gifts of library equipment. The total cash expense was \$19,000. Officials at the May 1, 1976 dedication commented on the extraordinary donations of funds, goods, and services by Clinton residents that could set an example for other communities. Since the new library still did not meet the standards of an official chartered library, it continued as the Clinton Community Library Reading Center. The new center boasted three thousand books and thirty volunteers, each of whom donated two hours per day to the operation.



*Putnam Davis breaks ground*

Finally, meeting all requirements except secure funding, status as a provisionally chartered library was achieved on December 12, 2004, and the Clinton Community Library Reading Center became the Clinton Community Library (CCL). In 2017 town voters approved the library to raise its own funds, enabling the granting of a permanent charter in 2018.

The strength of the CCL today comes from the dedication of its volunteers, staff, and Board of Trustees, and impressive support from the community. So outstanding are the library offerings and management of its operations that the CCL was awarded the coveted Joseph F. Shubert Library Excellence Award from the New York State Regents Advisory Council in 2018, the only small library to receive the award that year. Truly, the Clinton Community Library continues to be a great asset to the town and a facility of which its residents can justly be proud. ☺

# 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).

## 2023 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

## Board of Trustees

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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).

## President's Report

I hope the year 2023 is beginning splendidly for everyone. Last year proved to be a momentous one for the Historical Society. In addition to a full roster of exciting First Friday programs, mostly held by Zoom, we were able to return to the Creek Meeting House for our annual meeting and dinner, holiday dinner, and tag and craft sales—and perhaps most excitingly, the Progressive Dinner returned!

It was also a year that marked the beginning of our planning for the restoration of the Creek Meeting House. After raising \$147,000 in grants from Dutchess County and the Preservation League of New York State, we began our private fundraising campaign in the fall. I am happy to report that private donors have responded so far with nearly \$35,000. We are off to a very good start!

The architects have been busy working on plans to make the building accessible to people with disabilities and to repair voids in the exterior masonry to exclude bats from the attic. Research has also begun on the Historic Structure Report, which will guide our restoration planning.

Soon our 2023 membership dues mailing will be going out. I hope you will respond generously—and if possible donate something extra to support the restoration of the Creek Meeting House.

Cynthia Koch



*Board members and prospective donors to the Creek Meeting House restoration gathered for a reception at the home of Board member Chip Holman and his wife Merida Welles on October 15, a beautiful fall afternoon. Architect John G. Waite and his associate Shannon Brown described plans for the restoration.*

## BOARD MEMBERS NEEDED

The Clinton Historical Society is getting busier all the time and serving the Society as a Board member or volunteer is a great way to help our community and meet new people. We will elect new trustees in April and are looking for individuals who might be interested in serving and helping with fundraising, our landmarks committee, the archives, exhibits, education programs (especially programs for youth), publicity, social media, and recruiting new members and volunteers. We could also use some administrative help. If you are interested in being on the Board, or in volunteering for any of these activities, please contact our nominating chair, Richard Morse at (845) 266-4260 or [rjmorse73@yahoo.com](mailto:rjmorse73@yahoo.com).



# CELEBRATING CLINTON LANDMARKS AND DRIVING TOUR SITES

## DR. BARNES HOUSE, 218 HOLLOW ROAD

By Cynthia Koch

Dr. Edwin Barnes built this home in circa 1872 and practiced medicine there until his death in 1904. The style of the house is Folk Victorian; that is, it shows the influence of fashionable Victorian decorative features in its spindle-work porch (turned spindles and lacelike spandrels) that are applied to a simple, symmetrical traditional house form. The fashionable decorative elements were made possible by the invention of the scroll saw and steam-powered mass production facilities (which produced “gingerbread” trim) and lumber that was shipped to builders by rail. The present owners of the home—Bruce, Denise, and Jason Mattel—unearthed several old medicine bottles on the property. They also found the headstone of Dr. Barnes’s grandmother Fanny, although she was probably buried in the adjacent Providence Cemetery.

Dr. Edwin Barnes (1844–1904) was born in Troy, New York, but the family moved to Dutchess County when he was a boy of three. Dr. Barnes attended

school in Hyde Park and the “finishing school” operated for many years by the Reverend Sherman Hoyt. The Reverend Hoyt was the first resident minister at the Pleasant Plains Presbyterian Church, serving from 1843 to 1861, when he resigned to open his school. Dr. Barnes trained at Albany Medical College, completed his degree while serving in the U.S. Army Medical Corps, and started his medical practice in Pleasant Plains in 1866—where he succeeded the ailing Dr. Jesse F. Merritt (1831–1868) in his practice. The Clinton Historical Society archives contains a medical ledger book covering 1866–1868, which includes records from the period in which the practice transitioned from Merritt to Barnes.

Dr. Barnes was a prominent figure in Dutchess County during the late 19th century, serving as president of the



Dutchess County Medical Society and vice president of the New York State Medical Society. He was appointed health commissioner by the Town of Clinton in 1891, but resigned in 1893 because of “Peoples Disregard of the Laws governing the Board of Health.” He was married to Matilda Armstrong. One of their three children (Percy) wrote *Crum Elbow Folks*. Dr. Barnes continued to practice medicine in Pleasant Plains until his death in 1904. ☼



The **Fall Tag Sale** was our most successful to date prompting an extension to the following weekend. Many thanks to all who donated items, the bakers, the attendees (Jim & Lori Brands, pictured above), and the Tag Sale team: Mary Jo Nickerson, Glenda Schwarze, Lisa Noval, Donna Montross, Pat Phelan, Judith Grabowski, Carol Burns, Craig Marshall, and Cora Oakley (also pictured above).



Celebrating our first post-COVID **Progressive Dinner**, we had 73 attendees. Above: Guests at Marilyn Donahue Schiller’s wine & cheese visited on her patio. Below: One of two dinner tables at the home of Pat and Charlie Dykas. It was great to see old friends, as well as many new folks hosting and/or attending.



Our annual **Holiday Craft Fair** hosted a steady stream of shoppers all day, greatly pleasing our eight vendors. CHS added to the fun by selling donated craft and holiday tag sale items, Friendship Garden Club centerpieces and sprays, baked goods, and homemade soups. Kudos to the Craft Fair team: l-r, Mary Jo Nickerson, Chair Pat Phelan, Donna Montross, Judith Grabowski, Lisa Noval, Cathy McMahan. (Missing from photo: Glenda Schwarze and Cora Oakley.)



## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

### 2023 FIRST FRIDAY PROGRAM MEETINGS

**FEBRUARY 3, 7:30 PM**

#### **An Ecological History of Hudson Valley Forests**

*Presented by Charles Canham, Senior Scientist Emeritus, Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies*



Forests of the Hudson Valley have seen constant change throughout the more than 12,000 years since the retreat of the Pleistocene glaciers. Although humans have been responsible

for the most important transformations, the most dramatic changes followed European settlement. The future of those forests will be shaped by a new set of forces, including climate change and the impact of forest pests and pathogens.

**MARCH 3, 7:30 PM**

#### **The Rymph Family: Early Settlers**

*Presented by James Brands, Town Justice, Town of Clinton*



from Germany in the early 1760s. The family settled in Hyde Park and became emblematic of many of the founding families of the community. Judge Brands and his wife reside on the family farm on Rymph Road and a number of his ancestors have been buried in the Pleasant Plains Cemetery on Fiddlers Bridge Road.

Jim Brands is a direct descendant of Johannas George Rymph, the earliest known member of the Rymph family to migrate

**MAY 5, 7:30 PM**

#### **Have You Ever Wondered How To Clean a Gravestone?**

*Presented by Patrick O'Hara*  
A descendant of the Rymph family, Patrick O'Hara spent the summer of 2022 visiting local cemeteries while researching his family tree. Mr. O'Hara cleaned over eighty cemetery markers, writing narratives about the deceased and posting them to social media—and in the process stimulating interest and discussion on the upkeep of local cemeteries. He will discuss how to safely clean a gravestone, the best cleaning solutions to use, and basic tools and techniques.

