

# THE CLINTON HISTORIAN

The Clinton Historical Society

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Craig Marshall, Editor 266-5494

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## Great Grandfather's Stories

by Farley Rikert in 1959



The Hudson River Slate Company began the quarry on Schultz Mountain in 1798, for roofing the home of Mrs. Richard Montgomery in Rhinebeck. The industry continued for almost a hundred years until the good slate supply was exhausted. It was hauled to slate docks on the Hudson River for shipment. Great grandfather says that nowadays is so different from the time when he was a boy and the quarry was running. There were no hard roads then--every farmer sold hay. The company had cattle running loose, and when you went through with a load of hay on your way to the river, those cattle would come running and nearly pull the load off the wagon. The teamsters of the quarry had a hard job hauling loads to Rhinecliff. There the slate was put on river barges.

"The slate was used for tiles and roofing. They cut it at the quarry--used saws. And there surely was a lot of business. There were three or four houses on the quarry then, maybe more. One was boarding house. A force of 25 or 30 men worked at the quarry...lots of Irish. One day they got into some kind of argument with Sam who ran the boarding house. It got hotter and hotter until it finally broke out into a good old-fashioned free-for-all. One of the men ran into the house and cried to Sam's wife, 'Hey, come quick. They're killing

*(Continued on page 2)*

## Historical Society Approaches 30 Years

"Preserving our town's heritage" has been the mission of the Town of Clinton Historical Society for what soon will be 30 years of community service. In 1975, local folks saw a need to preserve artifacts relating to the history and heritage of our town, and to educate residents about the rich history of Clinton. At that time, a meeting was called by a group of local citizens leading to the formation of the Society. For many years, meetings were held in the town library featuring speakers on a variety of topics. In 1995, the Upton Lake Grange donated the 1777 Creek Meeting House for the Society's headquarters. Community support grew, and now about 15% of Clinton's families are members. Then, in 1999, the Warren Masonic Lodge #32 Masons offered their Masonic Hall to benefit the Clinton community. "We've completed most of the roofing and structural restoration on our two landmark buildings and are now addressing plumbing, electrical, and heating needs for the long term" said President Bill McDermott. "Our accomplishments are due to high community support and dedicated volunteers."

Monthly CHS programs educate on restoration, vintage crafts, living history tales from Clinton seniors, and cover a broad range of interests." The summer exhibits have been our annual highlight for the community, and we have planned an exceptional one for this summer on railroad history, our best-attended topic by far," said Bill. Two art exhibits were mounted last year, and a show of Bard student art is on show now. "The Bard exhibit is exciting for us," said McDermott "and gives grad students a venue to display their creativity." Mike Spitzer, chair for the Society's 1865 Masonic Hall Preservation Group, noted that five successful seasons of music performances played to standing-room-only audiences and more are planned.

Through bequest, the Society recently received the largest private collection of

Dutchess County railroad memorabilia ever assembled. It joins the considerable archive of historical documents that the Society has been building. A town treasure, it is open to residents and researchers on an appointment basis. Donations of local artifacts are always appreciated, as is permission to copy valued family historical documents, including vintage photos. These historic items have spawned the Society's publications programs, where local history is documented and available for sale.

Vice President Craig Marshall added "We award landmark status to historic structures in town, recognize land preservation efforts with our Emile Schoch Conservation Award, and support Clinton events such as Community Day and Daffodil Day. We also meet neighbors and enjoy great food at annual social events such as the Progressive Dinner in the fall, the winter Holiday Dinner-Auction, and our Annual Dinner meeting in the spring. We raise 100% of our funding, and receive no grants from the town. We've started craft programs of a fun, historical nature to attract children."

Treasurer Clinton Kershaw said, "Many residents cannot donate time, but do donate funds to our Endowment Fund and restoration and education programs, and we very much appreciate that. It is critical to our ability to continue serving our town. And, we can advise on bequests which we encourage."

"Looking back over almost 30 years gives a vision of how far CHS has come" says McDermott. "The future gives us new opportunities. We've embraced digital technology for reproduc-

*(Continued on page 2)*

## Preserving Clinton's Heritage

**Grandfather** *(Continued from page 1)*

Sammy.' She took one look out the door, picked up a sock from her workbasket and slipped in a cobblestone as big as your fist. Then she waded out among the men swinging that sock left and right. She saved Sammy all right!

They used to have lots of fights. They would get drunk down at the store at Bulls Head. Swartz ran the store. He had to have four or five men helping him, he had so much business. Didn't pay his help--just give 'em a drink of whiskey. They would come and go. One day old man Swartz had some turkeys to dress, so he gave some fellows a bottle of whiskey to do the job. They finished the bottle before they began to work, and made hash of those turkeys--tore off the skin and feathers--just let it rip. The old man lost on that deal.

But usually Swartz was a shrewd old covey. They said he would sit on a little bench beside a 40-gallon whiskey barrel on Saturday night and fill the glasses right from the barrel. That was so the whiskey would go farther because there'd be more foam to fill the glass than if he drew it into a jug first. They said he would sit there drawing off whiskey and have his helpers pass it out, and not get up from the bench until that 40-gallon barrel was empty.

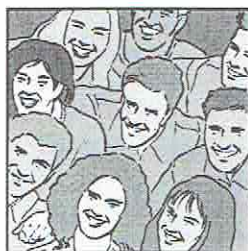
Country sure has changed, and not all for the worse either, and yet human nature keeps about the same. And well--cars do cover the ground faster than even a good road horse, don't they?"

**CHS turns 30** *(Continued from page 1)*

tion and preservation of our valued archive content, and are investigating this technology for a virtual museum project. We've not even scratched the surface in using our archive material for publications and we have exciting plans for future exhibits. We welcome everyone in the community to join us, as we likely have a program that will match your interests. So, have fun, meet new friends, and serve our community, all at the same time!"

**Enjoy all that Clinton has to offer**

**Join the Historical Society**



Clinton's Historical Society is one of the most active organizations of its kind in Dutchess County. We offer a full schedule of educational and social events, most at no charge. As a member, you'll have the pleasure of being a partner in preserving aspects of our town that provide its unique character and charm. Please use the form enclosed with this special addition newsletter being mailed to all town residents to enroll your family as members in the Society. Welcome!

**Preserving your Documents**



The durability of old documents depends on both the type of paper and the storage conditions. Paper made around 1865 consists of cotton fibers, whereas most papers after that date are a combination of wood pulp and lignin. Lignin is the substance that makes your newspaper yellow in the sunlight. In the late 19th century, stationery used for letter-writing could be either of these types of paper. To preserve your letters for future generations, lay them flat in an acid and lignin-free folder, or place them in clear plastic archival sleeves. This type of storage material is available from a variety of archival suppliers. Be sure to remove all paper clips (which rust), and rubber bands (which deteriorate). Store your documents in an environment with a stable temperature and humidity.

**Where was this building in the hamlet?**



Clinton Corners  
telegraph office c.1900

**American Rapid Telegraph Co.**  
**MESSAGES TAKEN HERE**  
**FOR CHICAGO**  
**50 Cents for 20 Words**  
VIA POSTAL TELEGRAPH LINE

*Sign indicates price  
for telegraph  
message to Chicago*

**1777  
Creek  
Meeting  
House**



The Creek Meeting House has served as our headquarters for nine years. It is one of the society's two major landmark restorations. This effort began with a professional appraisal of the building's condition that revealed serious deterioration of structural beams and the asphalt roof, and a need to shore up the attic by replacing interior columns that had been removed long ago. Phase 1 of the restoration plan concentrated on these repairs in the main structure, and Phase 2 followed with restoration of the porch roof. After much research on durability and cost for roof materials, the Board chose copper roofing in both phases that would last many, many years. Special fund raising drives had widespread community support and allowed completion of the \$60,000 restoration in relatively short time.

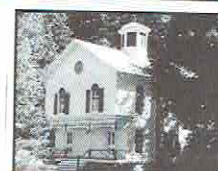
**Capsule History**

In the years 1762-70, Friends meeting at Nine Partners in Millbrook allowed the Friends who lived "over the creek" (the Wappingers) to hold wor-

ship meetings in Jonathan Hoag's house just north of the present building. The Friends "over the creek" continued to press for approval to hold weekly meeting for worship. In 1775, a committee was appointed to "pitch a place" for a meeting house. Abel Peters gave the land, stones were placed, and finally on the "sixth month, 21<sup>st</sup>, 1776" the grant was given by the Nine Partners Monthly Meeting. George Harris, Isaac Hallock, and Paul Upton began to build a meeting house. While they built, their "meeting" was held in Paul and Phoebe Upton's small log house. Due to troublesome times caused by the war, there were many interruptions in the building of the stone house. It was completed in 1782. In 1828 the Separation occurred. The "Hicksites" were in the majority (168) and kept the meeting house while the Orthodox (88) moved out. During the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Hicksite membership dropped off and meetings were held less and less frequently. Upton Lake Grange rented the building and later purchased it, recording their deed on October 3, 1927. Then in recent years the Grange membership dwindled and they offered the property to the Town of Clinton Historical Society. That deed was recorded with the County Clerk on December 4, 1995.

(source: "Creek Meeting House" by George Greenwood)

**1865  
Masonic  
Hall**



When the Society accepted the gift of the 1865 Masonic Hall in Schultzville in 1999 from the Warren Lodge #32 Masons, an evaluation had been completed which showed no significant structural damage, and a need to immediately address the cosmetics of the building. Volunteers painted the interior, remodeled the rest rooms, and conducted fund raising events which enabled professional contractors to paint the building exterior, replace the deteriorated asphalt roof on the rear addition with standing seam metal, and coat the metal roof of the original Hall. More recent work has been replacement of the two aged furnaces, replacement of the fuel tank, installation of a fire/burglary security system, and installation of an attractive ramp at the front entrance. Application is being made to list this landmark building on the National Register of Historic Places.

**Capsule History**

Hudson River sloop captain John F. Schultz settled in the Schultzville area in 1807, building a grist and saw mill and a country store in the next few years. John's business prospered, and upon his death, his son Daniel carried on and built the large Victorian home which stands across the road on the hill. When Daniel died in 1858, his son Theodore Schultz was willed part of the estate, but enjoyed it only a brief time before passing on in his late 20's from tuberculosis. Theodore's bequest of 1863 gave property and money to build the Masonic Hall and the Alliance Church.

The Warren Lodge #32 Masons continue to meet in this Hall as they have since 1865. Many generations of Clinton residents were active members. A life-size 7' antique oil painting of Theodore still hangs in the second floor of the hall, under a beautiful original curved wainscot ceiling of natural varnish finish. The Schultz family also donated the Schultzville schoolhouse. With the exception of the mill and original store, all of these buildings still stand and are an important part of the heritage of the Town of Clinton.



**Eagle Scout Project**

Eagle Scout candidate Brendan Phelan (center, behind frame) is shown with part of his 12 person volunteer crew of parents, leaders, and scouts, and one of 4 moveable display walls they constructed last month for the Society's future exhibits as part of his Eagle project. Thank you Brendan and crew!

**Calendar**

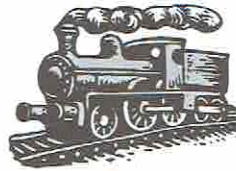
**May 15-June 6**  
 Art exhibit, Bard students\*  
**May/June**  
 Children's program *Basic Flower Arranging*  
**June 4**  
*Stained Glass of Hudson Valley Churches*  
**July 3-Sept 5**  
 Railroad exhibit\*  
**July/Aug**  
 Children's program *Surprise Arrangements*  
**Sept 3**  
*Servicing PT boats in WWII*  
**Sept 4**  
 Clinton Community Day  
**Sept**  
 Bluegrass Music Concert  
**Oct 1**  
*Hessian Soldiers in the Revolutionary War*  
**Oct 23**  
 Progressive Dinner  
**Nov 5**  
*Amenia Synagogue History*  
**Nov/Dec**  
 Children - *Making Evergreen Sprays*  
**Dec 3**  
 Holiday Dinner and Auction  
 (\* weekends only, noon-4PM)

**Exhibits**



**"New Insights" Art Show**

A changing exhibit of multi-media art work by Bard College seniors  
 Weekends May 15 through June 6,  
 Noon to 4PM  
 Creek Meeting House



**"The American Railroad Photographs: 1870's - 1950's"**

An extensive collection of vintage local RR photos & memorabilia  
 Weekends July 3 through Sept. 5,  
 Noon to 4PM  
 at 1777 Creek Meeting House

**June Meeting**

Friday, June 4, 7:30 pm,  
 Creek Meeting House,  
 Salt Point Turnpike

**"Stained Glass in Hudson Valley Churches"**  
 by Tom Daley

Tom Daley has been documenting the architecture found in the Mid-Hudson Valley for many years. His project has included mansions and other private structures, public buildings, and churches. Some of these structures no longer exist, and his documentation provides a valuable record of these landmarks. His presentation will focus on the beautiful stained glass works of art found in the churches of our region. His color slides will bring that beauty to our door, and give us a chance to see artwork we might otherwise never get a chance to see. Open to all...bring a friend!

NICKERSON FAMILY  
 396 CLINTON CORNERS RD  
 CLINTON CORNERS NY 12514

DATED MATERIAL - PLEASE DELIVER PROMPTLY

Nonprofit  
 US POSTAGE  
 PAID  
 Newburgh, NY 12550  
 Permit #7412

The Town of Clinton Historical Society  
 2433 Salt Point Tpk  
 PO Box 122  
 Clinton Corners, NY 12514  
 (845) 266-5494

**CHS Meeting Reminder**  
 Stained Glass in HV Churches  
 Friday, June 4  
 7:30 pm

**OFFICERS AND TRUSTEES**  
 President: Bill McDermott  
 Vice President: Craig Marshall  
 Treasurer: Clint Kershaw  
 Secretary: Maryann Thompson  
 Michael Appolonia, Past President  
 Richard Collier  
 Bill Dickett  
 George Greenwood  
 John Lacey  
 Edna Lachmund  
 Mike Spitzer  
 Elliot Werner  
 TOWN HISTORIAN: Bill McDermott  
 The Town of 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.