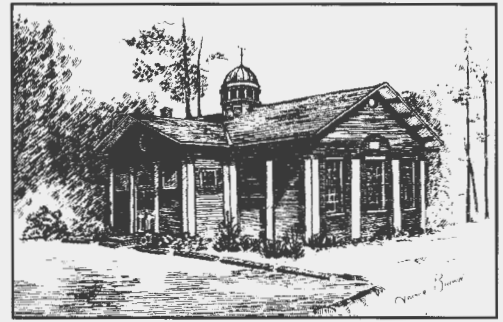


TOWN OF BETHLEHEM HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Old Cedar Hill School House, Setkirk, New York 12158



Fall, 2010

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Members and Friends:

The Annual Meeting of the Town of Bethlehem Historical Association was held on May 20, 2010. Election of Officers and Trustees resulted in the following slate: President, Valerie Thompson; Vice President, George Lenhardt; Recording Secretary, Carrie Lynn VanApeldoorn; Corresponding Secretary, Susan Leath; Treasurer, Wendy Brandow. New Trustees elected to serve until 2013 are Keith Bennett, Sheila Fuller, and Dawn Pratt. Outgoing trustees Joseph Allgaier, Ann VanDervort and Marion Zrelak were thanked for their service and commitment. Fifty members attended a well received dinner, catered by our very own hospitality committee, prior to the meeting. Many thanks to all who helped to make this "first-time" event a success. Robert Mulligan gave a presentation on the David Lithgow painting originally loaned to us by Betty VanOostenbrugge. I am pleased to report that the painting has been acquired by the BHA from Betty's estate.

Unfortunately, four of the six scheduled trolley tours were cancelled due to lack of participation. The issue of how to promote the heritage of the museum and the town will be addressed by the board. A "Drive-It-Yourself" tour has been suggested for the spring. We are also looking at ways to engage schoolchildren and our senior citizens in programs during the daytime hours.

The Card Party held in April with the theme of festive hats netted a profit of about \$600. We are grateful to all the prize donors for making this a success. Marion Zrelak, Susan Gutman and their committee are owed a big thank you.

On May 4th, Susan Leath and myself represented the BHA at the Albany History Fair held at Cherry Hill. Over 200 persons visited the displays and membership brochures were handed out. Our Ice Cream Social and Opening of the Summer Exhibit took place on June 13th from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. The ice cream and fixings were provided courtesy of Stewart's Shops. The exhibit, "Vintage Clothing New to Us" featured clothing and pictures from our own holdings and covered a period from the 1800's to the 30's and 40's. The Museum extended its hours until the end of September and was host to 189 visitors. Thanks to Ann VanDervort and Marian Davis and their committee for an outstanding presentation of years gone by.

On behalf of the BHA, our publicity chair Karen Beck, aided by Susan Leath, has submitted a monthly series of photographs with captions entitled "Where in Bethlehem" to the Our Town newspaper. We are looking forward to a productive year. If you have any suggestions on how to promote the work of BHA, don't hesitate to contact me.

Valerie J. Thompson

MUSEUM WALL HANGINGS

In our spring 2010 Newsletter we showed a picture of the Hudson River scene painted by David Lithgow in 1912. It has been on the wall of our building for many years because a long time ago our valued member, Betty Lyon VanOostenbrugge put it there. However only this year, after Betty passed away, did our Association purchase it from her family to permanently hang on our wall.

At our Annual Meeting in May our Program Chairman, Robert Mulligan, researched David Lithgow and gave an interesting talk about this artist, illustrator and decorator. His murals can be seen in the State Bank of Albany, the Cohoes Savings Bank, the Lobby of the State Library, the Milne High School Library and many other places.

Mr. Lithgow was born in England, but spent his childhood in Glasgow, Scotland. He came to America in 1888. Among his first commissions as an artist was one to paint a portrait of Lilly Langtry. He came here when he was hired by The Gilbert Car Company of Green Island as a draftsman for a railroad car for the President of Brazil. He lived in Green Island and had a studio in Albany. He was very active in his works and was very well-known. He died in 1957 at the age of 89 leaving a widow and two children.

There is much more to read in this interesting talk. We will leave a copy to be read in the Museum near the painting.

Looking around our walls there are other pictures hanging there to talk about. One large one is of a yellow Schoolhouse, "Van Wie's Point School 1861". The original deed for the school was signed by Stephen Van Rensselaer. The painter was Wilfred Thomas 1941-42 – a gift from Marie Weidemann.



Beneath the Lithgow painting is a smaller version of the painting – a gift from Charles Schade. The late Charles Schade was an Albany architect and popular painter of local scenes. His painting of a Tollgate which often hangs on our wall, was bought by our organization at the same time we moved the Tollgate building to our grounds.

On the front left wall there is a picture of a fish net. It is the net that hangs on the ceiling of our front room. This net was once used to catch Sturgeon in the Hudson River. It was used by John Scharff's father and John donated it to our Museum.

There are a couple other paintings that always hang on the walls. They were put there by unknown persons when the school was first opened as the Association.

In between exhibits in the Museum you will see several photos of historic houses in the Town of Bethlehem on the wall. These photos were taken by our Historic Resource Chairman, Lois Dillon.

The Board of Trustees met recently and welcomed new Trustees Keith Bennett, Faith Fuller and Dawn Pratt to the Board. Susan Haswell was named its Chairperson and Faith Fuller its Secretary.

CLOTHING COLLECTION THROUGH THE YEARS

Marian Davis, Museum Co-chairperson

When attending an exhibit this summer at Fenimore House in Cooperstown called a "Century of New York Fashion", I was again reminded of the fine collection of clothes the Bethlehem Historical Association has acquired through the thoughtful generosity of many people who contributed to our collection. I have a talk that I gave on Vintage Clothing to the Association and other organizations. I thought some of the historical facts about these fashions through the years would be welcome in our Newsletter, especially since our Summer Exhibit was centered around our collection.

We have a wonderful collection of clothing starting with the 1850's. Because these items were usually their "Sunday Best", seldom worn and seldom washed, they survived. Often the cotton and silk fabrics are fragile and crack easily. There are interesting stories about early clothing and customs. Early fashion was mostly copied from France and England. In the 1700's, ladies hairstyles were raised and reached fantastic heights. Wigs were worn by both men and women. They were made from human hair, hair from horses, cows, goats, feathers and even copper and iron wire.

After the French Revolution, wigs all but disappeared. An interesting accessory was red ribbon worn by ladies around the neck "a la guillotine". Along came Napoleon and the Empire style was made famous by the Empress Josephine. The shawl was the most popular accessory and remained popular. It was said Josephine had 400 shawls.

During the 1800's tightly corseted waistslines appeared using stays to obtain a straight posture. That's when the phrase "straight laced" came in. Children were dressed like miniature adults. Even men's clothing had corseting and padding.

By the mid 1840's ready to wear clothing was available and the sewing machine was invented. Empress Eugenie made popular the wire hoop to replace the many petticoats and Amelia Bloomer introduced the Bloomer.

We are all familiar with the Victorian era, the late 1800's. Our Museum has many wonderful articles of clothing from that period, all in great condition. In fashion were the bustle, leg-o-mutton sleeves, long trains and tailored ladies "walking suits" and high button shoes. The hour glass figure of the "Gay Ninety's" was popular. The "Gibson Girl" was the fashionable ideal for young women and the first "Tuxedo" was introduced for men's dinner wear. In the early 1900's paper patterns were available.

During the 1st World War, material was scarce. Gone was the French influence and the "All American" look developed. Shirts became shorter and straighter, and after the war the shirts remained straighter with a lowered belt line for the again longer skirts. The Flapper Era of the "Roaring 20's" came in the later 1920's. We have several wonderful dresses of the 1920's period, many were on display for our summer exhibit.



Marilyn Davis

(Continued on last page)

Clothing Collection Through the Years, cont.

Also on display were several dresses from the 1930's and 1940's. The 1930's had bias cut dresses and sweetheart necklines and the new zipper. Each period seems to have their own styles, sometimes repeats of past designs and other times all new, but always changing.



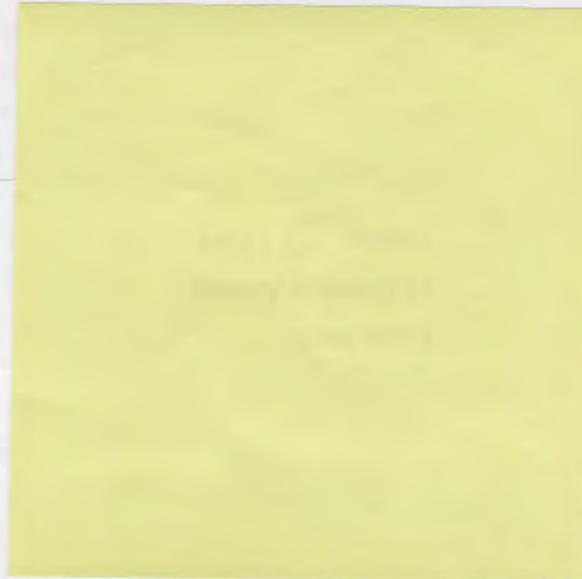
Valerie Thompson, President; Connie Frisbee-Houde; and Robert Mulligan, Program Chairman at the September 16, 2010 program "The World Trade Center Memorial Exhibit."



Historic Bethlehem web page launched at library

A comprehensive window on the history of the Town of Bethlehem is now available on the Bethlehem Public Library website, www.bethlehempubliibrary.org

Newsletter - Lois Dillon & Kathy Newkirk



CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Town of Bethlehem Historical Association
Cedar Hill Schoolhouse
1003 River Road
Selkirk, New York 12158

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