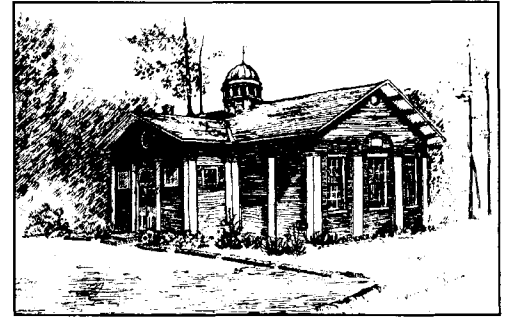


TOWN OF BETHLEHEM HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Old Cedar Hill School House, Selkirk, New York 12158



Fall 2012

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Members and Friends:

Welcome to the 48th season of new programs and exhibits at your Historical Association! Now that the summer is behind us, we look forward to another year of informative programs, interesting and artful displays, and scrumptious refreshments.

Seventy three (73) people attended the Ice Cream Social and opening of the summer exhibit on June 17, 2012. The ice cream and fixings were once again provided courtesy of Stewart's Shops. Part of the exhibit titled "Home Life in Bethlehem" featured the Westervelt family. Thank you, Barbara Wells, a BHA member and Westervelt family member, who loaned us many artifacts for this display. The other portion of the exhibit focused on home life during the Civil War and showcased medical equipment and battlefield medicine as well as displays of booths and photographs of actual vendors that participated in the Albany Army Relief Bazaar. The Museum once again extended the Sunday openings until the end of September and was host to 210 visitors.

This will be my final year as President of your association and I wish to thank all of the individuals who graciously accepted the invitation to remain in their committee positions. Unfortunately our Membership Chair, Rita Hoffman, has stepped down from her position. Thank you Rita for all of your efforts in promoting membership in BHA. I would like to welcome Kathleen Wagar who stepped up to assume the task as Membership Chair.

Speaking of membership, our current roster is hovering around 166. We had to drop 14 former but added 13 new members. There is the potential of losing an additional 14 current members. Have you told your friends, neighbors, and history buffs about our association? Please take a minute to tell them about us. We are always looking to add new friends to our membership!



Art Young and the Revision Committee are in the process of revising the Association's By-Laws. If you have ideas and suggestions, please let Art know as soon as possible. This is an opportunity to have an "historical impact" on BHA.

We are in need of a Finance Chair. Please contact me if you are interested. Many citizen volunteers make our association a success. So if you have time, a particular talent, or idea, please let us know.

HISTORIC RESOURCES

I like cows, especially Brown Swiss and Belted Holsteins. It is getting more difficult to see any cows as we drive through our countryside. I decided to call the Cornell Cooperative Extension. Tom Gallagher there was able to tell me about dairy farms in Albany County. He said there are 8 in our County. There are no dairy farms in our Town of Bethlehem, however, we are fortunate to have several cows even though we have no official dairy farms. I drive down Kenwood Avenue and I do see cows in the field. Also, when I drive down Route 144 to the Historical Association I see a barn on the right side with several cows. These cows are kept for their milk or to sell to other farmers or just for their pleasure.

Here in our Association some of us seem to be thinking of farms. In this newsletter Art Young in his Genealogy report mentions the historic years when farms were leased by General Stephen VanRensselaer. Ann Vandervort tells me she plans to feature sheep farms in our Christmas decorations – and here I am with dairy farms.

I made a slide tape program 25 years ago called Farming in Bethlehem. Heath's Dairy farm on the corner of Route 9W and Wemple Road was a wonderful farm with a large herd of Holstein cows. At that time the farm was being managed by his son-in-law, Dick Thayer – one of our members. He walked me through the milking barn explaining the equipment to me. We later sat down and talked about the farms in our County.

I have an article that appeared in the Times Union paper dated April 23, 1986 about a former college professor who had bought Heath's farm with big hopes and ideas even though he knew farms were having to give up their livelihood because of severe economic strains. Then 10 out of 50 dairy farms in Albany County had sold off their herds to the Federal Government as part of a program to curtail milk production. Heath's farm had 590 acres and 175 registered cows when he purchased it.

Now in 2012 we know that there is no dairy farm there and no cows to be seen and the barn is crumbling. I heard that the man who bought the farm had to let it go. Someone said that he couldn't handle all the government regulations. That was told to me – I do not know the reason however we no longer see the cows – the 175 of them -- walking and laying there in that field as we did once as we drove down Wemple Rod to our Red School House. See the picture below and you will remember.

Lois Dillon, Chairman



HOLIDAY GIFT IDEA

Looking for a historical gift idea? How about a copy of Town Historian Susan Leath's book Bethlehem? It is full of old photographs of our town's hamlets. You can purchase a copy at the Bethlehem Town Clerk's office, I Love Books, Tattered Pages and online retailers such as Amazon. Ms. Leath is giving all of her royalties to BHA and so far has donated \$1249.



QUILT RAFFLE

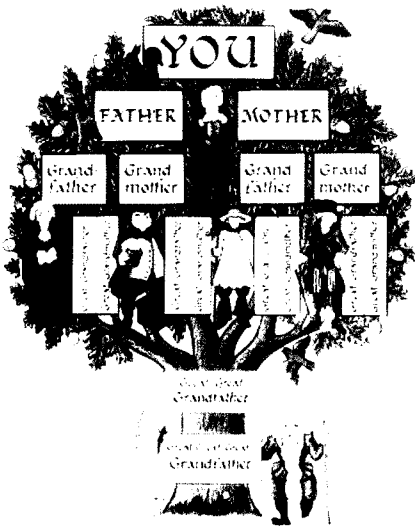
QUILT, Inc of Delmar has generously donated a large quilt for BHA to raffle off. Tickets will be available at our upcoming meetings, and the Silver Tea, for \$1 each or 6 for \$5.

The drawing will be held during our March 21, 2013 meeting.

Questions? Call Wendy Brandow at 767-0716

or email gutmansusan@yahoo.com or sel7@juno.com.





GENEALOGY CORNER

Art Young, Genealogy Chairman

To give everyone a little rest from my ongoing monthly meeting "G" series reports on how to find your ancestors we are going to move into another part of genealogy that relates in part to some of the historic background of our Capital District areas.

In the years 1787 to 1798, there were about 900 farms within the towns of Westerlo, Rensselaerville, Berne and Knox, which were leased by General Stephen VanRensselaer, generally for the first 7 years without rent. During that time the tenants merely occupied the land by sufferance and paid as rent, 10 bushels per hundred acres.

At that time in our history, Westerlo and Rensselaerville had been settled by New Englanders; Bern and Knox by Germans; Bethlehem, Watervliet, New Scotland, Guilderland, and Coeymans by still earlier Hollanders. A colony of Scotch established its-self in one of the above towns and conferred upon it the name of New Scotland. In most cases, the Town Clerks offices in most of these towns is a great resource for vital records if you have family that lived in those towns that came from those backgrounds.

--- MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL

HISTORY HIKES

Our History Hikes have been a success. Many adventurous hikers enjoyed Normansville, South Bethlehem, Slingerlands and Cedar Hill. We're making plans to add Delmar and Selkirk to the lineup for next year's series.

President's Message, cont.

Remember, volunteers receive much satisfaction from devoting their time to a good community purpose. You always meet the most interesting people who you might never have the occasion to meet otherwise.

We can always use material for the newsletter and are eager to publish research on Bethlehem history, interesting historic documents related to the town, and reminiscences about Bethlehem and its citizens. History is an unfolding process without a beginning or end. Yesterday's commonplace events become today's fascinating history.

Even though I do not look forward to the winter months, I am excited about the holidays that are quickly approaching! This year our Holiday Silver Tea theme will be "Christmas in Bethlehem". Ann VanDervort, Marian Davis and their team are busy planning and building the museum display for this annual feature event. I am sure it will put you in the holiday spirit. I can't wait!

On a final note for this writing, the Delmar Q.U.I.L.T. group has donated a wonderfully made quilt for us to raffle off as a fundraiser. Susan Gutman, Wendy Brandow, and Susan Leath are in charge of this endeavor. Please support this project by selling raffle tickets and purchasing some. All of the proceeds will go to your historical association.

My sincere gratitude goes out to all of the members, committee chairs, and everyone who has helped, in so many ways, to make the Town of Bethlehem Historical Association the success it is.

George Lenhardt

SLINGERLANDS HISTORIC DISTRICT

September 30, 2012 brought a celebration of the Slingerlands Historic District newly listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places. The district includes about 90 contributing structures and stretches from Couse Lane to Helderberg Parkway along New Scotland Road and includes Mullens Road and Bridge Street. Also listed in 2012 is the Rowe Farm located at 281 Bridge Street in Selkirk. The home, barns and out buildings exemplify Bethlehem's agricultural history.

HOLIDAY SILVER TEA

Save the date, Sunday, December 2 and December 3, 2012 will be the dates for the Annual Holiday Silver Tea. Theme for this year's tea will be Christmas in Bethlehem. Ann VanDervort, Marian Davis and their team are busy planning and building the museum display for this annual feature event.

WE NEED BAKERS

Share your holiday treat and provide some goodies for the Annual Holiday Silver Tea. All donations greatly appreciated. Please contact Dawn Pratt at 767-2285 or Kathy Newkirk at 767-2980 to put your name on our list.

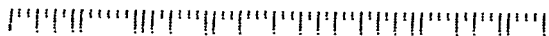
TEMPORARY ADDRESS CHANGE

Please remember to notify Karen Beck of any temporary address change for our Members who go south for extended periods of the winter months. Karen's address is 21 Glendale Avenue, Delmar NY 12054 or call Karen at 439 -9260. You may also send the information to the following email address:
correspondingsecretary@bethlehemhistorical.org



Our opening day and ice cream social was held in June 2012 this year. The weather proved to be beautiful and everyone enjoyed visiting..

Newsletter - Lois Dillon & Kathy Newkirk

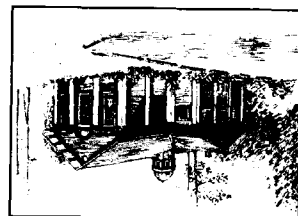


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Cedar Hill Schoolhouse
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