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## Town of Bethlehem Historical Association

# NEWSLETTER

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Old Cedar Hill School House

Spring 1992

Selkirk, New York 12158

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### President's Letter

Dear Members,

The Bethlehem Historical Association has had a busy and successful year. Marjorie and Charles Crangle have provided us with an outstanding slate of speakers this year. (Sometimes, the forecast of inclement weather deters some members from attending meetings. If anyone would like a ride at these times, please notify one of the officers).

We will be participating in Community Bethlehem Day on May, 16th. Please stop by our Slingerlands Park display.

Many thanks to Mr. Paul Mulligan, who has graciously invited our members to view his restoration of the Nicoll-Sill "Bethlehem House" on May 17th.

The Bethlehem Public Library is compiling a record of local homes and businesses as part of a bicentennial file. They request an 8" x 10" or smaller photograph. If anyone has an exceptional photograph of our museum, please let us know. Also, send the library a picture of your home - it does not have to be an historic building.

The association is considering having a pin produced for members. June Milburn is gathering information concerning this project. We also will be selling Christmas ornaments displaying a picture of the museum. This is a trial program which, if successful, will result in our selling an ornament next year which will display an historic town building in conjunction with the Bicentennial celebration.

The Fall Card Party again was a success and enjoyed by everyone who attended. We always get many dedicated, hard-working volunteers. Many thanks to all of you. We will be needing a chair or Co-chair for this year's event.

Have an enjoyable summer. Stop by our museum on Sundays and we will see you at the May meeting!

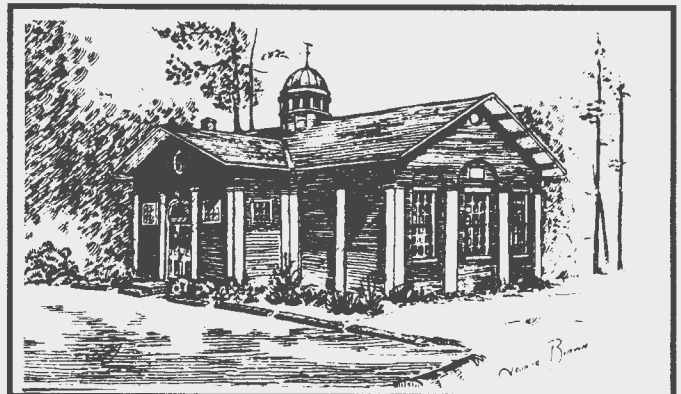
*Sheila Giordano*

### Nicoll-Sill House

Nicoll-Sill House, the sprawling white brick structure, is just off route 144, south of the Vlaumanskill. The original Dutch segment of the building was built in 1735. An English-influenced wing was added in 1795, with a kitchen wing added in 1812 and a tea room in 1830. Handcarved woodwork of the early 18th century is still intact. A bee hive oven is in the rustic kitchen in the basement. The heavy oak harvest table found in the kitchen has been restored and placed in the dining room.

It was the site of the wedding between Elizabeth Nicoll and Richard Sill. Guests included Alexander Hamilton and Aaron Burr. Before the Civil War it was a station for the underground railway. The house is listed on the National Register of Historical Places.

Since 1982 archeological digs led by Floyd Brewer have been conducted at Cedar Hill, the Nicoll-Sill site and adjacent Goes Farm.



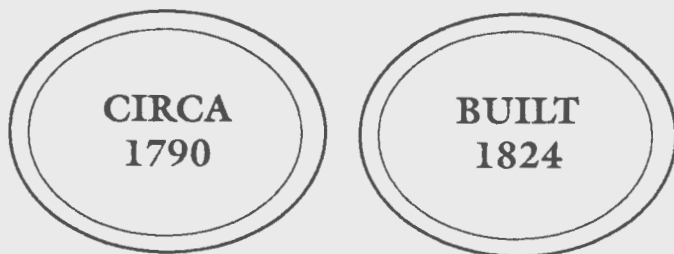
## Invitation to visit Nicoll-Sill

Paul Mulligan has owned the house since 1983. He has restored the Dutch colonial structure. The Town of Bethlehem Historical Association has been invited to tour Nicoll-Sill by Mr. Mulligan on Sunday, May 17, 1992 from 1:00 to 4:00 PM. We are looking forward to seeing the restoration of one of the "Stately Homes on the Hudson."

At 1:00 PM May 17, 1992 at the School House Museum a red maple tree will be dedicated in memory of Henry Meyer, a loyal charter member. He was 96, when he died July 1991. He is missed and remembered.

## Historic Plaque

Would you like a historic plaque indicating the age of your home? The Bethlehem Historical Association can make one available to you for \$52.00. The rust-free aluminum plaques are 8" X 13 1/2" in black with white lettering and band or in green with gold lettering and band.



If interested please write Lynn Mather, 2 Hartwood Road, Delmar, NY 12054, or call her at 439-9318.

With the Town of Bethlehem Bicentennial in 1993, we thought you might like to inform others about your special place with a plaque.

If you were to stroll the Blue Plaque Walk in London, you would see a blue-and-white ceramic disk affixed to the front of some of the buildings telling who lived there and when. The blue-and-white plaques are made today by Alan Dawson, a Staffordshire potter, for 400 pounds or \$800.



## The Museum

Tucked away in the Cedar Hill Schoolhouse Museum, The Town of Bethlehem Historical Association has an astonishing number and variety of holdings in its collection. Individual articles number in the thousands. The variety includes archival material, photographs, Bibles, government records, vintage costumes and accessories, building models, commercial displays, fitted apothecary and carpentry chests, furnishings, art, books, farm and ice harvesting tools, Hudson River memorabilia, toys and games.

This multitudinous and disparate collection claims as its common ground the people, places and enterprises of historic Bethlehem.

Generous and caring people who have valued the preservation of our local history have been donating items to the museum since BHA was founded in 1965. Each month gifts arrive from Bethlehem residents or persons far afield who have unearthed a treasure in barn or attic and recognize our commitment to preserving the town's posterity.

We may receive a rare photograph of a long-gone railroad station, a unique hand-carved wooden water pipe, a log dated 1794 recording Bethlehem's stray livestock, or a prominent citizen's formal wear. Each is documented, catalogued and preserved.

The volunteer staff of the Museum is small but dedicated and always welcomes new members. The Museum Committee set up displays, stores the collection and maintains a physical plant conducive to both preservation and exhibition.

When the Registrar receives a new acquisition, she assigns it a catalogue number, which is then placed on the article. She then enters the item, donor's name, a complete description and the catalogue number into an accession book. Donor and catalogue cards are filled, and business of preservation begins. The articles are stored in acid-free boxes or folders or placed on display in the main exhibit room.

Since approximately 90% of a museum's holdings are kept in storage, a donor may not see his arrow heads nor her coverlet at a given time. However, all of the collection is displayed at one time or another. Items appropriate to a particular program or theme are brought out to view. Archival material, in particular, is available to researchers, writers or interested groups at any time.

*Ann McGinty*  
Registrar

## Museum Restoration

As President of our Association in 1988, Lois Dillon appointed a committee to restore our building inside and outside as necessary. Julia Kelley, Marilyn Spaulding, Betty Van Ostenbrugge, and Jim Wiedemann made up this committee and have completed a wonderful job! During these years, the windows were scraped and painted and brown wooden venetian blinds were installed such as those being used in many historic buildings and around the windows a Williamsburg - color paint to give the look of drapes. Some interior painting was done around the top of the inside door and the kitchen window. A whole new kitchen was added to the joy of the Hospitality Chairman! The town put in a new bathroom planned by our committee. The town also scraped and painted the outside of the windows. Some of our own members also painted the outside Tollgate House Museum. A couple of months ago our last big goal was completed when the town matched funds with us to restore the floor.

Along with saving an old schoolhouse - we now look like a fine Historical Association! If you have not been down to see these changes, you must come down for a meeting or a Sunday when the museum is open in the Summer. You will be proud of the changes.

## House Tour

Our Association has told the town that one of the things that we will contribute to the Town's Bi-Centennial is a House Tour. It should be a pleasant time to plan this event. Members will be needed in many ways: hostesses & hosts, publicity, etc. The tour is planned for some time in June 1993. The date is to be decided soon. If you would like to join Charles Crangle and Lois Dillon, who are planning the tour - please let them know.

## V.C.R

The Hannacroix D.A.R. Chapter suggested that together we share the expense of buying a small television and a V.C.R. We agreed because many programs of interest to both of our groups are available on Video Tape. We also will be able to view the tapes we already have of our own Bethlehem Heritage Series. The T.V. and V.C.R. are now in place in the museum

## Endowment Fund

The endowment fund has received a gift from the late Henry A. Meyer. Mr. Meyer was a terrific friend and benefactor of the Bethlehem Historical Association. His dedication and generosity will forever be remembered by the Society. Henry, as we all are aware, led a long fruitful life and was an invaluable asset to the town. His generosity is certainly typical of his lifestyle and concern for his neigh-

bors. He always was giving and willing to volunteer his time and effort to further a cause he felt so strongly about.

The endowment fund continues to be appreciative of all donations it receives. Those of us who live in the Town of Bethlehem and are involved with the Historical Association are immensely appreciative of Mr. Meyer's generosity as well as all other contributions the endowment fund has received in the past.

*Julia S. Kelley*  
*Endowment Chairman*

## Town Hall

For the past year, the cases in the large meeting room of Bethlehem Town Hall have been filled with objects and collections from Bethlehem Historical Association's collections. We have had favorable reports from viewers and hope this has given us some good publicity. Anyone with ideas for future displays or an organization willing to take a turn, please contact Jan Satin at 767-3509

### Report of Nominating Committee

President: Shelia Giordano

First Vice President: Julia Kelley

Second Vice President: William Le Med

Recording Secretary: To be announced

Corresponding Secretary: Marjorie Crangle

Treasurer: Richard Spaulding

New Members of the Board of Trustees

Charles Crangle

John Scharff

Richard Thayer

*Edna Strumph*

*Nominating Chairperson*

### Trustees

Charles Alford '93

Kenneth Malary '93

Mary Ann Twardowsky '04

Jean Lyon '94

### Committee Chairpersons

Auditor: Gil Houck

Building & Grounds: John Scharff & Jim Wiedeman

Publicity: Allison Bennett & Angelina Giordano

Reception: Betty Van Ostenbrugge

Genealogy: Ed & Evelyn Alford

Herb Garden: Phyllis Howell

Hospitality: Wendy Brandow

Historian: Margaret Scharff

Historic Resources: Lois Dillon

Nominating: Edna Strumph

Yearbook: Eleanor Turner

Museum Registrar: Ann McGinty

Program: Charles Crangle

Newsletter: Lynn Mather

Our congratulations to Jan Satin, who was accepted in Russell Sage's Graduate Program in Special Education. She will continue to serve as museum chairperson, but due to her class schedule, we would like someone to volunteer to serve as our recording secretary.

We also could use another person on the following committees: Building & Grounds, Revision of By-Laws and Publicity. We were unable to get anyone to be chair or co-chair of Ways & Means. If anyone is willing to volunteer for any of these positions, please leave a message with Sheila Giordano at 767-2247.

## Annual Meeting

May 21, 1992 is the meeting of the Bethlehem Historical Association with election of officers and voting on the budget for the year 1992-93. Charles Crangle will give a slide presentation on Alaska.

## Summer at the Museum

The Old Cedar Hill School House Museum will be open every Sunday, June-August from 2:00 to 5:00 PM. On view will be a special exhibit from the museum's collections. If you are willing to be a host or hostess, call Mary E. Van Ostenbrugge at 767-9919

Be sure to go behind the museum and visit the exhibits in the Toll Gate House Museum and the Herb Garden maintained by Phyllis Howell. If you are willing to help her with planting, weeding or watering, call her at 439-9758.

## Editor's Corner

The Toll Gate House Museum has an exhibit on the Blacksmith and his Tools. Previous issues of the newsletter have dealt with the blacksmith.

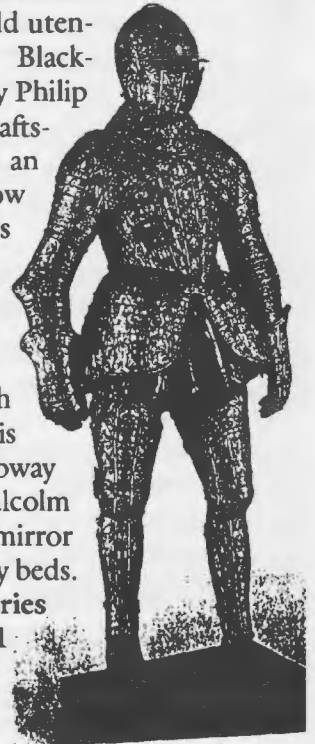
In the Middle Ages in Europe blacksmiths specialized

in making armors, shields, swords, knives, bows and arrows. The ornate metal shells that once protected knights and kings emanated the aura of brute force. By the 15th century most of the owners of this magnificent armor never ventured into battle. It was a powerful fashion statement to be worn in jousting tournaments or in ceremonies as a symbol of status and prestige.

During colonial times the blacksmith shoed horses, made household utensils, nails, plows and fences. Blacksmiths are still needed. Today Philip Huncik is a third generation craftsman, whose grandfather ran an iron-working shop in Moscow in 1890. In the 1920's his father opened a similar business in New York, selling staples like wire baskets. Recently Philip made a wire centerpiece for Elizabeth Taylor's wedding, a Perry Ellis branding iron, and an iron subway banister for the movie, "Malcolm X". Huncik also makes lacy mirror frames, candleabras and canopy beds.

The Arms & Armor Galleries reopened November 8, 1991 at the Metropolitan Museum of Art at 1000 Fifth Avenue in New York City. Armors on horseback, medieval shields, daggers and halberds are once again on display in the redesigned and renovated galleries. In the majestic 67-foot high central Equestrian Court are the finest tournament and parade armors. In the surrounding galleries are other European, Islamic, American, and Japanese arms and armor.

*Lynn Mather*



## Town of Bethlehem Historical Association

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Selkirk, New York 12158

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