

STEPHENTOWN HISTORICAL SOCIETY
"NEWSLETTER OF 1977"

June edition

As we prepare this edition we are pleased to report the progress of the Historical Society meetings. We are greatly encouraged by the attendance of so many people at various activities over the past few years. We have seen many new faces and met some wonderful people from other historical societies, who are most welcome to attend our meetings. Hopefully more of the people in the area will avail themselves of the programs at the society in the future. These programs will be announced at the meetins, in our newsletters, and in area newspapers.

We would like to remind you that it was not our intention to form just a social organization or "club", but it was meant to be more than that. Social functions are indeed important part of the Historical Society in the furtherance of our goals.

Thankfully we seem to have been successful in regards to our well attended socials, fund raising projects, informative speakers, captioned film showings, and also our musicals over the past few years.

There is a great deal more to be done. Now we are ready to move on with your cooperation to bigger and better goals. We hope to offer more informative history of our past and to improve our knowledge of the future. As with many organizations today, our economic support comes from membership dues and fund raising projects. We are having a membership drive. **WON'T YOU TAKE THE TIME AND JOIN US?** Types of membership are listed on the back page.

In closing may we ask that you feel free to call upon us with any suggestions for the betterment of our society. **IT'S OUR TOWN, FOLKS, SO LET'S ALL TAKE PART IN PRESERVING ITS HISTORY!**

A. Bayba, president

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT - report by Lynn Goodhue

The oral history project was begun by Agnes Coates even before there was a Stephentown Historical Society. She and others have recorded the reminiscences of Helen and Fred Kenyon, Carrie Sykes, Erma Graham, the late Fred Jones, Lewis Griffin, Alice Wemple, Al Silvernail, the late Clarence Starks, Clara Reynolds, and the late Alma Meddaugh. Outlines of these tapes have been made and copies sent to the New York State Historical Society at Cooperstown, which provides us the tapes free of charge in exchange for the use of our

completed tapes so that they may make copies of them for their archives. (The original tapes are returned to us.) The tapes at Cooperstown are then available to people researching the history of New York State. The Rev. Ernest Smith has made use of our outlines in his research for some of the Valley Tales published in The Echo. There is a wealth of information on the tapes we have--the stories recalled are fascinating. But much more work remains to be done. We should make transcripts so the printed information will be available through the library. Also we should continue collecting "memories on tape." Who knows what tales are left to be told?

When Agnes moved, she left the tapes and outlines with me. Unfortunately I do not have a cassette tape recorder and thus have not been able to do any work on the project. I would like to see a new committee organized with several people taping and others transcribing and outlining. We need access to cassette tape recorders and also dictaphone equipment (frequent stopping and rewinding of the original tapes wears them out). If you would like to get involved in this fascinating project and/or have machines we could borrow, please give me a call at 733-5598.

PROGRAMS FOR 1977

This year we decided to hold regular meetings in January and February, and take our chances on the weather. Our speakers didn't have to travel far: Cynthia Pease gave the first program of the year, a well-attended talk on cooking on a wood stove, including old-time methods and recipes. In February the Movie, "Don't Tread on Me", was shown. This movie, depicting the life of the American Revolutionary soldier, was filmed in Nassau, N.Y.

"A History of American Furniture" was the topic of the March 7 program, presented by Ruthann Brod of the Rensselaer County Historical Society. The Annual Meeting with the election of officers was held in April and featured a covered dish supper. And on May 2, Mrs. Shirley Dunn of the Esquatak Historical Society, presented a program on "Methods of Historic Sites Surveys: Identifying features of Old Homes." She went through the "blue sheets," the forms to fill out for a sites survey for the state, step by step, making the forms seem much less intimidating; she then presented a very interesting slide show illustrating the features to look for when trying to identify the age of an old home.

Programs have already been arranged for the summer months: On June 6, Mrs. Christina Stevens, Hoosick Town Historian, will present a talk on the Battle of Bennington, a timely topic since the 200th anniversary of this important Revolutionary battle is this summer. Hoosick will be holding an anniversary celebration (the famous battle was actually fought in Walloomsac, N.Y.), and Mrs. Stevens will be telling us of the plans for that.

In July William Senseney, a blacksmith from Lanesborough who specializes in period ironware reproduction and antique hardware restoration, will discuss his craft.

In August, Mike Dimanna and William Z. Bayba, of the Fowler and Finch Insurance Co., will talk on the past, present and future of insurance and will present a video tape on film.

Program topics under consideration for the future include: glass and ceramics; covered bridges; old barns, particularly their construction; antique guns; trolley cars; antique quilts; old tools, especially farm tools; history of farming; more on the Shakers, perhaps Shaker cooking; old schools of Stephentown; old-time everyday skills; and the role of women in the past. If you know of anyone who would be a good speaker on any of the above topics, or on any other topic you would be interested in, contact Mrs. Goodhue or Mrs. Bayba. We are always on the lookout for new ideas and welcome any suggestions you might have.

CEMETERY AND GENEALOGY COMMITTEES

So far many cemeteries have been done, but we need volunteers to help us with the large Catholic Cemetery and several smaller ones. Cynthia Pease reports that more typing needs to be done on cards, which she has. For more information, call 733-5017.

Is there anyone in our organization interested in genealogy? If you are please contact your president for information. This committee could be activated now that the nice weather is here. We have some cataloging of names and families in town which were done by Cynthia and her committee.

Thanks to Cynthia Pease and her Cemetery Committee for a job well done!

FLEA MARKET

The society is planning a flea market to be run on Saturday, July 9, and Sunday, July 10, from 10 am to 5 pm, rain or shine! It will be at the Town Hall on Grange Hall Road in Stephentown. We are looking for flea market and antiques dealers, but anyone wishing to sell items may reserve a table. Here's a chance to clean out your attics, cellars and closets--rent a table and sell your wares!

There will also be refreshments and baked goods for sale by the society. This will be our major fund-raising effort for the year--your help will be greatly appreciated!

HISTORICAL ALBUM

After many months of hard work, the Stephentown Historical Album has gone to print. This is the result of a concerted effort put forth since last fall by the Album Committee. It is expected that the book, consisting of about 150 pictures of Stephentown, its people and industry between 1880 and 1940, will be available for sale by the first of July.

OFFICERS

Newly elected officers of the Historical Society are as follows:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| President- Anna Bayba | Trustees: Jacob Bakker |
| Vice President - Susan Cooper | Sally Fox |
| Rec. Sec. - Giacinto Capelli | Lewis Griffin |
| Corr. Sec. - Georgiana Beebe | Jayne Sawin |
| Treasurer - Lynn Goodhue | Bertha Rathbun |
| | Al Silvernail, <u>ex</u> |
| | <u>officio</u> (Town |
| | Historian) |

MEMBERSHIP

Dues for 1977 are payable now. According to the By-Laws, membership in the society is open to any individual or organization interested in the history of Stephentown. Annual dues are payable in advance and members in arrears 6 months shall be dropped from membership. If you have already paid your dues, tear off and give to a friend: New members are always welcome.

___ Individual Member, Adult	\$1.00	Annual Dues
___ Individual Member, Minor (17 or under)	.50	
___ Contributing Member	5.00	
___ Sustaining Member	50.00	
___ Life Member (one time payment)	100.00	
___ Business or Organization	15.00	

NAME (please print): _____

MAILING ADDRESS: _____ PHONE: _____

Mail to: Stephentown Historical Society, Box 39, Stephentown NY 12168