

# Stephentown Historical Society Newsletter

Vol III, Issue X

February 2000

## HISTORY OF THE TOWNS OF RENSSELAER COUNTY

### THE FREEHOLDERS OF RENSSELAERWYCK

As the county of Rensselaer is part of the territory embraced in the manor of Rensselaerwyck, it is interesting to know what methods were first adopted to give the manor a representation in the general assembly, and to provide for its inhabitants the necessary officers for the management of its local affairs. "An act for defraying the common and necessary charge, in the manor of Rensselaerwyck, in the county of Albany, passed August 4, 1705, permitted the freeholders of the manor to elect and choose yearly, and every year, one supervisor, one treasurer, one assessor and one collector for the said manor."

The second section of the same bill recites "that the wages and charge of their representative, or deputy in general assembly," should be "ten shillings per diem," and that the inhabitants should "be liable to defray the wages and charge of their own representative or deputy."

In 1714 there were in the manor of Rensselaerwyck 427 white persons and 181 slaves; making a population of 608 persons.

In a return made on the 11th of June, 1720, by Gerrit Van Schaick, sheriff of the city and county of Albany, is preserved the names of all the freeholders in the colony of Rensselaerwyck. As many of the present residents of Rensselaer county are descendants of the persons named in this early census report, it may be well to mention them in this connection:

Wouter Barheyt	Albert Brat
Johannis Valkenburgh	Cornelis Van Alstine
Jno. Barheyt	Johns. Wendell
Isaac Van Alstine	Jan Van Alstyne
Jacob Schermerhorn	Adrian Oothout
Jacob Schermerhorn, jr.	Peter Coyeman
Johns Ouderkirk	Barent Staats
Claes Gardineer	Andries Coyeman
Andries Gardiner	Samuell Coyeman
Hend. Valkenburgh	Jno. Witbeek
Jacob Valkenburgh	Coonrod Hooghteeling
Tho. Witbeek	Storm Backer
Luykas Witbeek	Jno. Backer
Solomon Van Vechten	Hendrick Van Wyen
Cap. Hendrick Van Renselaer	Wm. Van Alen
Philip Foreest	Jaac. Falkenburgh
Andries Huyck	Phillip Wendell
Maes Van Buren	Gerrit Vandenbergh
Corn'lis Van Vechten	Hendr. Dow
Jonat. Witbeek	Albert Slingerlant
Martin Vanburen	Evert Banker
Barent Geritse	Wouter Vanderse
Jan Witbeek	Killian Vanderse
Jonas Dow	Johannis Appel
Folcort Dow	Peter Husyele
Jno. Van Vechten	Derrick Hagodorn
Gerrit Lansen	Andries Brat
Volcort Van Vechten	Storm Brat
Melgert Vandeuse	Ome. Legrange
Rut Vandeuse	Johns. Legrange
Daniell Winne	Johannis Simouse
Gerrit Van Wie	Nicos. Grewsbeek
Jan Van Wie	Jno. Oothout
Martin Van Alstine	Mindert Marselis
Albert Roolifse	Jacob Lansen
Marte Van Alstine, jnr.	Abram Ouderkirk
Jno. Funda	Peter Schuyler, Esqr.
Derrick Vanderhyden	Abram Wendell
Gerrit Vandenbergh	William Ketlyne
	Francs Pryn
	Claes. Bovie

## SYLVIA LOVES A MYSTERY

An ongoing Society project through the years has been the recording of an oral history of Stephentown through the reminiscences of elder citizens of the town. However, in recent years, several of these tapes were found to be missing. The missing tapes were recorded in the 1970's and cannot be replaced, as most of the interviewees are no longer with us.

Sylvia Leibensperger's curiosity was piqued by the mystery of what had happened to these tapes. The masters had, it seems, been given to the State of New York for safekeeping and research purposes, probably under terms of a grant that had financed their making. The copies that the Society had made, if any, had apparently disappeared. After several searches and several dead ends, Sylvia's sleuthing paid off. While she did not find any copies in Stephentown or Albany, she did find the masters at the New York State Historical Association Library in

Cooperstown, where they have been maintained in a climate-controlled storage facility.

Sylvia and Howard, accompanied by Clyde and Thelma Tomlinson, journeyed to Cooperstown and found the tapes in excellent condition. They duplicated them and brought the copies back with them. The Society's collection is once again complete. The voices of Agnes Coates, Donna Sidor, Lewis Griffin, Beatrice Wheeler, Fred Jones, Alice Wemple, Carrie Sykes, Fred Kenyon, Helen Kenyon, and Avery Hall are once again available in Stephentown. They have rejoined copies of interviews with the likes of Erma Graham, Al Silvernail, Clara Reynolds, Clarence Starks, and Alma Maddaugh in the Stephentown Heritage Center collection.

Welcome home, historic figures of Stephentown. Thank you, sleuth Sylvia, for solving the Mystery of the Transient Tapes and bringing home the truant interviews. James Bond could not have done better.

## WHO ARE THEY AND WHAT ARE THEY DRIVING NOW?



These two boys, out for a spin in 1942, are **not** Doug Feathers' sons. Today they would be 63 to 66 years old. Perhaps you've seen one of them driving around Stephentown. Any idea who they might be?



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Program Chairperson **Pat Bowman** continues to inspire us with outstanding programs in a wide variety of historical fields. **Blanche Nelson, Meredith Rhindress** and **Isabel Krebs** are helping Pat in her continuing searches for outstanding talent in our own and neighboring towns. All programs and events are held at the Stephentown Heritage Center on the first Monday of the month and begin at 7:30 pm unless otherwise specified.

### Monthly Programs:

- February 7 **Heirloom Animals**  
- Tom Gardner
- March 6 **History of the Schaghticoke Fair**  
- Gilbert Wright
- April 3 **Oakwood Cemetery**  
- Michael Barrett
- May 1 **Stations Along the Corkscrew RR**  
- Charles Ballard
- June 5 **Household Tools**  
- Ross French
- July 10 **Summer Potluck and Entertainment**  
- Note Later Date

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## MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

January 1 - December 31

Membership categories and dues are:

Individual Member	\$ 5.00
Contributing Member	15.00
Business/Organizational Member	25.00
Life Member	100.00

Please join us this year. Make your tax-deductible check payable to:

**Stephentown Historical Society**  
P.O. Box 11  
Stephentown, NY 12168

## EVENTS THIS SUMMER

**July 2 19th Annual Strawberry Festival**  
**Zema's Too, Route 22**

**1 - 5 pm**

Join us for shortcake, low-cal, salt-free, or high-test. Conversation and company to match.

**TBD Exhibit TBD**

Dates and times to be determined

**August 5 11th Annual Juried Craftfest –**  
**Fire Department Muster Field & Pavilion, Grange Hall Road**

**10 am - 4 pm**

High-quality craftspersons and discriminating shoppers make the Craftfest a special event.

**Sept 2 Tag Sale –**  
(Rain Date **Gardner's Field, Route 22**

Sept 4) **9 am - 3 pm**

A highlight of the Labor Day weekend. It's still warm enough to exchange your castoffs for someone else's treasures.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### Officers:

President	Beverley McClave	733-5170
Vice-President	Donna Mullett	733-5278
Recording Secretary	Donna Herrick	733-5298
Corresponding Secretary	Libby Kogan	733-6662
Treasurer	Caroline White	733-5250

### Trustees:

Betty Feathers	(413) 637-7218
Wyatt Haley	733-5771
Helen Koepp	733-5640
Bill Jennings	733-5923
Judi Tarr	733-9348
Bill Zimmerman	794-8430

### Committee Chairpersons:

Cemeteries	Wyatt Haley	733-5771
	Alan White	733-5250
Collections	<b>Help Still Needed</b>	
Fundraising	Sylvia Leibensperger	733-5716
Genealogy	Virginia Atwater	733-5136
Heritage Center	Bill Zimmerman	794-8430
Membership	Donna Mullett	733-5278
Nominating	Sylvia Leibensperger	733-5716
Newsletter	Bill Zimmerman	794-8430
Program	Pat Bowman	(413) 738-5420
Refreshments	Mary Gorman	733-9661

\* \* \* \* *In Memoriam* \* \* \* \*

**Brenda Bunting**  
1914 – 1999

\* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \*

### “The Way We Were” in 1936

We were before television, before penicillin, the pill, polio shots, antibiotics and frisbees. Before frozen food, nylon, dacron, Xerox, Kinsey. We were before radar, fluorescent lights, credit cards and ballpoint pens. For us time-sharing meant togetherness, not computers; a chip meant a piece of wood; hardware meant hardware, and software wasn't even a word. In those days bunnies were small rabbits, and rabbits were not Volkswagens.

We were before Batman, Rudolph the Rednosed Reindeer and Snoopy. Before DDT and vitamin pills, vodka (in the United States) and the white wine craze, disposable diapers, jeeps and the Jefferson nickel. Before Scotch tape, M & M's, the automatic shift and the Lincoln Continental.

When we were in college, pizzas, Cheerios, frozen orange juice, instant coffee and McDonald's were unheard of. We thought fast food was what you ate during Lent.

We were before FM radio, tape recorders, electric typewriters, word processors, Muzak, electronic music and disco dancing. We were before panty-hose and drip-dry clothes. Before ice makers and dishwashers, clothes dryers, freezers and electric blankets. Before men wore long hair and earrings and women wore tuxedos. We got married first and then lived together. How quaint can you be?

In our day cigarette smoking was fashionable, grass was mowed, coke was something you drank, and pot was something you cooked in.

We were before coin vending machines, jet planes, helicopters and Interstate highways. In 1936, “made in Japan” meant junk, and the term “making out” referred to how did on an exam.

In our time there were five-and-ten cent stores where you could buy things for five and ten cents. For just one nickel you could ride the streetcar, make a phone call, buy a coke or buy enough stamps to mail one letter and two post cards. You could buy a new

Chevy coupe for \$600, but who could afford that in 1936? Nobody. A pity, too, because gas was 11¢ a gallon.

We were not before the difference between the sexes was discovered, but we were before sex changes. We just made do with what we had.

And so it was in 1936. This is “the way we were” -- And we loved it!

-- Anonymous



DELICIOUS MINCE PIES  
EVERY DAY IN THE YEAR.

**NONE SUCH**  
CONDENSED  
**Mince Meat**



*Each Package contains material for two large pies.*  
Grocers often substitute cheap imitations, to make a better profit. Refuse such articles, and insist on having NONE SUCH brand—the best.  
**MERRELL & SOULE, SYRACUSE, N. Y.**

Epitaph on a grave in East Dalhousie Cemetery,  
Nova Scotia

Here lies  
Ezekial Aikle  
Age 102  
The Good  
Die Young.



**THE COMPUTER IS COMING...  
THE COMPUTER IS COMING!**

The Board of Directors has authorized the purchase of a new computer system for the Stephentown Heritage Center. The computer committee is working out final recommendations and quotes. By spring we should have a new system up and running. Included in the system will be Internet access, which will allow Society members to surf other historical societies' and museums' sites as well as establish our own web site. It's an exciting step. There will be lots of opportunities for expanded research. There will also be lots of opportunities to establish and expand our own data bases. Training will be available for anyone interested in using this valuable new tool. Additional information will be forthcoming at our monthly meetings. Researchers and data entry volunteers are always welcome. Let's keep our new tool busy. Call Bev McClave at 733-5170 or the Heritage Center at 733-6070.

**19th ANNUAL  
STRAWBERRY  
FESTIVAL**

**Zema's Too  
Route 22  
Stephentown**

***Sunday, July 2  
1 - 5 pm***



Post Office Box 11  
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©  
Stephentown  
Historical  
Society

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