

Stephentown Historical Society Newsletter

Vol II, Issue No. XVI

June 1993

A TRIBUTE TO ELIZABETH W. MCCLAVE

This issue of the Newsletter is dedicated to Betty McClave. She contributed so much to Stephentown and especially to the Stephentown Historical Society. This began with her desire to have a building to house our artifacts. It was mainly through her efforts that we purchased the 1870 Methodist Episcopal Church which has become the Heritage Center.

Betty chaired the 1984 Bicentennial which put Stephentown on the map. She also served two years as Town Historian. Interested in genealogy, Betty created "Living Gravestones" which has over 35,000 cards listing information about residents past and present. These cards have been invaluable in helping families trace their ancestors. Much of this information has been gathered from headstones at the 74 cemeteries in Stephentown. She personally visited, recorded each headstone and transferred this information to the Living Gravestone file. She recruited people to clean up small cemeteries. To preserve these records she interested teachers and students of local history in making gravestone rubbings of these stones. These are on file at the Heritage Center.

Betty McClave's first love was her job as Curator of our collections. She collected, carefully cataloged and stored artifacts for future use in exhibits.

Her dream of the creation of an office at the Heritage Center is slowly becoming a reality and will be a memorial to her hard work and dedication.

Album 4 was also her creation, and she worked diligently on this and on the labels for the Transportation Exhibit, even though she was ill at the time.

We miss her enthusiasm and wisdom and feel fortunate to have had her expertise to get us started. We now must commit ourselves to continuing her work and fulfilling her dreams.

Betty Feathers, President

GOLD IN YOUR ATTIC

By Dan Lorber



When I first got into the business of selling used books, I thought that was what it was all about -- just selling used books. But quickly I came to realize that the business wasn't about that at all. It is all about selling -- and finding -- rare books. This is the most interesting, most intriguing and the most lucrative part of the used book business.

Most people have heard of books like "Gold in Your Attic" about the treasures that lie hidden in stacks of old books. And it is true. Time and again I will go to a home to look at books and the collection shown to me is run-of-the-mill except for perhaps one or two items that really stand out. Such a time was when I was called to look at a collection in Grafton. The books had been stored in a barn and were in very

continued on pg. 5

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 1993

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CRAFTFEST '93

Craftfest '93, a highlight of our summer, will be held at the Firemans' Muster Field on the last Saturday in July. This event, now in its 4th year, brings much needed money for the continued restoration of the Heritage Center. And to all of us here in Stephentown and surrounding towns, it is an exciting fun-filled day.

The exhibitors have been approved by a panel of jurors. They bring handcrafted items which are skillfully created and unique in design. Prices are reasonable and the only other thing you pay for are the delicious foods. There will be a choice of menu for lunch and snacks, ice cream and drinks will be sold all day. Demonstrations, music and activities for children are going on at all hours.

We can use lots of publicity so spread the word. We need help during the day so let Ch. Betty Feathers know if your are available (733-5235). Please mark your calendar now. We will be set-up on the Muster Field on July 31 from 10:00 to 4:00, rain or shine.

JOSEPH WOOLCOTT came to Stephentown with his father Justus/Augustus previous to 1776, the year he first served in the Revolutionary War. The following is a transcript of his application for a pension in 1832. At that time, he was living in Indiana.

In the Probate Court of Switzerland County, State of Indiana, of the May term of Court on the 17th day of May the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty three William C. Keen, Judge of said court Edward Patton

In the Matter of Joseph Woolcott - An applicant for a pension under the act of Congress of June 7th AD 1832

The State of Indiana Switzerland County S.S.

And that he hereby relinquished every claim to a pension or annuity except the present. And declares his name is not on the pension roll of the agency of any state. The court has propounded the following interrogatories to the said Joseph Woolcott. 1st-where and in what year were you born? I was born in Newington Connecticut, on the 3rd of July AD 1764. 2nd-have you any record of your age, and if so where is it? I have none. It was recorded in the town records of Newington Connecticut. 3rd-where were you living when called into service? Where have you lived since the Revolutionary War and where do you now live? I lived in Stephentown Albany New York when first called into service. Continued for about 20 years in New York after the War - removed thence to Kentucky and from thence to Indiana. 4th-when were you called into service, were you drafted - did you volunteer, or were you a substitute and if a substitute for whom? Volunteered, was drafted and finally enlisted, and served as a substitute for my father. 5th-state the names of the regular officers, who were with the troops where you served?



Such continental and militia regiments as you can recollect, and the general circumstances of your service. Lieutenants Thorton V. Cole, Agetant Moore, Captains James Cannon and Wright. Sergeant Mayon Cone, who was appointed in place of __ who deserted. I the said Joseph Woolcott, was drafted in the fall AD 1776 in Albany County N. York in a company of New York Militia commanded by Captain Ichabod Turner, Joel Peak lieutenant of the infantry commanded by Col. Renssellear and served for three weeks: he was stationed with his company at Fort Edward and continued there the whole time except for a few days that he was detailed on a fatigue party to construct a causeway on the road leading from Fort Edward to Fort Ann. In 1777 I marched as a private and a substitute for my father Augustus Woolcott from Stephentown N. York and served for six months in a company of New York Militia commanded by Captain Downs. From Stephentown we were marched to Lake George fort, and were stationed there between three and four months. From thence we were marched to Stillwater where we remained untill I was relieved by my father. My father had been called out for nine months - I served for six months and he served the ballance of the time. In 1778 or 1779 I volunteered and served as a private soldier for three months in a company of New York militia commanded by Captain Breadbake we were marched from Stephentown to a place called Stone Robin and after a short time were marched from Stone Robin on to the Mohawk river to a small fort called Oneida (Indian Castle) not the main castle but a small fort that was known by the same name: For 1779 or 1780 I volunteered and served as a private soldier for three months in a company of New York Militia commanded by Captain Young, we were marched from Stephentown to the Mohawk River and kept moving along said river from one little fort to another all the time spending a few days at each of the following forts viz. Fort Plain, Fort Plank, Fort Wolrot, Fort Herkiman, alternately. In 1780 or 1781 I volunteered and served as a private soldier for four months in a company of

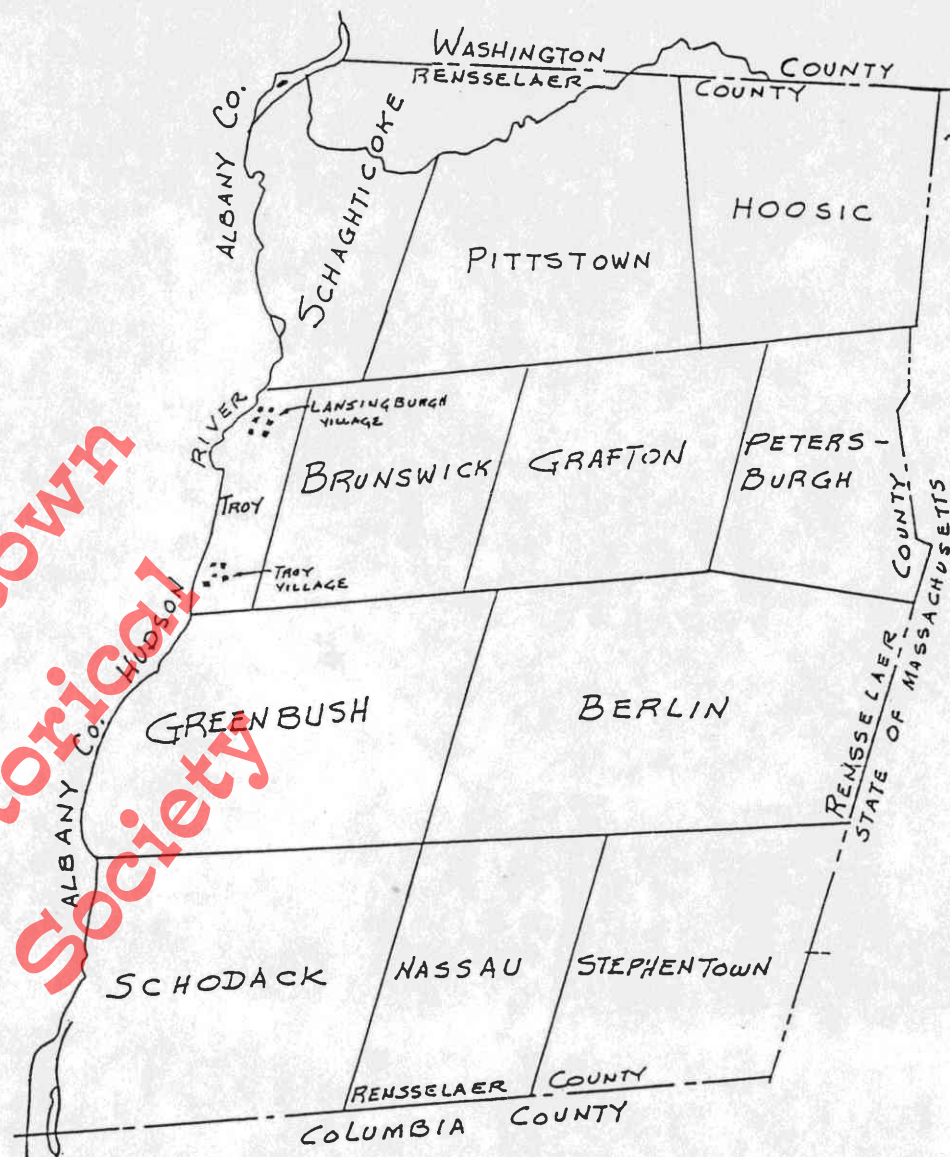
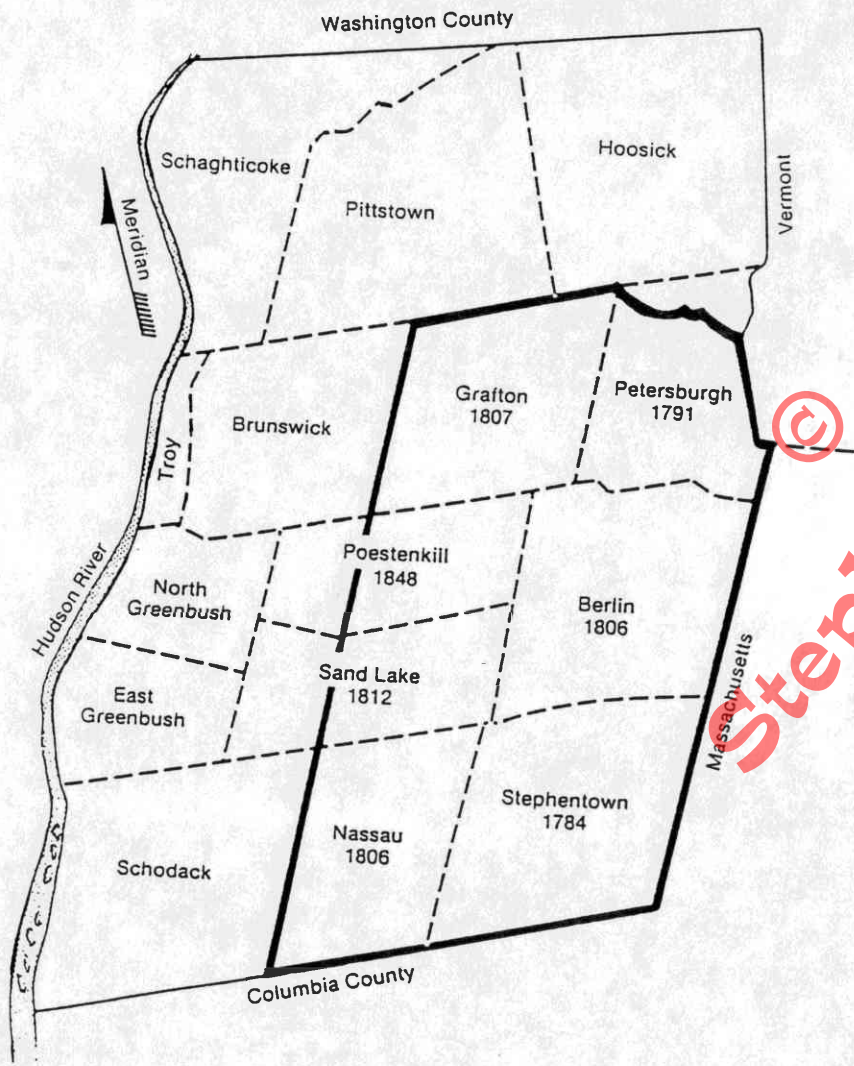
New York Militia commanded by Captain Newel or Wright, we were marched from Stephentown to the Mohawk River and continued in same chain of forts as last year. In 1781 I volunteered at Schenectady as a private soldier for nine months in a company of Rangers commanded by Captain Tierce or Tess and served for seven months when I enlisted for two years at Indian Castle in a company commanded by Captain Peat or Peak, Lieutenant Campbell - in the regiment commanded by Col. Willett, and was dismissed after serving eighteen months. I served as a waiter to Lieutenant Campbell for seven or eight months of the time, and for four or five months as a waiter to Doctor Spangler, I served altogether faithfully during the Revolutionary War for the full space of thirty seven months and three weeks. 6th-did you ever receive a discharge from the service, and if so, by whom was it signed, and what has become of it? I never received any, but a verbal discharge. 7th-state the names of persons to whom you are known in your present neighborhood and who can testify as to your charactor for varacity, and their belief of your services as a soldier of the Revolution? Thomas Davis, John Clark, Dudley Linville, Peter Bear and David Brown. 8th-have you any documentary evidence of your services and do you know of any person now living whose testimony you can procure to testify to your services? I have no documentary evidence and know of no person living by whom I can prove the same. Joseph Woolcott
Sworn to and subscribed the day and year aforesaid Edward Patton, Clerk

As taken from the original



Springbrook Farm, home of Bob Forman on South Stephentown Road, is a find for history buffs. Bob's research shows the soldiers trained here for the Battle of Bennington.

Original boundaries of Stephen Town, founded 29 March 1784 (surrounded by heavy line)
 Drawn for us by Warren Broderick, December 1982
 This area was in the County of Albany before 1791. In 1791 the
 County of Rensselaer was erected.



RENSSELAER COUNTY
 AS OF 1800
 STATE MAP BY AMOS LAY & ARTHUR STANSBURY

This summer's show will be an art exhibit promoting the works of local artists. It will feature water colors, oil, photography, furniture, sculpture ceramics and other forms of art.

The exhibit will be open for two weeks instead of just on Saturdays as we have done in the past. This is in response to those who must work on Saturdays and have not been able to visit our exhibits.

The dates will be August 18 through 22 and 25 through 29 from 1 to 4 PM. Be sure to come and see the talent we have in Stephentown.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Jun 27 STRAWBERRY FESTIVAL
Zema's, Rt. 22, 1-5:00

July 12 MOCCASIN TRAILS
Heritage Center, 7:30

July 31 CRAFTFEST '93
SVFD Muster Field, 10-4:00

Aug 9 OLD BOTTLES
Heritage Center, 7:30

Aug 18-22 ART EXHIBIT
Heritage Center
25-29 1-4:00

Sept 4 TAG SALE
Dave's Market Field
10-4:00 (Rain date 9/6)

Sept 13 EARLY MEETING HOUSES
Heritage Center, 7:30

Oct 10 PUMPKIN FEST
Zema's, Rt 22, 1-5:00

Oct 11 CHILDREN'S GAMES
Heritage Center, 7:30

Nov 8 TINSMITHS
Heritage Center, 7:30

Dec 13 HOLIDAY PARTY
& Pot Luck
Town Hall, 6:30

poor condition. However, one title stood out, a book published in 1814 about the Lewis and Clark expedition. As it turned out this book was one of the rarest in American publishing history. Unfortunately it is a two-volume set and I found only volume one. Also, the book was nearly falling apart and incomplete. With a rare book once it is damaged its value plummets. Still, this book was considered so scarce that I was able to sell it for the owner for \$1,000. If we had found both volumes complete and in very good condition we could have gotten as much as \$30,000 for the set!

Often I will get a call from someone who says something like: "I have a copy of A Tale of Two Cities by Dickens. It's over 100 years old, about 1890. I think it's valuable." I know almost immediately it is not. First, all such classics are reprinted by different publishers literally thousands of times, so for this one to be a first or early edition would be like getting struck by lightning. Most people feel that the date is the most important factor in assessing the value of an old book. In actuality date is way down the line in deciding value of a particular book. I have been offered books published in 1820 which I would not buy for any price and I have bought books published in 1985 that I've bought for \$100.

Another misleading factor is when the words "first edition" appears on the copyright page. Well, it is true, the first editions of some books are very valuable. But if it is a first edition by an author, who either never received literary recognition or never sold more than a few copies of a book because it was so bad, that it is virtually valueless despite those fateful words.

There is no easy way to tell a rare or valuable book when you see one. The best way to find out is to frequent a used book shop and see the types of books that command both high and low prices and to ask a lot of questions. If you hear of an Antiquarian book show in your area, take half a day to check it out because each dealer who brings books to show brings his best. If you look closely you can learn more about rare books in an afternoon that most people learn in a lifetime.

HERITAGE CENTER UPDATE

The insulation for the foundation is now completed and is to be followed by insulating the walls. Then the outside, will be painted after careful preparation by removing alligatored paint and resetting nails.

Monies donated in Betty McClave's memory have made it possible to fulfill her dream of an office in the Heritage Center. Stephentown's former Post Office boxes and Dutch door will be along one wall. Tom McVeigh will provide facilities for files and records and Rik McClave has donated a computer so the office will be state of the art. Upstairs the storage area is being put in order with an up to date listing of newly acquired items. These are stored on shelves by category. A library is being created with historical and reference books where one may go for historical research by appointment.

FUND RAISING

When you are approached either in person or by mail give what you can so we may move ahead with our many projects and programs. Your support is vital.



YOU ARE INVITED TO JOIN

THE STEPHENTOWN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

1993 membership categories and dues are as follows:

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

We hope you will join us this year. Checks payable to Stephentown Historical Society, c/o Jane Dwyer, HCR1 Box 67, Stephentown, NY 12168.

TAG SALE

Start saving your collectibles and other saleable items for the annual Tag Sale Saturday, September 4 (rain date Sept. 6), Dave's Field, Rt. 43, 10-4. Arrange to have large items picked up by calling Chairperson Edith Strobl at 733-5552.

Needed for storage in Heritage Center.
Wardrobe and a low dresser for clothing.

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