

# Stephentown Historical Society Newsletter

Vol III, Issue II

November 1995

## HISTORY OF THE TOWNS OF RENSSELAER COUNTY

As published in the Troy Daily Times  
1880

### PATROON PRIVILEGES.

In Holland there was in 1629 a guild of wealthy merchants known as the West India company. Conscious that by right of discovery the country adjacent to the river explored by Hudson 20 years previously was a possession of Holland, the association petitioned the legislative bodies of the United Provinces to grant it the exclusive privilege for 24 years of taking charge of this territory and of developing by means of emigrants its agricultural and mineral products. This petition was granted, and by the powers conferred by it the West India company issued its charter of liberties and exemptions under which the colonization of the possessions of the Dutch in North America began.

Inquiring persons will find in this charter of the West India company valuable information regarding the inducements offered to emigrants and what gave the patroons the proprietary right to such extensive tracts of land, as that of the manor of Rensselaerwick, from which Rensselaer county was erected. This important instrument provided that any person who wished to become a patroon would be obliged to give notice of his intention to the company, and that he would not be entitled to the absolute property right of such lands on which he intended to settle colonists, if, during the four years following the giving of this notice, 50 souls, upwards of 15 years of age, were not living thereon; one-fourth of the above number during the first year and the remainder the succeeding

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LEBANON SPRINGS RAILROAD COMPANY.

## LEBANON SPRINGS RAILROAD COMPANY

J. W. VAN VALKENBURGH, Receiver.

This Road presents to the Traveler the most romantic Mountain Scenery and beautiful Landscape, and passes through a section of country the most inviting for pleasure and health.

### LEBANON SPRINGS

The earliest fashionable watering place in the country. Is distant 19 miles from Chatham, 36 from Hudson, 39 from Bennington, 42 from Albany, 48 from Troy, 76 from Saratoga, and 143 from New York. It is a charming, healthful and very popular resort.

### MOUNT LEBANON.

The home of the largest "Community of Shakers" in America, is distant only one mile from New Lebanon Station, and is visited every season by thousands of persons from all parts of the world.



### QUEECHY LAKE

Is "over the hills" but not "far away." This is a lovely sheet of water, romantically situated among the hills, and of superior attractions as to boating and fishing.

The route from Lebanon Springs north through Stephenstown and other rural villages (which offer good accommodations for summer board) brings us to

### BENNINGTON

An historic spot, and a delightful and popular hot weather resort.

## SUMMER HOMES

Ample accommodations can be had at reasonable rates at any of the Stations or Villages along the line of the Lebanon Springs Railroad.

### THROUGH TICKETS.

Sold at all Railway Stations of connecting Lines; Albany Day Line Steamers, People's Line for Albany, New York and Hudson Steamboat Co., and Citizens' Line for Troy. Baggage Checked to Destination.

### CONNECTIONS

At CHATHAM with the Hudson R. R. for New York and intermediate points. Boston & Albany R. R. for Albany and points West, Boston and points East, and the Hudson & Chatham Branch for Hudson, where connection is made with the fast express trains on Hudson River R. R. At FERRISBURGH JUNCTION with the Troy & Hudson R. R., and the Hudson, Hudson Tunnel & Western R. R. At BENNINGTON with the Bennington and Rutland Railway for North Bennington, Rutland, Montreal and intermediate points.

For further information, Time Tables, &c., address

W. C. VAN ALSTYNE,

Manager under Receiver.

E. A. JAKES,

General Passenger Agent.

GENERAL OFFICES, 59 NORTH PEARL STREET, ALBANY, N. Y.

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### IMPORTANT CHANGE

General meetings of the Stephenstown Historical Society will be held the 1st Monday of each month at 7:30 PM. Mark your calendar now!

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## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### Officers:

President	Bill Jennings
Vice President	Beverly McClave
Recording Secy	Sally Fox
Corresponding Secy	Susan Savage
Treasurer	Howard Leibensperger

### Trustees:

Calvin Kenyon	Erich Strobl
Joan McMillan	Everett Tatro
Millie Smith	

### Committee Chairpersons:

Cemeteries	Calvin Kenyon
Collections	B.J. Anderson
Fund Raising	Bill Zimmerman
Geneology	Virginia Atwater
Heritage Center	Betty Feathers
Membership	Beverly McClave
Nominating	Al Silvernail
Program	Pat Bowman
Refreshments	Sylvia Leibensperger

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### CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Dec	4	HOLIDAY MEMENTOS AND POTLUCK Heritage Center, 6:30PM
Jan	8	HOW STEPHENTOWN CHANGED Heritage Center, 7:30 PM
Feb	5	HISTORIC HOUSES OF NEW LEBANON Heritage Center, 7:30PM
March	4	OUR OWN PASTS Heritage Center, 7:30PM
April	1	POTLUCK SUPPER AND TALK: GEORGE WASHINGTON,S SECRET ARMY OF SPIES Heritage Center, 6:30PM
May	6	ARMCHAIR TOUR OF RENSSELAER Heritage Center, 7:30PM
June	3	HISTORY OF SEDGWICK INN Heritage Center, 7:30PM

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WISH LIST: VCR IN WORKING CONDITION

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three years. The patroons were allowed for those colonies a tract of land on one side of a navigable river, four Dutch or twelve English miles in extent, or two Dutch or six English miles on each side of a river, and which tracts were to extend so far into the country as the situation of the occupiers permitted. The West India company also agreed to transport emigrants and their effects from Holland at a stipulated price; and the animals and instruments necessary for farming, free of freight.

The company also granted to all patroons who should desire the same the right to hold the tracts of lands settled by them as an eternal heritage, which they could transmit to their heirs by testament. The charter further provided that the patroons and colonists should in particular and in the speediest manner endeavor to find ways and means whereby they might support a minister and schoolmaster, that the service of God and zeal for religion might not grow cold and be neglected among them.

All the colonies were required, at least once in every 12 months, to make an exact report of their condition to the West India company.

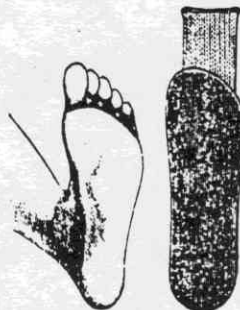
The company also stipulated, on certain conditions that it would use its best efforts to supply the colonists with as many blacks as it conveniently could after the land had been occupied by a colony.

As a means to protect manufacturers of Holland, the colonists were not permitted to make any woolen, linen or cotton cloth, nor weave any other stuffs, on pain of banishment.

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### The New Stocking.

## Waukenhose



from the  
The Berkshire  
County Eagle  
Thursday,  
July 9, 1891

### Knit to Fit the Foot.

**Saves Discomfort;** no wrinkles, no cramped toes. (Notice the shape.)

**Saves Darning;** the big toe, having room enough, stays inside this stocking.

A sure relief for those afflicted with ingrowing nails, corns, bunions, or unnatural heat and perspiration of the feet. Made by WAUKENHOSE CO., Boston, Mass.



## HISTORICAL SOCIETY EVENTS

The 14th annual **STRAWBERRY FESTIVAL** was held on July 2 at Zema's, a week later than originally planned. The berries needed the extra time to fully ripen. The **CRAFTFEST** held on July 29 was a great success, as was the **TAG SALE** on September 2. In the midst of these projects our annual **FUND DRIVE** was held. Our thanks to everyone who supported and helped make these events a success.

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### HERITAGE CENTER UPDATE

The hall to the back door is taped, plastered and painted. This painting was done by Astrid Smith who also did the kitchen painting.

Linoleum is still needed in several areas. Closets and shelves are still not completed.

The 18 pieces of lexan for storm windows were a General Electric donation acquired through Abe Phelps. This represented \$4000 in savings to the Society. Because of this effort on our behalf, the members voted an honorary membership to Abe.

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### PROGRAM AT THE LIBRARY

Legendary Founders of New York:

The Influence of the Dutch by Dr. Charles Gehring. Translator of early Dutch documents.

November 15, (Wednesday) 7:30 PM at the Library.

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### SPREAD THE WORD

Did you know that we have a National Archives Facility just over the hill in Pittsfield? Regional buildings such as this are located throughout the country, not just for the use of our government but for the use of the public at large. The building at 100 Dan Fox Drive was built in 1994 and has over 55,000 rolls of microfilm on such topics as the papers of the Continental Congress, Revolutionary War Military Services and pension files. Genealogy researchers can view census bureau records, immigration documents and ship passenger lists. Staff and volunteers are eager to answer questions and give direction. Hours are 10-3 Monday-Friday and 10-9 the 1st Wednesday of every month.

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Betty Jean Anderson attended a workshop at the Clark Institute of Art this past spring. She is willing to share information on keeping important papers from deteriorating. You may phone her at 733-6600.

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### TACONIC VALLEY ARTIFACTS

Just four years ago, William Mars, of Stephentown Center, became interested in searching for artifacts left behind by those who settled the Taconic Valley. He used a metal detector in fields, on mountains, and in dooryards of old houses and at cellar holes remaining from early dwellings. Bill is careful to ask permission of the owner of the property and to give the owner the first chance at anything found. Normally, the property owners decline, and Bill is able to add the artifacts to his collection. Bill is careful to disturb the site as little as possible when removing the items by replacing the plugs of soil.

When items are found there is the question as to why they were in that particular location. Bill's need for research has led him to history books and other accounts of local lore. He has found the history to be as fascinating as the artifacts. There are magazines for collectors of early American artifacts and experts who are happy to identify and date objects. Bill has asked experts to evaluate what he has found and that usually leads him in search of the whole story.

Although iron objects may rust, many have been found in good condition. Items of brass are found in better condition and can be cleaned to look almost new. Bill cleans off the dirt, usually leaving them the way they are, rather than trying to polish them until little is left.

Wooden handles from axes and hoes have rotted away but heavy axe heads and primitive hoes have been found throughout the valley. Other tools and spikes have been found. A thin, but still sharp weapon head from the French

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ARE YOU A MEMBER  
OF  
THE STEPHENTOWN HISTORICAL SOCIETY?

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, P.O. Box 11, Stephentown, NY 12168

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YOUR 1996 DUES ARE DUE JANUARY 1, 1996.  
AVOID THE HOLIDAY RUSH!

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Meetings are held at the Heritage Center each month. Read your Newsletter, The Echo and watch bulletin boards for up-to-date program information.

and Indian War is a treasure. Also found was a sharp, pointed blade that was a pike attached to a long pole. This was used by soldiers. A leg iron and chain was found in excellent condition surviving the ravages of the weather. This is a reminder that many of the large landholders kept slaves.

Many metal buttons were found, and a few bear the marks of a political campaign and were actually used to button clothing. There were buckles for knee breeches, shoes and waist belts. Watch fobs and war medals, rings lost while working, spoons, forks and barrel spigots often turn up when searching. There were also oxen bells and brass prongs for ox horns. A few coins, upon closer examination were found to be counterfeit. Bill found that a counterfeit ring had operated in the valley a long time ago.

The early settlers worked hard from dawn to dusk and we find their implements and tools near their homes. We also find indications that they found moments of enjoyment.

by Pat Bowman

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Stephentown  
Historical  
Society