

Stephentown Historical Society

Newsletter

Vol III, Issue VIII

February 1999

HISTORY OF THE TOWNS OF RENSSELAER COUNTY

EARLY ROAD MAKING

The following extract from the proceedings of the common council of Albany, of May 6, 1770, shows what measures were taken to open a road through Stephentown at that early day:

Levy Peas applied to this board for assistance to make a road from his house through Stephentown to the house of Andries Michal.

Resolved, That this board will give £20 to the inhabitants of Stephentown, or such of them as will undertake to make a good and sufficient waggon road and Bridges from the house of Levy Peas thro' Stephen Town to the House of Andries Michal, along the Markt Trees shewn to Mr. Marselis and Alderman Ten Brook, in behalf of the widow Van Rensselaer, undertake to pay £20 more.

STEPHENTOWN DISTRICT

By "an act to divide the east district of the manor of Rensselaerwyck, in the county of Albany," passed March 29, 1784, that part of the manor known as the Stephentown district was formed. The act designated its boundaries as follows:

That the said east district of the manor of Rensselaerwyck, in the county of Albany, shall be and is hereby declared to be divided into two districts by the following line: Beginning at a point in the division line between the said east district of the manor of Rensselaer and the district of Kinderhook, 10 miles distant from Hudson's river, and thence running northerly to a point in the division line of the said

east district of the manor of Rensselaerwyck and the district of Schactikoke, nine miles distant from the said Hudson river.

That all the lands immediately before the passage of this act, comprehended within the said east district of the manor of Rensselaerwyck, lying westward of the aforesaid division line, shall be one separate and distinct district and be called by the name of the Rensselaerwyck district; and that all the lands immediately before the passing of this act comprehended within the said east district of the manor of Rensselaerwyck, and lying eastward of the aforesaid line, shall be one separate and distinct district, and be called by the name of Stephentown district. * * *

The inhabitants of the district of Stephentown to hold their first annual meeting at the dwelling house of Daniel Hull, esq., to elect a supervisor, town clerk, and all the other town officers.

The designation of the name Stephentown was given in honor of Stephen Van Rensselaer, the patroon of the manor.

Under the provisions of the act Caleb Bentley was elected, in 1784, supervisor of the district, and Jonathan Niles, clerk.

HIRES
ROOT BEER
THE GREAT HEALTH DRINK
Package makes 5 gallons. Delicious, sparkling, and
appetizing. Sold by all dealers. A beautiful Picture
Book and cards sent **FREE** to any one sending
address to the O. E. HIRES CO., Philadelphia, Pa.

FEMALE WEAKNESS **Positive Cure**

I have a **Positive Remedy** for the thousand
and one ills which arise from deranged female or-
gans. I will send two bottles of my remedy **FREE**
to any lady, if she will send her Express and P. O.
address. **DR. JOHN MARCHESI, Utica, N. Y.**

Innkeepers and Facts About Them

Nancy Griggs (1772 - 1855)

The widow of Dr. Joshua Griggs, who died in 1813, and the mother of Julia Ann, Nancy Griggs kept an inn in the Flats in the early 1800's. In 1810 George Holcomb attended a town meeting there. In 1816, elections were held in her house, and in 1818 George Holcomb attended a dance there. She is buried in the Baptist Cemetery.

Benjamin H. Carpenter (1775 - 1830)

About 1820, Benjamin Carpenter kept a hotel in the east part of town (at or near the former Ellis residence). In May 1816, he had a house raising. A cross sill broke, and a number of workers fell into the cellar. Several were hurt, including William Holcomb. Mr. Carpenter became deranged about a year before his death.

Brigadier General Caleb Carr (1778 - 1840)

Originally from Greenwich, Rhode Island, Caleb Carr was "a man of confidence and trust in the early days of the town." He was a Lieutenant Colonel with the 5th Regiment in 1810 and served with distinction in the War of 1812. He was Colonel of the First Regiment, Eighth Brigade of Infantry of New York State in 1814, when the call came for every able-bodied man to hasten to the defense of Plattsburgh. Frustrated with the slow progress toward Plattsburgh, Colonel Carr asked permission of the commanding general to take 1500 men and hasten on to Plattsburgh. Permission was granted, and he and his men arrived in time to help turn the tide of battle in our favor. The balance of the troops did not arrive until the battle was over. For his meritorious conduct, Colonel Carr was promoted to the generalship of the New York State Militia, a rank that he held for the rest of his life.

Caleb Carr became an assistant judge and married his second wife Lucinda Harris in 1815. About 1820 he became an innkeeper in Stephentown Center. In 1824 he was elected to the state legislature, where he served one term. He moved to Williamstown in 1828 and died there in 1840. He was the father of five children, Cynthia, Caleb, Lucinda, Charlotte, and Henry. He is buried in Hancock.

Richard Spencer (1780 - 1851)

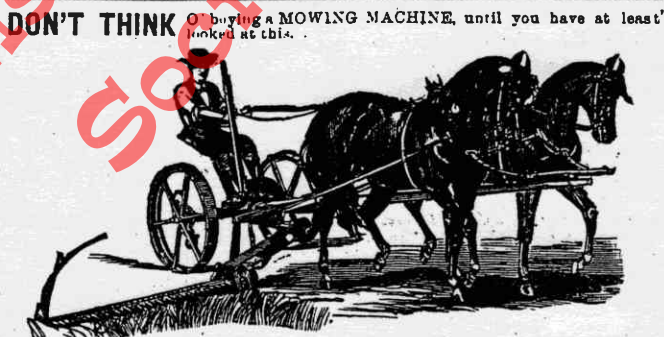
Richard Spencer was the son of Amos and Mercy Spencer and was born in East Greenwich, Rhode Island. He "kept an early hotel in the west part of town." (Sylvester) Mr. Spencer is an ancestor of Princess Diana and is buried in the Baptist Cemetery.

Erastus Brown (1796 - 1880)

The son of Major Daniel Brown, Erastus was the second postmaster (1827) and an early innkeeper and storekeeper in North Stephentown. His predecessor as postmaster was Lawrence Van Valkenburg. In 1836 he, his wife Angelina, Dr. Tanner, and T. Eldridge set out for Illinois (Adams diary). In 1839 Brother William Ross of Pittsfield, Illinois, arrived on business to principal cities in this part of the country, purchasing goods and wares for a wholesale business in Florence, Illinois, where he and Erastus Brown had opened a store for the sale of such goods.

Thomas A. Clark

Thomas Clark owned a farm south of town. He also owned the Railroad Temperance House (Beers 1876 Atlas) in Stephentown Depot, on the site of Sykes' General Store.



THE WORCESTER BUCKEYE MOWER.

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Walter Wood Mower.

Can suit you on a Machine, Horse Rake, Hay Tedder, or anything wanted on a farm during the hoeing or haying season.

Sections and Parts for All Mowing Machines.

When ordering parts for machines, send old pieces to insure a fit.

H. P. LUCAS.

Wollison Block,

North Street,

Pittsfield, Mass.

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Vice-President	Millie Smith	658-2605
Recording Secretary	Jim Dwyer	733-5061
Corresponding Secretary	Libby Kogan	733-6662
Treasurer	Caroline White	733-5250

Trustees:

Betty Feathers	(413) 637-7218
Wyatt Haley	733-5771
Helen Koepf	733-5640
Bill Jennings	733-5923
Alan White	733-5250
Bill Zimmerman	794-8430

Committee Chairpersons:

Cemeteries	Wyatt Haley	733-5771
	Alan White	733-5250
Collections	Help Wanted	
Fundraising	Sylvia Leibensperger	733-5716
Genealogy	Virginia Atwater	733-5136
Heritage Center	Betty Feathers	(413) 637-7218
Membership	Millie Smith	658-2605
Nominating	Sylvia Leibensperger	733-5716
Newsletter	Bill Zimmerman	794-8430
Program	Pat Bowman	(413) 738-5420
Refreshments	Mary Gorman	733-9661

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EVENTS THIS SUMMER

July 4 18th Annual Strawberry Festival - Zema's Too, Route 22 1 - 5 pm
Join us for shortcake, low-cal, salt-free, or high-test. Conversation to match.

TBA Exhibit - Local Businesses - Stephentown Heritage Center

August 7 10th Annual Juried Craftfest - Stephentown Volunteer Fire Department Muster Field & Pavilion, Grange Hall Road 10 am - 4 pm
High-quality craftspersons and discriminating shoppers make the Craftfest a special event. Christmas and other gift ideas abound.

September 4 Tag Sale -Gardner's Field, Route 22 (Rain Date 9 am - 3 pm September 6)
A highlight of the Labor Day weekend, it's still warm enough to exchange your castoffs for someone else's treasures.

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:

January 4 Railroad Lingo - Don Bowman

February 1 Shaker "Growth" Industries: Seeds & Medicinal Herbs - Bernice Gawren-Fiske

March 1 Growing Up In Stephentown - Panel of Local Residents

April 5 Early American Ballads - Norman Burdick

May 3 Down With the Rent: Anti-Rent Wars - William Massoth

June 7 Something Old: Show and Tell - Audience Participation

July 12 Summer Potluck - Dulcimer and Autoharp Music Afterward - Gene & Carol Lynn Langley

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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**

Save This Sheet for Reference

* * * * *In Memoriam* * * * *

Fr Joseph Hickey
1941 - 1998

COLUMBIA AND RENSSELAER
TELEPHONE COMPANY
Warren Fowler, Manager
Excerpt from First Directory, 1902

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Membership

As we begin our 26th year, the Society continues to grow and change with the times. The lifeblood of any organization is its members, and the Stephentown Historical Society is no exception. Life, Individual, Contributing, and Business memberships show your continuing support of the vital work of the Society. The funds raised from your dues go a long way in helping with the everyday expenses of running the Heritage Center.

STEPHENTOWN

Vanderbilt House
Ralph Rose
C. A. Chaloner

Barber
Store
M. D.

GARFIELD

Chas. H. Vary
Elbert Bateman

Store
Residence

EAST NASSAU

Nelson Webster
M. A. Bennet
F. M. Johnson
M. R. Millins
Geo. Graves

Attorney
Mills
M. D.
Store
Shirt Factory

© Mystery Photo



Can you identify any of the people (students or teacher) in this photograph from the Heritage Center's archives? Contact the Heritage Center at 733-6070 or Bev McClave at 733-5170 if you can identify anyone in this photograph or the school at which it was taken.

CURATOR OF COLLECTIONS RETIRES

Sally Fox has served as Curator of Collections at the Stephentown Heritage Center for the past 2 years. Through her efforts many improvements have been made. Cataloging has been improved, and many items lacking in historical significance have been deaccessioned. She continued the preservation of documents in acid-free boxes and mylar, including storage of Town documents during the renovation of the Town Hall. However, the job of Curator is never-ending, and much remains to be done with our extensive collections.

Sally's retirement leaves a large and critical vacancy. Betty Feathers is serving temporarily as the acting Curator, but we're still looking for a permanent replacement. If you or someone you know has all or some of the time required for this critical job, please call Bev McClave at **733-5170**.

Thank you, **Sally**, for your efforts as Curator of Collections. And thank you too for your yeoman service over the past 26 years, the entire life of the Stephentown Historical Society.

ANNUAL FUND DRIVE

The 1999 Annual Fund Drive is coming soon. The 5-year plan is in place that will finish the restoration of the tin ceiling and walls by the end of 2000 (less than 2 years away). This year's contributions will be used for exterior painting and continued work on the restoration of the interior.

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HERITAGE CENTER WISH LIST

WANTED: Data Entry Person(s)

The Stephentown Historical Society is looking for data entry people to help enter our myriad of data from file cards and other sources into files and data bases to make research and sorting easier. Do you have a few hours available per month? Of course. We all have a few spare moments, even in these busy times. Keyboarding (typing) skills desirable. Programming skills not required but quite useful. Please call Bev McClave at **733-5170** or the Heritage Center at **733-6070**.



Stephentown
Historical
Society

Editors:

Virginia Atwater
Klaus Burg
Ruth Leab
Bill Zimmerman