

Stephentown Historical Society Newsletter

Vol III, Issue IX

July 1999

HISTORY OF THE TOWNS OF RENSSELAER COUNTY

THE TOWN OF STEPHENTOWN ERECTED

By "an act for dividing the counties of this state into towns," passed March 7, 1788, the town of Stephentown was erected. The town was bounded as follows:

All that part of the said county of Albany bounded easterly by the east bounds of this state, southerly by the county of Columbia, westerly by the said town of Rensselaerwyck, and northerly by the north bounds of the said manor of Rensselaerwyck, shall be and hereby is erected into a town by the name of Stephentown.

A portion of the territory of the town was subtracted, March 18, 1791, to form the town of Petersburg, and parts, in 1806, to make the towns of Berlin and Philipstown, (Nassau).

INNS AND TAVERNS IN 1788

The inns and taverns scattered along the public roads of the newly-settled territory of northern New York, besides being places of entertainment, were generally points at which the people gathered at certain times for the transaction of business connected with the towns and districts of the counties. At the time the town of Stephentown was erected each inn and tavern keeper was required to enter into recognizance to the people of the state of New York in the sum of £50 not to keep a disorderly house or suffer any cock fighting, gaming or playing with cards or dice, or keep any billard table or other gaming table

or shuffle board within it. In regard to the selling of strong liquors, exceptions were made for the sale of metheglin, currant wine, cherry wine and cider made by the inn-keepers. At each tavern at least two spare beds for guests with good and sufficient sheeting and covering were to be kept in accordance with the demands of the law. It was also required that each tavern keeper should provide good and sufficient stabling and provender for four horses or cattle, and hay and pasturage in summer. No liquors were allowed to be sold to apprentices, servants and slaves. No inn-keeper could collect a debt higher than 10 shillings for liquors sold to travelers. Each keeper of an inn or tavern was required 30 days after receiving license to put up and fix a proper sign on or adjacent to the front of his house, with his name thereon. Every month's neglect in complying with this provision of the law subjected the inn-keeper to the payment of 10 shillings to the state.



THE TIN RESTORATION IS DONE!

After several years of experimenting and taking one financial step at a time, the Stephentown Historical Society has taken a bold step and completed the restoration of the walls and the ceiling of the Heritage Center. Rather than wait another year and go through another round of moving and cleaning up, the Board voted to cash in a low-yielding fund and finish the restoration (and save \$800 in the process). This spring Phil Holbrook and his crew put the finishing touches on the entire tin restoration project. It has taken 11 years to finish one of the last major projects in the restoration of the Heritage Center. And what a finish! The ceiling is complete and painted, including replacement of several rusted panels with fiberglass panels. The walls are also complete and painted. The entire interior looks absolutely wonderful. If you haven't seen it, stop by and enjoy the extraordinary interior view. And whether you have seen it or not, stop by **July 18** from 1 to 4 pm for the **Grand Reopening**.

Two negative notes: (1) as a result of the extra effort required to finish the tin restoration project, there will be no exhibit this summer, and (2) we finished this major project just in time to start the process over again. This year will see some major and very necessary roof repairs, and next year will see the beginning of exterior painting once again. Just like our own individual homes, repair and preservation never seem to end. But haven't we made some wonderful strides in the last decade?

THIS OL' HOUSE

Is your home over 50 years old, over 100? This year some elementary school students in the Berlin Central School District documented the histories of their own homes as a class project. If you are one of these students or a parent of one of them or you have such a record of your house, please consider donating a copy to the Society. We shall place it in our archives. It will make interesting reading and will certainly simplify research 50 or 100 years from now.

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ANNUAL FUND DRIVE

The 1999 Annual Fund Drive is nearing completion. The 5-year plan was accelerated to finish the restoration of the tin ceiling and walls this year instead of next. This year's contributions will be used for this restoration and for roof repair that cannot be postponed. As you can see, we are doing more than originally planned. Any additional help that you can give the Society this year will be greatly appreciated.

HERITAGE CENTER WISH LIST

Curator of Collections

The Stephentown Historical Society is still seeking a Curator of Collections to replace Sally Fox. If you have a few hours available per month, the collections and archives at the Heritage Center can use your TLC. If you have a friend or spouse, why not share the labors? Don't let the archives gather dust. Call Bev McClave at 733-5170, or call the Heritage Center at 733-6070.

 **Lanesboro Iron Co.,**

MANUFACTURERS OF

CAR WHEEL IRON.

Lanesborough, Mass., May 12th 1887

EVENTS THIS SUMMER

Due to the completion of the restoration of the walls and ceiling at the Heritage Center, there will be no formal exhibit this summer.

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

July 18 **Heritage Center Grand Reopening**
 1 - 4 pm
 Come and see the restored walls and
 ceiling in all their radiant glory.

August 14 **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.

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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

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Program Chairperson **Pat Bowman** and her committee of **Blanche Nelson, Meredith Rhindress** and **Isabel Krebs** continue to inspire us with outstanding programs in a wide variety of historical fields. They continue to seek and find 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. Meetings begin at **7:30 pm** unless otherwise specified.

Monthly Programs:

August 2 **Mohican Culture** - **Stephen Comer**

September 13 **Trolleys** - **Kinsley Goodrich**

October 4 **Ice Harvesting at Schodack Landing**
 - **Mary Bol**

November 1 **People of Albany** - **Stefan Bielinski**

December 6 **Holiday Pot Luck and Party** - **6:30 pm**

January 3 **Getting Through the Winter**

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Officers:		
President	Beverley McClave	733-5170
Vice-President	Millie Smith	658-2605
Recording Secretary	Jim Dwyer	733-5061
Corresponding Sec	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	
Alan White	733-5250	
Bill Zimmerman	794-8430	

Committee Chairpersons:

Cemeteries	Wyatt Haley	733-5771
	Alan White	733-5250

Curator of Collections	Help Still 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

DON'T FAIL TO READ THIS!!

CIRCULAR No. 2.

The next payment from this Office will be in August (4th and after) and for two months, - not in September, as heretofore.

FRANK C. LOVELAND,

U. S. Pension Agent,
Department of the Interior, NEW YORK CITY, N. Y.

BUREAU OF PENSIONS.

April 2, 1891.

The attention of pensioners on the rolls of this Agency is called to the fact that by an Act of Congress approved **March 3, 1891**, a change has been ordered in the date at which their quarterly payments shall be made after **July 1st, next**. Heretofore all quarterly payments have been due and payable on the **4th** days of **March, June, September, and December**. By the law above referred to, and by direction of the Secretary of the Interior pursuant thereto, pensioners on the rolls of this agency will, after **July 1st, 1891**, receive their regular quarterly payments on or after **November 4th, February 4th, May 4th, and August 4th**.

Enclosed you will find your check for the payment due **June 4th, 1891**, and also a voucher for **two months'** pension. On or after **August 4, 1891**, you will please execute said voucher and return it to the **Pension Agent**, who, upon its receipt, will promptly send you a check for **two months'** pension, accompanied by a voucher for the pension due you for the **three months** from **August 4th** to **November 4th** next. This latter voucher you will execute on the **4th** day of **November** next and transmit it to the **Pension Agent** promptly after that date, after which time your pension will be paid as heretofore indicated, on the **4th** days of **November, February, May, and August**.

Very respectfully,

Geo B Raum

Commissioner of Pensions.

(4325-300,000)

6-695

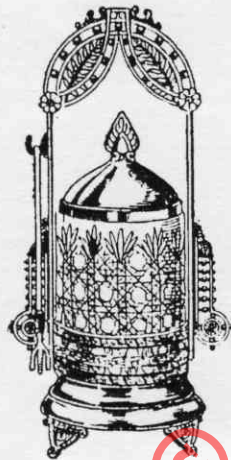
The next payment, after August, will be in November, not in December, but for three months, - i. e. : from August 4, 1891 to November 4, 1891.

Please read this circular carefully and send in your vouchers in August; and then in November.

* * * * In Memoriam * * * *

Helen Kenyon
1905 - 1999

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Stephentown Possible Link to *Monitor*

by Laura Lee

Reprinted from the Albany Times Union

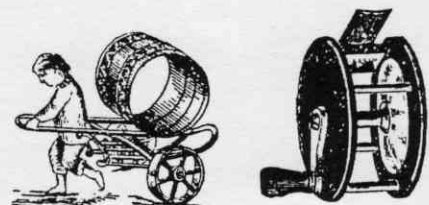
The city of Troy can proudly boast of its role in the building of the famous U.S. Navy ship, the *Monitor*. But it is not widely known that Stephentown may also have indirectly contributed to its construction.

Before the Civil War, ships were made only of wood, but, in 1862, the Confederates launched an iron-clad ship, the *Merrimack*. The Union responded with its own iron vessel, the *Monitor*. Their clash on March 9, 1862, changed naval warfare forever.

Designed by Swedish engineer John Ericsson, the *Monitor* was built partly of iron and partly of wood. Its sides were covered with iron 5 inches thick made by the Burden Iron Works in South Troy. Stephentown's contribution was in the form of an 11-inch cannon, which many historians believe was made from iron produced by the Richmond Iron Company in Massachusetts and taken by ox cart to the Hudson River to be shipped to Brooklyn.

Running the iron furnace required large quantities of wood, and eventually the Richmond woodlands were seriously depleted. Katherine H. Anin's book, "History of Richmond," said mine operators sent a wagon to the top of Lebanon Mountain to pick up wood for the furnace.

"At the crest of the mountain," she wrote, "it met a similar wagon bearing a load of wood from Stephentown." According to a 19th century map of Stephentown, there was a Richmond Iron Company building on what is now Route 22. Most likely, it was a lumbering operation owned or rented by the iron company which supplied the iron for the *Monitor's* cannon.



*The Stephentown Historical Society
Presents . . .*

The 10th Annual Stephentown Craft Fest

**Saturday
August 14**



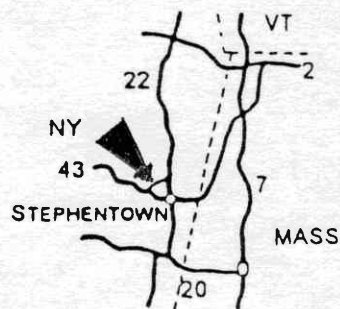
10 to 4

A Juried Art & Craft Show

Free

Held Rain or Shine

✿ Craft Demonstrations
✿ Delicious Food
Entertainment ✿



S.V.F.D. Fire Hall at the Muster Field
Grange Hall Road, Stephentown, NY
(Off Rte. 43, 0.7 mile west of traffic light)



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Editors:

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