



# NEWSLETTER

## HISTORICAL SOCIETY EVENTS FALL 2014

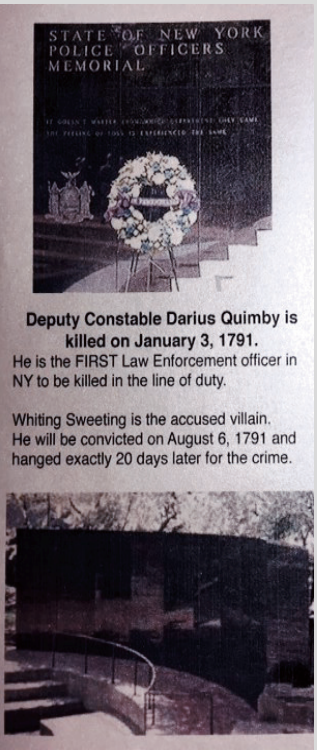
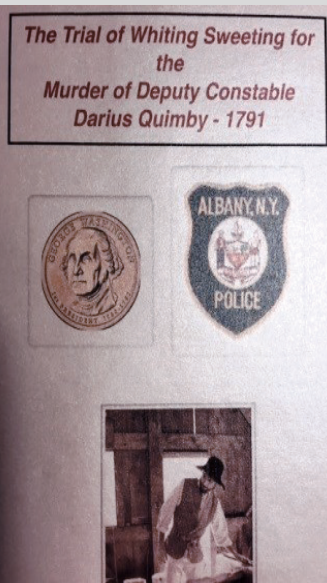
The Stephentown Historical Society offers a wonderful program about a local historical event or subject matter the first Monday of each month.

You will find the schedule of upcoming programs in this newsletter.

Patricia Flint is the town historian and works tirelessly researching and providing many contributions at the meetings.

Don't miss an opportunity for an evening out, an interesting program, fellowship and refreshments.

### MURDERS AND LAW ENFORCEMENT STEPHENTOWN 1791



### THE TRIAL OF WHITING SWEETING

Written by Patricia Flint  
Performed by Stephentown Residents

Constable Martin  
From Albany.....John Beach  
Whiting Sweeting the Accused...Tom Quimby  
Chief Court Justice.....John Meekins  
Court Prosecutor.....John Walsh

**WITNESSES FOR THE COURT**  
Mr. Witney.....Everett Madden  
Mr. Waterman.....Frank Mohos  
Mr. Pratt.....Larry Holder  
Mr. Sedgwick.....David Flint  
Mr. Magee.....Larry Eckhardt  
MANY THANKS TO EVERYONE  
WHO ATTENDED

### 218 Years Of Ministry Come To An End

The Stephentown Baptist Church, now known as the Church at the Crossroads, closed its doors Sunday, June 29 after its final service. The church was dissolved and the remaining congregation dispersed to other churches in the area. Ten years after the town was formed out of the Rensselaerwyck patroonship, Edward Carr in 1794 led a group that met at the home of Joshua Gardner to plan the building of a house of worship. Gardner donated the land and a church was built the following year on a hillside, where now is located the Stephentown Cemetery. Formal recognition from the Baptists came in 1796 and Rev. Robert Niles was chosen as the first Pastor. The church was designated the Second Baptist Church of Stephentown as the First Baptist Church had been formed in 1783 in Berlin, part of Stephentown at that time. When Berlin was separated from Stephentown in 1806 it became the First Baptist Church of Stephentown. A history of the church by Pastor L. A. Cummins in 1896 states that the original church building was “a lofty

structure, seated with old fashioned box pews, and had a large gallery around three sides.” In 1846 the church was disassembled and rebuilt in its present location on Main Street near the intersection of Route 22. The church records written longhand in old ledger books starting on “June the 12th 1796”, along with a treasure trove of other old documents and bibles, was turned over to the safekeeping of the Stephentown Historical Society. Among the records is a list of pledges showing the total cost of the new meeting house in 1795 to be 608 pounds and 13 shillings. There is also a pew map from about 1800 showing the seating of worshippers and a map of the “Baptist Burying Yard” enlarged in 1851 and again in 1860. One of the old bibles indicates that it was purchased from “volunteer contributions from the young female members of the church in 1836.” The SHS also took possession of the silver communion service donated in 1879 by Augusta Y. Cranston. The bell in the belfry was given to the West Stephentown Baptist Church. The building itself along with the parsonage will be put up for sale.

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Susan Gardner	733-5351			Caroline White	733-5250		
Joy Gudz	733-5843			<b>Newsletter</b>			
				Lorri Parisi	733-6455		
				David Flint	733-5871		

**The Heritage Center is open from 1 to 4 p.m. on Fridays and by appointment.**  
**It will be closed for the following dates in 2015:** Presidents' Day (2/13), Good Friday (4/3), Memorial Day (5/22), Strawberry Festival (6/19 tentatively), Tag Sale (7/24 tentatively), Labor Day (9/4), Columbus Day (10/9), Thanksgiving (11/27), Closed for the Month of December

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P.O. Box 11





## ANNUAL CHRISTMAS DINNER AND PROGRAM



Tables adorned with Christmas Centerpieces for the evening's potluck dinner. Members were given the flowers at the end of the evening to enjoy in their homes.



December Speaker and Presenter of Antique Christmas Ornaments, Tom Kernan.



Marilyn Osgood making Holiday Punch



Historical Society Members enjoying a holiday buffet.



Photos  
Courtesy  
Patricia Flint

## PROGRAMS FOR THE STEPHENTOWN HISTORICAL SOCIETY FEBRUARY 2015-JULY 2015

- February 2 - 1950 Rensselaer County Speedways presented by Ken Gypson
- March 2 - Traditional and Historical Songs of New York presented by Dave Ruch
- April 6 - The Erie Canal presented by Tom Ragosta
- May 4 - Stephentown Cemetery Highlights presented by Pat Flint
- June 1 - 250th Anniversary of the William Douglas Farm in Stephentown presented by Isabel Krebs
- July 6 - Pot Luck Picnic at the Stephentown Firemen's Pavilion

## NEW COMPUTER

The Historical Society has purchased a new computer for use at the center. Genealogy and bookkeeping are recorded on the computer in the office. The new model is:

HP ProDesk 400 G1 Desktop PC Intel Core i5 4590 (3.30GHz) 4GB DDR3 500GB HDD Windows 7 Professional 64-Bit.

THE HERITAGE CENTER is open and staffed by the Stephentown Historical Society most **Fridays from 1 pm to 4 pm.** Visit to see the exhibitions and carefully cataloged artifacts from the local area. Alternate appointment times can be made with Curator Bev McClave at 733-5170.

## Shaker Museum/Mount Lebanon



David Stocks, President of the Shaker Museum / Mt. Lebanon, gave an update to the Historical Society on what's happening with the Great Stone Barn. This architectural and agricultural wonder, Stocks said, was built in 1860 for the North

Family of the Mount Lebanon Shakers. Planned by North Family Elder Frederick Evans and designed by Brother George Wickersham of the Church Family, it incorporated the latest ideas in New England mill design and scientific agriculture technology. The Shakers saw as their mission the engineering of a perfect society. The Shaker village would strive to be "Heaven on earth". The construction of the perfect barn was in keeping with that mission. But the North Family being charged with recruitment of converts, the Great Stone Barn, along with the Great Meeting House, was also intended to be huge, technologically advanced and to attract visitors and potential converts.

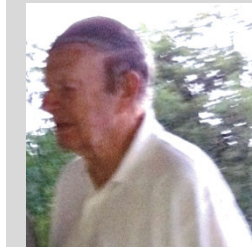
A colossal fire in 1972 destroyed the roof and gutted the interior of the barn. Steel braces were installed on the south side of the barn in 1984 to keep the walls from buckling, but 40 years of being open to the weather has seriously weakened the structure. Stocks said that in 2004 when the Shaker Museum assumed ownership of the property, the barn was in such an advanced state of decay "that it was really just a storm away from complete collapse." Along with very successful efforts to restore other buildings at the North Family site, the Shaker Museum set out to raise funds also to stabilize the Great Stone Barn. Four major grants have been received along with substantial donations from 100 individual supporters toward a two million dollar budget for the project. Stocks said there is need to raise another \$100,000, but the stabilization began last year and is well under way with a completion date expected sometime this summer. The architect is Jan Hird Pokorny Associates of New York City, a firm focussing on historic preservation work on landmark buildings. Robert Silman Associates are providing the structural engineering expertise.

By David Flint

The Stephentown Historical Society, just like most community based groups, is a not-for-profit organization which operates on a very slim budget. We offer monthly programs, maintain the building to house our activities, archives, and artifacts, and support our volunteers in doing research and providing information from our holdings. Beyond a grant from the Town, our membership dues, and the sales of publications we must rely on donations to support our service to the community.

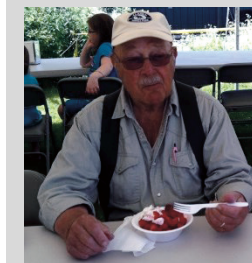
To help us preserve the legacy of over two centuries of Stephentown, its people, and its neighbors we need your help in three ways: 1) in acquiring and preserving artifacts and records of our history; 2) community support of our fundraising events; 3) donations of money.

## IN MEMORY OF FRIENDS WE HAVE LOST



### Robert Baum 1929-2014

Mr. Baum of Brainard was a musician and is survived by his wife, Joyce. He was a longtime SHS member.



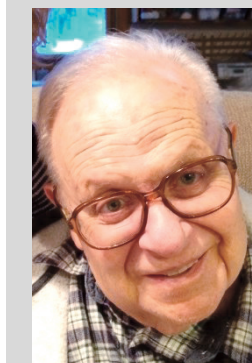
### Wyatt Jesse Haley 1928 - 2014

Wyatt was a 50 year member of the Stephentown Volunteer Fire Department serving as a Fire Commissioner and on the Board of Directors. He was a member

of the Stephentown Area Veterans Association – and a life member of The Stephentown Historical Society.

### Linda Palmer Holder 1949- 2014

Linda was a great help to the Historical Society in processing data for the genealogy records. She is survived by her husband, Board Member, Larry Holder.



### David Jacobs -2015

Mr. Jacobs retired as a Journalist for the Berkshire Eagle. He made the best orange marmalade that he sold locally. Mr. Jacobs was a life member of the Stephentown Historical Society.