



STEPHENTOWN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

January—2018

COVERLET DONATION

The Stephentown Historical Society is excited and thankful to be the recipient of an important and fascinating piece of American history. We were recently gifted with an exquisite handmade coverlet, or quilt, dating back to approximately 1745. This piece of early Americana was created by **Mary Wiswell Humphrey** in Stephentown, NY when she was 31 years old. Mary lived most of her life in Stephentown until her death in 1804, and she is buried in the Stephentown (Baptist) Cemetery.

The wool used to weave the coverlet was sheared, washed, scoured and carded by hand in the family home. The wool is not as soft as today's blends perhaps, but it is very strong and the perfection of the design along with the artistic fringe certainly compare and compete with machine made products produced today. It is in excellent condition, which is truly remarkable when you consider that it was made when George Washington was a youngster and George II still ruled in England.

The coverlet was handed down through the women in the family for over 200 years until it ultimately came into the possession of Judy and Jim Giesen (pictured) of Dubuque, Iowa.

To protect this valuable example of early American workmanship, the coverlet is kept in a special box and wrapped in tissue to keep it from damaging light, moisture and pests. It is displayed for 3 months at a time on a padded rod and then put away for the next 3 months to prevent stretching, fading or any other type of damage. Please watch for when the coverlet will once again be on display.



AMAZON SMILE

DID YOU KNOW..? That you can earn money for SHS simply by shopping on Amazon.com? Through the Amazon's Smile Program, amazon will donate a percentage of your purchase to SHS if you designate the historical society as your charity of choice. Just go to www.smile.amazon.com, sign in with your regular account information, choose SHS to support, then continue shopping as you normally would. It's that easy!

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CELEBRATE STEPHENTOWN 2018!

Planning has begun for the 2nd Annual "Celebrate Stephentown" to be held on August 17th through the 19th. Watch for more info and meeting dates!



We're on Facebook!
Visit our page and give us a "Like"! See what's going on from week to week!

STRAWBERRY FESTIVAL – 2017



“There were the traditional strawberry shortcakes of course – the star of the show – available either with a home baked biscuit or store-bought sponge cake. BUT – for the more adventurous, we add ice cream, for “the works”! Most people opted to go “all in”, and why not? This sweet treat only comes once a year! “

On June 25th, the Stephentown Historical Society hosted its 36th annual Strawberry Festival. This was the second time that the festival was held at Gardner’s Field just south of the intersection of routes 22 and 43, and, by all accounts, it was the most successful ever! Everyone raved about everything from the weather (bright & sunny) and the location (easy to find and plenty of parking), to the delicious fresh strawberries, ice cream, and homemade pies and biscuits. You can’t get any more “down home” than that! You might say that “it takes a village to host a Strawberry Festival”, and you wouldn’t be far off the mark! Aside from the organizers who make all the behind-the-scenes arrangements, and handle the scheduling, phone calls and writing of letters, there are helpers who meet the Friday prior to the event to hull and prepare over 200 lbs of berries, and then there are the bakers who produce the dozens of biscuits and 20+ pies that always sell out in the first hour! And we can’t thank Neil and Susan Gardner enough for allowing not only the use of their venue, but their facilities as well. They couldn’t have been more hospitable.

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While all this was going on, the ladies from SHS were busy selling T-shirts, several volumes of historical books, note cards, post cards and other memorabilia featuring scenes or information of Stephentown.

We’d like to thank everyone who helped to make this year’s festival such a big success. It is one of the Heritage Center’s main fund-raising event and helps us to keep the lights on and the heat running! Thanks to everyone who came out to support us!

PROGRAMS FOR THE STEPHENTOWN HISTORICAL SOCIETY JANUARY—JULY 2018

Sunday, February 4 @ 2 PM— Glenn Hankle—History of the Banjo

Sunday, March 4 @ 2 PM — Larry Eckhardt — What’s New In Farming

Sunday, April 8 @ 2 PM — Heidi Hill—Alexander Hamilton and the Schuyler Family

*Please Note: This is the second Sunday, the first being Easter

Monday, May 7 @ 7:30 PM—Rosemary Nichols—Building the Erie Canal

**Please Note: we return to first Monday evening meetings

Monday, June 4 @ 7:30 PM—Kurt Vincent—The Jewish Community in and around Stephentown

Monday, July 9 @ 6:00 PM—Annual Picnic at the Fireman’s Pavilion

TOWN HISTORIAN'S CORNER

Patricia Flint

A Fair Swap?

Stephentowners have always been avid hunters. And David Alderman who lived in the hamlet of Garfield, was no slouch. In the SHS Historical Album #2, there's a photo of him and his wife, Sarah Reynolds Alderman with the whole side of a barn plastered with skunk and fox skins. Maybe Sarah, armed with a shotgun in the photo, was a help with the hunting, and maybe not so much. 'Cause the story goes in Stephentown folklore - and is documented on one of the cards in the Historical Society's 'Living Gravestones' file - that Dave made a swap one day.

It seems that Dave went out hunting that day and didn't bag a skunk, nor fox, nor even a mouse. Coming out of the woods dejected, he comes across his friend William Dymond. And the story goes that this meeting ends up with Dave Alderman swapping his wife Sarah for Dymond's gun and his hound dog. The note on the 'Gravestone' card concludes with, "And they lived happily ever after."

We don't know exactly when this swap took place, but Sarah Reynolds married David Alderman in September of 1888, at the tender age of 15 if genealogical records are correct. She died in 1965 at the ripe old age of 92 and was buried in Garfield Cemetery. She had a farm and ran a boarding house in Garfield and was known as a nice, plump, quiet woman, and a very hard worker, often seen busy chopping wood or tending to farm tasks. Local residents remember going to her house to buy bread. Listed in the 1930 Census among the boarders in her house was one William C. Dymond, single white male, age 65.

The Chatham Courier reported on March 29, 1945, that "William Dymond, 80, died Monday morning at the home of Mrs. Sarah Alderman, where he had resided some time. He was the son of the late Mr. and Mrs. George Dymond and had been a resident of Stephentown nearly all his life. His funeral was held at the Presbyterian Church at Garfield on Wednesday. Burial was in Garfield cemetery."

We don't know what became of David Hamilton Alderman, or whether his hunting skills improved. He was born in 1851. There is no record of his death.



Sarah Alderman on her farm in the early 1920's (from SHS Historical Album #2)



WE HAVE A WINNER!

Members and supporters alike had been selling chances for several months towards a raffle for one of Barbara Peterson's hand-hooked rugs (proceeds went to the support of the Heritage Center, so special thanks to the family). At the 2017 SHS Annual Christmas Party, a winner was drawn.....Pat Bowman! Congratulations Pat. We hope you will enjoy this heirloom for many years to come.

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