

# Stephentown Historical Society Newsletter

Vol II, Issue No. XII

June 1991

## OLD RELIABLE REMEDIES

Those who lived around the turn of the last century recall many things from their childhood days, one of which is medical treatment to restore health. Have you ever wondered what happened to some of those old "reliable" remedies? There was the soggy compress that was filled with dry mustard and wet flour known as the mustard plaster. It was used to break-up congestion in the chest. The mustard stimulated the blood flow and hastened the healing process, so they said. How about the candle-like black Griswold Salve that drew out infection and deeply embedded slivers. It was heated over open flame until soft enough to be applied to the infected area on a clean cloth. It seemed to do its work! There was also Flax Seed Poultice that was used for the same treatment. What was the cause of their demise?

As the flu season approached and colds were on the increase many people would tie a camphor bag around their neck. Some used garlic for the same purpose.

There were many sore muscles after a hard day on the farm, so there were many liniments. Still found on medicine shelves is Sloane's Liniment. Save the Baby was widely used to treat colds. A carbonated soda was used for sour stomach. When a person had constipation, Epsom Salts was the common remedy. Few know how well Garfield Tea worked in such emergencies.



### Violet Ammonia.

For the toilet and bath. Violet Ammonia is a comparatively new article for toilet and bathing purposes, which has won the favor of every lady and gentleman who has given it a trial. Once used you would never be without it. We furnish Violet Ammonia in liquid form and in the very best condition for toilet and bath. It is inexpensive and a few drops added to the water before washing will be sufficient to perfume it. Intensely the cleansing and invigorating effects greatly leaving a mild but lasting odor always pleasing and refreshing.

No. 8K588 Violet Ammonia.  
Price, 1-pint bottle, ..... 17c  
Unavailable on account of weight.

-continued on pg. 3-

## GEORGE HOLCOMB'S BICENTENNIAL BIRTHDAY

"Today I am 12 years old". That is the way George Holcomb started his diary on June 13, 1805 and which he continued until March 1856, two months before he died.

The Stephentown farmer recorded births, deaths, marriages, illnesses, medicine, farming practices, prices of commodities and details on schools, churches, and local government. He gave us a picture of the life of the 'middling' man of the nineteenth century. Neither poor nor wealthy, he was an enterprising and industrious farmer, an example to generations to come of the worth of some of our past residents.

Mr. and Mrs. Raymond Meisberger are owners of the Holcomb homestead located on West Street, the last house in Stephentown before the Columbia County line. They are hosting a garden party and open house to celebrate George Holcomb's Bicentennial Birthday from 1-4 on June 15th and all are welcome.

\* \* \* \* \* 2nd ANNUAL \* \* \* \* \*

Certainly one of the highlights of the summer will be our annual CRAFTFEST - July 27, Muster Field (off Grange Hall Rd.), 10:00 - 4:00, rain or shine.

Over 35 craftpeople who have been approved by juried selection, will be exhibiting and selling articles made from natural materials. Throughout the day, there will be demonstrations, programs and activities for adults and children. A special effort has been made to offer a tempting menu of foods at reasonable prices.

This year's holder of the lucky raffle ticket will go home with a 2'x3' oval rug handcrafted by one of Stephentown's most accomplished artisans, Barbara Peterson. Raffle tickets are on sale now.

Proceeds from the fair go toward restoration of the Heritage Center.



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LINCOLN COMES TO STEPHENTOWN

Bruce Hanks tours the area giving presentations to schools, churches and organizations on highlights in the life of Abraham Lincoln. He himself a descendent of Nancy Hanks (Lincoln's mother), wears no make-up as his appearance resembles that of his ancestor Abraham Lincoln. He speaks, acts and dresses in character quoting witty sayings and passages from easily recognized speeches. This living history lesson lasts about an hour and will be time well spent for both adults and children.

The First Baptist Church and the Stephentown Historical Society are co-sponsoring this event - July 19 (7:30), at the church on Main Street.

P.S. You may see Abraham Lincoln walking along Main Street on July 19.



\* \* \* \* TAG SALE \* \* \* \*

Save your collectibles and throwaways for the annual Tag Sale Saturday, August 31, Dave's Field, Rt. 43, 10-4. Arrange to have large items picked up by calling Chairman Edith Strobl at 733-5552.

**REMINDER**



To our members who don't as yet own Stephentown's historical memorabilia like the:

Bicentennial Album	\$ 6.00
Historical Album	\$ 4.00
Pictorial Reflections	\$10.00
(Stephen Van Rensselaer)	
Epitaphs	\$13.50

Also, don't forget our 1991 calendar, now reduced to \$4.50 - with six months to go, greeting cards and notes for \$1.00 - and a special reminder for those seeking out local ancestry, "Epitaphs" recently published by Betty McClave.

The newest sale items are picture postcards of local scenes. These pictures were selected from photographs taken by residents. The contest winners being: Dave Jacobs, Dick Lewis and Ellen Fruchtman. The postcards will be available locally in June.

You will certainly find some, if not all, of the above fascinating and worth having.

Greeting Card



Garfield Road about 1920  
Acrylic by Bill Haight

ARCHITECTURAL EXHIBIT AND DRIVING TOUR

On August 17, 24, 31 and September 7 from 1-4 the Stephentown Historical Society will be presenting an Architectural Exhibit and Old House Driving Tour. The Exhibit, at the Heritage Center, will be pictures of and artifacts from local buildings. The Driving Tour will be the same days. With a map you will be able to drive by approximately 12 buildings which are representative of different periods in the history of Stephentown.



Grandma's Lye Soap was effective for treating lice. Plain Baking Soda was the old time Alka-Seltzer or Tums.

Making your own medicine was common. Lemon and honey was a common cold treatment still used today. The following is a recipe as advertised in a 1937 Pathfinder magazine: "From your druggist, get 2½ ounces of Pinex, a concentrated compound of Norway Pine, famous for its effect on throat and bronchial membranes. Then make a syrup by stirring two cups of sugar and one cup of water. With this one pint of syrup, mix in the Pinex. You'll be amazed how it takes hold of severe coughs, giving you double quick relief."

#### CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- June 15 G. Holcomb Birthday, Open House, R. Meisberger's West Street (1-4)
- June 30 Annual Strawberry Festival Zema's Too, Rt. 22 (1-5)
- JULY 8 SHAKER MUSIC Heritage Center (7:30)
- July 18 Red Cross Bloodmobile Town Hall (3-7)
- July 19 Abraham Lincoln Presentation 1st Baptist Church (7:30) co-sponsored
- July 27 2nd Annual Craftfest SVFD Muster Field (10-4)
- AUG 12 SCHODACK LANDING Town Hall (7:30)
- Aug 17 Architectural Exhibit at Heritage Center and
- 24 Old House Driving Tour
- 31 (1-4)
- Sept 7
- Aug 31 Annual Tag Sale Dave's Field, Rt. 43 (10-4)
- SEPT 9 BERKSHIRE HILLSMEN BARBERSHOP CHORUS Heritage Center (7:30)
- Oct 13 Pumpkin Festival Zema's Too, Rt. 22 (1-5)
- OCT 14 WOODWORKING TOOLS Town Hall (7:30)
- NOV 11 WHAT MILITARY SERVICE MEANT TO ME Town Hall (7:30)
- DEC 9 HOLIDAY POTLUCK, GIFTS AND SINGALONG Town Hall (6:30)

The Goodrichs were put down side by side for two hundred years next to a county road, fenced in by 'hard rock' maple trees.

Their first markers were slabs of slate wrested from the Taconic Valley where the Shadow Brook wanders through Goodrich Hollow.

Family plots for two hundred years takes some doing.

Always someone able bodied to do the work, never missing taxes, surviving pests and the freeze, the flu and small pox.

What went by the Goodrichs? Were they there when the anti-rent demonstrations stopped the feudalism of the Patroon in the Valley?

Did they lend a hand when Slaves were fed and rested down the road on the way to Canada?

Or did they avoid the ways of working folk for the advantage of a graveyard laid side by side for two hundred years?

April 1989  
Lonnie Nelson

Lonnie Nelson, a summer visitor whose ancestor Serena Twist was an indentured servant on one of the Van Rensselaer estates, shares one of her published poems with us.

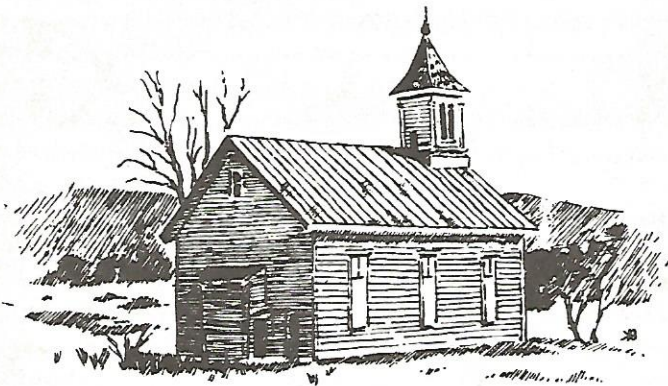


## HERITAGE CENTER UPDATE

The up-dating of the ancient electrical system was nearly completed during the past winter. A volunteer work team moved all the display cabinets and exhibit pieces back into place after electrical work.

A new front walk and handicapped ramp will soon be insalled.

We are seeking bids for insulation and heating. Many of you have been contacted to give to our Annual Fund Drive which goes toward the ongoing restoration of the Heritage Center. If you have not been contacted send your donations to Stephentown Historical Society, Annual Fund Drive, P.O. Box 11, Stephentown, NY 12168.



THE OLD METHODIST CHURCH



YOU ARE INVITED  
TO JOIN

THE STEPHENTOWN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

1991 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, c/o Anitta G. Burg, P.O. Box 339, Stephentown, NY 12168

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From Times Record



ALBANY BEEF - the sturgeon was once so plentiful in the Hudson River that it was a common main course in the local diet. The dictionary traces its origins to 1791.

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