



STEPHENTOWN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

March - 2025

New Building Update



The Building Committee is currently in Phase 1 of the New Building Project, i.e. getting estimates for the foundation of the new building. The building will be 36' wide by 48' long x 16' high. Site work will begin this year with the hope of having the foundation done by fall. We are looking at needing approximately \$20,000 and currently have \$3,275 dedicated to this endeavor. If you can, please donate to this cause so that we may display more of our collection and expand our collection preserving the history of Stephentown.



We are currently seeking volunteers to continue grounds work at the **Carpenter Cemetery** once the weather clears. If you are interested in helping out, please reach out to Carole Stuart, cstuart259@gmail.com, or call or text 413-442-5054.

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Holiday Potluck



Our annual potluck held in December was a huge success bringing neighbors and friends together to enjoy a smorgasbord of treats. It was a very eventful and productive meeting starting with the election of officers, which are as follows: President – Carolyn Hourihan, Vice President – Elly Lanier, Treasurer – Alan Stuart, Corresponding Secretary – Carole Stuart, Recording Secretary – Ellen Jennings, Trustee – Paul Raider and Trustee – Joy Gudz.



The next item of business was selecting the winners of our two raffles. The winner of the horse head wood carving donated by Joan Curtin was Pat Flint. The winner of the dove hook rug donated by the Peterson family was Rich Shedden.

Trustee & Officers sworn in at the Potluck meeting (l-r) Joy Gudz, Carole Stuart, Elly Lanier, Alan Stuart (Absent from photo are Paul Raider and Carolyn Hourihan)

Appreciation Recognition

As a volunteer organization, we firmly believe it is important to thank those people who stand out for their contributions they have made over the years to make us a success. As a small token of our appreciation, we presented the following recipients with a certificate and pin to show our gratitude: Richard Demick for his gardening expertise keeping our landscaping looking fabulous; Susan Gardner, a former trustee, for the hospitality of hosting our annual Strawberry Festival and utilizing her discounts on products and supplies, Marilyn Osgood, former president, Cemetery Committee, and current Program Committee member; Jean Bolen, who just finished two terms as Trustee and her work on all our fundraisers, and lastly Alan Stuart, our current Treasurer who keeps our website updated, records and uploads our programs, and generally keeps everything behind the scenes running smoothly. The Historical Society wishes to thank each of them for their contributions over the years.



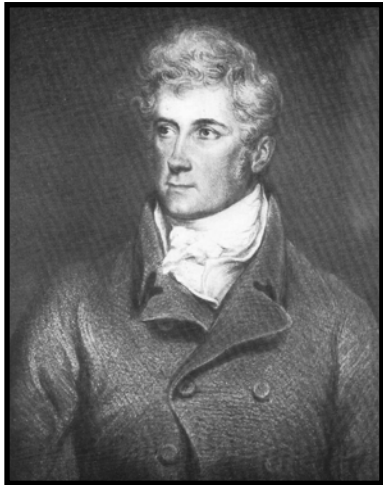
L-r are Richard Demick, Jean Bolen and Alan Stuart. (Absent from photo are Susan Gardner and Marilyn Osgood)

Stephen Van Rensselaer III - A Pictorial Reflection and Biographical Commentary

Our featured album this issue was written by Elizabeth W. McClave in 1984 and edited by Rowland McClave and William B. Zimmerman. McClave dedicated it "To the Holland Society of New York, whose interest and support of these Reflections have made this project feasible, a major contribution to the celebration of their Centennial and our Bicentennial." There are 36 portraits of "The Good Patron" in this volume, by various artists and in a variety of formats.

Aside from the Pictorial aspects, McClave starts with a fine essay on SVR's background, upbringing, education, his marriage to Peggy Schuyler, his interest and involvement in geological surveys and his furthering of education in the new State of New York. She follows this up with more detailed sections on SVR's involvement in transportation including the Erie Canal, and in politics, the military and the Free and Accepted Masons.

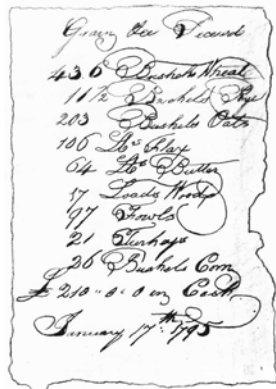
Among the more interesting aspects of this album is a letter from Captain Timothy G. Bosse, Instructor of History at the United States Military Academy regarding SVR's brief career in the military In the War of 1812. Appointed by the Governor to head the state militia, he soon became the senior US commander in northern New York as a Major General. As such he led the ill-fated attack across the Niagara River against the Canadians and British at Queenstown Heights. The attack was a disaster and Van Rensselaer resigned his commission soon after. Bosse gives an excellent brief history of the whole affair, but concludes that, "If Van Rensselaer had any fault, it was in his acceptance of a military commission. He was ill-prepared to lead a poorly trained and equipped army. He fell victim to the continuing feud between the militia and the Regulars - a feud that eliminated a vital means of support at Queenstown."



Stephen Van Rensselaer III
Artist Unknown
Courtesy of Rensselaer
Polytechnic Institute



Artist: Alexander Francois
Celebrating opening of the Erie Canal at the Manor
House of Stephen Van Rensselaer



Copy of farm receipt report
of Rensselaerwyck Manor,
January 17, 1795



Major General Stephen Van
Rensselaer
Artist: Charles Henard

Stephentown Historical Society

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Town Historian—Pat Flint

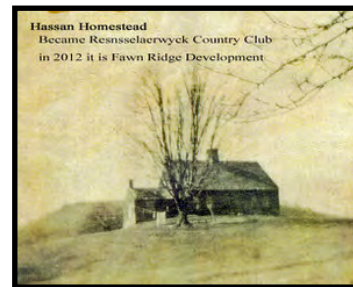
Curator—Bev McClave

Genealogist—Bill Zimmerman

TOWN HISTORIAN'S CORNER

Pat Flint

The Hassan Property located on the E. Nassau-Garfield Road has seen many changes over the years. Henry Hassan, born 1816 in Ireland, came to America



along with his wife, Gracia Lilly Boughton Hassan, in 1834, arriving in Philadelphia on May 26 from Londonderry, Ireland on the Ship "Garland". They were residents of Stephentown at least by 1855, according to the Census of that

year. Henry died in 1876; Gracia Lilly died ten years later. They are both buried in Garfield Cemetery.

Their son, Jared Boughton Hassan, born 1847, inherited the property. He married Sarah M. Gardner. Both are also buried in Garfield Cemetery. Their son, Boughton Jared Hassan, born 1881, became the heir and he married Carrie Rose Kittle. They had five children: Henry, Hazel, Florence, Ruth and Lillian. Lillian is actually my step-grandmother. Boughton lived a long life, outliving his wife by 40 years and passing on in 1964.

Fred Garfield, born 1897, later became the owner of the property. He and his wife Mollie were both Attorneys. After Mollie died, Fred married Olive at the Presbyterian Church on December 12, 1954. The reception was held at Fred's estate, the former Hassan property, in Stephentown. Gus Johnson was caretaker of the property at that time. He and Fred were good friends.



*Jared Boughton Hassan
1847-1896*

Sometime In the early 1950's Johnny Johnson and his wife Naomi moved to Stephentown and fell in love with the area. Johnny had a talent for fixing vehicles. He set up a shop on Rte 43 (where Bob Adler now owns). The Johnsons were close friends of Therman and Dorothy Steele Spencer of New York City. The two women had a lot in common. Naomi was a nurse in Troy and Dorothy was a nurse in New York.. Dorothy

would later become a director of the New York City Health Department.

When Therm realized that the 233.58 acre parcel located at 473 Garfield Rd. was for sale, he and Dorothy quickly purchased it. They named the property Rensselaerwyck Country Club. It consisted of a bar, a nine hole golf course, facilities for skeet shooting as well as archery, and a swimming pool which was built into the back side of the bar area, with a fenced in deck on the roof of the bar area. There was also a kitchen where food was prepared and sold to the patrons. And Dorothy always made a fantastic potato salad.

In the beginning most of the patrons were people of color, as were the Spencers and the Johnsons. There was a guest house and Therm renovated a a long vacant building into three rental rooms. He spent the week taking care of the business, while Dorothy would come on the week-ends to help run the resort.

Therm and Johnny Johnson were both members of the Stephentown Fire Department. Occasionally a clam steam was held on the property for the Fire Department members and their families.

Along the walls of the club's Bar area were many pictures of famous people Spencer was in contact with who donated their time and money to a program that Mr. Spencer believed in, the Black Inner-City Youth Program, located in New York City. Among famous people who were seen at the club was Sammy Davis Jr, another big supporter of the Youth Program.

Jack Brazie became friendly with Therm and Dorothy Spencer in 1964 and began to help out at the Club on week-ends with odd jobs and then as bartender on week nights. We were all neighbors at one time. Jack Brazie lived across Garfield Road from the Rensselaerwyck Country Club, and my family home was located at Swan Neck turn (as it was called back then) just to the to the right or north of the club.

Part of the original Hassan property later became a Gravel Pit, providing the Club with some extra income to help cover expenses. It became popular for hunters who would go there to site in their rifles prior to hunting season.

In 1983 the property became what it is today, an upscale housing development called Fawn Ridge

WE'RE ON YOUTUBE!

We have been our recording our monthly programs (with the speakers' permission of course) and posting them on YouTube. So if you are unable to attend in person, you can still enjoy our programs. You can access the site from our webpage—www.stephentown-historical.org or go directly to YouTube and search @Stephentownhistorical233.

Acquisitions



Portraits of Jesse and Addie Snow donated by their granddaughter, Darlene Przeliski.



Sykes Family photos – Above is one of a collection of generational photos of the Sykes family donated by their granddaughter, Eileen Sykes Roder. At a 1943 wedding held at the Atwater home are left to right: Blanche Coffee, Betty Green, Ruth Rose and Norma Rose.

Snow & Kenyon Families Photo Album

One page from the album donated by Donna Erickson. Pictured is Helen B. Kenyon participating at Stephentown's Bicentennial



UPCOMING PROGRAMS & EVENTS

**Programs are on the first Sunday of the month at 2 PM.
Admission is free and refreshments are served.**

Sunday, April 6	When Hops Was King in NYS - by Roger Savoy
Sunday, May 4	Gravestone Matters - Joe Ferrannini
Saturday, May 17	Hoosick Heritage Fair
Sunday, May 18	Annual Car Wash & Bake Sale - The New Scrub Board Laundromat & Car Wash
Sunday, June 1	TBA
Sunday, June 22	43d Annual Strawberry Festival - Gardner's Ice Cream Shoppe
Sunday, July 13	Annual Picnic - Stephentown Historical Society
Sunday, August 3	Clifford Oliver, Photographer and Reenactor
Sunday, September 7	Patriot Burials Commemoration at Carpenter Cemetery w/Saratoga Battle Chapter SAR Color Guard

IN MEMORIAM



Melvin T. Feathers ('Mel'): 1934-2025. Born and schooled in Berlin, New York, Mel was a master mechanic since a very young age, and there wasn't anything he couldn't fix! A dedicated member and officer in the Hancock Volunteer Fire Department and community member of the Stephentown Federated Church and also SHS. Mel loved to dance from the time he met Marge square dancing at Bridgeway and ballroom dancing as recent as New Year's Eve. They both fell in love with African drumming where they took weekly classes. Married to his wife Marge for nearly 70 years, he was the proud father of Stephen, Susan and Neil. Mel, you will be greatly missed.

Ice Harvesting

In our first program in the new year, Tom Ragosta, Watervliet Town Historian and Curator and President of the Watervliet Museum and Historical Society, presented a most informative and interesting history of ice harvesting. Tom showed the tools of the trade and provided a detailed description of the ice harvesting process, storage, and delivery. Some in the audience were old enough to remember the process and were able to contribute to the discussion.



Donating Items Through Meissner's

A Reminder that our arrangement with **Meissner's Auction Service & Antique Center** is an important revenue source for us. We have a consignment account there and any items accepted will bring 80% of the sale price to the Stepentown Historical Society. So check your basement, clean out the attic, scrounge the garage and see what you have that is in good saleable condition that you no longer need or want. An appointment is necessary. Call Meissner 's directly at 518-766-5002. Ask for Dolores. They take in consignments Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. Our account number is 5821.

Baseball In The Berkshires

Larry Moore, Director of Baseball in the Berkshires, gave an interesting and amusing talk on March 2 about the history of town baseball. Baseball was big in this area, on both sides of the state line. Larry pointed out that there are some 40 major league players born, raised or settled in the Berkshires, including Stepentown's own Elroy Face. Two of these are in the National Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, and Elroy, Master of the Forkball, surely will be some day. Larry was kind enough to copy, assemble and donate to SHS two large notebooks full of newspaper clippings about Elroy and local baseball in the Stepentown area.



Frozen Pies



We have a limited number of frozen pies available for your holiday table. Apple, Strawberry Rhubarb and Pumpkin. Call, text or email if you are interested!

Bottle & can collection

SHS has a collection site at the Stepentown transfer station for bottles and cans. Looking to get rid of yours and donate to a good cause? Consider dropping yours off today!

Please Support Our 2025 Sponsors!

Gardner's Coffee Shoppe
Scrub Board Laundromat & Car Wash
Stewart's Shops
Hannaford
Averill Park Septic Service LLC
Four Fat Fowl
Atlantis Equipment Corporation
The Eastwick Press

Membership renewals

Membership renewal notices sent by email this year. You can renew online or by mail. Thank you for your continued support!

Email: Do we have your correct email address? We send out program information, reminders and newsletters via email. Please reach out to Carolyn @ president@stephentown-historical.org to update our contact list so you don't miss out!

XCA Composites LLC
Valley Energy
SKZ Excavating
Woodcrafts, Etc
MK Electric
Zema's Nursery, Inc.
Morse Fuels
Senter Farm
Kinderhook Farms

Stephentown Historical Society Membership

(If you are a current member, a renewal notice will be sent to you in January.)

NEW MEMBERS

Please complete the form below and return it to:

(Check made out to:)

Stephentown Historical Society

PO Box 11

Stephentown, NY 12168

OR—go to www.stephentown-historical.org membership tab and renew online!

Membership Categories

Please check one:

- Individual Member — \$15.00 Supporting Member — \$50.00
 Family Membership — \$25.00 Life Member (Individual) — \$200.00
 Life Member (2 Person) — \$300 Business/Corporate — \$75.00

(Annual Membership is January—December)

Dues enclosed _____

Tax Deductible Donation _____ [501(c)(3) Organization]

I'd like to volunteer—please contact me: **YES** []

