



THE SENTINEL

Vol. 23, No. 4

The Newsletter of the New Scotland Historical Association

Summer 2015

Tuesday, June 2 7:30 P.M.

NSHA's Membership Drive Features a Performance of "Down with Rent!" (Program at the Old Songs building in Voorheesville)

The New Scotland Historical Association (NSHA) will be presenting a special performance of "*Down with Rent!*" *The Anti-Rent Rebellion in New York State* as part of its 2015-16 membership drive.

This program tells the story of the tenant rebellion against the Van Rensselaer landlords during the early 19th century. The program features authentic songs and stories written and sung by Anti-Rent protestors in the 1840s and features local musicians in period costumes.

Performers (left to right): Terry Leonino, George Ward, Greg Artzner, John Roberts, Bill Spence, Greg Clarke, Toby Stover, and George Wilson.

The Anti-Rent rebellion began in 1839 after the Patroon of the Manor of Rensselaerwyck, Stephen Van Rensselaer III died. Stephan's will divided the 726,000 acres manor between his two sons: Stephen IV, who received the land west of the Hudson River and William, who inherited the land east of the Hudson River. The will admonished them to recover the \$400,000 accumulated back rent that had accumulated after years of lax rent collections. The heavy-handed attempts by the Van Rensselaers to collect back rents and foreclose on tenant farmers in arrears sparked the rebellion. In the Helderberg's the tenant farmer's organized into an Anti-Rent Association and disguised themselves in calico robes and Indian masks. They assembled at every farm where the Albany County sheriff tried to evict farmers, and demanded that the sheriff destroy the eviction notices or be tarred and feathered.

The Anti-Rent Association met in 1844 and 1845 on the Fourth of July in great celebrations of resistance. At these gatherings songs were sung and speeches were made. Such a meeting was held in New Salem right here in the Town of New Scotland. The songs sung at this rally and meetings like it form the basis of what will be a fascinating and entertaining musical and dramatic program the program.

The program will be at the **Old Songs Community at 37 South Main St., Voorheesville** (the former the Voorheesville Public Library building). It will be free to all NSHA members and will cost \$10 for non-members. Non-members will be able to purchase an individual NSHA membership (\$10) in lieu of purchasing a ticket. NSHA members will be able to renew their membership at the program. Donations to defray the cost of the program will be gratefully accepted.

There is limited parking behind the Old Songs Community Center, which will be reserved for NSHA members with mobility limitations and those with handicap license plates. There is also a handicap ramp at the side of the building.

Additional parking is available at the Voorheesville Carpet Store, Philips Hardware or Village Hall parking lot.



Alan Kowlowitz, Program Chair

NEW SCOTLAND HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

P. O. Box 541

Voorheesville, NY 12186

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President's Letter

Dear Members and Friends,

I am both honored and humbled to begin my service as president of the New Scotland Historical Association: honored to have the support of so many dedicated members of the association, and humbled to be added to a long list of respected citizens of the town who have served in this position.

I personally cannot imagine a better place to call home. As I walk or drive in town, I am always reminded of earlier families that helped shape our town. Those early settlers faced unimaginable obstacles, yet they thrived by helping neighbors and the community in times of need. This year, in keeping with our



purpose to "promote an appreciation of local history..." our exhibit is titled "100 Years Ago...1915; Life in the Town of New Scotland," with a special Centennial Celebration of the Voorheesville Public Library. We are also highlighting the 200th anniversary of the Voorheesville Methodist Church. Clearly, the residents of the town thrived in part due to churches, schools, libraries, organizations and businesses that promoted community involvement. One hundred years ago, women still did not have the right to vote, the country was conflicted over the idea of prohibition, we were concerned over whether we should enter "The Great War" (World War I) and much of the town of New Scotland was still farmland. Although today, we face different struggles, and farming in the town has diminished, the "rural" atmosphere still exists, and community is as important now as it was then.

I hope that you will find time this year to participate in some of our wonderful educational programs, or visit our exhibit at the museum some Sunday afternoon. Please "Like" us on our Facebook page or visit our website to keep informed of the many great activities we have planned for the coming year.

Debbie Mahan

Mission Statement

The Town of New Scotland Historical Association preserves, protects and promotes history in the Town of New Scotland through the stewardship of material culture directly related to the town. The purpose is to promote an appreciation of local history, heritage and culture through research, publications and educational programs.

Museum Closed

July 5: 4th of July week-end
Sept. 6: Labor Day week-end

Eliza Jobin-Davis

Eliza Jobin-Davis, recipient of the New Scotland Historical Association High School Junior Award, is a student of C. A. Bouton High School. Her essay on the preservation of the Hilton Barn intrigued the Scholarship Committee. By using Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, along with other social media sites, Jobin-Davis explained that interested students could provide advocacy and push for funding, while educating the younger generation on the importance of the preservation.



Eliza Jobin-Davis receiving her award from Sherry Burgoon

Besides Jobin-Davis' exemplary academic achievements, she has received awards for her involvement in the Green Generation Science Olympiad, encouraging her desire to major in Chemical or Environmental Engineering, with a focus on sustainable and alternative energy. Eliza plans to make international work a part of her academic studies by working with non-profit organizations. A recent volunteer trip to New Orleans, along with her planned travel this summer to Guatemala spending 10 days with the Safe Passage organization exemplifies her worthiness of the 2015 scholarship. No doubt, Ms. Jobin-Davis will be changing the world that we all live in!

Eliza's essay will appear in the September issue of the *Sentinel*.

Sherry Burgoon, Committee Chairperson

Let's Go Strawberrying!

Lorraine Felter

Growing up in the country, nothing said summer like going strawberrying!

The strawberries we went to pick were not like today's berries. Today as the seasons change as you enter the grocery store, you are greeted by plastic containers with large red fruit they call strawberries. But they are nothing compared to the smell and taste of the berries we used to pick! The strawberries of my childhood bore no comparison – and they were not found in stores!

During early June everyone kept their eyes out for patches in pasture or along roadside banks of delicate white blossoms – the thicker – the better, and then as the days warmed – you watched for the fruit to turn from green to red. With granite pail or large bowl, we were sent off to pick berries for shortcake or if it was a good patch, a batch of wild strawberry jam.... the flavor of which is beyond compare.

And you'd go great distances for those luscious morsels! My sister discovered a hayfield near the Jericho railroad track and off we went, my sister, my mother-in-law and our baby daughter in her stroller, armed with pots. We spent 3 or 4 days picking large stems of 4-6 berries on each, then home to hull our find.

The best patch I found turned up across the road from our home in an unused field. I could sit on the ground and work in a clockwise circle picking the abundant fruit.... moving as necessary... several batches of jam were my reward.

One hot June day, my brother mowed and crushed a field of hay nearby this same area and the air smelled like strawberry jam being cooked!

In the late 1980s the property was sold and a horse and a donkey took over "my" strawberry patch – the plants soon disappeared!

But when summer comes, I still long for the days of picking "real" strawberries – the smell – the taste!

Do you remember those "wild" strawberries?

Time to Say Goodbye

To quote the title of one of my favorite Sarah Brightman songs, “It’s Time to Say Goodbye.” Over the last several years I have had the privilege of sharing some of my stories and recollections with you in the pages of the *Sentinel*. I hope you have enjoyed reading them as much as I did writing them. But as the song says, “It’s time to Say Goodbye.” How do you say goodbye unless you first say hello? My final story line will be how I first came to say hello to the NSHA and some of my favorite memories.

It all started with a simple phone call that went something like this. “Hello, Willard?” “Yes.” “This is Marion Parmenter and I don’t know if I have the right person or not, but NSHA is doing a book about the Town of New Scotland and we are looking for someone who might have pictures of Osterhout’s Indian Ladder Lodge.” I replied that she had found the right person and that I had a number of pictures she might be interested in. I made arrangements to meet with the Parmenters in the near future.

A few days later I made what was to be the first of many trips and many cookies later to Badgley Lane and the Parmenter home. I met Marion and Bob for the first time as we sat at their dining room table discussing the Town of New Scotland book project that they and others were working on. I had several pictures that I shared with them which they thought might be of use for the book. Next was coffee and some of Marion’s homemade cookies and some casual conversation. During our conversation Marion mentioned the NSHA and thought it may be something I would be interested in and told me when the next meeting was and where. I told her I would try to make a point of being there.

I attended my first meeting at the Wyman VW. Osterhout Community Center and I was hooked. I felt like I was coming home. A building where as a 5 year old I started my formal education, I was now returning some 50 years later to be part of an organization helping to preserve the history of the town I grew up in. I believe my former teachers Mrs. Sisson and Mrs. Chaffee, for once, would have been proud of me. After being a NSHA member for several years I was elected vice president and after that had the honor of serving as president for two terms.

As I think back over my years spent with the group, my mind is flooded with many wonderful memories too numerous to mention so I will just touch on a few of my favorites. Attending the dedication of new historical markers, touring the Helderberg Castle, opening of a new exhibit each year, the Christmas programs singing carols with Peg playing the piano, riding the Aquaduck through Albany and on the Hudson River, the bus tours to all those historical places organized by Mike and Peg Dorgan, the last meeting of the Helderberg Ski Club and the dinner they had catered at the Community Center, (Marion, Bob and I were privileged to be invited to that affair), refreshments after the meetings and who can forget the beautiful table setup often with fresh flowers prepared by Lorraine and Bob Felter and working in the museum on Sundays and giving guests a tour of the facilities.

Now, how did I become involved with the *Sentinel*? Once a teacher always a teacher and Marion was no exception, always expecting more of a student. Marion must have looked at me like one of her students because one day she said “Willard, you have so many stories about growing up in New Salem, you should write a column for the *Sentinel*.” I thought I might write one or two and that would be the end of it, but I was sadly mistaken, as you know. I continued for several years and enjoyed every minute of it. As part of the *Sentinel* committee you would also be asked to help with the folding, putting address labels and stamps on and getting them ready for mailing. My wife Jerri would accompany me to these work parties and became a regular member of the team.

Working with Bob and Marion over the last several years has certainly been a bright spot in my life. I don’t have words to express how I feel about the friendship they offered to Jerri and me, they are indeed very special people. Several times in the past I have stated that Memories are food for the soul and having memories provided by the NSHA and its members provide me with enough food to last a life time. Thank you, thank you, thank you!

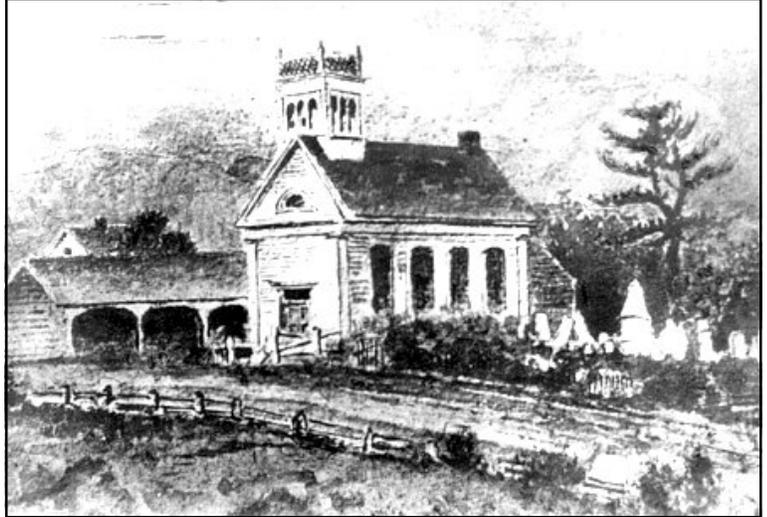
God Bless You All
Will

United Methodists in Voorheesville Celebrate a Bicentennial

The origin of the First United Methodist Church in Voorheesville predates the village by several decades, and also the Town of New Scotland, which was formed from Bethlehem in 1832. Although details are lacking, it is recorded that a Methodist Society was organized in 1815, when James Madison was U.S. President. Its location was the area between the Helderberg escarpment and nearby Black Creek. Rev. Elias Vanderlip of Albany was instrumental in bringing this about.

Prior to the erection of the original edifice, early settlers met in each other's homes for worship and class meetings. The latter were more frequent, since the circuit-riding preacher was unable to visit every society on his circuit every Sunday.

The earliest written record on file is the Trustees' Minutes, dated November 9, 1825, noting that trustees were elected. A motion was passed to incorporate under the name "North M.E. (Methodist Episcopal) Society of the Town of Bethlehem." The following year (1826), a church building was constructed on land apparently given by David Martin, who had come to Albany Co. from Rhinecliff-on-the-Hudson. He, with family members, "had cleared a section for a homestead," on what today is Rt. 156, or Altamont Rd. The site is identified by a state historical marker.



Artist's rendering of the Black Creek Methodist Church

During the Civil War years (early 1860s) a settlement grew where two rail lines crossed. This was the beginning of Voorheesville. Then in 1890, as the trustees looked into the future, they realized their church must be "in town." Thus, in the summer and fall of 1890, an amazing feat was ac-

complished. The church building in its rural setting was dismantled and reconstructed where it stands today, nine tenths of a mile away, at 68 Maple Avenue. On Sunday morning, September 9, 1990, this historic event was re-enacted, complete with horses and lumber wagon.

Over the ensuing decades, this congregation has gradually grown in numbers, keeping pace with the surrounding community. Hence, the physical size of the current church complex is evidence of a continuing need to expand. The most recent addition (office, parlor, and first floor nursery) was dedicated at a Service of Consecration conducted by Bishop Susan Morri-



Voorheesville Methodist Church with carriage shed in the rear c. 1915.

son on May 21, 2000. Not to be overlooked are countless internal improvements.

From a humble start 200 years ago, among folks who made their living on small family farms, this 21st Century parish, in 2015, is more vital and diverse than ever before. This is in no small measure due to the faithful leadership of an almost endless line of pastors and laity. We can only imagine what changes will inevitably occur in the next 100 years.

Lee Flanders, Church Historian

Our Last Effort As Editors of the *Sentinel*

We are absolutely delighted that Sherry Burgoon has agreed to take over leadership of the *Sentinel*. Bob first met her when she taught Social Studies briefly at the Guilderland High School where he taught. It was the fall of 1982. She then started teaching English in VCHS. In late 1999, it was suggested by Peg Dorgan that the New Scotland Township Book Committee ask her to proofread our Arcadia Book. What a treasure she was—she not only accepted our offer, but was wonderful to work with.

Coming from the area, Sherry has lots of contacts, knows the local history of not only Voorheesville, but the entire Town of New Scotland. She has lots of new ideas for the newsletter, and is lining up folks to help her. We did have a meeting with Sherry and other interested folks and outlined what all was involved, and how we have gone about producing the newsletter. Since then they have done a lot of brainstorming and are making plans for the Fall issue already. (We agreed to complete the current issue, Volume #23, No.4)

We've met so many folks over the years, while working on the *Sentinel*—and learned so much. Our original committee in 2000 consisted of Mike Dorgan, Will Osterhout and Joe Hogan. Soon Marie Hornick joined us and continues to be our faithful proofreader for each issue. Willard wrote so many wonderful articles—he became a regular contributor and he was so much fun at all of our meetings! Folks were always commenting to Bob and me about how they looked forward to his articles—especially the Highwayman Series! In addition to proofing, Marie wrote a series of articles on the Fire Departments and ambulance crews within the Town, among other articles. Mike has handed us lots of fun Historical Trivia articles over the years to use as fillers. Martha Slingerland has contributed many, many articles over the years pertaining to the history of the town and the genealogy of folks who have lived here. Sam Youmans, Lorraine Felter, Norma Walley were also frequent contributors. Thirty-two homes were featured in our This Old House Series, written by the homes owners.

We also want to thank Will and Jerri Osterhout and Janet Klopp for always helping out with the prepping of the newsletter for mailing. There were many others who pitched in when we asked for more help.

We thoroughly enjoyed working on the *Sentinel*, but after 15 years, we look forward to receiving it in the mail and sitting down to read it like everyone else!

Bob and Marion Parmenter



We hope you all enjoy a happy, healthy, and safe summer—Even though you can't enjoy the food and ice cream once served at Charlie Sander's Ice Cream Stand in Slingerlands! How many remember stopping there?



If you would like to become a member, please do so!

NSHA Membership Form

- \$10 Individual
- \$15 Family
- \$25 Sustaining
- \$100.00 Life (per person)

Name _____

Street _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Make checks payable to NSHA.

Please send dues to:

Sarita Winchell
NSHA Membership Chair
279 Helderberg Pkwy
Voorheesville, NY 12186

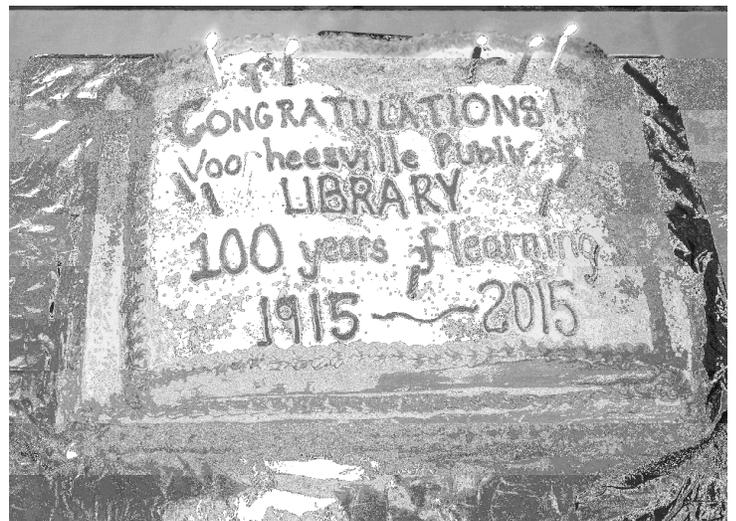
New Exhibit Opens

One Hundred Years Ago...1915; Life in the Town of New Scotland A Special Centennial Celebration of the Voorheesville Public Library

The Opening Celebration of the newest exhibit at the New Scotland Historical Association Museum was held on Sunday, May 17, 2015. The exhibit showcases the year 1915, with stories and memorabilia that give a sense of what life was like one hundred years ago. During that year, the "Voorheesville Free Library" opened its doors to the public on Saturday, January 23 for the purpose of loaning books to the residents of the school district. Visitors to the museum will learn about the library's beginnings, as well as the people who were instrumental in developing it into the Voorheesville Public Library that we know today. There are also displays describing the many social, school, church and political activities that involved the townspeople 100 years ago, with historical items that have been generously donated to the museum.



Debbie Mahan and Jim Corsaro, our researcher from the Voorheesville Public Library, worked together to create the library exhibit.



Everyone attending the exhibit enjoyed the special cake!



Our recently acquired Redmen Banner from New Salem's own Ouray Tribe is on exhibit.



Sarita Winchell is enjoying the Voorheesville Diorama created by Bob Shedd many years ago.

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Museum Hours

**The museum is
open year-round**

on Sunday

from

2:00 P.M. - 4:00 P.M.

Handicap Accessible

THE SENTINEL

New Scotland Historical Association

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