



THE SENTINEL

Vol. 21, No. 1

The Newsletter of the New Scotland Historical Association

Fall 2012

Civil War Letter #6

This Civil War letter is a continuation of a series of letters from John Lewis Houck to his wife, Sophia Elizabeth Beller Houck, Clarksville Post Office, NY. He enlisted September 12, 1862, for 3 years as a musician and played the fife. He is described as having "gray eyes, light hair, light complexion," and being 5'6" tall. *Transcribed by Charles Melbert from the original letters at the Manuscript and Special Collections, NYS Library, Cultural Education Center, Albany, NY.*

The following are his concerns of the day.

Camp near Falmouth Va March 8th 1863

Dear Wife

I now take my pen in hand to let you know that I am well at present hoping this will find you all the same I received your letter and one from uncle Jim last night and was very glad to hear from you all the stamps have all come safe except them you sent me when I was in Alexandria I feel pretty lame and sore to day on account of the transfer that I yesterday I was twice down to Fredericksburg and back which is about five miles I went to the 61st and I seen John Hallenbeck and Len Applebee and Garr, Bradt they are all well one of our new recruits laid sick in the hospital his name is George Swarhout he is a cousin to George Fuller I went down to let his brother in law know that he was very sick and got back about four o'clock and the Capt sent me right back to tell him if he wanted to see him alive that he must come back with me he did come but was too late poor George was dead he had a fever and will be buried tomorrow and I will have to play the death march the 61st lays on one side of the river and Fredericksburg on the other and I had a good sight of the rebels and their rifle pits and batteries Fredericksburg has once been a splendid city but it is now all shot and torn to pieces by our forces it is still in the hands of the rebels and will stay so a long time for our forces can never take it I want you to send me a few stamps again for I have no more you must write just soon as you get this for I want to hear from you every week I made 45 cts yesterday just by pegging the heels on a pair of boots I done it in fifteen minutes and that will last me sometime again for bread now be sure and write as soon as you get this and let me know all the particulars so now I shall have to close by saying good bye

I remain yours Forever

John L Houck



Mark Your Calendars!

Tuesday, Oct. 2

**Civil War Medicine:
Myths & Reality**

Speaker: Dr. Matt Farina

7:30 P.M.

**Wyman Osterhout Community
Center, New Salem**

Membership Report

The General Membership renewal cycle is almost complete for the 2012-2013 year; many thanks to the members who have already submitted their dues.

Also, many thanks to the members who sent funds in support of NSHA's annual project; your donations will make it possible to upgrade the office computer and the equipment used for program presentations.

Remember, it is not too late to pay your dues now! There is a form on page 8.

Melanie Ernst, Membership Chairperson

NEW SCOTLAND HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

P. O. Box 541

Voorheesville, NY 12186

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Robert Parmenter 765-4652

Sentinel Committee

Robert and Marion Parmenter,
Editors

Marie Hornick

Willard Osterhout

Web Page

www.newscotlandhistoricalassociation.org
Email: newscotlandhistoricalassoc@gmail.com

President's Letter

Fall is a busy season for the Association. We begin our 2012-2013 Historical programs starting in October with a presentation on Civil War medicine, followed in November with a fascinating look at the impact of mechanization on American farms in the early 20th century. NSHA is also in the process of re-establishing and retooling its scholarship program to focus on high school juniors and will raise the amount of the scholarship. Our exhibits committee will begin planning a new exhibit focused on how people entertained themselves before the advent of TV. NSHA has also re-published Dennis Sullivan's **Voorheesville, New York: A Sketch of the Beginnings of a Nineteenth Century Railroad Town** with a new cover design by local artist Connie Burns. We will be selling this edition for \$15 and hope to promote it locally during the fall.

We would like to be doing even more, especially in the areas of historic sites and museum collections management. However, we are experiencing a slight "recession" in terms of people power. Although the Association is very solid financially due to our member support and the generosity of donors, finding volunteers willing to serve as Vice President, committee chairs and committee members, finding volunteers, especially new people, to serve on the Association's committees and Board has been difficult. You may have noticed the advertisement for Museum volunteers during the summer that appeared in some of the publications. In this edition of the *Sentinel* there is a notice of soliciting members willing to serve as Vice President, committee chairs, and committee members. If you haven't been involved in the Association please consider doing so. If you have been active in NSHA previously and would like to do so again, we welcome you back. I can assure you that it will be a rewarding experience.

Alan Kowlowitz

Exhibits Report

It is now time to start planning for next year's exhibit. The committee has chosen to display through re-enactment and visual aids the different forms of entertainment families and communities performed before TELEVISION—which seems to have taken over our lives. Anyone wishing to serve on this project is welcome to join. It should be a good time! Ideas are also welcome. Please call me at 768-2462 and leave your name and a number you can be reached and I'll return your call.

Also, we are starting a collection of Vietnam War veterans' photos to add to our display boards of WWI, WWII, and Korean War veterans. You may either bring them to the museum on Sundays 2-4 pm to be later scanned into the computer or mail them to me with a return address and they'll be returned. Any type of service to the war effort will be considered. Thank you.

Sandy Slingerland
PO Box 185
Clarksville, NY 12041

NSHA's Junior Award

Marie Hornick

A \$1,000 prize, a competition open only to high school juniors in the Town of New Scotland, a possible opportunity to help with college application fees or travel to visit colleges—these are a few of the changes the Scholarship Committee has made to the previous competition offered by the Association. With the advice and support of the NSHA Board, Don and Anne Eberle, and the Eberle Foundation, the new program will be open to all juniors residing in the Town of New Scotland. This would include students who are public school students, private school, parochial school or home-schooled students. Many high school juniors do not have a major field of study in mind yet; since we are a historical association, we will open the competition to students **who show an interest** in the fields of History (ex. American History, World History, Political Science, Archaeology), Museum Studies (ex. Curator/Director, Conservator, Archivist) or Education (ex. Elementary grades, Science, Mathematics, English, Technology, Languages).

The prize will be a check for \$1,000. The competition will take place from January to mid-March, with applications being available after January 1, 2013. The person winning the competition will have the option of keeping the check to help pay tuition, or of using the money to visit colleges, or to pay for books and supplies needed for school. The student and her/his family will make the decision after receiving the check.

Committee members (Marie Hornick, chairperson, Peg Dorgan, Jerri Osterhout, Bill Hornick, Alan Kowlowitz , Herb Reilly) examined reasons students had given in the past for not entering the previous competition, and the NSHA Board and Scholarship Committee tried to address these concerns.

Each applicant will be required to submit a completed application form, along with copies of his/her resume and references, and an official high school transcript through the first half of Junior year, plus a 250 word essay on a given topic. The winning entrant will be chosen in March or early April of Junior year, and the check will be presented at the New Scotland Historical Association program in May.

Become a more active member of YOUR organization!

Ethie Moak

Do you have some time to spare to help us preserve, protect and promote history in the Town of New Scotland? The NSHA Board consists of dedicated volunteers, many of whom have served for many years and would like to train someone else to step into their shoes. The Board meets once a month and most of us attend programs which are presented from October through May.

We would like you help us preserve the history of the Town of New Scotland for future generations. We are looking for volunteers to fill the positions of Vice President, (who also serves as Chair of the Program Committee. Programs are all set up for the current year), Collections Committee Chair, Coordinator of Museum Volunteers and the Historic Sites Committee Chair. We also welcome anyone who is interested is serving on these committees. If any of these positions interest you, please contact President Alan Kowlowitz, at 518-765-4212 or send an e-mail to:

newscotlandhistoricalassociation@gmail.com.

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.

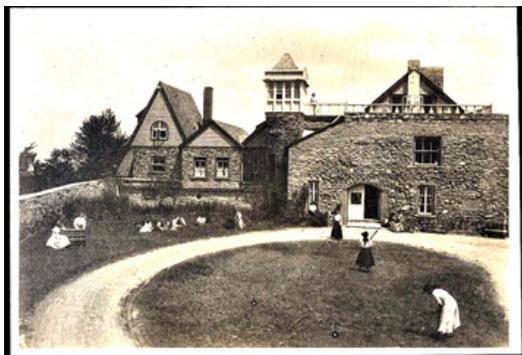
CAMP PINNACLE—Will Osterhout



THE FIRST CAMP AT INDIAN LADDER
Our first year of camp in 1898

I wonder how many of our members attended Camp Pinnacle and if they knew it was the first girl's camp in the United States and possibly the world. The camp's first year was 1898 and it was held in half of the farmhouse pictured above. This home was located in Thacher Park near where the old swimming pool was. You reached it by coming up the old road which started from the Altamont Road near the home now owned by the Anderson family and the old Meadowdale train station.

The next location was known as “Cassidy's Castle” and was on Old Stage Rd. at the top of the hill above Altamont. Even though the facilities looked very elaborate, most of the girls lived in tents.



At this point the camp was known as “The Young Woman’s Summer Camp At Altamont.” Eventually the camp purchased this property and owned it for several years. After selling the property, the camp spent the summer of 1912 at East Northfield, MA. By now the problems of moving the camp location every couple of years was becoming to much of a chore and they began looking for a permanent location.

They located a farm and barn built in the 1700s on Pinnacle Rd. owned by the Schenectady Lumber Co. They purchased the property but there was a lot of work to be done before they could move in, so they rented a farmhouse in East Berne for the summer of 1913.

This farm house in East Berne was the home of the girls camp in 1913. This home was formerly owned by Margaret Giebitz and is now in the Giebitz family.



In 1914 the camp opened on Pinnacle Rd. where it is still located today.



Camp seen from Pinnacle Road



Our first year at Camp Pinnacle 1914

Even at this new location for many years the sleeping facilities for the girls were still tents. Today they enjoy modern housing with indoor bathroom facilities. The camp is now co-ed and features many new programs for the campers, such as paint ball, high ropes, skate board park, swimming pool, horseback riding, a special art camp and running camp.

Our camp tent in the summer of 1915



The next installment of Tales of a Highwayman will be found in the next issue!

*Peg Dorgan emailed me the following and thought we could use it in the **Sentinel**. We don't know its origin, but it brought back memories for both of us, and the **Sentinel** Committee decided to share it.*

The Basic Rules for Clotheslines:

(If you don't know what clotheslines are, better skip this!)

1. You had to hang the socks by the toes....**NOT** the top.
2. You hung pants by the **BOTTOM**/cuffs...**NOT** the waistbands.
3. You had to **WASH** the clothesline(s) before hanging any clothes—walk the entire length of each line with a damp cloth around the lines.
4. You had to hang the clothes in a certain order, and always hang “whites” with “whites”, and hang them first.
5. You never hung a shirt by the shoulders—always by the tail. What would the neighbors think?
6. Wash day on Monday! **NEVER** hang the clothes on the weekend, or on a Sunday, for Heaven's sake!

(cont. on page 6)

The Mosher Family in the Town of New Scotland

By Irving G. Mosher

The Historical Association of the Town of New Scotland is celebrating 40 active years of accumulating and organizing the history of our town and the families that inhabited it. It's interesting to discover how the family names have spread out and commingled with other families over the last 200-300 years.

I have records of seven generations of the Mosher family and at least five generations have lived their entire life in the Town of New Scotland.

The history of my family started with:

1. Stephen Mosher 1771-1806
Wife—Phebe Joslin 1769-1840
2. Issac Mosher 1801-1855
Wife—Hannah Baumans 1804-1840
They had 13 children
3. Nathaniel Mosher 1835-1906
Wife—Elizabeth Radley 1840-1870
4. Niles Mosher 1862-1950
Wife-Estelle Bradt 1866-1938
5. Niles Mosher, Jr. 1902-1936
Wife-Zella Giles 1907-1975
6. Irving Mosher 1929-
Wife-Ruth Mosher 1932-
Sister-Dona Mosher 1928-
7. Mark Mosher 1952-
Wife-Julie Schoolcraft

I was born on Mosher Road, now known as Waldenmier Road. (*near Unionville*). My grandparents, Niles and Estelle, and my parents, Niles, Jr. and Zella and my sister, Dona, and I (Irving) lived on the farm until my father died at 34. The family sold the farm and bought the Hartman farm in the hamlet of Unionville.

I started school at the age of five and spent the next eight years attending the local school house (which is still standing) next to the Unionville Reformed Church. The school had two rooms and a cloak room. One room was the library and the other held all the classes with one teacher for all eight grades. My grandfather provided the pot-belly stove that was our only heat. I graduated in 1942 and went to the centralized school in Delmar. When I was ten years old, my Uncle, Fred Bradt, gave me my first

bicycle and in good weather I would ride to school. In those days, the traffic was a lot less, so it was safe to ride out on the road. We even went sleigh riding down the Unionville Hill, because the road was not salted.

When I married in 1952, my mother and my sister went to live with Anna Mosher Mathias near the railroad overpass, and I raised my family of four in the same house on the Hartman farm that I grew up in. In 1983, I moved to Voorheesville, which is still in the Town of New Scotland, which makes me a resident for 81 years.

(Continued from p. 5)

7. Hang the sheets and towels on the OUTSIDE lines so you could hide your "unmentionables" in the middle.
8. It didn't matter if it was sub-zero weather...clothes would "freeze-dry."
9. ALWAYS gather the clothes pins when taking down dry clothes! Pins left on the lines were "tacky"!
10. If you were efficient, you would line the clothes up so that each item did not need two clothes pins, but shared one of the clothes pins with the next washed item.
11. Clothes off the line before dinner time, neatly folded in the clothes basket, and ready to be ironed.
12. IRONED? Well, that's a whole OTHER subject!

Number 5 really made me chuckle. My grandparents lived down the road from us and my grandfather usually hung up the laundry for my grandmother. He always hung the shirts up by the shoulders. A little later my grandmother would go out and turn them around. My mom and dad frequently would watch this and chuckle about it. I had no idea it was a clothesline rule at the time. Guess it is a good thing we were the only neighbors!!

I have a long clothesline which goes from our back stoop to a pulley very high on a tree in our yard. The first time that rope broke I remember looking at it and trying to figure out how in the world to replace it. Then I had an idea. I went to Crannell's and bought new rope and got out my trusty needle and thread and sewed the new rope to the broken end hanging down from the tree. Pulling very carefully, I actually got it through the pulley. I've done it several times since, over the past 43 years! And yes, I always wash the clothesline, too!

Marion Parmenter

Does anyone else have any clothesline stories?
Please share them with the Sentinel Committee: news-cotlandhistoricalassoc@gmail.com

New Scotland Historical Association Program Schedule 2012-2013

October 2, 2012 **Civil War Medicine: Myths and Reality** Civil War Medicine is often described as being “Brutal, Barbaric, Butchery.” However, major medical advances occurred during the War. Dr. Matt Farina, Clinical Professor of Pediatrics at Albany Medical and member of the Capital District Civil War Round Table will explore some of these advances and explain how the myths about Civil War medicine arose and how Civil War military medicine is still practiced today.

Nov. 5, 2012 **From Muscles to Motors on the Farm: Henry Ford and the Great American Tractor Wars, 1910-1930** Dr. Milton C. Sernett, Professor Emeritus, at Syracuse University will describe the transition from horse power to tractor power on the American farm that took place during the early 20th century using rare images from the archives of the great tractor manufacturers and depictions of the seasons of agricultural work before the factory farm replaced the family farm.

December 4, 2012 **An Old Fashioned Christmas Celebration---**We will be kicking off the Holiday Season with an old-fashioned celebration featuring holiday music and refreshments from an earlier time.

Feb.5, 2013 **The Underground Railroad Turned on Its Head: Old Themes, New Directions** Based on the latest research Mary Liz and Paul Stewart, co-founders of the Underground Railroad History Project of the Capital Region (URHPCR), will provide an updated view of the Underground Railroad that sheds light on the role of the Capital District, women and African-Americans in the Pre-Civil War fight against slavery.

March 5, 2013 **Mayor Corning: Albany Icon, Albany Enigma** Award-winning journalist and author Paul Grondahl will discuss aspects of the life and career of Albany’s iconic Mayor, Erastus Corning III based on in-depth research into the Mayor’s own records and other primary sources. Mayor of Albany for 42 years, Corning's life is intertwined with Albany life and politics spanning more than four decades.

April 2, 2013 **Thacher Park –A Gift to the People for 99 Years!** Timothy J. Albright, former NSHA President and local historian, will present the story of how a wilderness become John Boyd Thacher State Park using early photographs drawn from the collections of local families and institutions including NSHA’s own collections.

May 7, 2013 **The Sights and Sounds of Scotland Come to New Scotland: The Pipe Music and Scenery of Scotland** Donald F. Lindsay, professional piper, respected bagpipe educator and authority on the classical music of the Highland bagpipe, will present in words, photographs, and pipe music how the Highland Bagpipe is closely linked to the language, culture, history and beauty of the Scottish landscape.

All programs will be held at the Wyman Osterhout Community Center, 7:30 P.M., 7 Old New Salem Rd., New Salem, off Route 85; they are free and open to the public. Refreshments will be served. The museum will be open one half hour before the program begins.

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Museum Hours

Sundays

2:00—4:00 P.M.

Come and visit our fascinating exhibit:

NEW SCOTLAND JOINS the CIVIL WAR

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: NSHA

Melanie Ernst, Membership Chair

P.O. Box 541

Voorheesville, NY 12186

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

P. O. Box 541

Voorheesville, New York 12186