



THE SENTINEL

Vol. 26, No. 1

The Newsletter of the New Scotland Historical Association

Fall 2017

TOWN OF NEW SCOTLAND THE COUGHTRY FAMILY AND LIFE IN THE 1800'S

The New Scotland Presbyterian Church

By 1790, the McCoughtry family was beginning to Americanize their name by dropping the "Mc." Coughtry was a well-known name to neighbors and friends, and by 1799, the "Mc" never appears again in the records of the New Scotland Presbyterian Church.

John Coughtry had faithfully served for twenty-two years in the New Scotland Presbyterian Church as Trustee, Elder and Clerk of Session. His wife Mary died in 1804 and is buried in the church cemetery. John died nine years later in 1813. He is buried next to Mary. Their grave-stones, as well as those of many other Coughtry family members, are located in this beautiful old cemetery.



A Farm Divided

After John's death, the Coughtry farm was divided between sons William and Alexander. Alexander and his family were already living in the frame house built by John Junior on the 100 acre "North Farm." The descendants of Alexander lived there until 1944, when Isaac L. Coughtry, the last in Alexander's line, sold the farm to his third cousin Howard Charles Coughtry.

William inherited the "South Farm" of 108 acres. William and his wife, Arianna (Moak) had ten sons and one daughter. By 1852, grandson William Henry and his wife, Gertrude (Gitty) Ann Whitbeck Coughtry were the sole owners of the South Farm. They were also the last Coughtrys to own the South Farm and live in the old homestead. All of their children eventually left the farm to pursue other vocations. Daughter Harriet married Samuel Raynsford, a name still known in the town today. Their youngest son, Robert T. Coughtry, was a Supervisor for the Town of New Scotland. He married Charlotte Stevens, and their children were Gertrude, Laura and Royal W. Coughtry. Laura Coughtry was a Village of Voorheesville as well as Town of New Scotland registrar for many years.



Harriet Coughtry Raynsford

We are thrilled to have received permission from the family of David E. Coughtry to have reprints made of the "Coughtry Family History From the Middle Ages to 1900."

This is a comprehensive history of the Coughtry family for anyone interested in one of the original families to settle in the town of New Scotland, complete with maps and a family tree.

Books are available at the Museum for \$15.00. or e-mail:

newscotlandhistoricalassoc@gmail.com

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President's Letter

I hope everyone had a fine summer. As we start our Program season, I would like to point out our 2017-18 program schedule available in this issue of *The Sentinel*. We will be hosting fascinating programs that range in topics that span the Dutch colonial period to New York's role in World War I. I also urge all of you to visit our museum on a Sunday afternoon or before a program to view our two new exhibits, *The Punkin-town Fair "75 years and counting"* and *Women in New Scotland Politics*.

I also would like to turn to a topic that should be of interest and concern to all our members. The Town of Scotland has begun a process to update the Town's Comprehensive Plan. This plan will guide the Town's future development. The Village of Voorheesville is wrapping up its planning process which was very ably lead by a broadly representative committee and experienced planning consultant. I think that the Town's Comprehensive Plan Update Committee may benefit from the experience of the Village of Voorheesville.

One important feature of the Voorheesville planning process was the extent to which it incorporated and encouraged wide citizen participation both face-to-face through workshops and focus groups, and, electronically through web surveys and other e-democracy techniques. Another feature of the Voorheesville process was that the planners reached out to various cultural institutions in the village and region including our association. This made it possible for NSHA to make a case for considering historic preservation in all its aspects in planning the future of the village. As I noted in the last issue of the Sentinel, historic preservation is not just the preservation of historical structures that are threatened, it is also the less tangible aspects of our history, such as the historic character of our communities and the sense of engagement with our communities' history on the part of the town's citizens.

The Town's Comprehensive Plan Update Committee has made a good start in its initial online survey by asking citizens the importance they put on the preservation of the Town's rural character, open space, historical buildings, agricultural lands, and natural vistas such as the Helderberg Escarpment. The outpouring of support for preservation of the Hilton Barn has already demonstrated the depth of support for the preservation of historic structures. The survey is just the beginning of what will be an extended process. I would urge the Committee and Town to directly engage NSHA as well as other stakeholders in the planning process. Perhaps our very able Town Historian could be included as an ex officio member of the Committee. For our part, we will reach out to the Town to see what part NSHA can play in aiding the planning process.

Alan Kowlowitz, President

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.

The Coughtry Family *(continued from page 1)*

The Albany and Susquehanna Railroad Company

In 1850, an Act was passed “to authorize the formation of Railroad Companies and to regulate the same.” The Albany and Susquehanna Railroad Company was authorized to “take and acquire” a strip of land on the Coughtry South Farm to use as a right of way.

The new railroad tracks were quite elevated above ground level where they crossed LaGrange Mills Road (now Hilton Road). There was a very steep highway grade built on either side of the crossing. This made it impossible to see what was coming on the other side, and a very dangerous site for horse and wagon drivers, as well as future automobile drivers.

The new tracks also separated 8 1/2 acres of farm land from the South Farm. The Coughtrys risked life and limb, farm equipment and animals every time they crossed the tracks to work this land. They eventually convinced the railroad to purchase this land.

Hilton Crossing was a regular passenger stop on the railroad, located very close to James Henry’s house. Night and day the Coughtry family heard sounds of hissing steam, squealing brakes, shrill whistles, steel wheels churning on the tracks and foul smelling coal smoke that covered clothes hanging on the wash line and coated the house and windows with grime.

The trains and tracks they ran on changed the lives of the Coughtry family in many ways. James A. Coughtry, a cousin of James Henry, was killed by the noon train on January 21, 1900, and James Henry’s son, John, was killed when his automobile was hit by a train at the Upper Font Grove Road Crossing in 1923.

Today, these tracks are known as the “Albany County Helderberg-Hudson Rail Trail.” We can walk and bicycle where the great trains once carried passengers from Albany to Voorheesville and beyond. In 2016, the Hilton Barn was moved and preserved for future generations to gather on this land that was once productive farmland.

THOMPSON’S ORCHARD

When Gertrude Coughtry passed in 1906, her children agreed to sell the old South Farm. They accepted a purchase offer from Ralph Thompson, who extensively remodeled the house, planted 3,000 fruit trees in “Thompson’s Orchard,” and constructed storage facilities on the farm.

Written by Debbie Mahan with information used from
“COUGHTRY FAMILY HISTORY From the Middle Ages to 1900” by David E. Coughtry, 1999

IN MEMORY OF

The New Scotland Historical Association was saddened to learn of the death of Collections Chairperson, Lea Warden’s mother, Bonnie Foster on August 1, 2017.

Bonnie was the wife of Eric D. Foster, M.D.

Our sincere condolences to the entire Foster family.

Equal Rights vs. “Burned Biscuits” New York State Women Win the Right to Vote: The 100th Anniversary

-by Judy Kimes

November 6, 2017: The 100th anniversary of the passage of the referendum amending the New York State Constitution and giving women their full right to vote.

This was the culmination of a hard fought 69-year battle that had its start at the Seneca Falls (NY) Convention in 1848. Marching, fund raising, rallies, and not a few arrests followed. A woman suffrage amendment to the NYS Constitution finally made it to the ballot on November 2, 1915, but was defeated by a margin of 194,984 votes.

On November 6, 1917, the amendment came up again and was approved with almost 54% in favor. This in spite of a strong anti-suffragist movement whose members feared that if women received the right to vote, “political gossip would cause her to neglect the home, forget to mend our clothes and burn the biscuits.” *

Locally, the 1917 woman suffrage amendment did not pass. As reported in the Nov. 9, 1917 issue of *The Altamont Enterprise*, “Although the vote was overwhelming against the amendment in this county and a few other sections of the state, the vote in N.Y.C. and the rest of the state carried it to victory.”

The U.S entry into the Great War on April 4, 1917, provided added momentum to the suffragist movement. They became very involved in the war effort. *The Altamont Enterprise* reported that on July 28, 1917, in Berne and on August 10 in Voorheesville suffrage conferences were to be held with talks entitled *What Women Are Doing in War Service*, *Women and War Service*, and *Food Conservation*. Instructions were given on how to eliminate the waste of food and fuel, and brochures describing further food conservation methods were available at suffrage headquarters in Albany. One highlight of the Voorheesville conference (held at the Methodist Church) was the “War Thrift Picnic,” at which each person was asked to bring “some original war thrift dish.”

These conferences were being held throughout the nation. In September of 1917, suffrage supporters at the higher levels of the federal government went on record supporting the thinking that woman suffrage was a “war measure.” Further, they stated that NY state voters “could not refuse democracy to its own women” as long as the United States was engaged in a war for democracy. **

The amendment passed and on November 5, 1918, New York State women could head to the polls and vote. This momentous occasion seems to have been a relatively low-key event in the Town of New Scotland and its environs. The November 1 issue of *The Altamont Enterprise* simply stated, “Next Tuesday the voters of Albany County with the women participating for the first time will go to the polls and elect new state officers....” In the November 8 issue, the Friday after the election, the winners were listed with no mention of the women’s participation. Van LaGrange’s diary entry for November 5 says, “To stone house after hay. To election Unionville.”

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That does not mean this was not an exciting event for the women of the Town of New Scotland and beyond. On visiting the new exhibits at the NSHA museum, one can see the County Record showing the names of the 389 New Scotland women who registered to vote in this landmark election of 1918, along with the political party in which each was enrolled. I was proud to see my grandmother, Bertha Slingerland, on the list. In 1918 she would have been 32 years old, with a 7-year-old daughter and a 3-year-old son. She was a hard-working farm wife with a calm demeanor and much common sense; and if she ever burned the biscuits, it was the fault of that temperamental old wood stove!

Thank you again to Donald Slingerland for his willingness to share his knowledge and expertise as well as photos from his extensive collection.

Also, a note of appreciation for *The Altamont Enterprise* and its 133 years of faithfully recording the events of our area. Having this long stream of information available is such a remarkable and valuable resource!



Tintype photo of Bertha Slingerland (seated left) around 1918 with her family and the family of James LaGrange (son of Van). (Courtesy of Don Slingerland)



A few years later, Bertha Slingerland with her daughter, Dorothy, and friends. (Courtesy of Don Slingerland)

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:

Amy Heebner
NSHA Membership Chair
1403 Delaware Turnpike
Delmar, NY 12054

MUSEUM UPDATE

The Museum will be closed on the following dates:

- Sunday, September 4, 2017 Labor Day Weekend
- Sunday, October 8, 2017 Columbus Day Weekend
- Sunday, November 26, 2017 Thanksgiving Weekend

SUNSHINE'S CORNER

By MaryBeth (Frohlich) Felice

My brother (Richard Frohlich) and I took a road trip on a beautiful summer day up into the majestic Helderbergs, into Berne and beyond in his little Miata, top down, sun up – it was perfect! Again I was impressed with the beauty of this area; twisty, quiet roads winding through the mountains, traversing small villages, fields and woods. Large areas of forest surrounded us with green. We drove for miles and had lunch at a funky little diner in Middleburg, fancy fare like cheeseburgers and giant Diet Cokes. Our big stop was at the flea market in Preston Hollow-wherever that is. I, who really likes Fleas, couldn't believe the size of the fair! Of course, one step out of the car and I spied a fancy dome topped trunk about fifteen inches tall. It was in perfect condition and I could just picture it housing my silverware collection. A little negotiation and it was mine! At the end of the afternoon and all that walking around that was my only purchase.



The ride in Richard's sporty Miata brought back some fond memories. When I was a senior in Voorheesville Central School, my father's brother, Rudy Frohlich, accepted a teaching post in Arkansas and stopped for a visit on his long journey. He drove a conservative station wagon and towed his lovely two seater MGA sports car behind it. Turquoise with a white racing stripe, it was a seventeen year old's dream. And my uncle asked if we would babysit the car while he went south to teach! He felt that a sports



car driving new professor in the Deep South wouldn't portray the appropriate image. Well of course I'd take care of that! I had learned to drive on an automatic, but how quickly I learned to drive a standard shift. Obviously, it was a heavenly summer.

So the seasons go, but I admit, I love the summers the best and have many fond memories of them, but my sports car driving summer was one of the most stupendous.

New Scotland Historical Association's Program Schedule 2017-18

(Titles are tentative and subject to change)

Oct. 3, 2017 (7:30-9:30pm) – “The Erie Canal’s Early Years” - Using seldom-seen archival records from the first days of Clinton's Ditch, Erie Canal historian Craig Williams will provide an illustrated overview of how New York State learned to survey, design, construct and operate this unparalleled engineering achievement. Who took the first shovel and where? Once built, who was going to maintain it and how? New Yorkers were the first to undertake such a massive public works. The Canal’s bicentennial is an especially good time to appreciate this truly remarkable accomplishment.

Nov. 5, 2017 (2:00-4:00pm) “A Sound and Trustworthy Keystone”: The Empire State in World War I The history of New York State in World War I sheds light on the American experience during that conflict. New York State surpassed all others during the First World War in contributing men, money, and material to the war effort. State Museum Senior Historian Aaron Noble will discuss the Empire State’s pivotal role in the American war effort.

Dec. 5, 2017 (7:30-9:30pm) – “To Serve in a Free Country”: Slavery and Freedom in New Netherland and Colonial New York – Slavery in the Hudson River Valley began with Dutch settlement in the 17th century and continued through the colonial and early State periods. Enslaved Africans and African Americans became a vital part of Hudson Valley’s colonial agricultural and commercial economy. Sam Huntington, Assistant Director of Fort Crailo, State Historic Site, will discuss the history of slavery and the lives, culture, and traditions of the enslaved in colonial New York.

Feb. 4, 2018 (2:00-4:00pm) – The Women of Schuyler Mansion - The “Schuyler Sisters” have been causing quite a stir in the Broadway musical *Hamilton: An American Musical*, but did you know that there were really five Schuyler sisters? Michelle Mavigliano, Schuyler Mansion Educator, will present an in depth look at the history of the Schuyler women, their daily lives, and the impact they had in shaping their family’s history.

March 4, 2018 (2:00-4:00pm) – Beer, Brewing and Pieter Bronck: Brewing in Beverwyck and Early Albany – Educator, local historian, and enthusiastic home brewer Richard Muggeo will review how beer was brewed in Beverwyck, visit with Pieter Bronck an early brewer of Beverwyck, and demonstrate the tools used in home brewing.

April 10, 2018 (7:30-9:30pm) –Revels in the Cheerful Spring, The Helderberg Madrigal Singers present a celebration of the gentle season in a program of vocal music from the 13th-18th centuries accompanied by period instruments.

May 1, 2018 (7:30-9:30pm) – Preserving History in a Growing Suburban Town – Voorheesville native and Clifton Park Historian John Sherer will discuss how the challenges of preserving history in a suburban town can be addressed even in the burgeoning Town of Clifton Park through the establishment of a Historic Preservation Commission. He will relate his experience to growing up in New Scotland.

All Programs will be held at the Wyman Osterhout Community Center

All Programs are free to the public; Parking is available

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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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