



THE SENTINEL

Vol. 20, No. 2

The Newsletter of the New Scotland Historical Association

Winter 2011



Exhibit Committee Report

We need Civil War Memorabilia!

The Exhibit Committee has had its first meeting and we've chosen April for our grand opening. There is a lot of information we need to put together to make this exhibit meaningful. The title is "**The Civil War and how it affected the Town of New Scotland and surrounding townships.**" We are looking for any photographs or family stories and letters of enlisted family members who took part in this war or any memorabilia you care to loan us for this coming year. It was discussed to have a re-enactment of a typical Union camp and a medical tent with all the fixings sometime in good weather. Details will follow in the next *Sentinel*.

We are planning to have the "Antiques Road Show" this year in March. Caroline French had such a great time last year that she has agreed to come back to assess our treasures; the date is yet to be determined. Look for more details in the next issue of the *Sentinel* and the *Altamont Enterprise*.

Sandy Slingerlands

Civil War Letter #2

*(The following is the 2nd in a series of letters from John L. Houck, which Sandy Slingerlands asked me to transcribe for the **Sentinel**. They are copied exactly as written. I left a large space after each sentence to make them easier to read. Marion Parmenter))*

December 20, 1862

Camp of Recruits near Alexandria

Dear Wife

I now take my pen in hand to let you know I am still in good health hoping this may find you all the same We have received orders to go to our Regt and I expect we will have to march tomorrow now the Regt lays at Fredericksburg and has been in the last battle but they was not cut up much

where we are now it is about 7 miles from Washington we can see the white house very plainly

you better not write until you hear from me again I think that will be the safest plan Burnside is yet in the hospital and we have not heard from him yet the weather is very cold so cold that there was two men froze to death last night they say it has not been colder in twenty years than it now is but it will not last long for the weather is very changeable when you write you must let me know how all the folks are I have received but one letter and this is the 6th that I have wrote I do not know what is the reason as you have plenty of paper and stamps which is very scarce here if we want any thing we have to pay a big price for it if we go to the Regt and should march I want you to send me a box of eatables as it would be a rare thing to have something from home I shall let you know what I should like and how to send and now I shall have to close as we are all very busy on account of the order for marching no more at present

I remain

Yours

John L. Houck

Tuesday, Dec. 6th 7:30

**St. Nicholas, the Saint Who Became
Santa**

Historian Peter G. Rose

NEW SCOTLAND HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

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Voorheesville, NY 12186

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President's Letter

It is November and we already have had our first snow fall. The bad news is that a long winter is ahead of us. The good news is that the Christmas season will soon be upon us.

The New Scotland Historical Association (NSHA) has planned a wonderful Christmas-oriented program on Tuesday, December 6, at 7:30 P.M. It will feature Peter G. Rose, who is a Dutch woman, and a widely published authority on colonial Dutch and Hudson Valley culinary history and food ways. The program is entitled "Saint Nicholas, the Saint Who Became Santa" and will delve into how the 17th century Dutch brought Saint Nicholas to America and how he was transformed into Santa in the 19th century. Her talk will encompass literature, religion, the fine arts and Dutch food. Please join us for what will prove to be a wonderful program.

It is also not too early to think about Christmas shopping. Last Christmas NSHA offered gift memberships and we are doing so this year. A NSHA gift membership is a wonderful way to help friends, relatives, and children keep in touch with New Scotland and its history.

Our recently published memory book, *The Times of Our Lives: New Scotland Memories!!!!!!* would make a wonderful Christmas gift. This book contains the reminiscences of current and former New Scotland residents that one reader has described as "a real treasure for the Town of New Scotland." Local artist, Diane Wozniak has produced a beautiful colored cover that presents a view of the Helderbergs. Books are available for \$20.00 at the Feura Bush Library, Voorheesville Library, New Scotland Town Hall, the NSHA Museum, or by calling Marie Hornick (768-2933) or Peg Dorgan (768-2852).

Another gift idea is the new book by our own Timothy Albright and Laura Ten Eyck, *John Boyd Thacher State Park and the Indian Ladder Region* in the Images of America series. It details the story of John Boyd Thacher State Park and the Indian Ladder region and how a wilderness became a park. The book contains some of the most beautifully reproduced historical photographs of our region that I have ever seen. It is available at popular online and chain outlets. However, if you want to give a gift to our Capital District's economy, buy it at a locally owned bookstore like the Book House at Stuyvesant Plaza.

The seemingly neglected bicentennial of the War of 1812 is just around the corner, so I am asking Santa for Alan Taylor's new book *The Civil War of 1812: American Citizens, British Subjects, Irish Rebels, & Indian Allies*. Taylor is a Pulitzer Prizing winning historian who has written extensively on Native Americans and early settlers in New York. His new book examines the political predicaments of the settlers and Indians on the New York-Canada border during the war.

I think I can speak for the entire NSHA Board in wishing everyone a Happy Holiday Season.

Alan Kowlowitz

Civil War Reading and Discussion Series at the Voorheesville Public Library

“A hundred and fifty years after the defining war in our nation’s history, we are still discovering its meanings.”

Edward L. Ayers, Civil War Historian

“Let’s Talk About It: Making Sense of the American Civil War,” a scholar-led reading and discussion series, will provide an opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the events and meaning of the conflict. Voorheesville Public Library is offering these discussions, as well as other Civil War themed programs, all made possible through a grant from the National Endowment and the American Library Association. The New Scotland Historical Association is one of the library’s grant partners.

Andrea Foroughi, Associate Professor of History at Union College will facilitate the discussions and provide background on the topics we will examine. Professor Foroughi is the author of *Go If You Think It Your Duty: The Civil War Correspondence of James Madison and Elizabeth Caleff Bowler* (2007).

The discussions will take place one each month from January through May 2012. Each conversation will focus on a different theme: imagining war, choosing sides, making sense of Shiloh, the shape of war, and war and freedom. Three books will be discussed over the course of the series: *March*, a historical novel by Geraldine Brooks, *Crossroads of Freedom: Antietam* by James M. McPherson and *America’s War: Talking About the Civil War and Emancipation on their 150th Anniversaries*, an anthology created especially for this program and edited by Civil War Historian Edward L. Ayers. The sessions are free, and copies of the book are available for checkout. You can register by calling (765-2791) or emailing the library.

The library is also offering a Civil War film series, two concerts and programs on women’s work in the 19th century. For dates and times of the “Let’s Talk About It” discussions and other programs go to the program blog at: <http://www.civilwarprograms.blogspot.com> or the library’s website www.voorheesvillelibrary.org, or contact Suzanne Fisher at 765-2791 or suzanne.fisher@voorheesvillelibrary.org.

NSHA Winter Programs

December 6th Tuesday 7:30 P.M. *Saint Nicholas, the Saint Who Became Santa* Food historian Peter G. Rose will delve into the early history of Saint Nicholas, relate how he was brought to America by the Dutch in the 17th century, and again transformed into Santa in the 19th century. This talk encompasses literature, religion, the fine arts and Dutch food.

February 7th Tuesday 7:30 P.M. *Voorheesville: Ties That Bind, Forging Community in a 19th and Early 20th Century Railroad Town* Presented by local historian, poet and author Dennis Sullivan.

March 6th Tuesday 7:30 P.M. *Albany Rural Cemetery in the Civil War* In this power point presentation, local Civil War historian Mark Bodnar will take us on a virtual tour of the Albany Rural Cemetery, weaving a tapestry of military interest, genealogical research and local history.

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.

Tales of a Highwayman Village Humor

Each home in Salem Hills had a water shut off that was supposed to be within 5ft. of the curb at ground level. Through the years, we found them under the precast concrete steps, under shrubbery or any where else on the property that the builder saw fit to put them. They would have been impossible to find without a metal detector.

One particular day, a woman called to have her water shut off because she had a plumber coming to do some work. Wild Bill [Hotaling] went all over her property with the metal detector like a hound dog looking for a scent, but was unable to find a thing. Eventually after an hour of additional searching, he got a faint signal in the middle of her lawn. We brought in the backhoe and started digging very carefully as we didn't want to damage the shutoff. We would remove 6 in. to 1 ft. at a time and then someone with a shovel would probe around in the hole before we would proceed further. We spent the rest of the afternoon digging in this fashion until we located the shutoff more than 6 ft. deep in the ground. After installing an extension to bring it up to ground level, we had to repair the lawn. As I stood there looking at the hole, I suggested to Wild Bill that it might be cheaper to fill it with water and the lady could have a swimming pool. Something as simple as shutting off the water had become a very costly job for the village.

One day I came to work with a brand new pretty blue plastic lunch box. I was telling Wild Bill how much I liked my new lunch box and that blue was my favorite color. Well, Wild Bill looked at me with a wild look in his eye and said "Well, then you should really like two of them," and he proceeded to cut my new lunch box in half with a chain saw with my lunch in it.

During the summer, the village would hire some high school kids for a few weeks. Over the years they became known as "The Village Boogers." One year Tom George was a village booger and liked to display his sense of humor. Now some people can take a joke and others can't. One particular day, Tom filled a 5 gal. pail with water and snuck upstairs where there was a window directly over the door that you used to leave the garage. Wild Bill was supposed to leave next, but he went to get something and Big John [Elmendorf] went out instead. Tommy, unaware of this change, let her rip and 5 gallons of water descended down upon Big John's head. Big John let out a mighty roar and vowed vengeance on the party responsible. Tommy snuck away, but the truth came out and if I remember correctly, he got every lousy job for the rest of the summer. Those of you who knew Big John will remember that his sense of humor was very limited.

Wild Bill, in trying to maintain discipline, would threaten me with a heart punch. Just one he would say, just let me give you one once! Fortunately it never happened or I might not be here to write about these adventures.

The three of us would go to the Voorheesville Diner in Wild Bill's pickup truck with me in the middle. When we would get back in the truck after coffee, Wild Bill would clench his fist and hit me very stoutly on the upper thigh and ask me if it hurt. Another form of discipline I suppose. One day I was first back in the truck and had a couple of minutes by myself. I noticed a large crescent wrench lying on the floor and a brilliant idea came over me. I quickly inserted the wrench in my pants down to my thigh and puffed up my pant leg so it wasn't visible. Will Bill got in and proceeded to strike me viciously on my thigh. When he got done screaming, I asked him if it hurt! Big John and I laughed about that for many years.

At this point I would like to tell a couple of my favorite stories about when Wild Bill and I worked for Old Hoag (Leighton Hotaling) our boss during our iron working days.

How many of you remember when there was a dime store in Stuyvesant Plaza? One day Will Bill and I were going there for lunch and Old Hoag asked us to see if they had any French fried bacon rinds, one of his favorites. After lunch we proceeded to the pet supply isle and purchased a bag of rawhide strips for dogs. Next we went to the lunch counter and asked for a take out bag. When we got back to work we told Old Hoag how lucky he was as they had bacon rinds as a special that day and gave him his bag of chews. I remember Wild Bill and I watching him try to chew them, from a safe vantage point of course. It was at this point he yelled "I don't know where you two clowns are, but I know you're watching me!"

(continued on page 5)

Old Hoag had a particular hat that he wore to work each morning. One night it had fallen off the peg at the top of the cellar stairs and landed down on the basement floor. The next morning he retrieved it, placed it on his head and proceeded towards Voorheesville. Just about the time he got in front of the Methodist Church, he realized something was crawling down his neck into his shirt. Removing his hat, he discovered it was full of silverfish from the cellar floor. Quickly pulling over, he jumped out of the car and started removing his clothing right there along the street, creating quite a show for the motorists passing by. I should mention that this took place in the winter time!

How many of you have ever gotten egg rolls that used to come with the Chinese mustard that said "very, very hot, use sparingly?" One lunch time, I had a packet of that with me from dinner the night before and planned to use it in some devious little way. Old Hoag had his lunch in an old brown paper bag that he left sitting unattended! Silly man! I checked it out and found Shirley had made him an egg salad sandwich. What a perfect opportunity, mix some hot mustard with the egg salad and he would never know until he ate it. At lunch, Old Hoag, Bill and I sat around enjoying our sandwiches when Hoag made the comment "Boy is this good, Shirley must have added a little horseradish to it." A short time later he exclaimed "Good Lord is this hot, my mouth is on fire." "Osterhout" he shouted as he ran out looking for some water to put the fire out of his gums, "you must have had something to do with this!" One thing you could be sure of: if you put one over on Old Hoag, you knew you had one coming sooner or later. Remember Wild Bill!

"Memories are food for the soul"
Willard Osterhout

**Museum Closed:
Sunday, Nov. 27
Christmas Day
New Years Day**

If you would like a special appointment over the holidays, call Marion Parmenter at 765-4652 to arrange for this.

Thanks!

As NSHA's 40th Anniversary Celebration draws to a close, we want to thank all those who have become a part of NSHA over the years. We are deeply indebted to Jane Blessing and Elizabeth Ingraham for having the vision to create this organization. Think about what they started! Our Charter Members, Martha Slingerland and Sam Youmans remain active with us today.

Besides all the artifacts originating in the Town of New Scotland which have been collected, we have a huge photo collection showing the way folks lived here over the years, and books have been written that are dedicated to the history of the town and its inhabitants. In addition this quarterly newsletter, begun 18 years ago, continues.

Membership grew over the years, as did the yearly activities. The special programs which were begun in 1971, have continued to be presented. These cover a wide variety of historical interests and always have been well attended.

Also, the Town of New Scotland has supported us over all these years by providing us with a place to have our museum, keep our collections, and a place to meet as well as helping with the Historic Markers.

Over all 40 years, the organization has been run by volunteers in every capacity. We thank them all.

Marion Parmenter, Chairperson

**I. O. O. F. Hall
THEATRE
VOORHEESVILLE
NEW YORK**

"Where the Sound Is
Best"

Saturday, August 20
Tom Mix in
"The Texas Bad Man"
MIX AND HIS WONDER HORSE
"TONY"

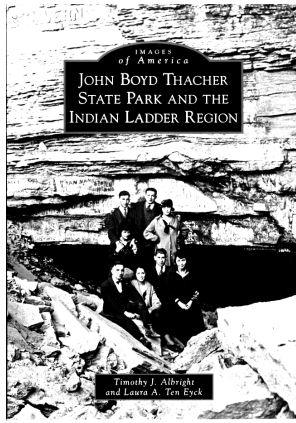
And a great cast, in their fastest,
wildest, big surprise picture.
ALSO COMEDY AND CARTOON

I. O. O. F. HALL — THE COOL-
EST PLACE IN TOWN.

"ALWAYS A GOOD
SHOW AT
I. O. O. F. HALL"

An advertisement for the movies playing at the Odd Fellows Hall [now Legion Hall] in Voorheesville, in August, 1932. Tom Mix was a favorite in those days!

Reprinted from the Altamont Enterprise, Aug. 19, 1932 edition.



New Arcadia Book!

The *Sentinel* would like to share the news that former NSHA president Timothy J. Albright, and Laura TenEyck have co-authored a new Arcadia book entitled *John Boyd Thacher State Park and the Indian Ladder Region*.

NSHA first met Tim when he entered the Town Seal contest in 1975, sponsored by the DAR and NSHA. Tim, then age 13, became the winner of the contest and his winning design became the official Town of New Scotland Seal. Later on, in the '90s, Tim became a trustee and later President, and has helped out many times with NSHA projects throughout the years. He's been fascinated with the Helderbergs and Thacher Park, and has a large collection of photos he has been collecting for years. He has been a speaker for NSHA several times, as well as other community organizations. Laura, a writer and land conservationist, has also been involved with NSHA writing articles for the *Sentinel*, and assisting with earlier essay contests among other things over the years. Both have lived their entire lives beneath the Helderberg Escarpment.

The book contains over 200 images and memories of days gone by. It has references to the early history and land formations, photographs of surrounding sights, and shows the difficulties of early farm life in the Hellebergh. It also points out the park's unique characteristics that make it eligible to be a national natural landmark.

John Boyd Thacher State Park and the Indian Ladder Region, \$21.99, Arcadia Publishing. Available at local retailers, including Indian Ladder Farm Store, Thacher Park Nature Center and Park Office, Little Book House, Barnes & Noble, Walgreens, and on line bookstores, or through Arcadia Publishing at www.arcadiapublishing.com or (888)313-2665.

We have a copy at the museum which you are welcome to view!!!

New Salem—South End

(Article appeared in *Altamont Enterprise*, Nov. 16, 1917)

On Friday of last week D.H. Miller and William Smith started to the Albany market with a load of farm produce. When about two miles from home, Mr. Smith's horse, a fine young mare, slipped, all four feet going out from under her. She fell under the other horse, which belonged to Mr. Miller, which being on the right side, kept on its feet but being young and full of life gave a jump bringing one (*foot*) down on the other horse's leg and being newly shod, tore a large gash in its leg. They got the horse up, turned around and made their way back home stopping on the way to phone to Mr. Barber of Clarksville who came and attended to the injured horse. If a man beats an animal, or in any way injures it through bad temper, he would be arrested for cruelty to animals. But the state builds roads that are so bad and slippery that it is impossible to keep a horse upon its feet. It is all very lovely for the automobiles but it is cruelty to animals to try to drive a horse on them. The poor horses must suffer. Now is it just or unjust. It seems that something ought to be done to save our horses from so much suffering.

Volunteers Needed!

For many different reasons, we have a severe shortage of Museum volunteers. 17 volunteers sounds like a lot, until you consider we must have 2 people on duty at a time, and many of these 17 have family obligations, other organization obligations, take vacations, occasional illness is a problem, etc.—in other words we all have a life, too.

If you can help us out, please contact Marion Parmenter 765-4652, or Alan Kowlowitz 765-4212.

Purple and Gold?

Late last winter NSHA received an email requesting what the significance is of the Voorheesville Central School District school colors. This person was wondering if there was a meaning behind the purple and gold. We sent emails out to various alumni to see what we could find out. We had several guesses sent to us. Then a few days later I received a phone call from a class of 1950 graduate who had heard we were asking this question. He told me he thought he had the answer. He had played basketball throughout high school.

He explained that at the end of the various sports seasons the uniforms and equipment were sent away to be “reconditioned.” Then they would be retrieved before each sports season. One year (1945-1946) before basketball season, the place that had the uniforms burned down. There were no basketball uniforms to be found anywhere, but they went to Metropolitan Loan on Hudson Ave. in Albany and were able to get just plain gym shorts. They were purple with a gold stripe on the side.

Harold Mead, the coach, convinced the home economics teacher to sew blackbirds on their T-shirts! They even had a red wing sewn on it. As he recalls, from then on the new uniforms were purple and gold. Previous to this, they had been black and white—as the teams were the blackbirds.

This was about the same time the alma mater was written also. The team pictures shown were found in the *Torch* yearbooks and verify the uniforms and years.



Black & white uniforms, 1944-1945



Purple gym shorts, gold stripe & white T-shirts, with birds sewn on, 1945-1946



New purple and gold uniforms, 1946-1947
(All pictures taken from *Torch* yearbooks)

Inclement Weather?

In the event of stormy weather on a meeting night, if you are unsure about whether the meeting has been cancelled, please call Peg Neri, 765-3125, Alan Kowlowitz, 765-4212, Peg Dorgan, 768-2852. Emails will be sent to those on the email list.

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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