

# The Rensselaerville Press

📖 A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE RENSSELAERVILLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY 📖

"Today is Tomorrow's History"

Summer 2022

## Successful Art Show

This was the biggest art show ever with over 140 pieces of art on display. It became the Rensselaerville Historical Society's largest fund raiser through the generous donations from guests plus the sale of twelve art pieces by five artists.

Doug Riter, the Curator, and his assistant Geoffrey Hall, had the show hung in record time this year. Doug also created the bios for each artist. A special thanks to Rose Kuhar for organizing the show and creating artist name cards, Karen Haseley who developed an online sign up with payment for artists and her computer skills to help with creating posters and putting the art show on the website and Nancy Rypkema who worked with each artist to make cards describing their artwork and letting guests know if the piece was for sale.



This year was a challenge with the hottest July in years, but the people came and experienced a unique show. At the opening, guests enjoyed the donation of wine and other beverages. The array of hors d'oeuvres that individuals created plus appetizers catered by Kuhar Family Farm made the Artist Reception on Friday night, July 27, a large success.

One thing that makes this show different is the array of artwork showcased. This year there were several examples of paintings and sketches using pastels, charcoal, watercolors and oil paints. But as individuals wandered the historic mill, their eyes found a quilt, tapestry, pottery, wire art, wooden furniture, painted rocks, photography of the wonders of space and the scenes around Rensselaerville and even a barn quilt. Both professional and amateurs are invited to participate in the show. The only qualifying factor is the artist must live now, or in the past, in the Township of Rensselaerville or be a member of the Rensselaerville Historical Society.

Each year a family member has displayed work for a resident who is no longer with us. This year a display of Christmas cards and a counted cross stitch needlework showcased two of those residents, Janet Haseley and Anna Kuhar.

Reporter, Noah Zweifel from the Altamont Enterprise wanted to know why so many artists live in the area. No one knows the answer, but these hills and valleys are full of writers and musicians as well as artists.



All photos in this article by Victor Schragar

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Successful Art Show... Continued from page 1



Forty-three artists made this year such a success. There were fifteen first time artists participating in the art show. The artists were Thomas Corrado, Justine Criswell, Barry Gerson Tony Guardagno, John Haines, Deborah Hallenbeck, Dan Hofstradter, Anna Kuhar, Stuart Miller, Laura Tenney, Elizabeth Vines, Dave Warburton, Ann Wolf, Silas Yelich and Edith Zimmerman. Eighteen artists returned this year to display their artwork. A special thanks to the following for supporting the RHS again this year: Susan Beatty, Bruce Barker, Dorothea Cotter, Pat Frik, Janet Haseley, Karen Haseley, Jane Hershey, Bente Hirsch, Nora Logan, Peter McCaffrey, Ella Prince, Jeanne Strausman, Clay Sorrough, Susan Story, David Suter, Courtney Stannard, Charles Van Horne and Paul Ventura.



One aspect the RHS is proud of is our Emerging Artists' Room. Ten youths' work was displayed in this room. The artists' ages ranged from 6 to 14. We showcased art by Eliza Caprio, Jared Caprio, Alex Cotter, Olympia James, Caroline Kosich, Burton L. J. Kropp, Heather Sheriden, Paul "Eddie" Ventura, Lillian Ventura and Rose Warburton.



The Board of Trustees of the RHS wants to thank all the artists who displayed their works. The show wouldn't happen without them. Neighbors, friends, families, RHS members and visitors from far and wide wandered through the show. The Trustees also want to thank all the volunteers that made this such a wonderful two weeks. We look forward to seeing you all at the 2023 show!

By Rose Kuhar



# Music, Rainbows and Thunder

The Stringplicity Concert in memory of Janet Haseley was held on a Friday evening in early August. Janet was a long supporter of the Rensselaerville Historical Society. She was on the Board of Trustees, wrote the newsletter, chaired the research and was a moving force finding individuals to give mill tours. This is the second year

that Stringplicity gave a benefit concert and they played on a stage Janet's grandchildren built on the Haseley property. Doug Riter led the group as he shared each song's history then played the guitar or violin along with the other two members, Peggy Bellenger on violin and Heather Hutton on cello. Doug and Heather sang many of the tunes as well. All three trio



*All photos in this article by Karen Haseley*



members traveled from near Rochester to bring music to our community. The music ranged from original to popular Beatle songs, to pop and classical.

The hardy individuals who ventured out that night didn't just hear wonderful music they witnessed a rainbow that lasted over twenty minutes and as the thunder rumbled to the south the most amazing pink cloud floated over the concert. What a wonderful evening!

*By Rose Kuhar*



## 1900-1950 the Next Fifty Years of the Rensselaerville Library

The spring edition of the Rensselaerville Press ended with the following entry:

**1899** Mr. Oswald had given the use of rooms for free for three years and now needed the space back. Mr. F.C. Huyck offered to fit up the rooms in the Felter building at his own expense if the Association wished to take on the rent of \$2.00 a month. Thanks to Mr. F.C. Huyck and J.F. Becker for their generosity in fitting up and furnishing it so beautifully at their own expense and Mr. & Mrs. Mulford for the gift of 75 volumes of choice books. [This became known as the Reading Room.]

**1896-1904** Alice M. Chadwick, Librarian

**1900** Annual Meeting receipts during the year \$234.71, expenditure \$113.55, cash on hand \$121.16.

**1904-1914** Helen Golden, Librarian

**1905** F.C. Huyck proposed to upgrade the rooms at his own expense. The Reading Room moved to the Felter Building basement while this was done.

**1907** \$10 for books needed by students studying for Regent's examinations.

**1911** Ordered 100 catalogues to be sold for 10 cents each and eight bookcases. Cash in hand \$87.77.

**1914** Bertha Jenkins, Librarian

**1921** The first meeting of the Rensselaerville Associate Library was held August 27. A Board of Trustees will be composed of seven members, 2 one-year positions, 2 two-year positions and 3 for a three-year position. The following persons were elected as trustees: H. Henshall Bates, Henrietta Oswald, L.A. Eldridge, Nathaniel Tweed, John P. Gavit, J.B. Sployd, Wm. F. Rice.

A book committee was established. The first Annual Meeting was to be held the first Friday after the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. A Provisional Charter was granted by the Board of Regents of the University of the State of New York on November 17, 1921, to the Rensselaerville Library. Cash in hand \$22.45.

**1921-1923** Nathaniel Tweed, Library President

**1922** Lorenzo.D. Hewitt was the librarian and pastor of the Baptist Church. A Provisional Certificate was granted to the library on October 19, 1922.

**1923** Books loaned from July 1, 1922, to July 1, 1923 were 2077 volumes, 1830 fiction, 90 nonfiction, 157 juvenile, magazines 302 and there was discussion about lending books to Potter Hollow.

**1924-1926** Brock Sployd, President

**1925** A \$50 matching grant for purchase of books was awarded but the list of books needed to be okayed by The University of the State of New York.



Alice M. Chadwick

## 1900-1950... Continued from page 4



**1927-1928** John P. Gavit, President; **1927** The library closed for several months due to the death of Mr. Hewitt at the age 58. It reopened July 5, 1927, with reception attended by about 100 people. It was requested that Mrs. Marguerite Rueff accept the position of librarian at the nominal salary of \$1.00 per year. Vivian Anderson was also trained since Mrs. Rueff was a seasonal resident. The library was open except for Sundays and Thursdays from 2:00-5:30 & 7:00-9:00.

**1928** Mr. Keller was appointed to look after repairs.

**1929-1931** Dr. Huntington Williams, President; **1929** Dr. Williams and William B. Colburn were given permission to collect fossils and display them upstairs. Mr. Keppie worked with Mrs. Rueff in arranging for the garden in the rear of the library.

**1930** Patrons were asked to make pledges to pay for the matching book grant. Repairs were made to the roof, plaster

behind stove and replaced lower back door. Shelves were added to the gallery for reference books and a case for fossils. Tables and chairs and two electric lights were added. \$57.02 was collected to purchase an electric radio. A collection of children's books was to be acquired but could only be used in the library. Families were permitted to take four books for a period of two weeks.

**1932-1933** Dr. Thomas Ordway, President; **1932** Rensselaerville Union School requested history and biographies.

**1933** William Garner, Trinity Rectory; "He expressed his concerns needs of the local permanent residents & youths. The library is not by any means fulfilling its entire purpose, a pitiful few use it, and fewer books from its shelves. I am now speaking of the permanent population. I have discovered that this group needs a less difficult type of literature."

**1934** 50 books were sent to Medusa and Preston Hollow.

**1935-1949** William Rice President; **1935** An inspector visited the library from the New York State Education Department.

**1936** On July 9 Mr. & Mrs. Francis Huyck desire the Trustees accept the deed to the library property. Provided that the premises would always be used for the purpose for which the library was incorporated. If the library is dissolved or becomes defunct, the property is to revert to Mr. & Mrs. Francis Huyck or their heirs.

**1937** Vivian Borthwick, Librarian; Begin an endowment for the library known as the Francis Conkling Memorial Fund. There are 4329 adult books, 191 children's books. Total registered borrowers 551, Outlying communities – Medusa 40, Westerlo 35 and Oak Hill 25 volumes.

**1938** New books will have a one-week loan period and older books two-weeks, with two cents a day fine for overdue books. Harvey Officer put on a play to benefit library in August. The library was open 206 days, September 2, 45 books were taken out and April 13 when 1 book was taken out and 5 people came in.

**1900-1950...** *Continued from page 5*

**1939** Creation of the F.C. Huyck Endowment Fund. Vivian Borthwick resigned, and Sarah Prout was appointed librarian.

**1940** Needed to do fund raising to build up a substantial endowment. Try to find more younger people interested in being a trustee.

**1941** Low interest rate – hard to make money in endowment.

**1942** 140 duplicate or inactive books donated to Army Camps. 150 books received for Victory Book Campaign.

**1943** Sarah Prout's salary was raised from \$20 to \$25 a month.

**1944** A shortage of gas and small number of workers not feasible to have an auction, rummage sale or play this year. The marker erected by State was loosened from post and is not high enough; patrons are hitting their heads. Library needs to spend a larger proportion of book budget on building up children's collection. Start a club or Story Hour to stimulate children's interest in reading.

**1947** The last two weeks in December the library was only open Wednesday and Saturday afternoons to conserve oil during period of shortage.

**1949** Dr. Lewis Eldridge, President & **1950** – E. Von, President

**1950** August had the highest attendance and December the lowest. \$150 was collected from 70 peoples towards storm windows. Mr. Cooley donated a stove to library. \$339.15 was raised during the summer from an Old House Tour.

(Editors observation: During this 50-year period the country went through turmoil WWI, The Great Depression and WWII. These events had an impact on the Rensselaerville Library. The library's needs changed. The focus of serving the residents (and their guests) who live here during the warm months to the permanent residents became an issue. How to financially sustain the library as it moved forward welcoming families, children and surrounding communities.

Food for thought: Can you imagine in 2022 telling a child they could not remove any book from the library?)

*By Rose Kuhar*

## Back In Time

**1922 ∞ 100 Years Ago ∞ 2022**

Altamont Enterprise August 11, 1922

### Lake Myosotis

Hot weather surely gives the fish a good appetite for nice cool worms. Mr. William Mitchell of Albany caught 17 pickerel and 30 bull-heads during one day last week.

### Filtration Plant Is Nearly Completed

The work of putting in the concrete basin in the reservoir is nearing completion and Weaver Brothers are starting on the second section of the concrete coping today and are pouring the balance of the side walls. The buildings for the balance of the side walls. The building for the filters is finished, and the filters are looked for at every train. A day or two more ought to complete the work.

[An artificial levee was built to dam up a stream running through meadows just north of the village of Rensselaerville. This created a pond that released a steady flow of water to keep the mills running. The road running past it is still called "Pond Hill Road" This water is now a reservoir for the village of Rensselaerville and is known as Lake Myosostis. [One hundred years ago a filtration plant was added to the reservoir.]



## The Greenville Local Thursday March 19, 1992 Old Creamery in Medusa Being Razed

*By Porter Wright*



Once again strange noises are coming from the old building that has stood these many years near the western end of the bridge in Medusa. The sounds coming now from that one-time busy place of business are not the rattling of milk cans, or the rumbling of steam cooking the kettles and vats of milk, in the making of cheese. Rather they are chatter of chain saws, pounding of sledgehammers, and the ripping of pry bars. The old creamery is being torn down.

1899 was an exciting year for the hamlet of Medusa. A modern type of iron bridge was put in place across the ten mile creek, replacing the old wooden bridge. A Mr. H. Wilbur built a modern creamery for making of butter which would relieve many housewives of the tedious job of churning at home. The creamery was finished and ready to be

open in March, but the icehouse was not ready so ice that year was cut in the month of March from the old mill dam. The ice was stacked like bales of hay and covered with sawdust to preserve it. By the next ice season, the icehouse was finished with an inclined ice run so the ice could be hauled up by horse power.

In 1905 my father purchased the building and became the proprietor of the Medusa Creamery. For the next ten years he made and sold thousands of pounds of butter in one-pound prints and fifty pound tubs. When I came along in 1912, I am sure I spent many hours in the creamery sleeping in a laundry basket while my mother was wrapping the one pound prints that my father was turning out by hand.

1917 with war in Europe hampering the importation of products from the area, Italian cheese was becoming in short supply. Herbert Jennings from New York City purchased the creamery from my father under the name of Medusa Creamery and Mill Co. The size of the building was more than doubled with a new two-story addition built in front of it. A fleet of

Model T. Ford trucks hauled in milk from farmers in a wide area. Every week Bulldog Mac Trucks hauled a load of provolone, cacicavali, (ciciocavallo) and the ricotta salata in New York City. When the war was over the demand for domestic Italian cheese declined. In 1921 Jennings' Company went bankrupt. My father purchased the building and started selling fluid milk and cream in the Albany and Poughkeepsie market.

In 1927 Alleva Dairy purchased the plant and started manufacture of fresh types of Italian cheese, ricotta, ricotone and the curd for mozzarella. In June 1928 I went to work for Alleva Dairy and for the next forty-eight years the old creamery was the place of my employment. After seventy-seven years the creamery closed for the last time March 1, 1976. A few years later the building was converted for the production of maple syrup. This effort was short lived. Time and weather have taken their toll and now the old creamery is coming down. Sad, yes, but its days of usefulness are over.



*Photos by Karen Haseley*

# **Rensselaerville Historical Society**

## **Annual Meeting**

***Friday, October 28, 2022***

***Medusa Firehouse, on CR 351***

***5:00 Annual Meeting***

***6:00 Potluck Dinner (Bring a dish to share)***

***Followed by speaker***

The Board of Trustees were able to rebook our speaker, Terry McMaster who had a health emergency prior to last year's Annual Meeting. We hope many of you can attend this year. It is later than planned because of scheduling conflicts.

### ***"Scots-Irish Immigration, the Old New York Frontier and the Destruction of Cherry Valley"***



Terry is researching the western frontier of colonial New York beginning about 1740 by Scots-Irish settlers and examining the development of communities in the Mohawk Valley and the upper Susquehanna River watershed. Examining the immigration of these Ulster Scots who left the Province of Ulster in the north of Ireland for religious and economic liberty, we will look at their geographical settlement patterns in New England and later migration into the Mohawk Valley region. The white European-Americans who established a stable frontier at Springfield, Cherry Valley and Unadilla saw their farms transformed into a dangerous borderland as a result of the political turmoil of the Revolutionary War. We will look specifically at Joseph Brant's frontier raids and the massacre of the family of Capt. William Deitz.

This presentation looks at 18<sup>th</sup> century Native American settlements of the Mohawk and upper Susquehanna regions, especially Tiononderoga (Ft. Hunter), Canajoharie, Schoharie and Onaquaga, the influence of missionaries on these villages, and the cultural, political and religious influences which united some peoples and made enemies of others. Enhanced with maps and illustrations from 18<sup>th</sup> century sources, we will look at how ethnic differences and religious affiliation largely determined how sides were chosen prior to and during the early years of the "War of 1776." Rebel Americans were largely drawn from Palatine German and Scots-Irish ethnic populations, while white Loyalist sympathizers and partisans were primarily Irish, Scottish and English. The Iroquois people who participated in this affair were primarily but not exclusively Oneida and Tuscarora on the Rebel side, and Seneca and Mohawk on the Loyalist side. We will look closely at the 1778 raids on the western frontier of New York, especially that of Cherry Valley, the settlement and the eventual destruction of that community.

# RENSSELAERVILLE'S



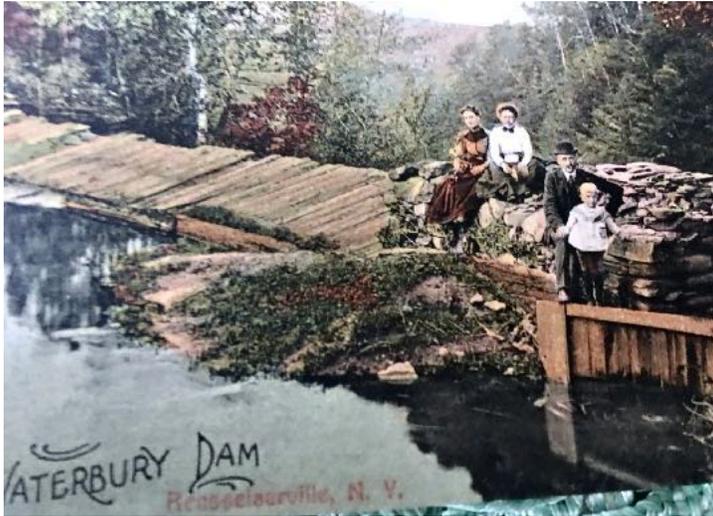
***Sunday, September 25, 2022; 10am to 3pm  
Conkling Hall, 8 Methodist Hill Road, Rensselaerville***

\$10 admission fee (includes one appraisal; \$5 each additional appraisal)  
Pre-register at <https://rensselaervillehistoricalsociety.weebly.com>

Food & beverages available for purchase on-site from Kuhar Family Farm

This antique and jewelry appraisal event is a fund raiser for the  
Rensselaerville Historical Society.

# Post Card Donations



The RHS has received two donations this summer of historic postcards from the late 1880s and early 1900s showcasing our township. The latest donation was from the Town of Westerlo Heritage Museum. Look for more information on our postcards in the next issue of the newsletter.

## Membership

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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