

Stephentown Historical Society

Newsletter

Vol III, Issue XI

July 2000

HISTORY OF THE TOWNS OF RENSSELAER COUNTY

SLAVES AND SLAVE LAWS

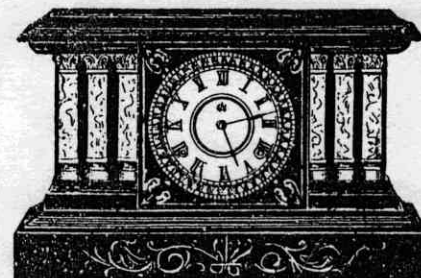
Slaves were first brought into the New Netherland by the Dutch, under the granting power of the charter of liberties of 1629. When the English became possessed of the territory, they, by importations from Africa, further perpetuated slavery and protected it by different laws. "Forasmuch," reads an act passed by the general assembly, October 29, 1730, "as the number of slaves in the cities of New York and Albany, as also within the several counties, towns and manors within this colony doth daily increase, and that they have oftentime been guilty of confederating together in running away, and of other ill and dangerous practices," it is unlawful "for above three slaves to meet together at any time," or "at any other place than when it shall happen they meet in some servile employment for their masters' or mistresses' profit, and by their masters' or mistresses' consent, upon penalty of being whipt upon the naked back, at the discretion of any one justice of the peace, not exceeding forty lashes."

The act further provided that each town and manor might appoint a common whipper for their slaves, who was to be paid a sum of money "not to exceed three shillings per head." Five pounds was the penalty for harboring a slave for every 24 hours. Free negroes for entertaining slaves had to pay a penalty of £10.

This was in the fourth year of the reign of George III.

In the act for granting to his majesty the several duties and importations on goods, wares and merchandises imported into the colony, passed December 12, 1753, it was provided there should be paid "for every negro, mulatto or other slave, of four years old and upwards, imported directly from Africa, five ounces of Sevil, Pillar or Mexico plate, or forty shillings in bills of credit made current in this colony."

To avoid and clear up disputes that might happen concerning this duty on slaves, it was further provided "that all slaves imported from Africa, in the same vessel which took them on board on any part of that coast," should pay no duty greater than 40 shillings, "tho' such vessel had stopp'd at, or entered in any other port or ports, before her arrival at New York," provided the master or mate, and some other officer which came in such vessel from Africa, "made oath before the treasurer of the colony that the slave or slaves so imported had been actually taken on board of that vessel on the coast of Africa."



**THE COMPUTER IS HERE. . .
THE COMPUTER IS HERE!**

Our new computer is up and running, along with its color printer. The Stephentown Historical Society will soon be online. Internet access will soon allow Society members to surf other historical societies' and museums' sites as well as establish our own web site. Training is available for anyone interested in using this valuable, user-friendly new tool. Researchers and data entry volunteers are always welcome. Let's keep our new tool busy. Call Bev McClave at **733-5170** or the Heritage Center at **733-6070**. Many thanks to the Computer Committee for researching and purchasing the best system possible for our needs: **Dave Flint, Pat Flint, Bill Jennings, Rik McClave, and Eric Shyer.**

ANNUAL FUND DRIVE

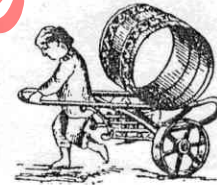
The 2000 Annual Fund Drive is underway. Last year the Society achieved a major milestone with the completion of the tin restoration by Phil Holbrook. However, like any organization, we can't stand still. Painting of the exterior of the Heritage Center is underway, and additional roof repair is necessary. When that effort is complete, other projects await: window restoration, a moisture problem in the foundation, and balcony supports. And that's only the building. There is also a multitude of things to do in the collection and exhibit areas. A volunteer curator has not emerged since Sally Fox's retirement, so there may be an additional investment there. Our new computer is rearing to go with lots of data to enter and artifacts to catalog.

As you can see by looking at the Heritage Center and the programs and activities that have occurred over the past decade, your donations have yielded very good returns. Many more projects await the funding and the people to bring them to fruition. Remember how much good your contributions have accomplished in the past, and don't forget that there is still much more to be done. Our goal this year is \$5000. That's a lot of money, but we met that goal last year, and we can do it again this year – with your help. Remember, it is better to give than to receive – and it's tax deductible.

MYSTERY PHOTO



This woman is much older than she appears in this photo. She might well be someone's grandmother or great grandmother by now? Do you notice any family resemblance?



A widow wrote this epitaph in a Vermont cemetery:
Sacred to the memory of
My husband John Barnes
Who died January 3, 1803
His young widow, aged 23,
Has many qualifications of a good wife,
And years to be comforted.

EVENTS THIS SUMMER

July 21 - Then and Now – A Century of
August 26 Change
July 21 Grand Opening 7:30 pm
Fridays & Saturdays (7/22 – 8/26) 1 – 4 pm
August 5 Closed (Visit the Craftfest)
 The changes that made the Twentieth Century
 in Stephentown so exciting

August 5 11th Annual Juried Craftfest –
Fire Department Muster Field &
Pavilion, Grange Hall Road
10 am - 4 pm
 High-quality craftspersons and discriminating
 shoppers make the Craftfest a special event.

Sept 2 Tag Sale –
 (Rain Date Gardner’s Field, Route 22
Sept 4) 9 am - 3 pm
 Start your Labor Day weekend off right.
 Exchange your castoffs for someone else’s
 treasures.

Sept 22, 23 Hooked Rug Show
Barbara Peterson & Students
10 am – 4 pm
 Over 100 rugs from classes and shows, teacher
 and students
 Donation \$3

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MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

January 1 - December 31

Membership categories and dues are:
 Individual Member \$ 5.00
 Contributing Member 15.00
 Business/Organizational Member 25.00
 Life Member 100.00

Please join us this year. Make your tax-deductible
 check payable to:

Stephentown Historical Society
P.O. Box 11
Stephentown, NY 12168

Save This Sheet for Reference

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Program Chairperson **Pat Bowman** continues to inspire
 us with outstanding programs in a wide variety of
 historical fields. **Blanche Nelson, Meredith Rhindress**
 and **Isabel Krebs** are helping Pat in her continuing
 searches for outstanding talent in our own and
 neighboring towns. All programs and events are held at
 the Stephentown Heritage Center on the first Monday of
 the month and begin at **7:30 pm** unless otherwise
 specified.

Monthly Programs:

August 7 Our Changing Houses
 - Audience Participation
September 11 Philipsburg Manor
 - Richard Babcock
October 2 Suffragettes in Rensselaer
 County - Maren Stein
November 6 Hooked Rugs
 - Barbara Peterson
December 4 Holiday Potluck Party
 Begins at 6:30 pm
January 8 What Is It?
 Audience Participation

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Officers:
 President Beverley McClave 733-5170
 Vice-President Donna Mullett 733-5278
 Recording Donna Herrick 794-9448
 Secretary 766-5298
 Corresponding Libby Kogan 733-6662
 Secretary
 Treasurer Caroline White 733-5250

Trustees:
 Betty Feathers (413) 637-7218
 Wyatt Haley 733-5771
 Helen Koepp 733-5640
 Bill Jennings 733-5923
 Judi Tarr 733-9348
 Bill Zimmerman 794-8430

Committee Chairpersons:
 Cemeteries Wyatt Haley 733-5771
 Alan White 733-5250
 Collections **Help Still Needed**
 Fundraising Sylvia Leibensperger 733-5716
 Genealogy Virginia Atwater 733-5136
 Heritage Center Bill Zimmerman 794-8430
 Membership Donna Mullett 733-5278
 Nominating Sylvia Leibensperger 733-5716
 Newsletter Bill Zimmerman 794-8430
 Program Pat Bowman (413) 738-5420
 Refreshments Mary Gorman 733-9661

*The Stephentown Historical Society
Presents . . .*

Free

Held Rain or Shine

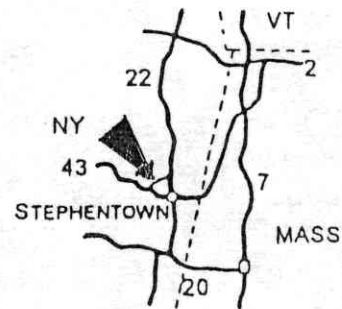
The 11th Annual Stephentown Craft Fest

Saturday
August 5



10 to 4

- ✿ Craft Demonstrations
- ✿ Delicious Food
- Entertainment ✿



A Juried Art & Craft Show

S.V.F.D. Fire Hall at the Muster Field
Grange Hall Road, Stephentown, NY
(Off Rte. 43, 0.7 mile west of traffic light)



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Editors:

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Klaus Burg
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Stephentown
Historical
Society