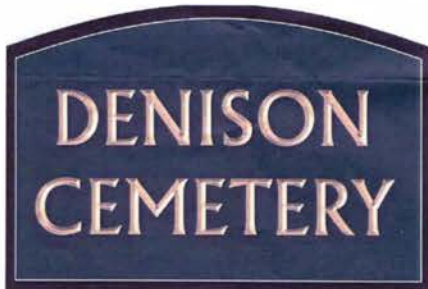




NEWSLETTER

DENISON CEMETERY BEING RESTORED

Local Boy Scout working to earn his Eagle Scout Badge has coordinated a Stephentown cemetery restoration project.



Beginning in the fall of 2010, Boy Scout David Kirsimagi, 15, of Nassau Troop 166 and a student of LaSalle Institute, began writing his plan for his Eagle

Scout Service Project. David lives near the Denison Cemetery, located on East Road in Stephentown. Over the years it had become overgrown with brush and trees. The service project consists of the restoration and beautification of this cemetery.

First he obtained permission from Pat Flint, the president of Stephentown Historical Society at that time, to do the project. Then he got permission from the landowner Craig Chittenden to cut trees, clear brush, and unearth buried stones. (The 1990 SHS publication *Epitaphs in the Only Stephentown on Earth* indicated that there were 56 known graves in the Denison Cemetery. So far David and his crew have located 91.) With the expertise of Joe Ferrannini of Grave Stone Matters, David has also learned to reset, clean, and restore cemetery stones.

David has coordinated work crews comprised of other Troop members and volunteers to assist him.



The gravestone of Revolutionary War veteran Captain James Denison is now in plain sight in the Denison Cemetery. (David Flint photo)

30TH ANNUAL STRAWBERRY FESTIVAL

The Stephentown Historical Society held their Annual Strawberry Festival, one of their major fundraisers, at The Berry Patch once again. The event was held Sunday, June 26, and featured Strawberry Shortcake with freshly picked Strawberries, Ice Cream and homemade Biscuits. Volunteers provided homemade Strawberry Rhubarb Pies that were sold as a whole pie or by the slice.



Volunteers of the SHS picked 214 lbs. of berries on Thursday night between the thunder storms. Friday was hulling day and Sunday, with the good weather, they served pie, ice cream and short-cakes.



He has also committed himself to providing a sign for the cemetery. He has contacted Montauk Signs to purchase a hand-carved green and gold sign (seen above). Kevin Dougherty, owner of Montauk Signs, has also generously agreed to install it. (SHS felt it could not fund the purchase of the sign to the exclusion of the 70-plus other cemeteries in town without signs.) David has added this financial responsibility to his project and is working and saving for it. He would welcome donations to help defray the cost. He has undertaken a worthy project, one which will benefit the town and highlight the Eagle Scout program.

**PROGRAMS FOR THE
STEPHENTOWN HISTORICAL
SOCIETY**

August 2011 through January 2012

All programs are free and open to the public. They begin after a short business meeting held at the Heritage Center on the corner of Garfield and Staples Roads at 7:30 p.m. on the first Monday of each month.

AUGUST 1 - Scott Christianson : Freeing Charles-
'The Struggle to Free a Slave on the Eve of the
Civil War'

SEPTEMBER 12 - (Note: This is the 2nd Monday)
Jim Bonesteel : The Rensselaer Plateau

OCTOBER 3 - Jennifer Lee : Historic Indian
Clothing of the Northeast Woodlands

NOVEMBER 7 - Marilyn Sassi : Antique Toys

DECEMBER 5 - Holiday Pot Luck at 6:30 p.m.
followed by Fred Cashmere : The History of
Coffee and New York

JANUARY 9 - (Note: This is the 2nd Monday)
Jennifer Allard: The Roosevelts in New Lebanon

**THE STEPHENTOWN TRAIN STATION
IS DEMOLISHED**



Another Main Street icon is gone. On April 5, 2011, Dave Goodermote demolished the landmark that had fallen into a very decrepit state. The

Stephentown Historical Society tried to purchase the building in the 1980s and others have tried with similar lack of success. The current owner, Frank Zwack, Sr., said the building was dangerous in the state that it was in and vandals had been in there recently starting fires. He was afraid someone would be injured or killed and decided it was best to tear it down. Zwack

recalled that in the early 1950s he helped to unload the last freight car that arrived at the station. It had a load of backhoes sent down from Vermont.

Historical Society records indicate that the Lebanon Springs Railroad consolidated with the Bennington & Rutland Railroad in 1870 to form the Harlem Extension Railroad Company, with service from Chatham extending all the way up to Bennington. A succession of mergers and acquisitions ended in 1901 with the "Chatham Division" now becoming part of the Rutland Railroad. The New York Central company assumed control of the Rutland in 1904.



Rose Gerstel's Rutland Railroad student ticket from 1929. Photo courtesy of the Stephentown Historical Society

By 1938 better roads and motorized transportation had reduced the need for trains, and the Rutland went into receivership. The company recovered and attempted with equipment upgrades to win back freight business. Passenger traffic on the Chatham or "Corkscrew Division" ceased in 1926.

Stations on the Corkscrew Division included North Bennington, Bennington, Mt. Anthony, Bee Hive Crossing, Petersburg Junction, North Petersburg, Petersburg, Berlin, Center Berlin, Cherry Plain, North Stephentown, Stephentown, Wyomanock, Lebanon Springs, New Lebanon, Center Lebanon, Adams Crossing, Brainard, Riders, Old Chatham and Chatham. The Stephentown station building and the Berlin station, now known as the Watipi building, were among very few that remained.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Annual Tag Sale Saturday, July 30
Field Trip on the Berkshire Scenic Railway October 1
Leave Heritage Ctr. 9:15 am - Lenox to Stockbridge Trip - \$13.50
Tour Museum of Lenox Station, Picnic Lunch & Friendly Restaurant

IN MEMORIAM

Stephentown's Centenarian, Eva Mayer, passed away at the remarkable age of 106 on May 17, 2011. Eva Gladys 'Sis' Tyler was born in Springfield, MO, on December 29, 1904. Eva went peacefully in her home in Stephentown, NY, as were her wishes. Coming from Springfield, MO, she met her husband John "Jack" Leo Mayer in Chicago and moved to Stephentown in 1942. She operated the Country Kitchen coffee shop for 13 years on Route 43. At age 59 she began to sell Real Estate for another 21 years. Mrs. Mayer was buried in the Garfield Cemetery.

A NOTE FROM OUR TOWN HISTORIAN

Hello, my name is Tom Laier and I am the Town Historian for the Town of Stephentown. It has been decided that perhaps the Stephentown Historical Society's newsletter should contain a few words from the Town Historian.

I am the large fellow with the unkempt hair that sits next to his pretty wife at the meetings. I live in the New Lebanon School District end of town so many of you may not know me. You may be acquainted with my more famous brother, Steve, of postal fame.

I would like to thank Bev McClave and Bill Zimmerman for patiently showing me the ropes. I sort of became the Town Historian because there wasn't one for many years and I thought it was a good way to give back to the town in which I live. I also truly love having an excuse to open a history book and read. My favorite topics are Medieval England and colonial New York and New England. I am currently working on a project about the Albany County Militia during the Revolutionary War. If anyone has ancestors or knows of anyone who served in the ACM during the Revolutionary War, especially if they were from Stephentown, please let me know. You can contact me at thomaswlaier@gmail.com.

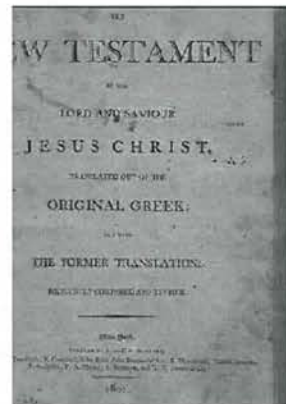
I am fortunate to have an intern to help me with my research this summer. Hannah Hogan is a history major at SUNY Oneonta, who also happens to live in the Town of Stephentown. Currently she is transcribing the 192 pension pages of Colonel Henry K. Van Rensselaer, an officer in the ACM.

One cannot be the Stephentown Town Historian without acknowledging the work of Betty McClave. Stephentown was certainly blessed to have this energetic woman develop such an interest in our little town.

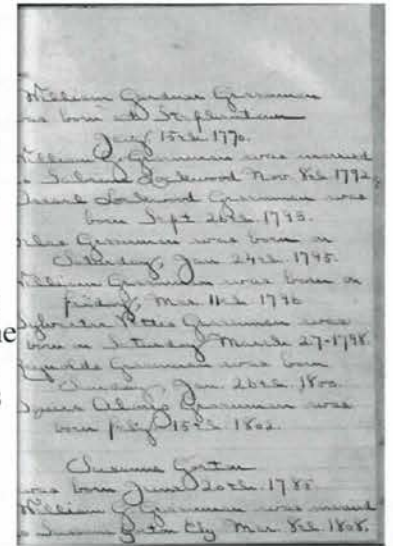
Everywhere I look or research I find Mrs. McClave has been there first. The transcription of the Holcomb diaries by itself is a life's work. I am grateful for all of her work.

Finally, as we get ready to celebrate the birth of our nation on this Fourth of July, I would like to share some thoughts on my visit last fall to Nettuno, Italy. Nettuno is special because at Nettuno there is a US

LOCAL "GREENMAN" BIBLE ADDED TO ARCHIVES



A Bible from Stephentown was found on Ebay and purchased by the Stephentown Historical Society. The handwritten inscriptions show the birth of William



Gardner Greenman in 1790 in Stephentown. Pat Flint purchased the Bible to be placed in the Archives and has done some research. She has identified many of the names included in the Bible and found the cemetery stones in the Greenman Cemetery located on Madden Road on private property.

Town Historian Continued

Military cemetery with the graves of many WWII casualties, mainly from nearby Anzio Beach. The day I visited was a perfect day. The sky was blue and there was just enough breeze to unravel Old Glory. I was deeply saddened, but at the same time I was never so proud to be an American as I was that day in Italy, where I saw row upon row upon row of young Americans who were willing to sacrifice all for us. There are over 7,000 white crosses and stars of David there. It's all part of history. It's all part of the price that's been paid for us.

So when you eat that hotdog at the family barbecue or go to the Valley Cats' game, or sit back and enjoy the traditional fireworks, take a moment and remember the price that was paid for our freedom to do so.

Log onto the Stephentown Historical
Society's Web Site:



www.stephentown-historical.org

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The Heritage Center is open from 1 to 4 p.m. on Fridays and by appointment. It will be closed on the following dates in 2011. Presidents Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Columbus Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day

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