



DHS News

The Official Newsletter
of the

Deposit Historical Society

October 2011: Vol VIII, Issue iv

The Deposit Historical Society

145 Second Street

Deposit, New York 13754

(607) 467-4422

Website: www.deposithistoricalsociety.org

Note: You can view our newsletters with color pictures in pdf format on our website!

President's Message: Fall Ahead, Not Behind!

Believe it or not we're already into the next season. We look forward to beautiful days of sunshine and no shadows except what is created by standing with the sun at our backs! The best of life is yet to be. After the 200 years celebration of our little community's birth a new year looms for the next centennial. We've nowhere to go but up to better times, better programs, and better fun.

What a summer we experienced! As the hours and accomplishments flew by; a great exhibit of Delaware County aerial views on display in our social hall brought positive feedback from the viewers. The best mini-movie of our village by Kay Hoban and Ellen Jogo has and will be enjoyed by many friends throughout. The lasting memories of making history happen is what it's all about!

As much diligent effort and physical work that is employed by Mary Colvard and John Bartsch, our Newsletter continues to receive rave reviews from the membership and beyond. The gardening effort is also long-lasting and truly improves our facilities as well. The entire board of directors must be commended for continuously keeping our Historical Society viable. While functioning as a whole organization the most valuable lesson learned is cooperation and continuity.

I think the public should know each person who contributes receives a thank-you, although due to space limitations, not all can be publicly thanked through this newsletter. Without all who participate we would be nowhere. All the gifts of time, money, and artifacts do not go unnoticed. We dedicate our extra time to helping many. That's what makes us good citizens in a country with equally great freedoms.

Enjoy the remainder of the 2011 season by visiting the programs offered at the Museum through December.

Sincerely,

Richard S. Axtell, President

October Quarterly Meeting: *Letters of Joseph Brant*



Joseph Brant

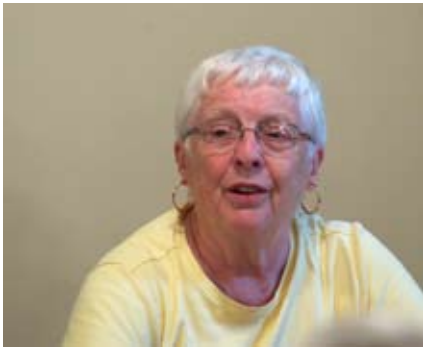
Presented by Buzz Hesse, owner of Hesse Gallery in Otego, N.Y., and an avid archeologist. Hesse will discuss the 1777 letters of Joseph Brant, an important historical figure. Brant was a powerful and influential Mohawk chief who sided with the British during the American Revolutionary War.

The meeting is on Wednesday, October 19th, at 7:30 PM. Refreshments will be served following the meeting.

Rafting on the Delaware Program

On the evening of July 20th, a crowd of over 50 attendees enjoyed an extremely informative and interesting presentation by Gloria McCullough and Ann O'Hara of the Wayne County Historical Society. They are also authors of the book, *Murder, Mayhem, and Sundry Misadventures in Wayne County, Pennsylvania 1850-1910*.

According to the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway New York web site (<http://www.upperdelawarescenicbyway.org/history/logging/logginghistory.php>),



Ms. Ann O'Hara

and floating them down the Delaware for sale in Philadelphia started just after the French and Indian War. Daniel Skinner, who came here from Connecticut in 1755 with his parents and siblings — his father, Joseph, killed in 1759, is believed to have been the first white man murdered in the upper Delaware — is generally regarded as the man who started it all. The earliest trips down river, however, were not without incident.”

It is interesting to note that at the time, the state of Connecticut claimed all of the land from its western border to the Pacific. Joseph Skinner was the original proprietor of the Susquehanna Company, formed in 1753 with the purpose of expanding Connecticut Colony

borders westward through Pennsylvania by occupying the Wyoming Valley along the Susquehanna River. Neither the Pennsylvanians nor the Native Americans occupying that area were happy with this and it is very likely the reason Joseph was murdered.

Daniel Skinner was one of Joseph Skinner's ten children. In 1763 he built his first raft by lashing trees together. He thought he could follow them down the river in a canoe. This didn't work. The logs ran aground. The next year, 1764, he nailed six large logs together to build a raft that could be ridden and steered down the river. Skinner hired a man to accompany him on the trip. It took them over a week to go from St. Tammany's Flat, just below Callicoon to Philadelphia. Skinner was paid four pounds per log.

A second raft, containing ten logs, was constructed and floated down river in just two days. Soon, there were dozens of other daring, hardy men rafting logs down the Delaware. Skinner came to be known as “the Lord High Admiral of the Delaware.”

James Eldridge Quinlan, in his History of Sullivan County wrote, “By general consent, (Skinner) was constituted Admiral of all the waters of the river in which a raft could be taken to market, and no one was free to engage in the business until he had the Admiral's consent. This was gained by presenting Skinner with a bottle of wine, when liberty was granted to the applicant to go to Philadelphia as a forehand. To gain the privilege of going as a steersman, another bottle was necessary, on receipt of which the Admiral gave full permission to navigate all the channels of the river.”

During the Revolution, all rafting ceased. After the war, there was a big market for logs. In the early days, rafters only cut pine trees of a specific height and straightness. These were destined to become ship masts. Later, the rafters also cut hemlock. The bark was used for tanning and the wood for lumber. As the number of saw mills along the river increased, the rafts started to carry cut lumber and any tree of respectable size was prime for cutting. Both the raft and the cut lumber were sold upon arrival in Philadelphia, Trenton, or one of the other cities.

The rafting season began as soon as the ice on the river melted. During the winter months logs were brought down to the river and the rafts built. A typical raft would be 20 to 25 feet wide and 160 feet



Ms. Gloria McCullough

long. Small rafts called “colts” were linked together to form a “fleet.” Oliver Tyler built a raft that was 75 feet wide and 200 feet long. It had 9 oars.

The rafts had no propulsion and depended on the river current to move them along. The oars pulled against the current. The steersman’s oar was off center a little to the right (or Pennsylvania) side. The left of the raft was known as the New Jersey side. Basically there were four commands the river men used: New Jersey (left), Pennsylvania (right) Holt! (stop), and Holt t’other way! (go back).

Many rafters stopped in Deposit for the night. For the trip down the river, the owner paid a steersman \$50, an oarsman \$20 or \$30. The rest of the money from the sale went to the owner who was also obligated to cover three rounds of drinks per day plus the hotel each night. In Narrowsburg, there was a boat that traveled the river and supplied food. It was similar to a Mississippi river boat. Long Eddy was a popular stopping place. It was reported that at times, the rafts were so dense you could walk across the river on them.

Once the lumber was sold, the men walked home. It took them about two weeks. After the railroad came through, they would take the train. Later, they would take the train to New York City and spend a few days there before returning home.

Men loved the adventure of rafting. The women were not quite so excited about it. The river men liked practical jokes and to bend the law a little. They also liked to fight. In fact, they liked to drink and fight. There were other vices they also enjoyed. Since this is a family publication, these will not be mentioned!

From 1775 to 1785 was the heyday of rafting. Around 1897 was the time of the last raft. It wasn’t because there was no market but because the trees were mostly gone.

Ms. McCullough and Ms. O’Hara recommended the following, if you are interested in learning more about rafting on the Delaware:

History of Sullivan County, by James Eldridge Quinlan, 1873

Holt! T’Other Way! Leslie Wood, 1950

Once Upon a Memory, edited by Eleanor Keesler and Pat Christian, Volumes 1 & 2 (1987) and Volume 3 (1993)

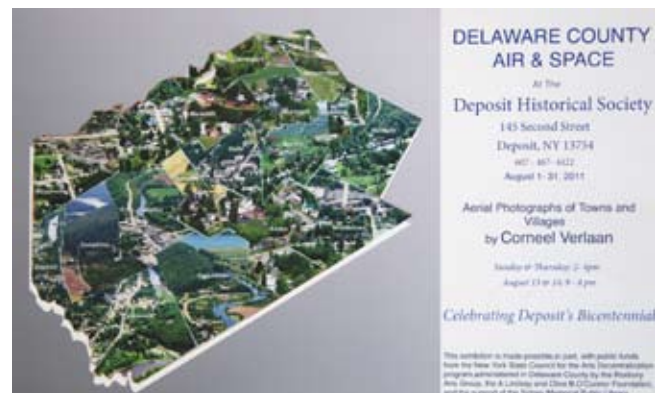
Rafting on the Delaware, by Leslie Wood, 1934

Stories of Raftsmen, by Charles T. Curtis, 1922 (reprinted 1975)

The Winding Delaware, by Pierre DeNio, 1960

Aerial Images at the Museum in August

During the month of August, a special exhibition of Delaware County aerial photographs were on display at the museum. These images offered an unusual perspective of the area’s small towns, rivers, and mountains that have shaped our region. The exhibit is the work of professional artist Corneel Verlaan. Many visitors to the Museum found the exhibit very informative and interesting. Thanks to Corneel Verlaan, the artist, for providing us this unusual opportunity.



Riflemen of the American Revolution

Mr. George Cummings, dressed in authentic uniform, provided attendees with a wonderful glimpse of what it was like to be a rifleman during the American Revolution.

Riflemen were typically frontiersmen, individuals who had ventured from the cities and appreciated being their own person. They were a bit crude and lacked certain social graces. George Washington had used frontiersmen as scouts when he was surveying the Ohio Valley. He recruited frontiersmen to become riflemen when he became commander of the American Army. The collection of militia that constituted the new army did not possess the wilderness survival skills of the frontiersmen. Members of the regular army were also not very accurate shots when compared



Explaining the operation of his rifle

to the frontiersmen. They were lucky to hit something at 25 feet whereas a rifleman could shoot a British officer at 200 feet. Since they were not regular army and because they typically shot British officers, if a rifleman was captured, they were given no quarter and treated as a spy.



Cummings as a Rifleman of the Revolutionary War

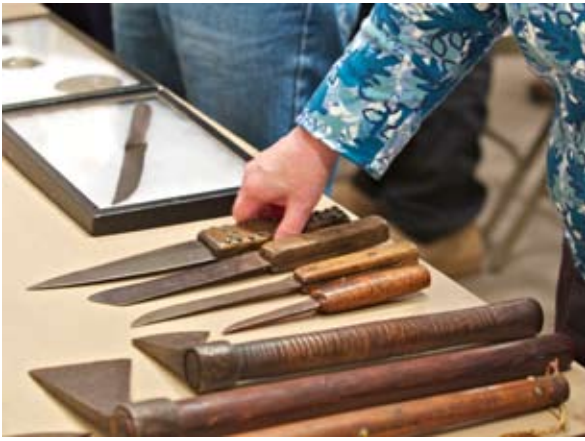
Riflemen were paid professional soldiers. Their uniform was a rifleman's frock that was often made of homespun. The frock featured a short cape to help retain warmth. All the edges of the frock were fringed. This allowed water to drip off the fabric keeping the underside dry. Riflemen carried a wooden canteen typically made of white oak or willow. They also wore a small knife around their neck. It was used for utilitarian purposes such as eating. A larger knife, used as a weapon, was worn at the waist. They carried a powder horn that was a horn scraped thin so that they could hold it up to the light and see how much powder was left. Powder was a critical item since it had to be imported. General Washington was very concerned about the amount of powder the army had. At one point he determined there was only enough for each soldier to fire eight balls. Little did he know that the British were also strapped for gunpowder. Riflemen made their own balls since their rifles were different from those used by the conventional army. When



Describing the route of Clinton's army in 1779

a garrison or fort fell, the real prize was powder, lead, and metal.

Mr. Cummings explained that the Germans developed rifling in the 1600s. Rifles were used for shooting wild boar and deer. Many Germans settled along the Susquehanna River bringing their rifles with them. Riflemen reported back to German manufacturers that the rifles were very heavy and had a lot of kick. Also, they had to make large balls that required much powder to fire. This made it expensive. German gunsmiths listened and the next edition of the rifle was lighter and



Some of the display items for the audience to examine after the meeting — including the scalping knife in the display box!

had a much smaller bore, about 30 caliber. The barrel was very thick so that it could be retooled when it became too worn from use. To load one of these rifles takes about a minute. In combat, riflemen would shoot from a distance. They might get off two shots but combat quickly became hand-to-hand.

Mr. Cummings mentioned that Old Stone Fort Museum &



A dual-purpose hand axe with a pipe bowl and drilled handle

Schoharie County Historical Society is an excellent place to visit if you are interested in learning more about riflemen and the American Revolution. I checked their website and learned that the museum is now exhibiting Timothy Murphy's famous double-barrel rifle from the Revolutionary War. Mr. George P. Wilbur III of Howes Cave, NY has lent it to the museum for an indefinite period, along with another rifle attributed to David Ellerson. Go to <http://www.theoldstonefort.org> for more information about the museum.

Joan Axtell Organizes DHS Fund Raiser



The evening of September 25, 2011 Butterfield's in Deposit was filled with the sound of lovely music and pleasant conversation.

The Deposit Historical Society owes Joan Axtell a debt of thanks for organizing the

event. She produced and mailed the invitations, hired the musicians, set the menu, and organized the other fund raiser initiatives that occurred during the evening.



Joan Axtell, event organizer, on left

Thanks are also extended to Pat O'Donnell, Elaine Reinhardt, and Paul and Susan Zagami for helping with the event. Approximately fifty DHS members and supporters enjoyed the clear autumn evening on the patio and inside Butterfield's. We thank all who participated and made the event a success! Here are some pictures of a few of the people, the entertainment, and of course, the food!



Smith's Pharmacy

In the April 2011 issue of the Newsletter, excerpts from David Smith's "diary" and pharmacy records were shared. Glued to one page is a sheet from James A. Vail, "Wholesale and Retail Dealer in Drugs and Medicines Pure Brandies, Wines, and Liquors and a Special Line of Choice Cigars and Tobacco." Inside the folded sheet, Mr. Vail wrote, "I take pleasure in presenting to my customers a few valuable receipts (sic) for coloring. My stock of Dye Stuffs I can warrant to be of the very best quality, and fresh." Included are formulations: "To Color Madder Red, To Color Cotton Blue, How to Color Cheap Scarlet Red," and several others. If anyone is interested in the actual recipes, please contact us and we'll provide you with the information.

Now, for the important information, treatment for your dog, the ingredients for some cure-all liniment, heave powders, and sun cholera medicine.

First the liniment—the ingredient list is as follows:

- fr opii (I think this is powdered opium)
- chloroform
- oil of cloves
- ether sulphur
- oil of Lavender
- alcohol

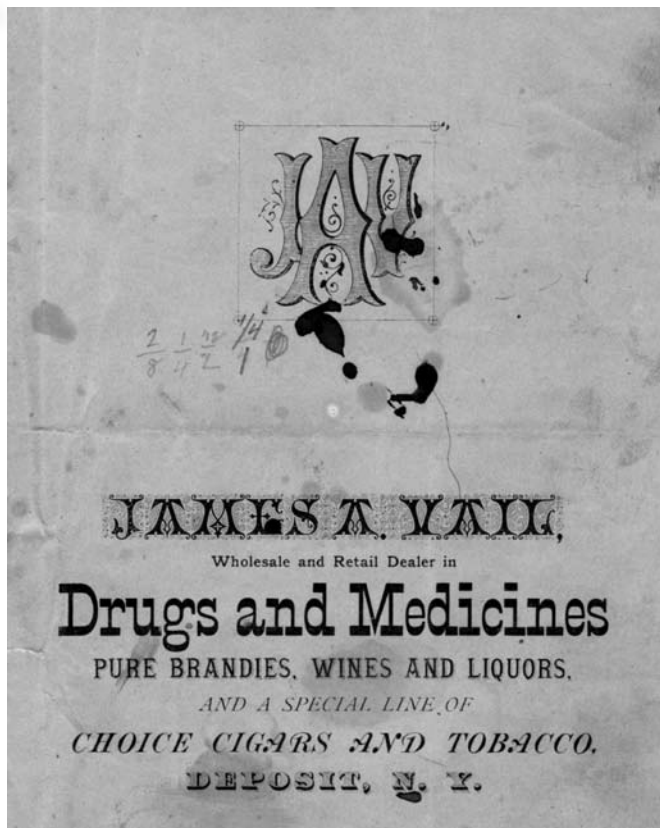
With these ingredients, I can imagine that it truly would be a cure-all liniment!

Next—the Dog Wash. I had originally thought this formulation was a flea treatment but now am not so sure. See what you think. This is what you had to do:

Wash your dog in warm water and perfume, dry well, after, take ½ pint astral oil, 2 oz. sulphur, 2 oz linseed oil, 1 oz. turpentine, 2 oz. oil tar. Mix. Shake the bottle well. Rub into skin and leave it on about four days. Wash him out again and your dog will be all right. And if he should not be better, give him another rub as before. (Dr. Mulvey)

The heave powders were prepared from lobelia and bloodroot. The patient was to take 1 teaspoonful a day or ½ teaspoonful twice a day. It is interesting to note that several species of lobelia are cultivated as ornamental garden plants. In terms of medicinal uses, Native Americans used it to treat respiratory and muscle disorders and as a purgative. It is also referred to as Indian tobacco. Today lobelia is used to treat asthma and food poisoning. It is also a part of some smoking cessation programs even though there is no conclusive evidence that it works. Because of its similarity to nicotine, the internal use of lobelia can be dangerous to children, pregnant women, and individuals with cardiovascular disease. It is also listed as an emetic (induces vomiting) and a diuretic. The bloodroot component is scary. I did some research and found that bloodroot extracts are toxic to animal cells. Applying bloodroot to the skin may destroy tissue and result in the formation of a large scab. It was used by Native Americans as an emetic.

Mr. Smith pasted an article from the New York Sun into his "diary." It includes the instructions for making "The Sun Cholera Mixture." According to the article, "It is found to be the best remedy for looseness of the bowels ever yet devised. It is to be commended for several reasons. It is not to be



mixed with liquor, and therefore will not be used as an alcoholic beverage. Its ingredients are well known among all the common people, and it will have no prejudice to combat; each of the materials is in equal proportions to the others, and it may therefore be compounded without professional skill; and as the dose is so very small, it may be carried in a tiny phial in the waistcoat pocket, and be always at hand. It is:

Take equal parts of tincture of cayenne, tincture of opium, tincture of rhubarb, essence of peppermint and spirits of camphor. Mix well. Dose fifteen to thirty drops in a wine-glass of water, according to age and violence of the attack. Repeat every fifteen or twenty minutes until relief is obtained. No one who takes it in time will ever have the cholera. Even when no cholera is anticipated, it is a valuable remedy for ordinary summer complaints, and should always be kept in readiness.”

Deposit Bicentennial

This August, Deposit marked its 200th birthday with a celebration of its history. Along with many other organizations and individuals, the Deposit Historical Society joined in. The museum was open both Saturday and Sunday during the event and offered new displays and a special slide presentation. Kay Hoban and Ellen Jogo teamed to produce a PowerPoint showing the homes and business of Deposit as they appeared in the past.

Kay narrated the presentation. The virtual tour was organized so that you started at the museum, moved up one street and down another until returning to the museum.

The 25-minute program was shown multiple times each day and attended by over two hundred people. On Saturday, attendees were invited to watch slide show and then follow the same path through town on a hayride to see what these homes and streets look like today.



The PowerPoint has been updated to provide more information. There will be an additional showing at the Museum during *Octoberfest* on October 9th. The Museum will be open from noon to 4:00 PM on that day, with the PowerPoint slide show at 2:00 PM.

The full version of the narrated slideshow is available on a CD at the museum for \$5.00 or by mail for \$8.00. If your computer does not have the PowerPoint program, you can download a PowerPoint player application for free at the Microsoft website. (There are different versions of the player, depending on your computer's operating system.)

Harvest Pie Sale Coming



On October 9th (Columbus Day Sunday) we will be having our annual pie sale during *Octoberfest* on Front St. It runs from 10 AM to 3 PM. We would love to have some of our members donate a home-made pie or two that our booth has become so well known for. If you are willing to bake for us, drop off your delicious treat at our booth in the morning, or contact us if you need someone to pick it up.

Even if you can't bake for us, please stop by to visit and check out our selection of pies and various other Museum items for sale!

Don't forget, the Museum is also open this day from noon to 4 PM with our slide show, ***Going Back in Time***, airing at 2 PM.

Upcoming Events (July through September) at the Deposit Historical Society...

Be sure to check the DHS web site for the latest details and updates.

Sunday, October 9, 2011 10 AM — 3 PM: Harvest Pie Sale at Octoberfest.

Stop by our booth and purchase some of the best home-baked pies around! (See article on page 7.)



Sunday, October 9, 2011 (Columbus Day Weekend) Noon till 4 PM

The Museum will be open from 12 Noon to 4 PM with a *Going Back in Time* PowerPoint slide show presentation at 2 PM. The museum then closes for the season at 4 PM. (See page 7 for more information)

Wednesday, October 19, 2011 7:30 PM: Quarterly Meeting and Program, Letters of Joseph Brant

Presented by Buzz Hesse. He will discuss the 1777 letters of Joseph Brant who was an important historical figure in Unadilla and Central New York. (See article on page 1.)



Sunday, December 11, 2011 2:00 — 4:00 PM: Annual Christmas Open House.

Join family and friends as we celebrate the holidays in our beautifully decorated Museum. Enjoy delicious refreshments and special musical entertainment.

Contact the DHS News editors for information, suggestions, or address changes...

If you have information to share with us about our mysteries, historical events, or suggestions for new articles or projects at the Museum, **or if you have moved**, mail it to DHS Newsletter editors Mary Colvard and/or John Bartsch at 24 Bobolink Ct., Deposit, NY 13754, or email it to one of us at mcolvard@tds.net or jbartsch@tds.net. We will be delighted to hear from you! Thanks!!

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Deposit, NY

13754