



# *Spindle City Historic Society*

Volume 11 Issue 3

Fall 2008

## HISTORIAN'S NOTEBOOK

### *The Cohoes American Cooking School*

In February 1936, *The Cohoes American* newspaper sponsored a cooking school. The cooking school, held in the Keveny Memorial Academy cafeteria, began on the afternoon of Tuesday, February 11, 1936 and continued through Friday, February 14. The classes were conducted by Mrs. Edna Riggs Crabtree, a nationally regarded teacher and speaker on home cookery and other domestic activities. She had been an Associate Editor at the *Cohoes American* newspaper since 1934, with her column appearing in the once-weekly "Modern Home News" page edited by Mrs. Broebeck. In her presentations, Mrs. Crabtree offered advice on entertaining, menu planning, grocery shopping, and the use of new and unusual food products, along with kitchen tips, shortcuts, and advice.

In the Keveny cafeteria, Mrs. Crabtree cooked at a kitchen set up for her use on an elevated platform. The classes, offered free of charge, were very popular, with overflow crowds throughout the week. Cohoes merchants supported the program with donations of merchandise, which were given to attendees as prizes. Among the prizes were market baskets, cakes, pies, tarts, muffins, bread, sandwiches, salads, ham loaves, and non-food items including flowers, a heating pad, a hand iron, wallpaper, a desk lamp, a bedspread, dresses, and a free eye examination. Sponsoring merchants included Scotland and Munro, Inc., Jo Ann Dress Shops, Carroll's Cash Shoe Store, Carpenter the Florist, Smith Electric, Marra's Pharmacy, De Freest, Keller Baking Company, Imperial Dairy Products, Trombley Electric Service, Dr. T. Brandon Timpane, Carhart Motor Company, and Swatling Paint and Paper Company.

The recipes presented for Friday's program of the course were Ribbon Cake, Meat and Vegetable Pie with Biscuit Topping, Afternoon Tea Doughnuts, Quick Salmon Patties, Pineapple and Apricot Salad, Macaroni Stuffed Peppers, Mock Parker House Rolls, Banana Milk Shake, Luscious Dressing for Fruit Salad, and Graham Cracker Ice Cream. These were easy to prepare, economical recipes with advice for the home cook, valuable assistance in the midst of the Great Depression.

Those who attended the cooking school were pleased with the recipes and instruction Mrs. Crabtree offered, and requested that the cooking school be held again in the future. Mrs. Crabtree had high praise for the enthusiastic Cohoes audience, who even braved a snowstorm on February 14<sup>th</sup> to turn out in large numbers for the class.

JC/staff

Many thanks to Jeannine Nescot for information used in this article.

## DID YOU KNOW

....that the names of several streets that were in existence in Cohoes in 1846 are now used in the city for streets in other locations? Willow Street was once located along the Mohawk River at the site of Peach Street, but now runs between Vliet and Garner Streets. Walnut Street was once located at the site of Ship Street (near Bridge Avenue), but today connects Columbia Street and McElwain Avenue. Devlin Street in the Orchard was once called Younglove Avenue; Younglove Avenue today runs from West End Park to High Street. Streets no longer in existence are Sue Street and Healy Road, adjacent to Columbia Street.

....that on September 2003, after 40 years after it was disbanded, the Schuyler Society for the Children of the American Revolution was reorganized and the Van Schaick Mansion was selected to serve as their headquarters? The society was first organized in February of 1903 and received its charter on March 30, 1907. The new charter members numbered 19 and range in age from infancy to 18. Membership in the society requires proof of relation to someone who served in the Revolutionary War or otherwise supported the cause of American Revolution.

.... that Frederick C. Malpass, Assistant Vice President of the Cohoes Savings Bank, worked at the bank for 45 years before retiring in 1968? Malpass was a graduate of the American Institute of Banking and served in the army during WW II. He was active in many community organizations, serving as vice chairman of the advisory board to the Salvation Army, trustee of the Cohoes Masonic Temple Association and chaplain of the Cohoes lodge, deacon of the First Baptist Church, and Chairman of the Christmas Seal campaign. He was also a member of the Cohoes Historical and Cultural Society, Rensselaer County Historical Society, Lansingburgh Historical Society and the Waterford Historical Museum and Cultural Center.

....that Cohoes Mayor Alfred LeRoy, who served from March 1882 to October 1885, is buried in Albany Rural Cemetery?

....that St. Joseph's Church celebrates its 140<sup>th</sup> anniversary this Fall? A celebratory dinner and Mass will be held on September 21, and a commemorative booklet on the history of the church is set to be published.

### WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

The Spindle City Historic Society welcomes new members *Thomas & Laurie Carter, jr., Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Fitzpatrick, Dick & Diane Loeffel, Susan Vail, and Barbara Zavisky.*



## Off the Top...

As a teacher, it is hard not to measure years by an academic calendar. Student success is measured through achievement and sometimes progress is overlooked. The measurable achievements of the Spindle City Historic Society in the past are many.

Here is the short list of achievements in the past 12 months:

- Mastodon exhibit at "Arts Friday Night" at Harmony Mill #3. (8/17/07)
- Opening reception for "A Gentler World - Finding The Way Back" – photographs by Paula Symanski. (9/8/07)
- "Cohoes as a Company Town" - Tour co-sponsored with the Hudson-Mohawk Industrial Gateway. (9/23/07)
- Trade card exhibit. November – December 2007.
- Opening reception for an exhibit of Cohoes photographs by Mike Carey. (12/9/07)
- "History of a Cohoes Quilt" presentation by Lynne Shultis. (1/20/08)
- Presentation by Bernie Ouimet on immigrant groups of Cohoes. (6/20/08)
- Opening reception for an exhibit of Spanish American War artifacts. Co-sponsored with the Sons of the Spanish American War. (2/16/08)
- The Hudson-Fulton Celebration - What happened in 1909 and what is planned for 2009 - a Presentation by Assemblyman John McEneny. (2/28/08)
- Pizza party and Cohoes High School art show reception. (4/23/08)
- Women in the Military - A Retrospective. Exhibit opening/media event (6/2/08); Cohoes school group visit (6/3/08); Evening reception (6/5/08). Co-sponsored with Cohoes Remembers Vets.
- Visitor's Center open house/Cohoes Treasure Hunt. Co-sponsored with the City of Cohoes. (6/7/08)
- A Presentation about Albany Rural Cemetery by Peter Hess. Co-sponsored with the Harmony House Marketplace. (6/8/08)
- Profiting Through Preservation. Co-sponsored with the City of Cohoes. (6/19/08)

How many events did you attend (or help to organize)?

This does not include the countless hours members spent at regular meetings, producing this newsletter, organizing the collection, designing historical signage, staffing tables at such events as the Farmers' Market, and taking specific requests from the public for information. This is the very short list, there is so much more. I know I am biased, but I would have to give the organization a documentable A (not an A+, because there is always room for improvement. That room for improvement is you! We can't go much further on the resources we have, but an A isn't bad!)

Donations of photographs, memorabilia and artifacts keep coming in for our growing collection. The SCHS is grateful for these contributions. Our regular meetings are the last Wednesday of the month at 7 p.m. in the Cohoes Visitor's Center at 58 Remsen Street (the ground floor of the historic Cohoes Music Hall). I hope to see each one of you at an event. Let's keep memories and history of Cohoes alive!

Paul D. Dunleavy  
President

## Profile of a Member of SCHS – Donna Riley



This issue features a profile of longtime SCHS member and trustee Donna Riley. Donna has great enthusiasm for historical research, and the results of her efforts appear frequently in our newsletter and other

publications. She is a volunteer at SCHS events throughout the year and regularly staffs the SCHS table at the Cohoes Farmers' Market.

### What is your occupation and background?

I enjoyed teaching elementary school in the Cohoes City School District for 32 years until I retired in 2002. I'd been raised in the Clinton Park area of East Greenbush, but moved to Cohoes when I started my career here.

### How did you learn about and become involved in SCHS?

In 1999, a coworker, Elin "Connie" Riley asked if I would go to a meeting with her to see what the group was all about. The SCHS meetings were held at the Cohoes Community Center then. I've been attending ever since.

### What are your hobbies and other interests?

Flower gardening is probably my favorite pastime. I enjoy researching things in libraries and archives. I collect old postcards and novelty teapots.

### What aspects of Cohoes history most interest you?

The nice thing about being part of SCHS is that someone else tells me about an area of Cohoes history and I find myself exploring another avenue I hadn't expected to be interested in. Right now, I'm finding information on the Hudson-Fulton Celebration of 1909. You'd be surprised to learn what an important part Cohoes played in that celebration.

### What SCHS activities and events do you enjoy the most?

Working on the two books the group wrote was fun and I'm looking forward to the next book project.

### Please include any other information about yourself you would like to share.

I moved to Clifton Park when I retired but am still involved in Cohoes. We have many members who do not live in Cohoes but are connected to Cohoes. A person shouldn't hesitate to join and participate just because they don't reside in the City. It is a good place to meet other people. Hope to see you at the next meeting or event.

## The People of Albany Rural Cemetery – A Presentation by Peter Hess



On June 8, Peter Hess, President of Albany Rural Cemetery, spoke about the history of the cemetery and some of the many of the notables buried there. The cemetery is the final resting place of political figures, industrialists, artists, explorers, writers, inventors and many others who

shaped the history of the region and beyond. Mr. Hess' talk included stories of survivors of the *Titanic*, as well as those with Cohoes connections, among them President Chester Alan Arthur.

## Profiting Through Preservation

Historic preservation provides many benefits to our community. Historic buildings lend character to Cohoes, and preserve our city's unique identity and connection to its remarkable past. But historic preservation can also promote a healthy economy and high quality of life, creating thriving downtowns that are good places to do business, with attractive housing in livable, walkable neighborhoods. In a presentation on June 19, Erin Tobin, Regional Director for Technical and Grant Programs at the Preservation League of New York State, described some of the ways in which preservation enriches communities, offering examples of cities and towns around the state that have been revitalized through a commitment to historic preservation. She also outlined some of the programs and resources that can be of assistance in both residential and commercial preservation projects, from tax credits and grants to technical advice.

If you missed the presentation and would like more information about the Preservation League and its programs, they can be found on the web at [www.preservenys.org](http://www.preservenys.org)

## “Women in the Military – A Retrospective”

The Spindle City Historic Society of Cohoes and Cohoes Remembers Vets opened *Women In The Military – A Retrospective* at the Cohoes Visitor's Center on June 3, 2008. The exhibit was up throughout the month of July and was visited by many groups of people.

This special exhibition showed the opportunities afforded to women in the military and revealed their unheralded yet tremendous contributions made as camp followers in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, and through military service in the Army and Navy Nurse Corps, National Guard and Women's Air Force Service Pilots (WASPS). The photographs themselves told their own story!

This retrospective highlighted women who served from Cohoes and Evelyn Pinkert “Pinky” Brier, the first woman flight instructor for WWII fighter pilots. Pinky's story is a very compelling testimonial to the silent service that women gave to this country. After reading her story, it's hard to imagine what her male trainees must have thought when they met their flight instructor on day one. Pinky also served with the WASPS flying planes from the factory to locations overseas through enemy skies.



During this retrospective, students from Cohoes Schools met with active duty women in military service at the Cohoes Visitor's Center and looked at and read the stories on exhibit about women in the military throughout history. The Visitor's Center was packed to capacity and the students gained valuable insight into how women's roles in the military and society have changed over time.

The media were also given a special interview day during which they spoke with women in the military about their various roles and how military service had provided them with many opportunities for career advancement. There was also an evening showing of the exhibit on June 5.

The exhibition team included Curator Gertrude B. Hutchinson, MA, RN, Archivist for the Foundation of NYS Nurses and Contributors Tor Shekerjian, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President of the Spindle City Historic Society, Master Sergeant Corine Lombardo, NYS National Guard, LTC Kim Terpening, 109<sup>th</sup> airlift and Cohoes Remembers Vets.



## The Photographs of Bernard T. Shaw - Views of Cohoes Across 50 years

Longtime Spindle City Historic Society member and trustee Bernard T. Shaw was born in Green Island and lived there and in Troy before moving to Cohoes in 1970. He served in the U.S. Navy, and worked as a printer at Samaritan Hospital, retiring in 1982. Bernie was an active member of the Cohoes-Waterford Elks for 20 years, and was an amateur Ham Radio operator.

Bernie's interests also included painting and photography. He took photographs of Cohoes from the late 1940s through the early years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, capturing aerial views, streetscapes, and city events. Mr. Shaw's photographs document the extensive changes in Cohoes during the last half century, providing a valuable record of the city's recent past.

Bernard T. Shaw passed away on May 27, 2005. His wife Ruth generously donated Bernie's photographs of Cohoes and the surrounding area to the Spindle City Historic Society. A selection of these photographs will be exhibited from mid-September through early November in the Cohoes Visitor's Center. The opening reception for the exhibit will be held on Wednesday, September 17 at 7 p.m.



Photo credits this issue – Walter Cherniak, Bernard T. Shaw, Tor Shekerjian

### **Spindle City Historic Society Membership Application**

[www.spindlecity.net](http://www.spindlecity.net)

President - Paul Dunleavy

First Vice President - Daniele Cherniak    Second Vice President - Tor Shekerjian

Secretary - Linda C. Christopher    Treasurer - June Cherniak

<input type="checkbox"/> Individual Membership	\$10.00	<input type="checkbox"/> Institutional Membership	\$25.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Senior Citizen Membership	\$ 5.00	<input type="checkbox"/> Contributing Membership	\$35.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Student Membership	\$ 5.00	<input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining Membership	\$50.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Family Membership	\$15.00		

*We have great things planned in our home in the Cohoes Visitor's Center!*

*Please help if you can with an additional donation to support our upcoming programs:*

\$5.00     \$10.00     other

gift membership

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP CODE \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Mail completed form with membership fee, payable to Spindle City Historic Society, to:  
June Cherniak, Treasurer, 415 Vliet Boulevard, Cohoes, NY 12047



