

Museum of Rhinebeck History

Celebrating Rhinebeck's Rich Heritage

Volume XXI, No. 1

June 2014

Farewell to valued Board Members and Welcome to a new one

Ada Harrison Retires from Museum Board

The current Museum board wishes to thank Ada Harrison. Ada, a Rhinebeck native, is one of the original founders of our organization.

For many years, Ada served as the Museum curator. With help from Kay Verrilli and later Steven Mann, she had the pleasure of accessioning thousands of objects – pictures, textiles, documents, books, and other local memorabilia. Her largest assignment was coordinating the addition of the prestigious Frost Collection which was donated by the late Rhinebeck resident, Barbara Vaughan Frost. Her second largest was working with a committee of Museum trustees on the Frank Asher collection of photographs, which was donated by his son, Robert Asher.

Ada is enjoying retirement in Rhinebeck with her devoted daughter, Stephanie, son-in-law Jay, and their lovely daughter, Xandra. We will continue to carry on the Museum's work, using all the practices and procedures she helped to establish over the years since its inception in 1992.

~

We are also sorry to report that Jan Scriber has resigned from the Museum board. Jan has served for over 10 years and has been our membership coordinator and was instrumental in putting together policies and procedures for Museum operations. She will be missed.

Board member Sarah M. E. Bacheiler is taking a leave of absence for a year while she is out of the country. We look forward to her return next year.

Krista Miller the intern who has work with at the Museum has joined the board and has stepped right up and taking the position as Secretary in the absence of Sarah. Welcome Krista!

Schedule

This year we will be open on Saturdays, June 14 through September 27 from 1 – 4. The Chancellor Livingston DAR Chapter House and Palatine Farmstead will be open at the same time.

Award Dinner Held



The Museum of Rhinebeck History sponsored an Award Dinner for Steve & Ellen Hubbert. In addition to hundreds of volunteer hours that they have given to the community, Ellen served on the Museum Board of Trustees for many years and Steve has been, and continues to be our computer guru! Thanks again to Ellen and Steve!

The Future Is Now

Krista Miller

For the past year, several museum board members have been working furiously on a new database and accessioning procedure project. The current database for the Museum of Rhinebeck History is problematic. It can be difficult to navigate which voids its usefulness in historical research. This project is designed to revamp the database by creating a standardized key that will be used for all future entries and will also incorporate our ongoing digitization efforts to ensure that all entries have corresponding images. Sounds exciting, right?

Our goal is to eventually have the database completely revitalized- chock full of images, detailed descriptions, and accurate information regarding the collection at the Museum of Rhinebeck History. By initializing this new standardization, everyone interested in Rhinebeck History will be able to easily search our online database with the assurance that every possible relevant item from our collection will appear as a search result. This will greatly enhance our mission in encouraging the understanding and appreciation of Rhinebeck and its history.

We have our goal, but a goal is nothing without proper action. We have already taken great steps to make this idea a reality by creating the new standard that will be in practice. From this point on, every new item that comes into the Museum's collection will undergo a thorough cataloguing process before it is placed into collection storage. This is to ensure that every minute detail is properly recorded and uploaded into our online database. We are headed in the right direction, but there is always more work to do.

What is left? As of now, we still need to complete the digitization of the current collection. This process is already more than half-way finished. We hope that all of those newly scanned images will ultimately make their way online. Eventually our three-dimensional objects will be photographed and those images, too, will be available for the

public to peruse online. These are all easily accomplishable tasks.

The Museum of Rhinebeck History is on the verge of complete digitization. With this bump into the 21st century, we will be able to continue our mission to educate the public about the history of Rhinebeck and hopefully inspire those who may have not always had an interest in local history to participate. With a newly organized and standardized collection, we have no limits. The future is now.

The Museum of Rhinebeck History is on Facebook!



Sarah M. E. Bachelier

In case you haven't heard, the Museum of Rhinebeck History is on Facebook. In attempts to connect with the larger community of Rhinebeck we decided getting on Facebook was a good idea. And it has proven to be true! We have had a page since summer of 2012 and have 358 likes and counting! If you don't have a Facebook account, maybe this will motivate you to get one... Or tell your technologically driven relatives to check us out.

Having a Facebook page has allowed us to share events, announcements, and even actual photographs from our collection. It is a fun and exciting way to interact with our community and discuss topics related to our collection and your ancestry. Posting photographs on Facebook allows us to hear your comments and memories related to the places, people and things we share!

Is your family originally from Rhinebeck? Did you grow up here? If so, please take the time to take a look at our Facebook page. You won't regret it!

Reverend Quitman vs. Robert Scott

Two Rhinebeck theologians and a fundamental disagreement

Beverly Kane

This winter we were contacted by Adam Jortner, Professor of United States History at Auburn University in Alabama. Marilyn Hatch also spoke with Professor Jortner. You may have read a piece that Marilyn wrote in the recent Quitman Resource Center Newsletter.

I have been on the board of the Museum for four years yet I never took the time to find out more about Reverend Quitman and the Quitman house, the building in which the Museum is housed. My conversation with Professor Jortner spurred me on.

The Quitman House, more properly the Stone Church Parsonage, was built for the arrival of first resident minister of the Lutheran religion in Rhinebeck, Reverend Frederick Quitman. The Lutheran congregation constructed the original St Peter's Lutheran church on the site of the Stone Church that we know today. The property was received by the congregation from Gilbert Livingston in 1729. A log or wood frame was first constructed on the site in about 1730 and the new edifice that we see today was built around the old church and completed before the Revolutionary War.

The congregation was served by itinerant ministers, including Reverend Quitman, for many years. In 1798, the congregation made the decision that a more permanent minister was needed and Reverend Quitman was offered the position.

Reverend Quitman was born in Germany in 1760. In 1783, he was ordained by the Lutheran Church. He and his family moved to New York in 1795. Quitman originally divided his time among a number of small and scattered Lutheran churches in the Hudson River Valley. Reverend Quitman

preached seven or eight times a week in German, Low Dutch or English.

The old stone church parsonage was built for Reverend Quitman and his family in 1798. In return Reverend Quitman was required to preach eighteen Sundays, and three festival days at Rhinebeck; eighteen Sundays and three festival days at Germantown; nine Sundays and one festival day at Wurtemburgh; and seven Sundays and one festival day at Livingston. Reverend Quitman died in 1832 and is buried in the Stone Church Cemetery.¹

Reverend Quitman was the author of 5 publications, the first being *A Treatise on Magic, or the Intercourse between Spirits and Men* in 1810. This is the book that sparked the interest of Professor Jortner.

An email from Professor Jortner explains – “in 1810 Quitman published *A Treatise on Magic*, one of the few books written by someone in the US that's specifically about magic. Quitman's text goes through the history of magic (Egyptian, Roman, English, etc.), and concludes that while God and the gospel were real, all subsequent supernatural events were *deliberate* fakery: “they are a mere cheat of designing impostors, or finally that the very stories are forged for the amusement of the credulous.” (40) In other words, biblical miracles are okay, but everything else is a deliberate lie--not a mistake or an accident or a coincidence.”²

In the *Treatise*, Quitman describes an incident that occurred in 1808 to support his conclusions. It is summarized by Professor Jortner as follows: “The ghosts came to Rhinebeck in October 1808. A local farmer ran afoul of the evil spirits, who threw stones across his farm (indoors and outdoors), even when doors and windows were locked. Some winter stores were blighted; those that survived simply vanished. The family feared witchcraft, and they called in a famous conjuror from across the Hudson River. The conjuror was one of the cunning-folk whose job it was to reverse enchantments using counter-magic, but it did no good. Rumors began circulating about the appearance of “apparitions in several quarters of the town.”³ We find in

Woodstock: History of an American Town by Alf Evers "The conjurer with the magic staff was [identified as] Dr. Jacob Brink, the white witch..." who hailed from Woodstock. There is a chapter in *The Catskills from Wilderness to Woodstock* also by Alf Evers, titled "Dr. Brink Battles the Witches." Mostly likely this was the conjuror called to Rhinebeck.

Reverend Quitman "was appalled to find his fellow citizens gabbing about witchcraft. He announced his intention to find the human beings responsible, but his first attempted was foiled when he found the house in question crowded with people, presumably waiting for him to perform some fantastic rite. With too many eyes on him, Quitman made arrangement with some confederates, who literally caught the culprits the act of throwing stones; but Quitman soon learned that even when the whole affair had been exposed as a prank, "the infatuation is so great that many, and even members of the injured family, persist in the belief of its being practiced by infernal influence.... And it is really to be feared that during this dull winter, all the corners of Rhinebeck, for want of other employment, will be infested with demons."⁴

Enter Robert Scott, fellow Rhinebeck resident and future minister to the Baptist Church in Rhinebeck. Robert Scott was born in England the same year as Quitman, 1760. He arrived in the United States in 1794 and moved to Rhinebeck in 1796. Mr. Scott opened a school on South Street and Baptist services were held at his home at the same location. He was official ordained as a Baptist minister in 1821 and the Baptist congregation was born. Scott died in 1834 and was interred at the Baptist Church cemetery.

But, back to 1810, after Quitman published his *Treatise on Magic*, Robert Scott wrote a series of letters to Reverend Quitman which was published 1810 as *Letters to the Rev. Frederick H Quitman; occasioned by his late Treatise on Magic: with additions*, by Robert Scott, Preacher of the Gospel.

Scott disagrees with Reverend Quitman and states in his introduction "...nothing but the love of truth, a persuasion that the arguments advanced were dangerous to and destructive of revealed religion, and a desire to prevent my fellow men from running headlong into this gulf of infidelity which seemed (at least to me) to lie yawning before us; or prevent them from swallowing the poison, which to me seemed to lie hid in said treatise..." Basically Scott "argues that you cannot disbelieve in the modern supernatural without being an atheist: "I looked upon the arguments in the treatise as not only a stroke at witchcraft, but also at all natural and revealed religion."⁵ Scott's book consists of four letters to Quitman and final comments by Scott. The book puts forth serious allegations and I imagine that Scott hoped for a reply. Evidently Quitman never responded to any of the letters.

Why did Quitman never respond to Scott? Was it because Scott was not a "real" minister? Did Scott present arguments that Quitman found difficult to respond to? I guess we'll never know.

Regardless of the reasons I thank Professor Jortner, Reverend Quitman and Robert Scott for encouraging me to find out more about the Quitman house, Reverend Quitman, and his life!

¹ Isaacs, Reverend Mark D. Memorial for Frederick W. Quitman, FindAGrave.com, May 28, 2014

² Personal correspondence from Adam Jortner to Beverly Kane, March 11, 2014

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

Auction items needed

Once again, the Annual Holiday Auction is being planned for November. Those with quality items to donate, please contact Steven Mann at 876-6892 or smann320@yahoo.com who is willing to pick up items that can fit in his Nissan Rogue.

MUSEUM OF RHINEBECK HISTORY MEMBERSHIP FORM

PO Box 816, RHINEBECK, NY 12572

Phone: 845-871-1798

DUES INVOICE FOR THE PERIOD January 1 through December 31, 2014

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, ZIP _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

Enclosed is my tax-deductible check in the amount of \$_____

Please enclose your employer's form if your employer has a matching grant program (e.g. IBM).

Please apply my payment for the year 2013 as follows:

Lifetime.....\$1,000 _____ Family.....\$15 _____

Lifetime option \$250 x 4 years ___ Individual.....\$10 _____

Sponsor.....\$100 _____ Student.....\$5 _____

Business.....\$50 _____ Other.....\$ _____

Patron.....\$50 _____ Added Donation.....\$ _____

TOTAL.....\$ _____

Please make checks payable to MUSEUM OF RHINEBECK HISTORY and mail to the Museum at the address above. Thank you!

NOTE: If you have family archives that you wish to donate to us, please check below and someone from the Museum will be in touch with you. _____

DOCENTS NEEDED

Attention Rhinebeck Natives!!!
Share your knowledge and wisdom of your town as a Docent at the Museum of Rhinebeck History. Hours for volunteering are Saturdays from 1-4pm during the period between June 14-September 27. Learn about this season's collection and meet our visitors.

Contact: Mara Marrero 845-797-5070 for more information.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

We depend on member dues. The cost of membership is very reasonable, a small price to pay to protect, preserve and display our growing collection. The membership form is on the other side of this page. Before you forget, please complete and send it in to us with your check. Your support is needed and very much appreciated.

Museum of Rhinebeck History

P.O. Box 816

Rhinebeck, NY 12572

2014 Board of Trustees & Advisors

President—Elizabeth Clarke
V. Pres—Beverly Kane
Rec Secy—Krista Miller
Treasurer—Mara Marrero
Kay T. Verrilli
Sarah M. E. Bachelier
Five vacancies

Advisor—Nancy V. Kelly
Advisor—Brenda J. Klapproth
Advisor – Marilyn Hatch

CALENDAR

June 14th 2014 Museum opening

May through September 2013
Museum Exhibit – Textiles in Rhinebeck's history and display on breweriana.

November 15 – Holiday Auction

ADDRESS CHANGES

If you expect any change in your address, or if you are aware of any fellow Museum members who have recently moved, please notify Mara Marrero , the keeper of our membership records, at 845-797-5070, or email her at xmarrero25@yahoo.com

Museum opening June 14th!