

Museum of Rhinebeck History

Celebrating Rhinebeck's Rich Heritage
Volume XV, No. 2

Fall 2008

President's Message

The Museum this summer received two startling items, one a rock, another a piece of paper. Both can lay claim to being the oldest of their kind here in Rhinebeck.

In June, we received a very large quartz crystal. At 500,000 years of age, it is probably the oldest piece of Rhinebeck history. It is on loan to us through the generosity and foresight of Wally and Mary Knapp, who had acquired it in 2000 from Dr Edward Dunlap, who quarried it from a 60 acre tract he owned on Enterprise Road. In November, the crystal will go on permanent display at the New York State Museum in Albany, where it will become part of the permanent geological collection. It will be here in Rhinebeck on display every Saturday and Sunday from 2 to 4, through October 26, as part of our exhibit about prominent Rhinebeck families. (Much of the Knapp portion of the exhibit is postal art work by Wally Knapp's mother and former Rhinebeck art teacher, Dorothy Knapp.)

At the end of August, the Museum received another even more startling item. Jim Donnelly donated a deed signed in 1709, which we believe is the oldest document here in Rhinebeck pertaining to our local history. There is an older 1688 deed from the Indians to five Dutchmen, two of them Kips, but it is in the Ulster County archives, not here.

The 1709 deed is in magnificent condition, and had come to the donor through his stepfather, Radcliffe Heermance, who was born in Rhinebeck in 1882 and lived as a

child on the property in Rhinecliff described in the deed, before he left to eventually spend most of his professional life as Director of Admissions at Princeton.

The deed appears not to have been recorded in either Dutchess or Ulster County, and historians seem not to have known about it. I shared our excitement at this stunning gift with our Town Historian Nancy Kelly, and she has responded by sharing some notes with me about its content and about the individuals named in the document. I'm delighted to be able to share those here.

The deed describes the transfer of "a certain tract of land...to the south of the land of Jacob Kip and to the north of the land of Evert Van Wageninge"—the deed doesn't state the acreage, but it's a large chunk of what was then called Kipsbergen—so named because the Kips (Henry & Jacob) were the only ones of the 5 partners who signed that 1688 deed with the Indians to actually settle there. Henry's son John, signer of this 1709 deed, thought he was selling property from his father's estate. It's likely that John's sister Catlyntje was getting married to Matthys Sleight, and this deed was a settlement of her portion of the land. Henry was baptized in Kingston Feb 8, 1654, and would die 4 years after this deed was signed, in 1713). When the 1688 land patent was initially divided between Henry and his brother Jacob, Henry took 2/3 south of Jacob and 1/3 north of Jacob's land. John, Henry's eldest son, was born in Kingston, March 31, 1678 and there he married Lysbet (Elisabeth) Van Kleeck September 28, 1703. There was no church yet on the east side of
(continued on page 5)

Mystery of Rhinebeck's Missing African-American Graves

By Steven Mann

Back in mid-June, I had the pleasure of giving a driving tour of the Rhinebeck-Red Hook-Milan area. My guests were two people I have had the pleasure of working with down at the Dutchess County Historical Society in Poughkeepsie -- Lorraine Roberts and Jacqueline Harper, both of Wappingers Falls, who are active with the DCHS Black History Committee.

Our afternoon was spent reviewing the areas of Thorneville in western Milan, which is part of the Salisbury Turnpike, Lafayetteville, Upper Red Hook including St. John's Reformed Churchyard, and Morehouse Lane in Milan where the Quaker meeting was many years ago. The one site they did not get to was the old Union Church (also known as Milan Christian Church) where Quakers worshipped. The church ceased operation many years ago and was torn down in the 1960s. A small burial ground remains with the early Connecticut and Long Island families of Thorne, Wakeman and Sherwood buried on this land.

The second part of our afternoon, was spent viewing the nearby Village of Rhinebeck historic district and then over an hour at the Negro Burial Ground at Rhinebeck Cemetery. One-half acre of land had been given for a cemetery for the "people of color" by Miss Mary Garrettson on August 27, 1853. A small number of monuments in memory of those people still stand. They have the surnames of Jackson, Hasbrouck, Sleight, Clow, and others. However, several town natives have told me that they remember as children wooden crosses, now long gone, marking the graves of some who

were not lucky enough to have such permanent memorials.

Although I have thought we might never know exactly where these missing graves are buried, there might now be hope. Dr. Brian McAdoo is a professor at Vassar College. He and his classes over the years have helped search for long-forgotten burial sites, including those at East Fishkill and Hyde Park. This could be a golden opportunity should we be able to secure Dr. McAdoo's services, to find out just where the others are buried within the Negro Plot. Jacqueline was able, through the knowledge she had in working in the past with Dr. Christopher Lindner of Bard, to detect just from walking around and looking, several other burial sites within that plot of land by depressions in the ground. Could these be the sites of the missing graves???

Stay tuned, we hope to know more by spring 2009 as to whether this could be a possibility for the 2010 academic year. I for one certainly hope it can be done.

For those who are interested, I will be speaking on October 28, 7 PM at the Hyde Park United Methodist Church Hall, to the Hyde Park Historical Society of which I am a member. The topic will be the Quaker abolitionists of Ulster and Dutchess Counties.

In February 2009, I will be speaking to the Chancellor Livingston Chapter DAR at an evening meeting to which the public will be invited. The topic will be the Colored Populations of Northern Dutchess, with a focus on Milan, Red Hook and Rhinebeck.

Editor's note: The author uses the term "colored," in both of his articles appearing in this newsletter, because of the wording in the original gift, as cited by Howard Morse in *Historic Old Rhinebeck*, p 364: "Miss Mary Garrettson gave a half acre of ground for a cemetery for the 'people of color.'"

MUSEUM OF RHINEBECK HISTORY MEMBERSHIP FORM
PO Box 816, RHINEBECK, NY 12572
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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. _____

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It's Time for All to Renew Memberships!

Memberships are used to pay the Museum's operating expenses-- electricity, rent, and curatorial supplies, for example. Because memberships pay only a portion of those expenses, the Museum continues to increase its fundraising efforts—for example, we had a yard sale in May and the Progressive Dinner in September—both of those events raised a considerable amount of money, and helped keep dues lower than they might otherwise need to be to allow us to meet our continuing obligations.

Members eager to further support the Museum's growing efforts can participate in the fundraising events noted above. Those wanting to go above and beyond can leave a gift to the Museum. As a 501(c)3 incorporated organization, we can accept willed gifts through your estate. Please consult your attorney or estate advisor regarding such a gift. A gift can also be artifacts with which your name will be associated in perpetuity.

Progressive Dinner

Museum members had a wonderful Progressive Dinner on Sunday, September 7th. Our thanks to Monique Segarra and Christopher Lipscomb, owners of Mansakenning, and to Carole DeSarum and Raymond Erickson, owners of the former Riverside Methodist Episcopal Church. Their willingness to allow the Museum and the Quitman Resource Center for Preservation to jointly sponsor the event at their homes allowed both organizations to raise a significant amount of revenue and to spend a delightful afternoon enjoying a wonderful selection of donated appetizers and desserts and appreciating the preservation of two important historic structures.

Docents Needed

The Museum needs more docents to keep the Museum open through the summer until the end of October. A docent is a volunteer who works with a Museum Trustee weekends during the season to help welcome visitors and guide them through the exhibit and the Quitman parlor. We need your help. Age is not a factor.

If you have a couple of weekend days during the summer to donate your valuable time, we would like very much to speak with you. Please contact our treasurer, Mara Marrero, who is also the docent coordinator. She can be reached by calling the museum office, 871-1798. Please leave your name, telephone number, and time that you are best reached.

Museum Calendar October 2008 to June 2009

June through October 26, 2008

Museum will be open all Saturdays and Sundays from 2:00 to 4:00 PM

Saturday, November 15, 2008 at 5:30 PM

Tribute to Tom Daley
Café Lucchaela at the Red Hook Gold Club

Saturday, June 6, 2009

Museum opening for 2009

In our upcoming newsletters, we will be announcing our House and Garden Tour for June 2009

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Rhinebeck's Small Colored Community was once a Large One

By Steven Mann

In speaking one afternoon last fall with Mike Frazier, we were talking about the large slave population of the old Rhinebeck Precinct as represented in the 1790 Census. Did you know there were more slaves in the Rhinebeck Precinct than there were total in the rest of Dutchess County?

Why, one might ask. One conclusion is that there were many large estates on the old Livingston land, some still held by that family's descendants. What is today's Tivoli was not far from Clermont, home of Chancellor Livingston. While some of the smaller "estates" might have had one, two or three slaves, there were several that had many more. The same would be true on the south end of the Rhinebeck Precinct where the Pawling family owned so much land.

The 1755 Census of Slaves, as documented in Morse's Historic Old Rhinebeck, shows quite a listing of fine old local families that owned slaves. The names of Hoffman, Knickerbocker, Van Benthuysen, Schermerhorn, Stickle, Ten Broeck, Pawling, Heermance, Van Steenburgh, Soefeldt, Ostrander, Van Vredenburgh, Van Wagenen, Sleight, Traphagen, Keip (Kipp), and Beekman are very much included among others. According to Morse, there were 52 slaveowners and 116 slaves in the precinct of Rhinebeck. There was quite a jump in those numbers by 1790.

One reason that I am trying to prove for this is the fact that there were very few Quakers in the Rhinebeck Precinct. A few lived in Milan, particularly the Wakeman and Thorne families, who worshipped at Quaker meeting and later the Union Church. Ergo, there would have been few vehemently opposed to the owning of a human being. However, in areas like Millbrook, Pawling (Oblong), Clinton (the old Charlotte Precinct) and Hyde Park (the old Crum Elbow Precinct), the Quakers were a very active community and were later very much a part of the Underground Railroad. The railroad was not a literal railroad, it was a system or a lifeline of persons opposed to slavery, usually Quakers, who helped to get the fugitive slaves from one "station" to the next to help them gain their freedom in Canada. Rhinebeck had Huguenots of the Dutch Reformed faith who, like their forefathers in New Paltz and New Rochelle, owned numerous slaves who were often included in property within written wills to be

handed down to the next generation. This explains why in Poughkeepsie there are still, to this day, large Colored families with the names Elting, Hasbrouck, and Deyo. The slaves would take the name of their owners upon being freed.

I could go on and on about my research and what I've found, but I will save that for another occasion. In the meantime, it will give you a taste of real local history.

President's Message (continued from p1)

the Hudson, but he was recorded as living in Cipsberg (Kipsbergen). Their children were baptized in Kingston 1704-1718. Another deed relating to the division of Henry Kip's estate among his three children (Jan, Catalyntje (wife of Matthys Sleight), and Henry Jr.) is recorded in Poughkeepsie, July 31, 1707. By a deed recorded in Ulster County, we also know John sold land to his Uncle Jacob Kip, March 26, 1716. This land was recorded as being on the north side of Jacob Kip north along the river, then east to a krick (creek), and following the creek to Jacob Kip's line. This land, plus additional land purchased from Henry Beekman comprised the 900 acres which Jacob is said to have owned when he died ([Kip Family in America](#), p 336). Smith in [History of Rhinebeck](#) p 29 also mentions a deed dated April 16, 1719 which refers to land sold by John, eldest son of Henry Kip, to Henry Kip (John's brother) and his wife Jacomyntje (Newkirk). In 1719 this land was transferred to Mattys Sleight. Henry and Jacomyntje lived in Fishkill when his will dated Dec. 12, 1751 was written. The will was probated Dec 14, 1754. Jacomyntje married Peter DuBois in 1755.

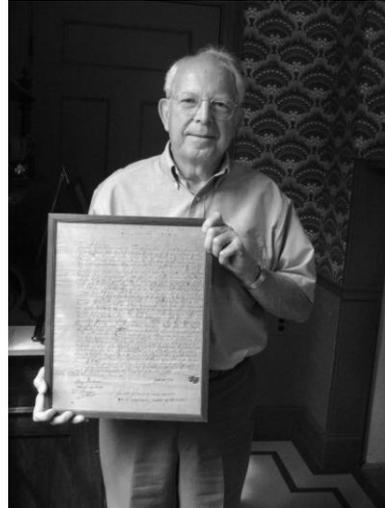
Elisabeth Van Kleeck, John's wife, was the daughter of Baltus Van Kleeck of Poughkeepsie, and by 1710, a deed shows that John had property in Poughkeepsie and was probably living there. He died sometime before the probate of his will August 7, 1747. Jacob Kip died Feb 28, 1733(after having nine children). He was a cooper and a Justice, also Captain of the militia in 1724. The land (300 ½ acres) Jacob bought from Henry Beekman on October 16, 1719, is described as beginning at the south side of a small creek where John Kip lived, being the bounds of Jacob Kip and company.

The genealogy becomes more intricate as we follow the families through the generations. All these families, however, trace themselves back to Kipsbergen, and the 1709 Kip deed shines light on a moment of great importance in the lives of all of these individuals and on the future of Dutchess County.

Mike Frazier

Museum Event to Honor Tom Daley

Members should mark their calendars for Saturday, November 15th. That evening, at 5:30 PM, the Museum will be honoring Tom Daley at the Café Lucchaela at the Red Hook Golf Club. Tickets will be \$25 per member, \$30 per non-member. (Anyone wanting to become a member will find a membership form elsewhere in this newsletter). Tom Daley's extensive photographic work cataloguing the history of the Hudson Valley is a source of inspiration to all of us, and the Museum is looking forward to this opportunity to recognize his achievements.



Jim Donnelly displays the 1709 Kip Deed he has donated to the Museum in memory of Radcliffe Heermance--read about it in President's Message.

**Museum of Rhinebeck History
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