

SAND LAKE
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

November, 1976

FROM THE PRESIDENT -

We Mossy Blue Bloods

During the week of September 20-24 the American Association of State and Local History held its 36th annual meeting right in our own back yard, and several society members took advantage of Sand Lake Historical Society sponsored registration to attend. Madoline Carpenter sat in on a panel discussion for town and county historians and Joan Fuess attended an oral history workshop. Don Carpentier took in two sessions: one on planning, designing and producing exhibits, and another on alternatives to public funding. Your own president sat in on two sessions treating society collections and the problems of small historical societies.

Historical societies, small and large, typically struggle against the old image that they cater to mossy hide-bound, blue-blooded antiquarians who are interested in nothing after 1840. We don't, and few historical societies do, but that is nonetheless the prevailing image, and there's history to support it. The only way to correct the old image is to project the new one vigorously and visibly. Dedication, time, and money are the necessary ingredients in such an image destroying/building campaign, and those are three very difficult components to get together.

Rensselaer County Historical Society suffers from this image problem as we do, and as probably most of the county historical societies do. Ironically, the RCHS could be filling a very worthy role in helping our local societies with such problems as this, except that they haven't been able to overcome the impression among most town historians and local societies that the RCHS caters to mossy hide-bound, blue-blooded It simply isn't true. And another attempt at help is in the offing.

10 AM Saturday 20 November. Those are the vitals of a workshop to be hosted by the RCHS for delegations from all the local historical societies in the county. The idea is that we locals shall try to define our problems (mossy blue-bloodism among them), will find many that are common among us, and finally discover some concerted activities to provide solutions. And I'll bet we so.

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This Newsletter is published quarterly
by the Sand Lake Historical Society.
The Society was granted a temporary charter
by the Regents of the State of New York
June 27, 1975.
Chairman of the Board: Lou Leitgeb
President: Robert Harris
Publisher: Shirley Rescott

SOCIETY EVENTS

1. Last year the Society published a calendar featuring old pictures of our Town. This year we would like to do a Bicentennial Calendar - featuring pictures of Town Bicentennial events held during the past two years. If you have any pictures of this nature, please call me - it is getting late.
2. A new and used Book Sale is planned, benefit the Library, for whenever a suitable place or event to hold it at can be decided on. Any ideas on this will be appreciated. Also, call Robert Harris, 674-3547, or myself, 674-5737, if you have any kind of book or magazine you would like to donate.
3. A Plant Sale was held at Miller's Market, WSL, on Sept. 10. Dorothy Leitgeb and myself were in charge of this Sale and even though it poured just about all day, we consider the day a success. The few plants left over that evening were donated to the Methodist Church for their Festival which was held the next day.
4. Coming programs -

Nov. 8	Rev. James Borden, folk songs
Dec. 8	Cherry Hill, Cornelia Frisbee, Director
Dec. 18	Tour of Cherry Hill.

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TOWN BICENTENNIAL REPORT

To wind up our Town's Bicentennial celebration, a slide program featuring slides of the past two years Bicentennial events will be held on Sunday evening, Nov. 14, 1976. An added attraction of the evening will be the presence, in costume, of the Signers of the Declaration of Independence.

Commemorative plates are still available. If you haven't obtained yours yet, stop at Gifford's Market, or call -

Judy Rowe	674-5388
Doris Gallent	674-3064
Madolyn Carpenter	674-3147
Meg Cipperly	674-3876

The price is \$3.00 if perfect; \$1.00 for seconds.

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ORAL HISTORY

The Oral History Committee will be meeting soon. Do you have your interviews ready yet?

THE TOWNS OF RENSSELAER COUNTY: A Series

A Brief Story About Each Town in Rensselaer County, A Different Town
To Be Treated in Each Newsletter.

This Issue: No. 2 - Schaghticoke, New York "Planting of the Peace Tree"

A most conspicuous object marked the old Indian Council ground at Schaghticoke, the famous tree of peace, called the "Witenagemot" Oak, which was planted more than two centuries ago in 1676. Its wide spreading branches covered an acre of ground and its immense trunk was 22 ft. in diameter, until, unfortunately, it was uprooted in 1948 by flooding of the Hoosick River. Actually, decay had made inroads upon it and part had already fallen away. The remains of the tree can still be seen on the grounds near the Knickerbocker Mansion. But the legend will live on, for in May of this year the planting of this peace tree of the Indians and early settlers was commemorated with the planting of a third generation sapling from the parent tree - re-affirming the principles established in 1676 - the most important being that two peoples can live together in peace and maintain their identities as a people. Descendants of the Schaghticoke Indians and other tribes of the Iroquois Nations participated in this ceremony

The events leading to the planting of this tree were these: Following King Philip's War in New England, a band of refugee Indians who fled from the avenging whites, were urged by Governor Andros of New York to locate along the frontier. He had just organized a Board of Indian Commissioners, the purpose being to establish groups of friendly Indians to guard the trails against invaders from the north, and these Indian refugees, known as the "Schaticooks", were the answer. They were soon settled among the friendly groups that were there.

It was during a visit of Gov. Andros to Albany in the following spring that he, his councillors, the Indian Commissioners, and a detachment of militia, together with nearly 1,000 warriors of the various Indian tribes assembled at the point where the Tomhannock flows into the Hoosick in Old Schaghticoke, and planted the famous Council Tree of Peace as a symbol of a covenant of peace between the English and the Indian inhabitants. To further the covenant, bows and arrows were broken and the hatchet was buried at the foot of the tree. The Indians took the name of Schaghticoke which is said to signify "Mingling Waters."

Schaghticoke had some good land for farming, as well as hunting and fishing, and the Indians seemed content in the reservation set aside for them. The land at Schaghticoke also appealed to the white settlers. The result was, as it almost always was, that the Indians were finally forced to leave. This happened about the year 1753-54. They left the reservation and joined Grey Lock, an old Woroquoak Chief (after whom the well-known Mt. Greylock near Williamstown is named) on Lake Champlain. From Lake Champlain, they raided the Connecticut valley, and even parts of Rensselaer County, until they were finally driven up into Canada. There is no record, though, that they ever raided Schaghticoke.

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"INTERVIEW" (A follow-up Report)

Our Society was extremely fortunate in having as guest speaker on April 14, 1975, William Kennedy of Averill Park, author of a book about that infamous character in our history, Jack "Leggs" Diamond.

This book met instant success - - was chosen alternate selection for the Book of the Month Club. Warner Bros. bought the screen rights and the screen play has been written by Joe Walsh, author and producer of "California Split" which came out a couple of years ago.

In July of this year "Leggs" came out in paperback (Warner Books) and will be available in England in paperback (Penguin Books) sometime in 1977. Johnathan Cape, Ltd., published "Leggs" in hard cover in May, 1976, in England, and the Kennedy's went over to celebrate this event.

"Leggs" is available now at most any store that carries books, in our area Grand Rags, Ltd. has the hard cover edition, and I recently saw copies of the paperback edition on the racks at Miller's Market.

If, or rather, when, Warner Bros. produce the movie of this masterpiece about the stylish '20's gangster, Jack "Leggs" Diamond, it should prove especially appealing to Capital District residents for it offers some rare glimpses into the area's tawdry and colorful past.

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LIBRARY REPORT

As reported in the July Newsletter, a complete list of books belonging to our Library will be published annually (which was done in that Newsletter), with additions reported in each succeeding Newsletter. The additions since July are, with their costs, as follows:

1. "History of Greenbush" reprinted from Sylvester's "History of Rensselaer County, N.Y. 1880" \$2.00
 2. "Cohoes in '76"
Cohoes Bicentennial Commission 2.50
 3. "Christmas in the Catskills"
by Mary Bogardus 1960 6.95
 4. "The Architecture of Lansingburgh, New York"
by John G. Waite 4.00
 5. "Third Rails, Pantographs & Trolley Poles"
by Wm. Reed Gordon 1973 4.00
- Booklets -
6. "The Muitzeskill Historic District"
Historical Society of Esquatak 1976 1.50
- the following booklets were published by The N.Y.S. American Revolution Bicentennial Commission and were free
7. "The Hudson Valley in the American Revolution" 1975
 8. "The Mohawk Valley and the American Revolution" 1972
 9. "The Champlain Valley in the American Revolution"
 10. "Longhouse Diplomacy and Frontier Warfare" by Wm. T. Hagen
 11. "Sir Wm. Johnson and the Indians of N.Y."
by Milton W. Hamilton 1975
 12. "Landmarks of the Revolution in N.Y.S." by David Thurheimer 1974
 13. "John Jay 1745-1829" by Herbert Alan Johnson 1970
 14. "Garrison Town" by Wm. A. Polf 1976

15. "The Spirit of 76" by Carl Becker 1971
 16. "New York's Signers of the Declaration of Independence"
by Paul J. Scudiere 1975
 17. "Four Traditions - Women of N.Y. during the American Revolution"
by Linda Grand DeParev 1974
 18. "The Black Minority in Early New York" by David Kobrin 1971
- the following were published by The University of the State of N.Y.
 19. "Champlain and the French in N.Y." 1959
 20. "Henry Hudson and the Dutch in N.Y." 1959
- Calendars -
21. Esquatak Historical Calendar 1977
Nassau and Schodack 1.50

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FAMOUS OR LITTLE KNOWN PEOPLE IN THE HISTORY OF OUR COUNTRY - A Series

This Issue: The Kittle Family of Schaghticoke

In 1746 the peaceful valley of Schaghticoke was invaded by hostile bands of French and their Indian allies. One of the darkest records of this hostile invasion is that of the massacre and captivity of the members of the Kittle family.

When the first news of the bloody acts of these invaders in the more northern part of the province reached Mr. Kittle he persuaded his brothers who lived near Ft. Edward to move in with his family, consisting of his wife, a 14 year old daughter, and a young son. As the hostiles approached closer it was thought best by Mr. Kittle and his brothers to remove to Albany, as their neighbors had done. A number of friendly Indians, seeing the Kittles making preparations for departure, persuaded them that they had no cause for fear, and should there be any danger they would tell them in time to make their departure. These "friendly" Indians even presented Mrs. Kittle with a belt of wampum in token of their Friendship. On the following day Mr. Kittle and his brother Peter went for a brief hunt in the woods. Upon their return, when quite near home, Peter shot a deer. Hardly had the shot been fired when two Indians appeared, fired at them, killing Peter Kittle. Mr. Kittle immediately shot one dead and struck the other senseless with the butt of his gun. He hurried home with his brother's corpse and news of the danger, and then hastened to Schaghticoke to obtain the necessary transportation for his family and household goods to Albany. Hardly had he left when a party of Indians attacked his house, murdering a second brother and that brother's wife. Mrs. Kittle and her brother-in-law Henry were spared but the children were burned with the house. When Mr. Kittle returned he found only the charred remains in the smoking embers of his house. Not knowing of his wife's and brother's captivity, he mourned them as dead. The captives at length arrived in Montreal where for two years they were kindly cared for by sympathizing women. By good fortune, Mr. Kittle finally found his supposed murdered wife and brother and heard the story of the massacre.

The farmers did again return to their despoiled homes, and for their protection, in March, 1747, Gov. Clinton posted two companies of soldiers at Schaghticoke.

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