

Colchester History Connections Newsletter

April 1, 2019 Colchester Historical Society, Box 112, Downsville, New York 13755

Volume 9, Issue 2 Preserving the history of Downsville, Corbett, Shinhopple,
Gregorytown, Horton and Cooks Falls

Website: www.colchesterhistoricalsociety.org

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/colchesternyhistorian/>

Historical Society Room, 72 Tannery Road, Downsville, New York is open
by appointment, please call

Kay Parisi-Hampel, Town Historian at 607-363-7303

Colchester Town Hall Display February-May 15 Antique Tools

Stop in to see a variety of tools used by Colchester residents to do carpentry, farm, quarry and home jobs.

May 15-July 15 Birds and Blooms



A variety of photos, diary entries and artifacts from the Historical Society collection on home and farm gardens, flowers and birds.

**William H. Shelley, Beers Block,
Downsville Photographer--
Girls with Flowers.**



Colchester Historical Society Annual Meeting—Tuesday, March 26, 2019, 7 PM

Please join us for our Annual Meeting. Election of Officers will be held and plans for 2019 will be discussed. Remember Annual Dues should be sent to: Box 112, Downsville, NY 13755. Membership forms can be found on the CHS website:

<http://www.colchesterhistoricalsociety.org/MemberApplication1.htm>

Thank you for your donations. We appreciate all of the items that were donated last year and we hope that you will continue to support and share your family items and stories for the Historical Society collection.

Delaware County Historical Association to Host Sixth Biennial History Conference Making History in Delaware County, Saturday, May 4, 1-4 PM

Members of local historical societies, local historians, and members of the general public are invited to attend the Delaware County Historical Association's sixth Biennial Historical Society Conference, Making History in Delaware County. The conference is specifically designed for the town and village historical societies of Delaware County.

For 2019 the afternoon's agenda focusing on various topics of interest to local historians and historical organizations. Presenters will include Liz Callahan and Kajsa Harley of Hanford Mills Museum on disaster planning for museums; representatives of the NYS Documentary Heritage Program on the varied services they provide; and a round-table discussion on local history and local historical societies and those issues common to many of us. The meeting, on Saturday, May 4 from 1pm to 4pm, is open to everyone. *We are looking forward to an informative and enjoyable afternoon and hope that you will be able to attend.* Advance registration is requested by May 1, 2019. There is no charge to attend. DCHA: 46549 State Hwy. 10, Delhi, NY 13753. Tel: (607) 746-3849 dcha@delhi.net

Other Delaware County Historical Association news:

March 8 - May 10 ~ Exhibit: *At Home: Furniture from the Museum's Collections*

View furniture from DCHA's collections, including a day bed, school desk from the town of Meredith, a parquet table made by James Middlemist and lamp made by Ken Sprague. Also, on display is doll furniture and pieces from Youngs Station, Hamden and Murray Hill in Delhi. **Free Admission.** *Open Monday - Friday from 10am to 4pm.*

Saturday, May 11 ~ *Rails to Catskills* film showing ~ 2pm

A film by Tobe Carey. *Rails to the Catskills* is a history of the dynamic railroad industry in the Catskills. Catskill railroads have roots in the canals of the 1820s and the post-Civil War railroad boom. The film includes original footage, contemporary and vintage photographs, postcards, rare films, rail fan movies, newspapers, and historic archives. *Running time: 95 minutes.* **Free admission.** *Refreshments served.* Call 607-746-3849 or e-mail dcha@delhi.net for more information.

Thursday, June 13 ~ Bennington, VT Bus Trip

Travel with us to the Bennington Museum where you will enjoy a guided tour. After lunch at the museum visitors will reboard the bus for a tour of Old Bennington. Cost to be announced. *For further information or reservations please call: (607) 746-3849, or email: dcha@delhi.net* Reservations required by May 31, 2019. Passengers may board the motor coach in Oneonta or Delhi.

Colchester Town Profile

In 1847 the Delaware Gazette published History Profiles of the towns in Delaware County. The following is Profile No. 26 on the early history of Colchester.

Delaware Gazette June 24, 1847

"In the last edition several typographical and other-errors occur, which is regretted. In the notices in reference to Abel Downs, it should have been stated that Mr. Downs established a store in Delhi, with Herman D. Gould as Clerk, and finally, aided Mr. G. in setting up for himself there; that General Smith was clerk for Gould, and that he finally entered into co-partnership with him, went to Kingston and was there very successful in the mercantile business, and that it was Gould instead of Downs who removed to Kingston and returned, and that Mr. Downs always resided at Colchester after his marriage till his decease. Gould was however aided by his capital and influence in commencing business. The manuscript stated that Allen Knapp, Esq., and his sister Prudence Horton had resided in Colchester for seventy years past, but the type made it read several instead of seventy. In the headings of the number the word Albert should read Abel, and in the extracts from Ross, Linsey "Woolly should read Linsey Woolsey.—Mrs. Prudence Horton married Isaac, a son of Judge William Horton, instead of the Judge.

The writer would state that in examining various accounts and statements of individuals, he finds frequent differences and is under the necessity of adopting those that seem most probable, judging from the preponderance of evidence and collateral facts; and, after the most careful scrutiny, errors will sometimes unavoidably occur. Following French 's Gazetteer, it was stated in the last number that the name of Colchester was given to the town by Joseph Gee; since that number was issued the writer has been informed by Charles Knapp, Esq., (who was born and passed about fifty years of his life in Colchester,) that it was Gen. David P helps who gave the name; he was then a lawyer and a very prominent and popular citizen of the town.

Wm. Holliday first came from Stephentown, "Westchester County, N. Y., and settled in Harpersfield. After a few years removed to Colchester where he resided till over one hundred years old. He was a religious man, a deacon in the Baptist Church and died a few years since universally respected and regretted.

Thomas Gregory first settled on what is now called the Phelps farm in Pepacton, and Captain Hagen on the William Elwood farm. James Wright came very early after the revolution. He married a woman named Wolf, an emigrant, who was sold for her passage, as was usual in that day. He kept a public house or tavern opposite Downsville. By his first wife his children were Harry, Daniel, Rensaleer, Catharine, Phebe, William and Matilda; and by the second, Alfred and John, born in Colchester. He removed in 1814 to Allegany county and had 19 children born there. Harry Wright, formerly of Deposit and now of Delhi was is oldest son. He married a daughter of Capt. Conrad Edick. Peter P. Wright, Esq., of Delhi, and Conrad

E. Wright, Esq., the former editor of the Deposit Courier were sons of Harry. His daughter Phebe who married George Butler) a son of the late Samuel Butler, Esq., of Deposit. Enoch Knapp came to Colchester from Stephentown, Westchester county, N. Y., in 1793, with his wife who was a sister of James Wright, and three children, Prudent, Allan and Rachel. After he came, James and Charles were born in Colchester. He resided through a long and useful life in the town, and died a year or two ago, at a very advanced age. His youngest son, Charles, resided in Colchester till 1848, when he removed to Deposit. He was early engaged successfully in the mercantile business, and was often Supervisor of the town. In 1841 he was elected to the legislature. A few years after coming to Deposit he established the Deposit Bank, at first an individual bank, but since converted into an associated one, of which he has ever been President and manager. The credit of the bank is undoubted, and its uniform success proves the wisdom of its administration.

John and Jacob Radeker came early to Colchester and each married a daughter of Wm. Horton. They had large families. Sylvia, the wife of Charles Knapp, Esq., of Deposit, is a daughter of Jacob Radeker, and Boliver, cashier of Deposit Bank, a son of Barney Radeker, Esq. of Colchester is a grandson of Jacob. Benjamin Pine, an early settler, married a sister of Abel Down's wife.

Nathan Elwood was an early pioneer and had a large family. His sons were Hezekiah, Roger, Drummond, William, George, Smith and Rensselaer. Hezekiah was a well-known and successful member of the Legislature in 1852. Besides those named, Colchester has furnished members of the Assembly as follows: William Horton, 1798, Adam I. Doll, 1805, John H. Gregory, 1820, John H Gregory, was elected Sheriff in 1831.

*The first flourishing mill was built by Charles Wilson on the Cole farm (**Cat Hollow**) and now owned by Rensselaer Shaver, said to be the best farm in town. Much attention was given to agriculture, and great quantities of grain, such as wheat, rye, corn and oats were raised above the consumption of the inhabitants and exported to Kingston, Delhi and neighboring towns, and to the towns on the river below, as far as Minisink. Canoes came up from Cohecton for supplies of grain and pork and large quantities were carried down the river on rafts. As an evidence of the productiveness of the soil it is stated that Judge William Horton, one year, sold 1,000 bushels of wheat from the tolls of his mill. Frederick Miller kept the first tavern on the Tremperskill and was reported the wealthiest farmer in the town. He was living a short time since, and over 100 years old. John More was a very early settler and came a single man, and worked in the rude saw mill of Wm. Early, where the carriage had to be run back by treading it with the foot. He married Early's daughter and had a family of ten children.*

Peter and James Bogart came very early. Some of the pioneers had no very high opinion of learning. Dr. Doll, however was not of this class. He undertook to get up a school and called upon Peter Bogert to aid him. Peter answered him, "it's as much as I can do to keep my children out of State prison now; what shall I do? If they should get learning they would all go there." The Doctor's arguments were fruitless. Peter could not be convinced. The sad experience of Daniel, the only son of Abraham Sprague, who had been sent to Kingston to school and had become dissipated, settled the question in his mind. This Daniel Sprague married a daughter of Gilbert Early of Hancock, and had three children, Abraham, Daniel and a daughter who married a Sampson.

The land was not alone productive in Colchester. Malthus had no advocates there. As the most extraordinary instance, one Middaugh is named as having 33 children, 23 of them by one wife. He removed to Cohecton where he is said to be still living. The descendants of Adam Shaver, who married Eve Shunfeldt are quite numerous and respectable in Colchester.

Notwithstanding Peter Bogart's objections to learning, Colchester patronized the Schoolmaster, and some fifty year ago a well selected public library of about 400 volumes was formed and for many years was well patronized. It was finally sold at auction, after private libraries became common. A Polemic Society was formed early, and took the lead in most of the public celebrations and particularly on the 4th of July. In 143 the educational association obtained the services of the Rev. Daniel Shepherd of Delhi, who delivered an oration and furnished a copy, by request, which was printed.

The first church organized was Baptist in 1803. Elder Hayes, the first preacher, then James Covill, a Methodist from Westfield, preached there very early, some say before any other. The Rev. Mr. Woolsey was the first settled minister. Rev. Mr. Deadly of Walton assisted in the formation of the first Congregational church. He was the father of the eminent historian, Joel T. Headly. The Samaritan Lodge

of Masons was established there about the year 1822. Judge Joh H. Gregory was the first Master. The anti-mason whirlwind which passed over the country, five or six years after, prostrated the Lodge, as it did all or nearly all others in the State. It would be easy to give a full account of individuals and incidents, but our time and the limited scope of the sketches forbid." July 26, 1863, M.R. H.

7 Billboards in Downsville

Thanks to a NYS Arts Award, and a Delaware County Tourism grant, in conjunction with the Downsville Streetscape, curated by Pio Deroda, 7 Collaged Billboards will be hung at strategic viewing points in Downsville to celebrate and commemorate our rich and varied past. Historic photographs from the Colchester Historical Society collection will be used within these collaged works. The artist Sean Noonan, will also create lithograph signed prints of the billboards to be auctioned and/or raffled off at a closing event in November. Sean is a graduate of Pratt Institute and a Kingston-based artist whose paper works have been heavily influenced by his travels, most notably a year spent teaching in Japan. Postcards and information will be given out in local town businesses.

Shinhopple Memorial Center Grants Update

The Colchester Historical Society is supporting the preservation efforts of the Shinhopple Memorial Center. This 87-year-old log structure was once an Episcopal Church and then turned into a community center in 1950. Grants from the O'Connor Foundation and private funds are used towards preservation of the building. Installation of a new well has been completed and a septic system, ADA Handicap accessibility ramps, doors, security lighting and bathroom facilities will be completed this year. Additional plans will include a new kitchen and resurfacing of the hardwood floors. All of this work will prepare the building for use by its members and the community.

Please consider joining the Shinhopple Memorial Center and support the restoration of this Colchester historic building. Please mail to: Ann Hood, Shinhopple Memorial Center, President, 348 Hood Lane, Downsville, NY 13755

Make Checks & Donations **Payable to: Shinhopple Memorial Center**

Member Name(s) _____ Individual \$15.00 Family \$25.00

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email _____



For other glimpses into the past life in Colchester, please join our monthly meetings.

Meetings are generally held the last Tuesday of the month at the Colchester Town Hall, 72 Tannery Road, Downsville, New York 13755

2019 Historical Society Meetings:

Annual Meeting: March 26, at 7 PM

**April 30 at 10 AM
July 30 at 7 PM
October 29 at 10 AM**

**May 28 at 7 PM
August 27 at 10 AM
November 26 at 7 PM**

**June 25 at 10 AM
September 24 at 7 PM
December 17 at 10 AM**