

Colchester History Connections Newsletter

April 15, 2020 *Colchester Historical Society*, Box 112, Downsville, New York 13755

Volume 10, 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 Historical Society Annual Meeting Postponed

The March 31, 2020 Annual Meeting and Officer elections has been postponed until we can safely meet again. Notice of the new date will be posted on our Facebook and Colchester Township website and the Colchester Community Facebook sites. In the meantime, we encourage you to send in your membership renewals to the address listed in the masthead.

Documenting the COVID-19 Pandemic at the Local Level

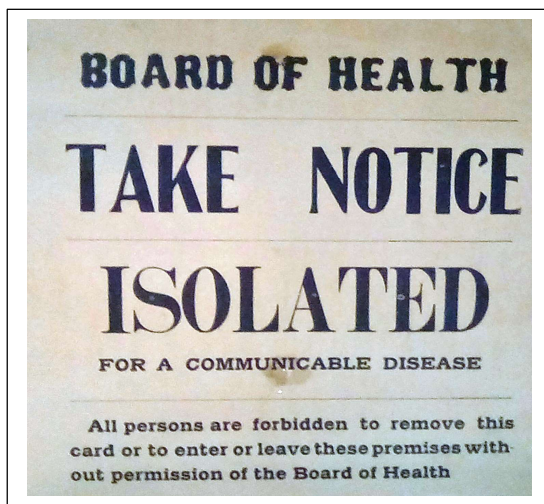
The COVID-19 pandemic is an unprecedented event in all our lives; it is imperative that we record the impact on our communities and how our citizens respond. The Association of Public Historians of New York State suggests that we immediately begin documenting our community's response and offer the following guidelines and suggestions:

Keep a diary. Beginning today, record your memories of local events and reactions to COVID-19 at least since the beginning of March. Continue to update that journal as we move forward: What are you doing, what are you hearing and seeing, and how is the response to COVID-19 affecting your normal habits? This can be done by in a variety of ways. Individuals can keep handwritten or computerized diaries, write blogs, record video or audio diaries or use whatever creative venue appeals to you.

APHNYS (Assoc. of Public Historians of NY State) has developed a form that historians can use to collect stories from throughout New York State. Once the crisis and the collecting period have ended, APHNYS will share the responses with historians throughout the state Please use this Google form to help record your memories: <https://forms.gle/ZUxePXJLcQC2fKCK8>.

Keep a record of specific activities Colchester community's citizens are taking to help each other in this crisis, such as making grocery runs for the elderly, etc. Collect letters, posters, flyers, social media posts, etc., advertising these activities. Keep these materials until we can safely meet again and give them to the Historical Society to preserve for the future. These events will be of great interest to future generations.

Past Epidemics and Quarantines in Colchester



This notice donated by Pamela Place Cole was posted on her mother's Stalker family home on lower Main Street, Downsville in the 1930's when Jeanne Stalker contracted Scarlet Fever.

Similar notices were posted on Colchester homes during the 1902 and 1913 Small Pox outbreaks, and 1918-19 Influenza Epidemic.

Downsville News, December 2, 1902

There are five new cases of the disease claimed to be smallpox in the family of Elmer Aiken, Gregory Hollow, the persons afflicted being Mrs. Aiken and four children. The disease is very mild and there is no reason to think that it will spread, as the quarantine rules have been observed. The schools in that section, closed for a short time, have been reopened.

Delaware Gazette, December 10, 1902

DR. G. C. SMITH, Delhi, N. Y.:

Dear Sir—Your favor of the 5th inst. at hand. In reply will say that the family of Elmer Aiken including himself, wife, four children and hired man have all had the small-pox. They have cleaned up and disinfected the house and I raised the quarantine yesterday. No one else took it from him. There are no other cases near this village. There is one new case at Horton in the family of Wm. Berry. I was over there last Saturday. That is the only case now at Horton.

Fraternally yours,
E. A. HOLMES, Health Officer.

**Delaware Gazette-Downsville News,
January 10, 1913**

Smallpox Outbreak

Regarding its appearance at Downsville the News of that village says:

The outbreak of small pox in the town of Colchester has given the village of Downsville a scare, inasmuch as a party from the town of Honeock visited the village when his face was covered with blotches, whether of smallpox or of "Cuban itch" as some are inclined to believe it is, and the News is led to remark:

The "smallpox of today seems to be of a character to bewilder and perplex the pathological skill of the physicians. Often they seem to see their way and many times they are mistaken. Nine years ago when smallpox struck Walton it was called "Cuban itch" by many, and it is a fact that some of the cases of alleged smallpox in that town showed few symptoms of the old time smallpox. Five or six years ago a man came to Jefferson, Schoharie County, his face covered with blotches. He stopped at the local hotel for a day, or at least a few hours, and finally visited a physician of the village, who affirmed that the man had smallpox. Health officer Peck of Oneonta was summoned, whose statements were corroborative of the report of the local physicians. Then Jefferson people were in a state of consternation. Schools and churches were closed; a pest house was selected, and every precaution taken to stay the dread disease. Within a few weeks from the time the man came to the village there had developed about forty cases of pure measles! not a case of smallpox.

On **December 6, 1918** the *Catskill Mountain News* reported, "Between 300,000 and 350,000 deaths from influenza and pneumonia have occurred among the civilian population of the United States since September 15." Colchester's population in 1918 was approximately 3100 people, Death Certificates for that year show 31 residents died from influenza, 11 of those certificates noted that pneumonia was a contributing factor.

"In the winter of 1918-19, Walton and East Branch and vicinity had perhaps a larger number of cases than any section of the county, and the number of deaths occurring in the two places above named was some weeks frightfully large. Consternation prevailed among the residents of some localities in consequence of the dreadful ravages of the "flu," and physicians seemed positively baffled by the rapid progress of the disease." *Downsville News, February 2, 1920.*

We hope that you are all staying safe and healthy.

If you are dealing with short supplies, this is one of recipes Colchester women used during the WWI Food Shortages:

With America's entry into World War in 1917, President Woodrow Wilson requested that Herbert Hoover take charge of the wartime Food Administration. Hoover never instituted food rationing, but did introduce a range of voluntary efforts that proved highly effective. Hoover as Food Administrator encouraged American mothers as a patriotic act to hold to "meatless Mondays" and "wheatless Wednesdays" to conserve food supplies. This recipe was from Mrs. Alzina Knox, Downsville, "this receipt was very popular because we couldn't get white sugar and not much flour."

War Cake 1918—First World War

- 2 cups hot water
- 2 cups brown sugar
- 1 ½ cups raisins
- 2 tablespoons Crisco

Boil these ingredients for five minutes and let them get cold before adding the following:

- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon ground cloves
- ½ teaspoon ground nutmeg

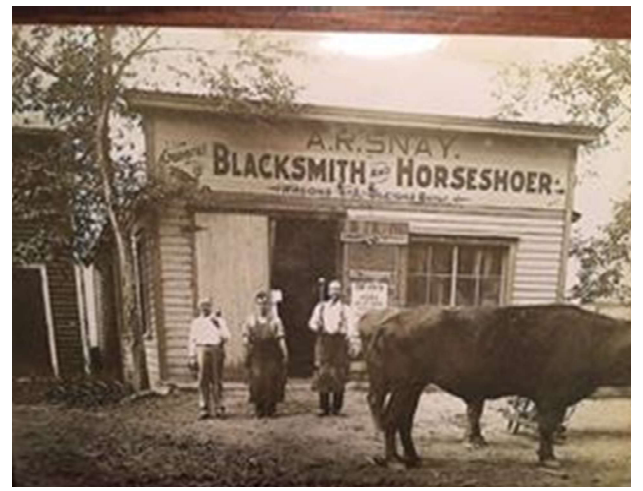
Just enough flour to make a stiff batter.

Bake at 350 or 375 degrees until done.

Transition of the A.R. Snay's Blacksmith Shop-Lower Main Street, Downsville, New York.



Original A.R. Snay's Blacksmith Shop



V. J. Beatty took over the Blacksmith Shop from A.R. Snay. Photo donated by Pamela Place Cole.



Shop as it appeared in the early 1900's when owned by Burt Boyd and automobiles started to become popular in Downsville. Thor Klindt continued the business from the 1940's to the late 1970's.

Early Fishing Postcards



Early Women's Fishing Costume-
NY Public Library Collection.



Beaverkill River, Cooks Falls, NY



Moonlight on the Delaware, Downsville, NY

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 Rd, Downsville, NY.

2020 Historical Society Meetings:

Annual Meeting March 31 cancelled, new date TBA

**April 28 at 10 AM, May 19 at 7 PM, June 30 at 10 AM,
July 28 at 7 PM, Aug. 25 at 10 AM, Sept. 29 at 7 PM,
Oct. 27 at 10 AM, Nov. 24 at 10 AM, Dec. 22 at 10 AM**