

Colchester History Connections Newsletter

December 10, 2012

Colchester Historical Society, Box 112, Downsville, New York 13755

Volume 2, Issue 3

Preserving the history of Downsville, Corbett, Shinhopple, Horton and Cooks Falls

Website: www.colchesterhistoricalsociety.org

Historical Society Room is open the third Saturday of each month 11 A.M.-3 P.M. and by appointment, please call Kay Parisi-Hampel, Town Historian at 607-363-7303.

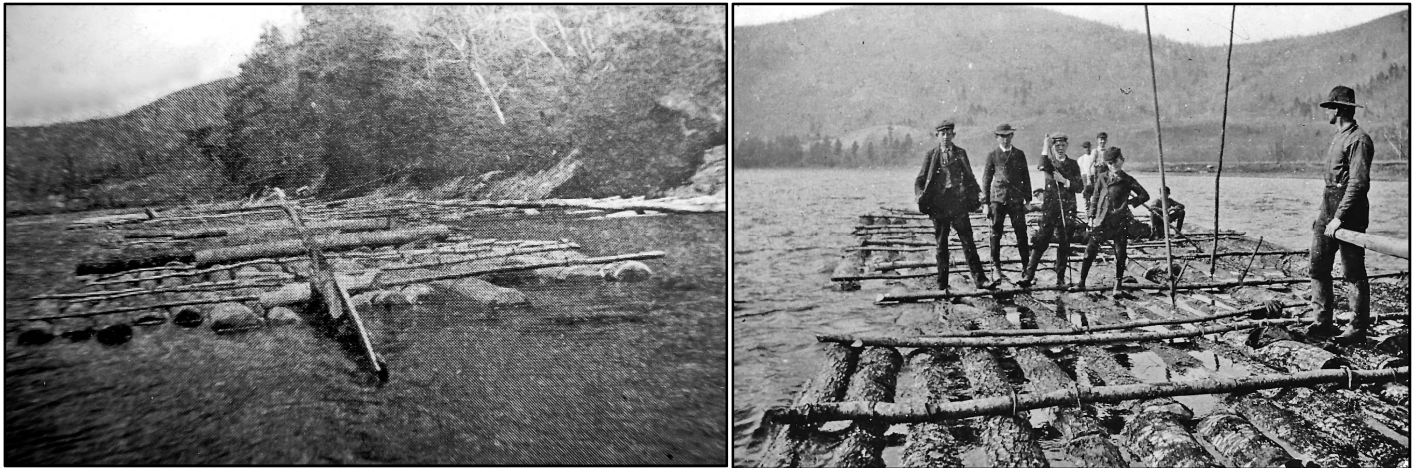
Displays

Corbett Centennial

To find out more about Corbett, be sure to stop in at the Colchester Town Hall until February 1, 2013, to view the history of Corbett from it's beginnings in 1912 to the close of the factory in 1934, the sale of the whole town to the Institute On Man and Science in 1976 and its Not for Profit incorporation in 1977.

Rafting

Daniel Skinner and Josiah Parks are credited with running the first raft down the Delaware River to Philadelphia in 1764. Daniel Skinner had been a sailor in the West Indies before settling in this area and seeing the straight tall hemlocks felt that these would make excellent masts for the tall ships. After several failed attempts at floating these timbers down river, he developed a method of mortising the ends of the mast timbers, inserting a white oak spindle and pinning the ends of of lumber creating a raft. The raft was then fitted with a perpendicular pin cross-log on each end of the raft for hanging oars. This design was successful and his first raft of six masts was floated to Philadelphia. *The Livingston Manor Times*, May 14, 1908 reported that this raft was "15 feet wide and 80 feet long, it took eight days to reach Philadelphia and Skinner was paid \$20 in gold for each mast." It took Skinner and Parks two weeks to walk back to their homesteads. This began the exciting and dangerous era of the Delaware River timber rafting industry. Baxter, Bogart, Cables, Campbell, Downs, Elwood, Foote, Francisco, Gregory, Hawks, Holmes, Hood, Hulbert, Johnston, Knapp, Knox, Kristman, Lewis, Miller, Mills, Neff, Niles, Radeker, Rhead, Russell, Shavers, Webb, White, Williams, Wilson, Vernold, and Young families were all rafters. According to the May 1, 1889 *Downsville News*, "from 3,000 to 5,000 rafts were sent down the river each season, representing three million to five million feet of lumber, with a market value of \$5 to \$10 per thousand feet." To know more, please stop by the Town Hall beginning February 4, 2013 to learn more about the history of the Colchester raftsmen.



Log Rafts on East Branch of Delaware River below Downsville—Delilah Babcock Collection

Programs and Projects

Old Cemetery Gravestone Cleaning Project

Marianne Greenfield, owner of Gravestone Cleaning Service, presented a very interesting program on Itinerant Gravestone Carvers, and the history and types of gravestone used in our local cemeteries, during the Maple Leaf Festival on October 6, 2012. She will be returning for a Gravestone Cleaning Workshop on Saturday, May 4, 2013 from 10 AM to 2 PM at the Old Cemetery located on Back River Road. The Girl and Boy Scouts and the Sons of American Legion have been invited to participate in the gravestone cleaning workshop, a general clean up and mapping of that cemetery. This program is open to the public and the Historical Society will be selling a "green" gravestone cleaning product-D2, for anyone interested in cleaning their family gravestones with the proper cleaning materials that will not damage their markers.

Colchester Historical Signs

Funding has been approved for Historical Information Signs to be placed throughout the Town of Colchester. Ten signs will be funded by the Town of Colchester, two by the Downsville Women's Club and one by the Downsville Lion's Club. These signs will be visual histories of topics such as logging and rafting, stone quarry history, farming and dairy industry, Corbet Acid Factory/Mill Town, Gregorytown—Paige Gregory's homestead, historic Old Cemetery and some of the founding settlers buried there, Downsville Business District, Town Baseball History, the D&E and D&N Railroad development, One-Room School houses, Shinhopple—All Saints Chapel and the East and West Brook areas, Cooks Falls—Mountain Lakes House, Cooks Falls Dye Works, Horton—George Treyz Operations, Cables Lake and woodworking factory, and Colchester's Covered Bridges. We hope to eventually produce a walking and/or driving tours that would lead residents and tourists to all the signs and explain the historic significance of Colchester.

Pepacton Park

Planning is underway for our new park at the site of the old Highway Garage across from Paige Cemetery. A well attended meeting of interested Colchester citizens took place in mid-November at which time we brainstormed ideas of what the area should be. We decided on the name Pepacton Park and hope to develop it as a space for Town activities and events. (i.e. Farmer's Market, Block Party, Walking/Fitness area, Flea Markets, Historical and Informational Location.) The exploratory committee is pursuing ideas, funding, and support. Share your ideas via the Historical Society at info@colchesterhistoricalsociety.org or write to address listed at the top of our masthead.

Agloe-The Paper Town that Became Real

According to the Museum of Hoaxes, "The town of Agloe, New York was a "copyright trap" placed on Esso Maps during the 1930's. (That is a nonexistent town whose purpose was to reveal if rival mapmakers were blindly copying the information on Esso maps.) The name was a scramble of the initials of Otto G. Lindberg (the company founder) and his assistant Ernest Alpers. They located the town at a dirt-road (Morton Hill) intersection north of Roscoe, New York. So when the town of Agloe later appeared on a Rand McNally map, Esso accused Rand McNally of copying their map. But it turned out that Rand McNally was innocent. The town of Agloe actually had been registered with the Delaware County administration, because someone had built a general store at that dirt intersection and had named it the Agloe General Store, thus bringing the town into existence. Eventually the store went out of business, and the town of Agloe is no longer on maps."

Recently, Tim Duerden, Delaware County Historical Association director, contacted us about Agloe, after receiving an email from a Scottish writer who was researching fictitious entries publishers insert into maps, for a magazine article. After digging through our files we did find a copy of an old postcard labeled Agloe Lodge on the Beaverkill, but nothing about the Agloe General Store.

A coming of age mystery book by John Green titled *Paper Towns*, uses Agloe as a setting in the book and this has created an internet following where people are traveling to our area in search of Agloe and blogging about their adventures.

Can you help us solve this mystery? Does anyone have any information or pictures of Agloe? Please contact Kay Parisi-Hampel at 607-363-7303 or hampelk@colchesterhistoricalsociety.org.



Members Work

We have made great progress this year in sorting and reorganizing the Colchester Historical Society Collection. Linda Mills and Betty Watson prepared a wonderful Civil War display showing the participation of the soldiers from Colchester. During Monthly Work Days we have sorted and copied old Downsville News articles by topics and towns, we have labeled and cataloged old store ledgers, scanned and indexed photographs, prepared bi-monthly displays for the Town Hall display cases, gathered and filed genealogy materials, sorted and filed the Tom and Jane Flannery collections. Thank you to the following members for their help in this work: Anne Hood, Kay Kauffman, Art Merrill, Linda Mills, Betty Vernold and Betty Watson. If you are interested in local history, why not consider joining us and help us to discover the treasures in our collection.

Kay Parisi-Hampel, Town Historian and CHS member has completed an on-line Collection Management course through Museumwise and the South Central Documentary Heritage Program of the New York State Archives. She has updated the Society's Collections Management Policy, Acquisitions procedures, Loan Policies and Disaster Plan. She is continuing to act as the liaison between the Town and the Historical Society and to promote the history of Colchester through our website: www.colchesterhistoricalsociety.org

Publications

Roots In the Valley and Just Looking Back by Alice H. and Robert Jacobson has just been published. They have combined and expanded their two books about Pepacton and Shavertown into one volume. Signed copies are available at the Adams Bookstore, 602 Main Street, Hobart, New York and directly from the authors at Pepacton Press, 55 Dibble Road, Andes, New York 13731.

WHEN YOU LIVE BY A RIVER by local author Mermer Blakeslee is the fictional story based on Pepacton, Shavertown, Arena and Union Grove communities soon to be flooded to create the Pepacton Reservoir. The drama centers on a farmer whose wife dies in childbirth and on the farmer's fifteen-year-old niece who comes to take care of the baby in exchange for the promise of college tuition. Set in 1931, the novel is based in part on actual circumstances involving water rights and eminent domain. This historical novel of rural lives in upstate New York portrays a love story set against a background of moral conflicts and destruction of their farms and villages.

Membership Dues Renewal Time

It is time for everyone to renew their membership to CHS for 2013. Individual Membership is \$10, Seniors over 55 and Students are just \$5.00. **Please make your checks out to the Colchester Historical Society and mail them to P.O. Box 112, Downsville, New York 13755 or drop your checks off at the Colchester Town Hall.** It would be wonderful if we could have all our dues collected by our first regular meeting on March 26, 2012. Thank you!

Meeting Dates for 2013

No Meetings in January and February—work days January 15 and February 12, 2013 at 10 A.M.

March 26, 2013 at 10 A.M	April 30, 2013 at 7 P.M.
May 28, 2013 at 10 A.M.	June 25, 2013 at 7 P.M.
July 30, 2013 at 10 A.M.	August 27, 2013 at 7 P.M.
September 24, 2013 at 10 A.M.	October 29, 2013 at 7 P.M.
November 26, 2013 at 10 A.M.	December 17, 2013 at 10 A.M.