

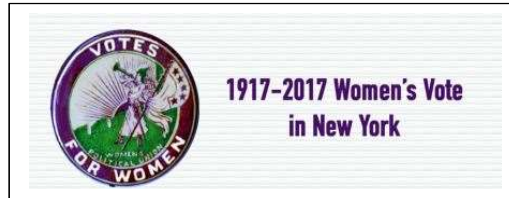
# Colchester History Connections Newsletter

June 1, 2017, Colchester Historical Society, Box 112, Downsville, New York 13755  
Volume 7, Issue 2 Preserving the history of Downsville, Corbett, Shinhopple,  
Gregorytown, Horton and Cooks Falls

Website: [www.colchesterhistoricalsociety.org](http://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



New York State was home to the first-ever Women's Rights Convention, held in Seneca Falls, on July 19 and 20, 1848 and organized by Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton. Sixty-nine years later, on November 6, 1917, women in New York State finally won the right to vote. Three years later, the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was ratified, granting all women the right to vote.

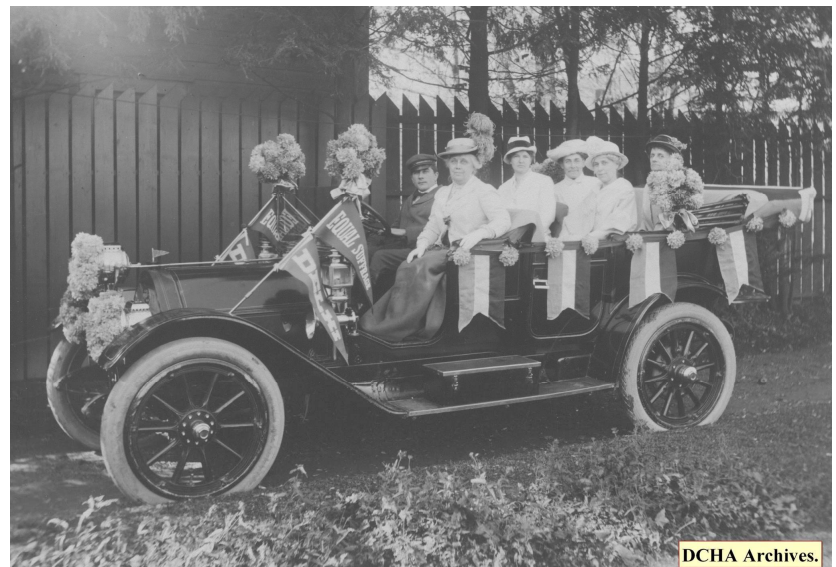
An active drive for Suffrage was waged in Delaware County headed by Delhi Suffragist Jennie Curtis Cannon. Summer Suffrage Conventions were held from 1900 to 1920. Jennie traveled all over Delaware County rallying men and women to the suffrage cause. Colchester women and men joined the suffrage movement. Downsville attorney, Edward E. Conlon, spoke in support of women's suffrage at many of the Delaware County Conventions. The announcements below appeared in the Delaware Gazette on June 10, 1914 announcing a Downsville Suffrage convention that took place at the Downsville Opera House and another report on a Cooks Falls meeting held at the Mountain Lake House on July 18, 1918:

## WANT SUFFRAGE FOR WOMEN.

The campaign for the ballot for women in New York state has been extended into Delaware county.

A delegation of suffragist speakers and workers held a mass meeting at the Opera House, Downsville, on Thursday evening of last week.

Attorney Edward E. Conlon acted as chairman of the meeting, and his remarks indicated that he has espoused the cause of the women. The speakers were Dr. Helen Brewster Owen, of Ithaca, and Miss Harriet May Mills, ex-President of the New York State Woman Suffrage Association. Each made an earnest plea. Summarized, it was: Women support the government, pay taxes, obey the laws, the same as do men, yet they have no voice as to the way they shall be governed. Dr. Owen declared that but for the influence of women many reforms would have failed of accomplishment.



DCHA Archives.

Jennie C. Cannon's Suffrage Campaign Car, October 2014

On Wednesday evening of this week an enthusiastic meeting was held at Cook's Falls, Mrs. E. C. Lemmi acting as chairman. Mr. Ralph Thorn and Miss Jane Olcott were the speakers, the music was furnished by the Mountain Lake quartet.



## 1917, World War 1 and the New York State Farm Cadet Program

In 1917, the New York State Education began a program that allowed students between the ages of 16 and 18 in good academic standing to sign up and become Farm Cadets. This was a popular program and many teens signed up to assist in the war effort by replacing laborers serving in World War 1. From April through September, students could be released from school and receive Regents academic credit for their work on a farm. Part of their academic requirement was recording their experiences in essays. The following is the essay written by Esther Hoy about her experience with the Farm Cadet program during her senior year at Union Free School, while working on her family farm on Wilson Hollow in Downsville. A copy of this essay was found in papers she donated to the Colchester Historical Society, another copy is also archived in the New York State Archives (NYS\_A4436-78\_B2\_Hoye) Other digital essays by volunteers in the Farm Cadet Corps can also be found on the New York State Archives at: <http://digitalcollections.archives.nysed.gov>

### Esther Hoy(e) Farm Cadet Service Essay, Downsville, NY September 1, 1918

*In the spring, when our government called for volunteers for Farm Cadet service, I enlisted on my father's farm. My term of service began the twenty-first of April and expired the twenty-fourth of August. During this period of enlistment my work consisted of general farm work such as a girl can do. My work began at half past six in the morning and lasted until half past six at night. There were about six days of labor, which I missed because of illness and unexpected calls away from my work.*

*At such a time as this, I think that every little bit that anyone can do is so much toward the winning of this war. During the period of my enlistment, I consider that I helped take the place of my brother, who is now serving in the Marine Corps. I did the work of a hired man many times, as raking during haying and measuring out oats during threshing time. I have tried my best to help with more produce for our government. The government was not the only one benefiting by my serving as a Farm Cadet because the farm service has proven to be very beneficial to myself in several ways. After being shut up in a school room all day I felt tired and did not care to take the exercise, which is needed for good health. Because of this my health declined and I lost many pounds of flesh. Since I enrolled in the service, my health has been improved very much. I weigh several pounds more and feel strong and healthy. I can do a day's work without feeling tired out. Not only has the service helped me physical but also mentally. Before enlisting, I know that crops were raised but never stopped to consider the expense and labor that went along with the crops. Now I understand the ways of the farm life better. I see why a farmer is needed as badly at this time more than any other.*

Esther Hoy graduated from the Downsville Union Free High School in 1918, she went to Oneonta State Teacher's College and taught in several Colchester one-room schools, later back at the Union Free School and finished her long teaching career in the Downsville Central School. Esther also served as Colchester Town Historian for many years and was a member of the Colchester Historical Society.



## Gravestone Cleaning Season

**Gravestone Cleaning Tips** Why should we clean gravestones? To preserve the past. We need to do it properly. The National Parks Service recommends a cleaning solution, D/2 and uses that cleaning solution to clean the gravestones in Arlington Cemetery. D2 is biodegradable and nontoxic.

Never use bleach, saving cream, or masonry cleaners not specifically made for gravestones. Do not use caulk or flour to read the inscriptions on the stone. The best way to read a faint inscription is by holding a mirror in front of the stone and reading the inscription in the mirror.

Tips from Marianne Greenfield, Gravestone Conservator:

- Do no harm. Always determine that the stone is stable-solid in the ground, no flaking or chipping. If unsure, leave the stone alone and have a professional give you an evaluation of the stone.
- Do not clean gravestones until the danger of frost is past.
- Take a photograph before and after you clean your stone. Write down the information from the stone (mistakes and all) and note your cleaning date.
- Use clean soft brushes (natural or nylon) to remove the dirt and lichens, split craft sticks can be used to scrape out the inscription on the stone.
- Use a clean pail and clean spray containers that have not been used with any other chemicals or cleaners.
- Once the dirt, moss and lichen are removed saturate the stone with water. The stone is porous and will absorb the first thing applied and this will prevent the D/2 from penetrating too deeply and affect the crystals inside the stone. Have lots of water on hand for rinsing the stone as you clean.
- Dilute the D/2 with water (50/50), spray the solution on the top, bottom and sides of the stone, let it sit for 15 minutes. Working from the top down, brushing gently to remove the remaining dirt and lichens with your brush. Use the pointed end of a craft stick to clean out the lettering and decorations. Rinse and keep the stone wet as long as you are working on it. Thoroughly rinse the stone after it's clean. You may not be able to remove all the stains from the moss and lichen but the D/2 will continue to clean the stone for several months.



**Susan Early cleans a gravestone in the Covered Bridge Cemetery, Downsville, NY**



**Marianne Greenfield demonstrates the use of a mirror to read gravestone inscriptions.**

**If you are interested in attending a gravestone cleaning workshop please email us at: [info@colchesterhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:info@colchesterhistoricalsociety.org).**

**Shinhopple Memorial Center/All Saints Chapel--Shinhopple, New York –O'Connor Foundation Preservation Grant**

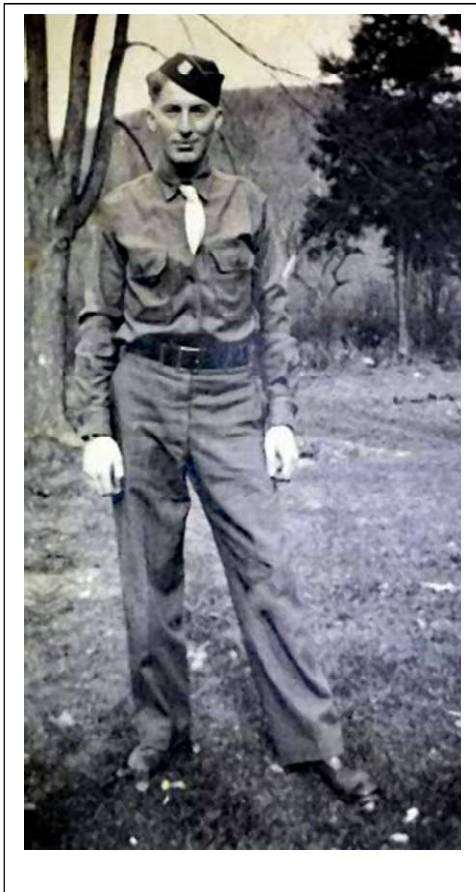
The Shinhopple Memorial Center has received an O'Connor Grant in the amount of \$3,865.00 for installation of a well. This is the first part of a three-part preservation plan for renovations of the Center building and grounds. The Center's members have raised about one quarter but now need your support to raise the rest to secure the grant. Please send your donations to: Shinhopple Memorial Center, c/o 348 Hood Lane, Downsville, New York 13755. Also check their Facebook site for the date of their pancake breakfast fundraiser. <https://www.facebook.com/Shinhopple-Memorial-Center>

**The story of one of the hometown heroes that the Memorial Center is dedicated to:**

***Downsville News, Feb. 13, 1945***

*With the 5th Army, Italy, February 13, 1945, PFC William D. Francisco, Corbett, Delaware Co., recently was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross posthumously for extraordinary heroism in action the 5th Army front in Italy. Private Francisco, machine gunner in Co. L of the 337th Infantry Regiment, accounted for 23 Germans and two enemy machine guns during an attack. When the leading platoon of his outfit was held up by intense German machine gun and mortar fire, Private Francisco moved his gun to a dominating position and neutralized a German machine gun nest manned by three enemy soldiers. He then moved his gun 100 yards through the intense enemy fire to another position, and from there, he knocked out a second machine gun nest and forced 20 Germans to flee in disorder. He was mortally wounded but refused to leave his post until assured he had enabled his outfit to resume its advance and take the objective. His courage reflects the highest traditions of the armed forces, states the citation.*

William D. Francisco is one of four hometown heroes that gave their lives in World War II and for which the Shinhopple Memorial Center is dedicated.



## DCS Second Grade Walking Tour

Mrs. Gardner's Second Grade class took a History Tour of Main Street on May 12<sup>th</sup>. Each student received a 25-card packet of historical information, vintage and current photos of Main Street buildings. This tour coordinated with Mrs. Gardner's unit on Community Services and Helpers. Students asked questions on the changes in the architecture and use of Main Street buildings, and how our community has changed through the years. The tour ended with a visit to the Historical Society Room at Town Hall with some hands-on investigation of our collection artifacts. What a wonderful, bright, polite class of budding historians; we had a wonderful time! Thank you to Mrs. Amber Gardner and all of the parent chaperones for their help.



**9. Downsville Opera House.**

The Opera House was built in 1906 by A. J. Fairburn. This cement block building contained the Downsville Bank, Telephone Co., Theatre, Opera House Pharmacy, a gym and three apartments. The building burned in 1949. A new fire hall was built in 1954 on the land where the Opera House stood.



The Downsville Library was located in the Fire Hall before it moved to the basement of the Colchester Town Hall. The Fire Department celebrated its 120<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2016.



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

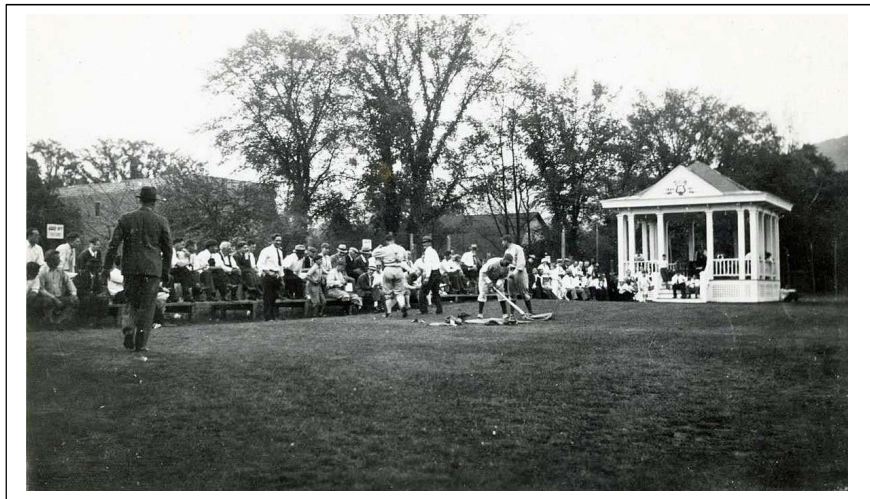
**Meetings are generally held the last Tuesday of the month at the Colchester Town Hall, 72 Tannery Road, Downsville, New York 13755**

**2017 Historical Society Meetings:**

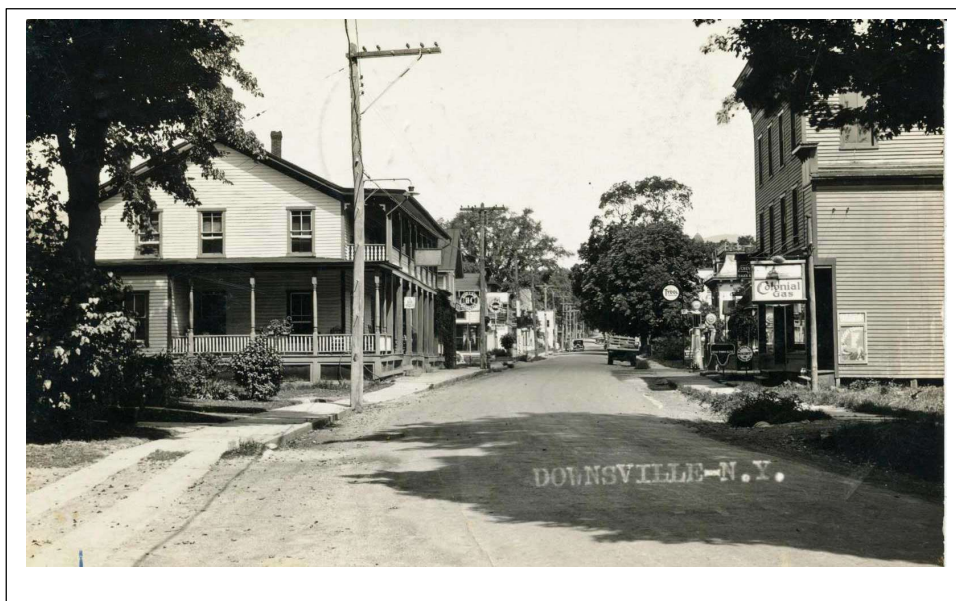
<b>June 27, 2017 at 10 AM</b>	<b>July 25, 2017 at 7 PM</b>
<b>August 29, 2017 at 10 AM</b>	<b>September 26, 2017 at 7 PM</b>
<b>October 31, 2017 at 10 AM</b>	<b>November 28, 2017 at 7 PM</b>
<b>December 19, 2017 at 10 AM</b>	



Beardsley homestead on Knox Avenue, Downsville, NY Circa 1900



Enjoying a summer Downsville Town Team Baseball game.  
The Downsville Opera House is visible on the left background.



Postcard view of lower Main St., Downsville, New York  
Eagle Hotel on left, Crispell Building on right