



Headwaters of History

Annual Awards of Merit ~ Presentation on Cannonsville Reservoir

The annual meeting of the Delaware County Historical Association was held on Sunday, November 2, 2025.

As always, the highlight of the meeting was the presentation of DCHA's annual Awards of Merit to those groups and individuals who volunteer their time and skills to preserve and/or present the history of Delaware County.

This year, the following individuals and groups were recognized for their achievements:

- ♦ **Kyle Brown & Jules Cunningham** for cleaning old gravestones in local cemeteries, mostly in the Croton Union Cemetery in Treadwell.
- ♦ **Deposit Koo Koose Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution** (pictured below) for their work maintaining and restoring the Revolutionary War Cemetery on Laurel Bank Avenue. The chapter is actively working on continuing to improve the appearance and accessibility of this historic cemetery, and draw attention to the stories of the veterans interred within.

- ♦ **Professor Lisa Tessier** for her planning and hosting historic architectural tours of the village of Delhi with her students, much of which is researched at DCHA.
- ♦ **Bob & Alice Jacobson** for their continued research and knowledge of the homesteads that were removed for the Pepacton Reservoir through their books and movies.
- ♦ **James Andrews**, historian of Andes, who continues to research and share the history of that hamlet and town.

DCHA is proud to honor these people and organizations who have contributed so much to the preservation and understanding of our county's fascinating history.

A short business meeting followed the Awards of Merit presentation at which Gabrielle Pierce was re-elected as DCHA President, Virginia Sanford as Vice President, and Virginia Sanford as Interim Treasurer.

The general public also enjoyed hearing local historian, Mike Showe, give a Powerpoint presentation concerning the Cannonsville Reservoir.



DCHA Library/Archives in December

Our Library and Archives will be closed for the remainder of 2025.

In December we will be installing mobile shelving, which will require considerable moving and shifting of research materials. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause. The new shelving will provide more archival space and allow safer storage for the historic items we already have.

From the Archives: Digitizing Our Records, Part II

by Ray LaFever

In our last newsletter, I reported on the New York Genealogical & Biographical (NYG&B) Society's *Digitize New York* initiative. We were able to take advantage of this opportunity to digitize materials that are too big to place on a conventional flatbed scanner. If your organization is interested in pursuing this free program, go to the *Digitize NY* website at: www.newyorkfamilyhistory.org/digitize-new-york

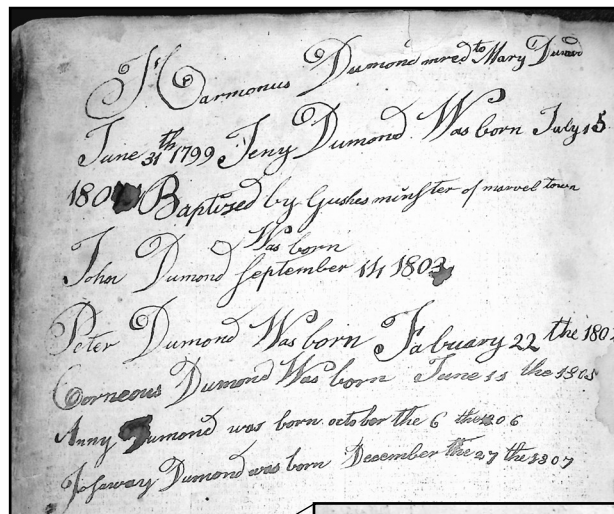
The equipment arrived in one big, but surprisingly not heavy, box. It included the camera, the light box, a laptop and an external disk. After a couple of sessions with NYG&B staff, I got the knack of scanning these items. What particularly excited me is that when the camera captured the image from a large volume, it flattened it, so we didn't have to deal with the curvature of the book.

It took me a couple of tries but I managed to scan the entire Matthew Griffin diary (c.1840 — c.1860), which included many pages of ledger information. Unfortunately, the ledger only gives a name then lists a series of pages, which we assume are references to other volumes that we do not have. It does let researchers know with whom Griffin was working. The Cora Livingston Barton Rent Book, which covers the Montgomery tract of Great Lot 40 of the Hardenbergh Patent, did not take quite so long, though dealing with the various inserts was challenging. When the work on making these presentable is

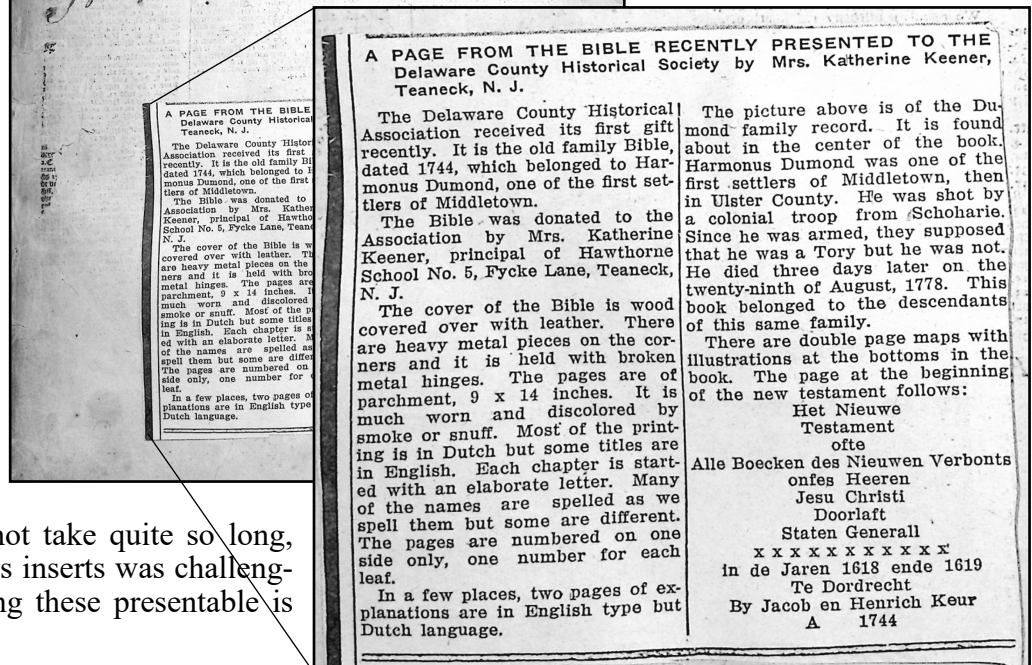
completed we will let you know where these can be accessed (for free, by the way).

And we added a third project to the scanning list — family Bibles. Many of the Bibles in our collection are large. The camera allowed us to scan the handwritten genealogy pages from these Bibles. When we have made the scans presentable these also will go online. Here's the page from the oldest and one of the largest bibles in our collection, the Dumond Bible, dating from the 1740s.

We recently returned the equipment to NYG&B in preparation for our major mobile shelving installation, but likely will borrow it again in 2026 when things are settled here to handle other large volumes of interest to researchers.



Page of Dumond Bible with article enlarged



Mobile Shelving Appeal Update

In 2025 over \$18,000 was raised through the generosity of our members and friends for our mobile shelving project. Along with grants from philanthropic foundations and a couple of very generous corporate donations, DCHA surpassed its goal of raising \$52,000 and we are on course to install seven mobile shelving units in our Library/Archives space before the end of the year.

Thanks to all who donated, large and small!

Historic Marker: The Delhi Equal Suffrage Club

On September 27, 2025 DCHA was proud to unveil a historic marker adjacent to the Delaware National Bank on Delhi's Main Street. The ceremony, which included Delhi Town Deputy Supervisor Christina Viafore and DCHA President Gabrielle Pierce, took place during Delhi's annual Harvest Festival on Courthouse Square. The marker recognizes the importance of this location in the local effort to allow women the legal right to vote in the early years of the last century.

The Delhi Equal Suffrage Club was founded in 1912 to advocate for women's suffrage in New York State. The club was active from 1912 through 1915, though it remained in existence to the end of the decade. The prime mover behind the club was Jennie Curtis Cannon, wife of Henry White Cannon, President of the Chase Bank for many years. Mrs. Cannon provided the building for the club, which had formerly been Graham's Hardware Store, in 1915.

That year, a ballot measure appeared in New York to get the vote for women. The club worked very hard to get the vote, but in the November election, the ballot measure failed. All was not lost, however, because only two years later, in 1917, the ballot measure again appeared in New York and easily passed.

Funding for the historic marker was provided to the Delaware County Historical Association by the William G. Pomeroy Foundation. The foundation has funded over 2,600 historical markers across the United States. Grants for markers are open to 501(c)3 organizations, nonprofit academic institutions and local, state and federal government entities. For more information on grants for historic markers visit: www.wgpfoundation.org/apply-for-history-grant/



Ray LaFever with historic marker

Lucky, Lucky!

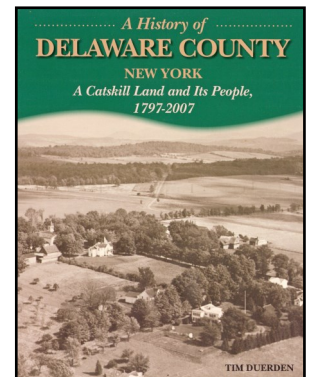
Tony Giaccone of Delhi was the lucky winner of our 2025 Raffle. The winning ticket was drawn out of the hat at our annual meeting in November.

Tony won a quilt made from a 1930s quilt top that was donated to DCHA by a member to be used as a fundraiser. A quilter from the Town & Country Quilters Guild assembled the quilt to be raffled. The quilt featured stripes of small blocks that were assembled and the stripes sewn together. Each square was a different pattern and color. Lots of bright colors and flower patterns. Many of the squares looked like they were made from old flour sacks.

Thank you to those who bought tickets. \$578 was raised for DCHA!

Buy a Book, Help DCHA!

Renew your DCHA membership during 2026 and receive *A History of Delaware County, 1797—2007* (Purple Mountain Press) for just \$20 inclusive of all tax and shipping. All you pay (alongside your membership fee) is \$20 for the book! What's more, Purple Mountain Press has generously offered that 40% of every sale will go directly back to DCHA.



This special offer is also open to those who become brand new members in 2026.

Brief Building Update

We are still waiting to hear about the Empire State Development Grant we applied for in July to help with costs to construct a new Collections Care and Research Center. We should find out by the end of the year. Currently we are applying for a New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA) Capital Improvement Grant (FY 2026) for the building. The deadline is January 13, 2026 with funding awards announced in May of 2026. Along with these grants we continue to explore other avenues to raise the necessary funds. This project will allow DCHA to continue its primary mission of collecting and preserving the rich history and culture of Delaware County.

Lillie (b.1878 — d.1966) grew up on a farm on Gregory Hollow, Hamden, NY. In 1954 she penned the following recollections of her life there in the 1890s. (Original spelling and grammar retained)

Diary of a little girl on a farm written sixty years late.

I remember my mother rising in winter long before daylight, lighting her kerosine lamp, then kindleing the wood fire in the kitchen stove and preparing breakfast for five — when everyone, sleepy or not, must be on hand to partake of a hearty meal of pan-cakes and beef steak or maybe homemade sausage or cured pork. Always the buckwheat pancake made from home grown grain ground with grinding stones.

The house was cold below freezing temperature many nights, when early dawn came my father went to the barn to do the barn work. He did not consider a kerosine lantern a safe light to use in a barn neither do I. I remember my mother making tallow candles. We threaded the candle molds with wick then she filled them with melted tallow and set them away to harden the grease then removed them and repeat the process until a years supply was on hand. At our house a candle was considered safer than a lamp for children to carry I wonder why? I wonder too how many candles it would take to produce just one electric watt.

I remember watching my mother carefully packing eggs in whole oats. She put a layer of oats in a wooden pail, set eggs on end not touching then more oats and eggs until the task was finished. My father took them to the general store in town and traded them for groceries, shoes or dress material as was needed. careful packing was necessary for our roads were rough and Jolty and a lumber wagon or bobsleighs were not cushioned with springs. No crates or fillers to make packing easy and delivery safer.

I remember the smokehouse where the brine cured hams, shoulders and sidepork was smoked. We ate shoulder or side pork. Hams were all sold. I recall the price was eight cents per pound for hams and six cents for shoulders. very juicy and good. not much like the “tuff” dried up

product we buy at the ~~grocery~~ food stores of today — where one pound costs as much as twelve did at that time. The price was too low in the Eighteen and ninties.

I remember my mother working salt into big trays of butter with a hand ladle cream was raised from milk in twenty quart cans submerged in a vat of cold spring water, soured naturally. churched in a dash churn with power made by a big old bucket water wheel. Later a heavy dog was kept to operate a tread power to run a swing churn milk seperaters and electric power were far in the future.

I remember when our roads would be blocked with snow for weeks at a time so we could not get to a village. Once I remember after being shut in for three weeks my Father walked on the snow crust four miles to Hamden to get the mail. He carried it home in a pillow case. Seven pounds of mail, to be divided among ten neighboring families, not so much mail as now. And everyone had to keep a well stocked pantry against such an emergency as snow-storms.

I remember seeing my Father with one or two fleeces of wool loaded on the back of a small buck-board wagon drawn by a fat farm horse starting at 3:30am for Bovina carding mill to have it made into rolls so my mother could spin it into yarn to be knit into socks, stockings and mittens for the family. Bovina was a far journey in those days. Man and horse were both weary when they returned after dark that night but mission accomplished.

I remember the eighteen year old hired boy running four miles on foot to Hamden to get a Doctor for my father when he was taken ill suddenly in the night. The horses were in the pasture it would take too long to catch and harness them. No telephone or cars. The hours of long ago compared to the minutes of today.

I remember walking two miles to school in winter and walking home at night in the moonlight, school was kept until 4 pm. It was called at 9 am. I am afraid I seldom arrived on time. There were not any big busses to carry us and we did not catch a ride even once a month. Thick leather shoes were worn by boys and girls, no rub-



Lillie Young Murray in her garden

ber overshoes. Schoolhouse floor so icy cold that the snow would not melt from your shoes all day.

When I was eleven years old I remember my mother had two broody hens and I walked over four miles to get two settings of brown leghorn hens eggs. On my four mile return trip I must carry the basket of eggs carefully or they would not hatch well. Over eight miles on two small feet.

I remember pumplogs my uncle bored and layed in the ditch to bring water to the penstock where it ran into a trough a short distance from the house, all water must then be carried into and later out of the house. I remember the log house where I was born and lived in until I was five years old. The kitchen had two windows the wood work inside was painted black. I wonder why. I remember the bread, mince pies, cookies, fired cakes and jelly cake my mother made. Baking and cooking on an old elevated oven stove.

Once I remember going over half of a mile to a neighbors long past my bedtime to get something that my father needed. He was sick in bed. The neighbor woman wanted to send their hired man home with me. I was only nine years old, so I promptly said, "I don't want him." I still can remember that young mans grin as he looked at me and said, "Well; I guess you've corked that." The neighbor and my two older sisters were all afraid after dark. I wasn't.

I remember when wages for a man in haying were \$1.50 per day, for no one knew how many hours, depending on who you worked for and how good the hay weather.

I remember seeing my mother make soft soap – whew; what a wicked mess. I remember the rag carpets that were layed on the floor over a thick layer of oat straw after being washed. And how hard it was to make them cover as big a place as before cleaning. Everyone tugged and pulled surprising how those carpets did stretch. I was too small to help pull them.

I remember my mother making our clothes, fashions did not change as they do now. Seems to me one girls dress pattern was sufficient for a whole neighborhood need for at least ten years.

I remember the hard, well stuffed straw ticks that served as mattresses on our beds. Each year they were emptied and filled with fresh straw. A cord bedstead didn't have any springs.

I remember seeing my grandmother siting on a little stool milking a cow in the milking yard. The cow was not fastened in any way. Surprising how still they stood. When it rained the milkers got wet, for the work had to be done shine or rain. Every child, boy or girl learned how to milk when I was a child. It took a good milker about an hour to milk eight cows. Usualy jerseys were kept who would want holdsteins? too much milk and too little butter, the

cow was tested. One days milk was set up when the cream rose it was skimed, let sour naturally then put cream into a two quart fruit jar and shake vigorously until the butter came, it was washed and weighted. This weight decided the future home of bossy – sold or kept.

As a young child I remember the day my grandfather, on my fathers side, and mother cleaned the Seth Thomas weight clock. They removed the brass works from the case, put them into an iron kettle filled with water, added plenty of lye homemade soft-soap put the kettle on the stove – sat down and visited until it was boiled long enough to thouroughly clean the works which were then rined in boiling water and thouroughly dried. Then my grandfather with a turkey tail feather expertly applied tired out chicken fat to all working parts. When finished it would run for years without extra attention. Yes, very simple and inexpensive.

And I remember the little brook that ran gurgling near our house on its way down through the Gregory Hollow valley. I didn't make any record catches but spent many a happy hour fishing. A straight little twig for a pole a garden worm for bait. I caught my first trout on a crooked pin tied onto a piece of white cord that came around a packaged from the store. My mother assembled the equipment. I still do like to fish, but its easier when you are ten than at seven times that number of years.

One cold March day my father took me with him when he went to Hamden to buy groceries – we went with the horses and long green sleigh, all wrapped up in horseblankets. But in spite of my mothers big gray shawl I was very cold. Father went back to the store before returning home and bought a big warm buffalo robe It cost \$8.00. A lot of money in those days. We were warm and proud on our return home. No father rich or poor could have done more for a shivering little girl. I like to think of this now so many years behind me.

I remember my little banty hen. An elderly neighbor gave her to me. She clucked and sang as I carried her. She hid her nest every summer and hopefully sat on eight or nine little white eggs. But nothing happened. She was disapointed but never discouraged. One day she disapeared. I think a fox caught her. I felt sick and could not eat. She was my choicest possession. I guess the neighbor understood for he then gave me a little dog. Her luck was better. She was never disapointed. I loved the puppies. I wanted them all. Strange but they gradually disapeared. My father said dogs sometimes ran away. I shut them in the barn but all but one finaly ran away. Even the mother dog went. I was puzzled. I was a very small girl. I have never heard of foul play.

Restoring Revolutionary War Graves in Delaware County

During the late summer and early fall of this year, funding provided by the Delaware County Historical Association Revolutionary War Cemetery Grant has facilitated multiple restoration projects.

In September, stone carver Mike Angelicola of Connecticut paid a visit to the Old Covered Bridge Cemetery in Downsville to help reset the gravestones of several Revolutionary War veterans. Angelicola also created a replacement stone carved from brownstone for veteran Enoch Knapp, whose original stone no longer exists. Knapp served as a captain in the Revolution before moving to Colchester.

Two other stones were also installed in the Partridge Island Cemetery in Hancock for veterans Joel Lakin and Josiah Parks.

In October, cemetery restoration professionals Tina and Dale Utter helped initiate the installation of Patriot Burial Markers through the William G. Pomeroy Foundation for veterans buried in the Old Hamden and Brisack Cemeteries in the town of Hamden. In the Old Hamden Cemetery, two new stones were installed for veterans Peleg Benjamin and Stephen Ward. The Uppers were assisted in their research by members of the Binghamton Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution.

DCHA is proud to be encouraging the restoration and commemoration of the final resting places of our county's earliest veterans.



Knapp Stone



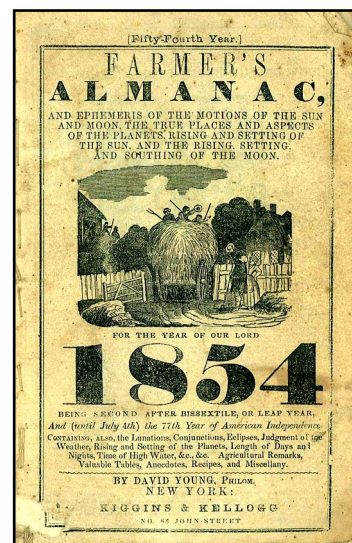
Mike Angelicola with Kay Parisi-Hampel, Colchester Town Historian, in the Old Covered Bridge Cemetery

Farmer's Almanac No More

The *Farmer's Almanac*, originally published in 1818, has decided their 2026 edition will be their final issue. Due to growing financial challenges of producing and distributing a paper book in today's digital age the company made the difficult decision to end operation.

Originally almanacs mainly provided astronomical data (rising and setting of the sun and moon, high and low tides) used by farmers and gardeners to help with their growing season. By the 19th century they also contained agricultural tips, trivia, jokes, recipes and natural remedies.

DCHA's archives has a collection of twenty two almanacs, ranging in date from 1853 to 1923. One of these is a *Farmer's Almanac* from 1854. The 1923 almanac states, "Compliments of the Delaware Republican, Delhi, NY." A few of the other almanacs in the archives include: *Ayer's American Almanac*, 1878; *The Diamond Dye Almanac*, 1888; *Centaur Almanac*, 1875; *Gargling Oil*, *National Almanac*, 1870 and the *Star Brand Fertilizer Almanac*, 1898.



Sidney Smith's Receipt for Salad

From 1854 *Farmer's Almanac*

Two large potatoes, passed through kitchen sieve,
Unwonted softness to the salad give;
Of mordant mustard add a single spoon –
Distrust the condiment which bites so soon;
But deem it not, thou man of herbs, a fault
To add a double quantity of salt;
Three times the spoon with oil of Lucca crown,
And once with vinegar, procured from town.
True flavor needs it, and your poet begs
The pounded yellow of two well-boiled eggs.
Let onion atoms lurk within the bowl,
And, scarce suspected, animate the whole;
And, lastly, on the flavored compound toss
A magic tea-spoon of anchovy sauce.
Then, through green turtle fail, though venison's
tough,
And ham and turkeys are not boiled enough,
Serenely full the Epicure may say –
Fate cannot harm me – I have dined to day!

Excerpts from *F.W. McNess Cookbook, 1933*

Back stamped "S. E. Chichester So. Kortright, NY Your McNess Dealer" (image below right)

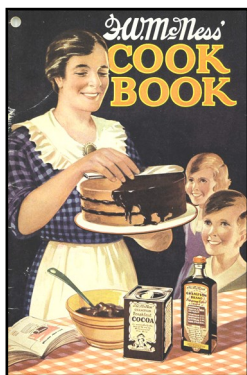
In 1908, Frank E. Furst and Frederick W. McNess started the Furst-McNess Company with a mission to make products safer. They created some of the first "safety seals," a tamper-proof top to show whether a bottle had been opened or not. They published a cookbook that same year.

This cookbook includes recipes from other countries printed in their native language and translated into English; also cake recipes from champion cake baker, Mrs. Edith Moore, winner of nearly a thousand cake baking prizes at various state and county fairs.

BURNT SUGAR CAKE

(This has won 30 First Prizes)

½ cup butter
1 ½ cups sugar
2 egg yolks
1 cup water
2 cups flour
1 teaspoonful vanilla
2 teaspoonfuls burnt sugar
And beat well



Add ½ cup flour which has been added to two teaspoonfuls baking powder and mix well. Lastly fold in whites of two well beaten eggs.

To prepare the burnt sugar put ½ cup of granulated sugar in a frying pan over the fire until the sugar softens and melts and finally begins to throw off intense smoke. It really must burn. Have ready ½ cup boiling water. Remove from the fire and pour into your water quickly, allowing it to boil until you have a molasses like syrup. Bottle and put away for use. This is sufficient for three cakes.

MAHOGANY CAKE

(This has won 67 First Prizes)

1 ½ cups sugar
2/3 cup butter
1 ¼ cups milk
½ cup cocoa
1 teaspoonful vanilla
1 teaspoonful soda
2 scant cups of flour
3 eggs

Cream sugar and butter. Add well beaten eggs. Take one-half of the milk, add to the cocoa and cook until the consistency of custard, then cool and add to the butter, sugar and eggs, then add another half of milk with the teaspoonful of soda dissolved in milk. Lastly add flour, vanilla and beat.

BAKED HAM (From Germany)

2 or 3 slices of center-cut ham. Cover with milk and water. Bake 1 hour in roaster. Add:
6 whole potatoes, medium size
6 carrots
6 turnips or large pieces of rutabagas
6 onions
2 cups milk and boiling water

Bake for 1 ½ to 2 hours more. Serve on platter. Slightly thicken the gravy left in the pan and season to taste.

SUNDAY HOT BREAD (American Recipe)

¾ cup sugar
1 egg
2 tablespoonfuls butter
2/3 cup milk
Pinch of salt
1 ½ cups flour
3 teaspoonfuls baking powder
3 teaspoonfuls lemon extract
Granulated sugar
Cinnamon

Cream butter and sugar, add egg mixed with milk and extract, then flour and baking powder. Spread in 2 large cake tins, sprinkle with mixture of sugar and cinnamon. Bake 20 or 25 minutes in quick oven. Serve preferably hot for Sunday night supper.

SAUSAGES WITH FRIED APPLES (American Recipe)

Fry country sausages formed into pats until thoroughly done. Remove from the pan and prepare a dozen slices of apple rings made by removing the core and peelings from sound apples. Dip into sausage fat, and fry until done. Place these rings around the sausages. Garnish with parsley or rings of red pepper and serve very hot.

COLLEGE FUDGE

1 cup brown sugar
1 cup white sugar
1 cup milk
1 cup English walnuts
Butter the size of a walnut
Square of chocolate or 3 level tablespoonfuls sifted cocoa
1 teaspoonful vanilla

Cook until it forms a soft ball. Beat until it becomes a little creamy. Quickly add nuts and vanilla and pour into buttered pans. Cut into squares.

S.E. CHICHESTER
SO. KORTRIGHT, N.Y.,
Your McNess Dealer

Exploring DCHA's Collections: Seager Fairbairn Work

A wooden chest measuring 34 ¾" x 13 ¼" deep x 12" tall was donated by Terry and Suzanne Puffer in May of this year. The chest was made by Suzanne's uncle Seager Fairbairn (1914 – 1999) of Dry Brook, Arkville. Seager was a well known carpenter/cabinet maker. He worked 20 years as superintendent of construction at the Armand Erpf estate in Dry Brook. In the 1960s he built a covered bridge (30ft long and 11 ft wide) for Armand Erpf on his estate.

Diane Galusha interviewed Seager in the early 1980s. The following are excerpts from the article she wrote for *The Daily Star*.

Dry Brook man gonna stay put

Margaretville – Seager Fairbairn is something of an institution in these parts, a well-respected carpenter and cabinet-maker, one of those people who seem always to have been here.

And indeed he has. For nearly all of his 70 years, the Dry Brook valley extending from Arkville to Ulster County has been home to Seager Fairbairn, who today lives but five miles from his birthplace across the county line.

A spare man of few words, he answers quickly when asked whether he's ever gone away for any length of time. "No," is his reply, "Ever want to?" Again, an unhesitating "No."

What keeps him here?

"The mountains, I guess. Freedom. I'm an independent bird myself," he says. No further explanation seems necessary.

Fairbairn's family has lived in the valley for well over a century, ever since a great-grandfather "drifted in here from Scotland around 1850." Seager, one of five children born of Miller and Elizabeth Fairbairn, was named for his uncle Claude Seager and attended the one-room Seager Schoolhouse for his grade school education.

"My father died when I was two and I was farmed out to friends, the Moot family," Fairbairn relates. "He was a bridge builder and barn framer. All I had to play with till I was eight years old was a hammer and saw.

"I got a job as an apprentice with a carpenter, name of John Dickman. Gradually broke into the business myself. Made fifty cents an hour then."

Fairbairn estimates he's built a "couple dozen" houses from Stamford to Fleischmanns, but the bulk

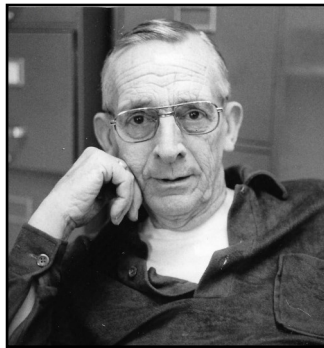


Photo Courtesy of
Suzanne Puffer



Chest with close up of corner showing dovetailed joints

of his working life – 20 years – was spent as superintendent of construction on the Armand Erpf estate in Dry Brook.

"You name it, he built it," Fairbairn said of the wealthy New York City financier whose 400-acre Catskill estate became noted for its fabulous brick-walled maze and sculpture gardens.

Following Erpf's death in 1971, Fairbairn worked on the restoration of the Dimmick house in Arkville, now known as the Erpf House in the philanthropist's memory.

It was there Fairbairn severed parts of the fingers on his left hand, which forced him into "retirement" to set up his own woodworking shop adjacent to his home.

"I can't grab a nail too fast anymore," he says, "but I can take a piece of wood and plane it, rip it, mold it, band saw it. I love to work with wood, even if it did cut my fingers off."

Fairbairn bemoans the loss of the traditional farm economy. "The thirties, forties, and fifties were good times for farmers," he remembers. "Back then everybody in the valley knew each other, most of us were related. If you got sick, you didn't have to worry how the wood would get cut or the cauliflower planted. Everybody'd come and help out."

The Dry Brook valley, edged by a string of 3,400-foot mountains, is still largely undeveloped, though one of the prettiest hollows in the Catskills. Fairbairn shares his home with wife Marguerite, "another Dry Brooker," and the couple has no thought of leaving.

Not even to a nice warm retirement home in Florida? "Oh no, uh uh." Fairbairn replies vehemently. "I was down there once for a couple weeks, that was plenty."

Besides, he says, "I don't mind the cold much. I've got a nice furnace in my shop, so I can work all year round."



Sylvenus Kelly Remembered for his Revolutionary War Service

On Sunday, November 9, 2025 there was a dedication of a new gravestone for Revolutionary War veteran Sylvenus Kelly in the Bedell Cemetery outside Fleischmanns.

The headstone was hand carved by Michael A. Angelicola Stone Carving of Connecticut, and produced with funds from a supporter of Delaware County Historical Association (DCHA).

Bedell Cemetery is located on Little Redkill Road on what had been the Kelly farm. Sylvenus and other family members were among the first to be buried there. The headstones for Sylvenus (c.1750-c.1825) and his wife (name unknown) have long since disappeared.

Sylvenus Kelly served in the 3rd and 7th Regiments of the Dutchess County Militia at different times from 1776 to 1777 and also with a regiment of levies (draftees) attached to the Second NY Line in the Continental Army in 1782. Sylvanus' cousins David, Edmund and Joshua Kelly were also veterans of the Revolution and also migrated to Middletown and Roxbury following the war.

Middletown Town Historian Diane Galusha and Dr. Samantha Misa of DCHA offered remarks at the headstone dedication, which was the first event in Middletown's observance of the 250th anniversary of the Revolutionary War. A reception followed the unveiling in the nearby Advent Christian Church.



Kelly Family descendants around new headstone

*Agriculture is the noblest and the most
useful pursuit of man.*

— From 1854 *Farmer's Almanac*

In Memoriam

Wray Rominger, founder of Purple Mountain Press, died October 23, 2025 in Stamford, New York. Born Gilbert Wray Rominger in Omaha, Nebraska, Wray and his wife Loni started Purple Mountain Press in Fleischmanns in 1973. It began as a print shop and later became a book publishing company. They were known for printing or reprinting books on the Catskills and surrounding region. Topics included: nature photography, human and natural history, art and architecture, folklore and genealogy, outdoor sports and guidebooks.

For a full obituary, written by long time friend Diane Galusha, author and historian, visit the Purple Mountain Press website: www.nysbooks.com/wray-rominger-founder-of-purple-mountain-press-has-died/

Volunteer/s Needed

We are now responsible for the maintenance and updating of the Delaware County NY Genealogy Website (www.dcnhistory.org).

The website was begun and for many years was ably and lovingly managed by Joyce Riedinger. However, Joyce has now stepped down from her role and we have agreed to take it on.

We are looking for someone who is more technically minded than us history nerds, but also perhaps someone who's interested in local history to help us keep this great website at the forefront of online research into Delaware County's past.

Although we can't say with any specificity, we would say that a volunteer would need to devote just two or three hours per week on this (sometime less, sometimes more) and after an initial training here at DCHA, could perform practically all of the needed tasks remotely.

Call or email us if you're interested!

CONVERSATION IN THE BACKWOODS

"Whose map do you use?"	— "Mogg's."
"What is the land?"	— "Bogs."
"What is the atmosphere?"	— "Fogs."
"What do you live on?"	— "Hogs."
"What is the house built of?"	— "Logs."
"Any fish in the ponds?"	— "Frogs."

TEA TABLE TYRANNY

A married man, at Peckham, complains that his wife brews his tea so weak, it has not strength enough to run out of the pot!

— From 1854 *Farmer's Almanac*

Brief Cannonsville History

From a 1926 newspaper article commemorating the 140th anniversary of the village of Cannonsville

For the benefit of those unfamiliar with our beautiful village situated on the banks of the Delaware, in the midst of the most magnificent scenery, we will give a few historical facts.

In the spring of 1786 Jesse Dickinson, a native of New Jersey, who had previously explored the country, came from his state with several assistants. From New York he embarked, with his family, a number of horses, cows, oxen and other live stock, on a sloop for Catskill. The road to the head of the Delaware had been cut out down to Kortright. The Indian path after this was very little used and considerable difficulty was experienced in chopping a road through the dense forest. After two weeks they arrived at the mouth of Trout Creek, then known by the Indian name, Ganniwissy. Here the Indians had cleared a few acres on which they had raised corn, the last of them having departed a few years before. Mr. Dickinson had purchased several hundred acres of land at this place and had exalted opinions of the importance of his new purchase. He made many plans of improvement; laid out a town in regular squares and called it Dickinson City, and for many years it retained the name, "The City."

The next summer Mr. Dickinson built a town hall and saw mill, inviting all the male inhabitants within a distance of 25 miles or more to the raising. A barrel of Jamaica rum was used on this occasion and undoubtedly the invitations were cheerfully responded to, as with the same inducement today a general invitation would draw a crowd. He also built a grist mill. To this mill people came a distance of 40 and 50 miles on horseback. He was finally obliged to mortgage his estate to a man by the name of Milton, as his expenditures in building and making improvements exceeded his income. Finally he was obliged to surrender the property to the mortgagee. Milton sold the estate to Benjamin Cannon, and descendants of the family resided in the place for many years.

Mr. Cannon built his homestead residence across the river, now owned by L.B. Boyd, living at the Manor until his decease in 1839. For many years the homestead was owned by members of the Hathaway family, who were among the pioneer settlers of the

town. In 1808 Mr. Cannon built the Cannonsville House, which was kept for a long time by Stephen Durfee. His son, Henry, was the efficient proprietor for many years. Benjamin Cannon left two sons, Benjamin and George. Benjamin built the residence at Chestnut Point, now owned by T.C. Judd. The family have always been interested in our village, which was named in honor of the family who were deserving of the honor and respect of the community, as they have done much to improve and advance its interests. Some months ago Henry Cannon, of New York, son of George Cannon, bought the Cannonsville House (pictured), which he deeded to the trustees of the Presbyterian Church for a community house.

The building has been thoroughly renovated and



Cannonsville House. Courtesy of the Delhi Historical Society.

modernized, although much of the former architecture remains intact. The entire building is steam heated, with electric lights and all modern conveniences. On the first floor is the rest room, with separate rooms for the ladies and men. On the second floor are double parlors, office, dining rooms, large and small, with a seating capacity of about 100 guests, community kitchen with up-to-date conveniences, caretaker's

living room and kitchen. On the third floor is a fine large ball room and eight sleeping rooms. The three-story building is situated on a height of ground. The spacious balconies, an attractive feature of the building, afford a magnificent view of the Delaware valley.

In connection with the community house is a hall, 97 feet long, 30 feet wide, which has been converted into a moving picture hall and for general purposes, with lobby and parlor in front, stage and two dressing rooms in back.

Millard H. Smith, of Deposit, who owned the Cannon homestead for some years, has represented Mr. Cannon and assisted the trustees and those interested in arranging and carrying out plans. His interest and assistance in every way has been of inestimable value. The gift of the community house with its spacious rooms for entertainments is filling a long felt want and Mr. Cannon's generosity is appreciated, not only by the people of Cannonsville, but the entire town.

📖 **History Corner** 📖
Cold War in the Catskills by Samantha Misa

American military forces engaged in combat in Korea during the early 1950s were tasked with stopping the spread of communism in one of the “hot” conflicts of the Cold War. But 20-year-old Private James Jardine of Andes, NY was more focused on stopping his fellow soldiers from dying. The young Catskills native had enlisted in the United States Army Medical Department in August 1951, and was deployed to Korea shortly after, serving with Clearing Company, 2nd Medical Battalion, 2nd Infantry Division. Jardine’s company was stationed in the volatile Chorwon Valley, slightly north of the 38th Parallel. The American Press dubbed this section near the contested line of demarcation between communist North Korea and non-communist South Korea as the “Iron Triangle.”

During his time in the Iron Triangle, Jardine’s life-saving skills were battle-tested while in proximity to tense exchanges of fire between United Nations forces and the Chinese People’s Volunteer Army (PVA). Less than five months after his enlistment, Jardine was honorably discharged and returned home to the Catskills. Doubtlessly shaken by what he had witnessed, Jardine hoped that returning home would mean a more peaceful existence, one far from the violence, bloodshed, and political divisiveness of a distant war. Unfortunately for Jardine, his return brought him into the heart of a different cold war – an ongoing one between the people of Jardine’s hometown and the expanding New York City reservoir system.

Construction on several new reservoirs in the western Catskills had commenced since the completion of the Ashokan and Schoharie in the eastern & northern regions in 1915 and 1926, respectively. The growing population of New York City required steady access to clean drinking water, and eminent domain procedures had secured large tracts of Delaware and Sullivan counties to meet the demand. When Jardine returned to Andes in 1952 construction on the Pepacton Reservoir in the town had already been in progress for three years. The Pepacton Reservoir cut a long swath through the town of Andes, forcing over nine hundred residents to leave their homes – for many, the war with the city had been lost, without ever having much initial chance for a victory.

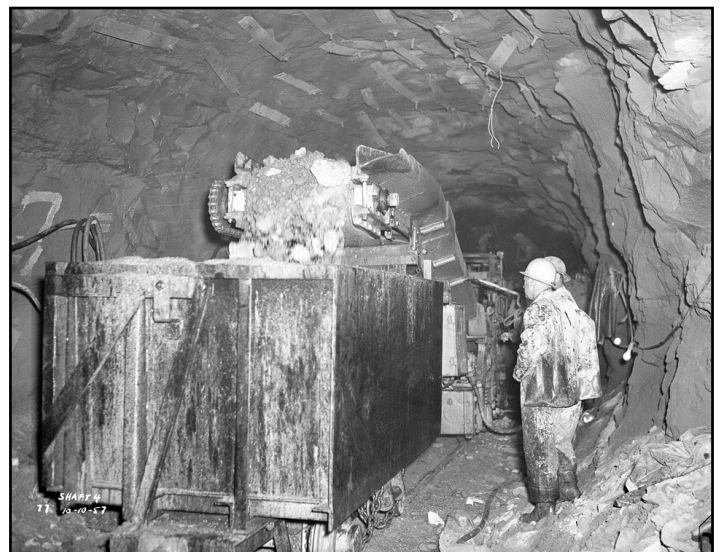
The New York City Board of Water Supply offered some consolation for the loss of communities in the form of industrial job opportunities constructing the reservoirs and dam systems. In 1956, Jardine took a job working on the construction of a tunnel that would connect the newly-begun Cannonsville Reservoir in the Delaware County towns of Deposit & Tompkins to the Neversink Reservoir in Sullivan County. Jardine worked as a brakeman directing rail-

cars full of excavated rock and mud out of the tunnels. Sixteen days after taking the job, 24-year-old Jardine was instantly killed when his “chest was crushed and several bones were broken” by an overturned train car “loaded with muck and stone.” Jardine was the first fatality of the Cannonsville tunnel and reservoir construction – but not the first casualty. The construction of the Cannonsville Reservoir had already eradicated the communities of Beerston, Cannonsville, Granton, Rock Rift, and Rock Royal, and displaced 941 people.

Delaware County was profoundly altered, both geographically and politically, by the construction of the NYC Reservoir System, which has continued to be the source of a “Cold War” between the need for residents to have businesses and employment, and the demands of New York City for clean drinking water.

The latter, and its requisite need for a pristine watershed region, is often given as an explanation as to why Delaware County lacks much large-scale industry. Accordingly, waste regulations discourage continuation of the region’s agricultural past, and city-owned watershed land and strict permitting processes stifle population growth.

As of 2025, Delaware County is the 10th least populated in New York, ranking 53 out of 62 total counties in the state – despite its being the state’s fourth largest in area. For some, the low population makes the area more attractive for tourists, but for others, it weakens us economically. As one former resident of Cannonsville said nearly 30 years ago, no matter what is grown, produced or made, “you can’t sell to a reservoir full of water!!!!!!!!!!”



Tunnel construction on the Cannonsville project showing a “muck and stone car” much like the one that killed James Jardine. Photograph by Walt Dette, 1957. DCHA Archives.

Delaware County Historical Association
46549 State Highway 10
Delhi, NY 13753

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Delhi, NY
Permit No. 15

Headwaters of History

Headwaters of History is produced by the Delaware County Historical Association. All rights reserved.

Editor: Tim Duerden
Designer: Angela Gaffney

We encourage the submission of articles relating to this county's history or the activities of local history organizations.

DCHA's Board of Directors

Gabrielle Pierce, President; Virginia Sanford, Vice President; Kay Parisi-Hampel, Treasurer; Elinor Oles, and Michael Wood.

Museum Staff

Tim Duerden, Director
Angela Gaffney, Collections Manager
Ray LaFever, Archivist
Samantha Misa, PhD., Educator

Volunteers

Susan Frisbee, Membership
Helen Casey, Library
Kathleen Curran

Summer Hours:

Exhibit Galleries and Gift/Bookshop:

Tuesday—Saturday, 11 A.M. to 4 P.M.
from Memorial Day Weekend to October 11.
Suggested Donation: \$5.00

Winter Hours:

Exhibit Galleries and Gift/Bookshop:

Monday—Friday, 11 A.M. to 4 P.M.
from October 14 to Memorial Day Weekend.

DCHA's H. Fletcher Davidson Library/Archives is open year-round Tuesday and Wednesday from 10am to 3pm. *By Appointment Only.*
For more information on the library's holdings, contact DCHA.

DCHA is located 2.5 miles north of Delhi on State Hwy 10.
Our address is 46549 State Highway 10, Delhi, NY 13753.
For more information call (607) 746-3849 or
send us an e-mail at: dchadelhi@gmail.com
www.dcha-ny.org ~ Visit us on Facebook

The A. Lindsay and Olive B. O'Connor Foundation, Inc.
The Tianaderrah Foundation
The Bert Santora Family Trust
The Robinson-Broadhurst Foundation
The George & Margaret Mee Foundation
The Juried Family Foundation
The Livestock Foundation
The Community Foundation for South Central New York
The Catskill Watershed Corporation