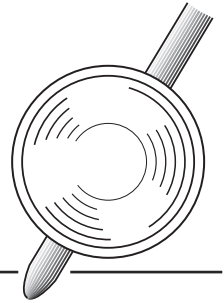


the *PENDULUM*

The Newsletter of the Pound Ridge Historical Society
& the Pound Ridge Museum
Winter 2010/2011 Volume XXIX Number 2



150-Year Anniversary of the Civil War

Our 2011 exhibit will focus on the Civil War and how it affected Pound Ridge.

Thomas Murphy was honored for his bravery at the Battle of Five Forks and was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. After being mustered out, Murphy took up residence in Pound Ridge on his farm at the corner of West Lane and Westchester Avenue, now designated as Murphy's Corners. He died at 68 on his farm in 1901.

In addition to the significance of the Civil War in our national history, major changes in industry and commerce affected many communities. In 19th-century Pound Ridge, handmade basketry was a major industry supplying baskets to the Long Island Sound oyster industry and as far away as Hartford. Scotts Corners was nicknamed "Basket Town." Shoemaking also contributed to this period of prosperity and growth for Pound Ridge as a cottage industry and with a "major factory" located just south of Barnwell.

After the war, new products emerged with new technologies which replaced handmade goods with machine-made. New building materials such as concrete changed methods of construction. Railroads now connected some emerging centers and bypassed others.

Do you have artifacts or print materials which you can lend to the Society for this exhibit, e.g., uniforms, weaponry, diaries, souvenir booklets, etc.? Please contact Joyce Butterfield at 764-4538.



Gen. Sheridan at Five Forks

ACQUISITIONS

Recently the Society acquired a 161-page ledger dated 1805-1815, kept by sawmill owner John Holmes. The sawmill and supply store were located at a stream at the corner of Boutonville Road. The ledger will be copied and pertinent information will be found in the accession files for researchers to use. (See page 2 for more about this mill, extracted from Philip A. Pessoni's "The Mills of Boutonville at Pound Ridge, N.Y.")

Such items are essential to preserving an archival record of the history and heritage of our town. Before discarding old photos, letters from the past or artifacts, please contact us about donating these items to our archives.

Third Grade Historical Society Bus Tour, November 2010

Can you give four facts about the history of our town? Have you heard of Hiram Halle? And Blind Charlie? The Pound Ridge Elementary School third graders recently learned some wonderful stories about our town's original residents as part of our outreach program. Pound Ridge Historical Society trustee and narrator, Ebie Wood, delighted the listeners with facts and local lore while pointing out some of our older homes along the Trinity Pass/Barnegat/Fancher route.

Farmers, basket makers, and shoemakers were some of the hardworking people who made up the population here over 100 years ago. Back at our town museum, the children were shown unfamiliar objects from a century past and had fun guessing their purpose. Each child received a local history-tour booklet to share with his or her parents.

If you are interested in traveling about town with us, please call the museum at 764-4333 and let us know. Our Spring 2010 adult trip was a sell-out and we look forward to conducting another one in the near future.

Melissa Verdier, Vice President

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The Mills of Boutonville at Pound Ridge, N.Y.

The largest concentration and most active center of water-powered industry in Pound Ridge was located at Boutontown (later known as Boutonville), a 40-acre tract nestled in the northeast corner of Pound Ridge and named for the many members of the John Bouton family of Norwalk and New Canaan who settled in the area in the 1750s. Since the characteristics of the Boutonville mills are representative of water-powered industry in other areas of town, only their location and function will be mentioned here. These include a grist mill that later became Aaron Northrup's cider mill in the hamlet, a grist and saw mill in the Long Ridge section, Elisha Avery's saw mill in the Pound Ridge reservation, Nathan Slawson's saw mill on Old Mill River Road near Trinity Pass and Enoch Hoyt's cider mill near the "long lot" on the west side of Route 124, just north of Old Stone Hill Road.

Mills ranked with the ax, ox and plow as a basic tool of the early settlers, and they were so essential in producing materials for food, clothing and shelter, that their construction was given precedence over that of schools, inns, churches and stores. Their presence raised the standard of living from the bare survival existence of an agricultural society and helped form the nucleus of small industrial communities. Mills could not only perform the work of several men, but they could also consistently produce a product of higher quality. Grain no longer had to be ground in a stump mortar or by using a hand-mill; lumber could be cut into square or rectangular lengths, allowing the construction of frame houses; the laborious tasks of tanning leather, operating nelsons, fulling cloth and carding wool could now be done more efficiently by machines.

Although the first reference to a mill in Pound Ridge was one opened by Ebenezer Green in 1749 just north of Boutonville, it is quite likely that by 1760 mills had been established on the Mianus, Stone Hill, Stamford Mill and Waccabuc rivers and also along some of the rushing

streams in the area. Water-powered mills continued to operate in Pound Ridge until the beginning of the 20th century.

There are records documenting the existence of at least two mills at Boutonville in the 1780s. In 1820, this hamlet was using water to power three mills, a carding machine, an iron works and a tannery, and by 1850, a community consisting of 28 houses had grown up around the mills. Boutonville had reached its peak of population and industrial activity.

Introduction of the water-powered sawmill represented a considerable savings in time and effort over the old manual "pit sawing" technique. The mill could do the work of 20 or more hand sawyers! Although it is possible that the sawmill at Boutonville

was built as early as 1760 by an entrepreneur from Stamford, it was most likely constructed by John Holmes of Bedford in the 1780s. Holmes and his son John Jr., resided at Boutonville and operated the mill from 1796 until 1824. The sawmill continued to operate over the next 80 years under the ownership of Aaron Hull; Minor, John and Norman Lawrence; and Jere Pickett.

The seven-foot-long, eight-inch-wide, coarse-toothed saw blade took its power from either a 10-foot-diameter breast wheel or a flutter wheel. The 12-inch-diameter horizontal oak shaft from the wheel was attached to a 180-pound connecting rod and crank by direct drive, which allowed the blade to make 120 up-and-down strokes per minute. With each upstroke a special cam mechanism automatically allowed the carriage which held the log to advance $\frac{1}{8}$ to $\frac{1}{4}$ inch. Upon completion of the cut, the "go back" gear was released and the carriage returned to its starting position, ready for the next cut. The sawmill was capable of producing from 500 to 1,500 board feet of lumber per day. For his labor, the miller would normally take 15 percent to 33 percent of the finished product.

Excerpts from the article by Philip A. Pessoni

“Mills could not only perform the work of several men, but they could also consistently produce a product of higher quality.”

Congratulations to 2010 Scholarship Recipients

Each year, the Pound Ridge Historical Society awards a \$1,000 scholarship each to two graduating Pound Ridge seniors who have excelled in History studies. This year's recipients are Margo Ametti and Tim Muller. We offer congratulations and wish you well in your future endeavors.

Thank you, Billy

We would like to join in acknowledging the contributions to our community by Billy Fortin, Scotts Corner Market. Over the years, his continuing generosity and support have helped make our town the special place it is.

Thanks, Billy.

Beverly Bender and friends

As the 2010 exhibit of the remarkable Bender Family was taken down, Beverly Bender (far right) and Marilyn Tinter visited with "Little Fella," one of Beverly's marvelous sculptures. Many thanks to guest curator Ebie Wood and those who shared their photos and memorabilia to make this such a special exhibit.



IF STONES COULD TALK . . .

As many of you members of the Pound Ridge community have noticed while on a walk, run, or ride through our town, it is marked by an array of what seems like endless amounts of stone walls. These walls are not only remarkable in their simplistic beauty, but tell a rich history about the town of Pound Ridge. It is clear that these walls served an important function to farmers who first settled in this region centuries ago. Whether simply driving along Westchester Avenue or walking in the Morgenthau preserve, it is evident that these now-wooded areas were once fields delineated by stone walls belonging to the early farmers of Pound Ridge. It is remarkable to imagine our town without the towering pines and maples that we know today, but early settlers cleared the land with abandon in order to cultivate it for farming and for grazing livestock. This deforesting was so intense that following the Civil War, there was such a shortage of wood in this country that stone became the primary material for wall building, replacing wooden fencing. No surprise in our area, as stone deposited by receding glaciers is abundant.

The iconic stone walls of New England were built, generally, between 1775 and 1825, and the use of concrete mortar was't prevalent until after the Civil War. Walls built without concrete are more "friendly" to wildlife which can move through them, and even make their homes in them.

It is believed that over 95,000 miles of stone walls crisscrossed New York state by the end of the 19th century, an amount that if placed end to end would measure greater in length than the coastline of the entire United States. The hours of labor that it must have taken to construct these stacked walls is extraordinary, and any of you who have planted shrubbery at home or put a fence post in the ground are aware that plenty of stones still remain. The fortitude that these early settlers of Pound Ridge possessed in order to clear and cultivate the land without the tools of the modern era is truly admirable. The livestock runs, or walls that run parallel to one another about 10 feet



Stone wall along Fancher Road.

apart, are some of the most extraordinary examples of the craftsmanship and the degree of labor that went into the construction of these walls. Rip rap walls came into use to contain sheep. The top layers were loosely constructed to discourage sheep from climbing over them. Runs were built for the purpose of escorting livestock to and from pasture and barn and can be found throughout town. The use of stone to construct walls, however, was not limited to the delineation of a field or for the purpose of fencing or herding farm animals. There are also countless examples throughout town of stone walls that were constructed to divert water, create walkways, steps, signs, or to fortify the foundation of a house or barn.

So on your next walk, run, or ride about town, take the time to notice these structures that make Pound Ridge so unique and allow your mind to wander back in time and imagine what it might have been like building these walls centuries ago. Imagine what the landscape might have looked like and how the people may have lived. We are fortunate to have so many preserved examples of this living history that helps give Pound Ridge its character, making it such a wonderful place to live.

Tim Hall, Pound Ridge Landmarks & Historic District Commission

On Ebenezer's Shelf

(Available for sale at the Museum or call 764-4333)

POSTERS:

Map of Pound Ridge \$10.00
 "Doors of Pound Ridge" 10.00

BOOKLETS:

"Beginnings" 3.00
 "Births, Baptisms, Deaths" 10.00
 "The Black Hussars" 6.50
 "Flag Brochure" 1.00

"Historical Houses of Pound Ridge (PRES)" 2.00
 "Historical Landmark Houses of Pound Ridge" 5.00
 "Mini-Bus Tour of Pound Ridge" 5.00
 "Pieces of the Past" 3.00
 "Pound Ridge Cemeteries" 10.00
 "Settling In" 3.00

"Water Power" 4.00
BOOKS:

"God's Country" Jay Harris 70.00
 "History of Betsey Hunt House" 35.00
 "Images of America-Pound Ridge" 22.00
 "Land Use Through Ecology (The PRUP Study)" 25.00



150TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CIVIL WAR
 Can you add to our coming exhibit focusing on this event? Read how you can be part of the process of preserving and celebrating our Town's history and legacy.

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is published by
the Pendulum

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 U.S. POSTAGE PAID
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 PERMIT NO. 7651

Be Connected!

Make a connection with the past *and* present history of YOUR town.

JOIN FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS, already members of the Pound Ridge Historical Society, and explore the variety and uniqueness that are Pound Ridge. We have a variety of activities and programs, all aimed at keeping you in touch with Pound Ridge and its fascinating roots.

Join us and call us at 764-4333.

Please send your membership dues check payable to **The Pound Ridge Historical Society** to:

Membership Chair
 Pound Ridge Historical Society
 P.O. Box 51, Pound Ridge, NY 10576

Thank you!

For membership year January 1 through December 31, 2011

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- Individual (thru 62) \$25
- Individual (over 62) \$20
- Family \$48*
- Patron \$50
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* Youth Membership is included for children up to 18.