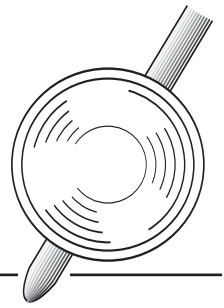




the *PENDULUM*

The Newsletter of the Pound Ridge Historical Society
& the Pound Ridge Museum
Spring 2007 Volume XXV Number 1



2007 Annual Meeting April 29TH “A Forage Affair”

The Annual Meeting of the Pound Ridge Historical Society took place at the Pound Ridge Town House Sunday, April 29th at 2:00 p.m. Ebie Wood, chairman of the Nominating Committee presented the following slate which was accepted by acclamation: Vice President, Joyce Butterfield, Recording Secretary, Michael Santulli, Treasurer, Norman Tunnell, Trustees: Bob Benjamin, Kevin Hansan, Brenda Jeselnik, Rayanne Kleiner, Annie Thom,, Josina vander Maas, Melissa Verdier and Alan Wechsler.



*Sil Gleissner of Sheldon's Horse,
2nd Continental Light Dragoons*

Sil Gleissner of Danbury, CT, the featured speaker, is a member of Sheldon's Horse, 2nd Continental Light Dragoons. Col. Elisha Sheldon's cavalry troops along with the 4th Regiment of Westchester County Militia fought Col. Banastre Tarleton during the raid on Poundridge, July 2, 1779. Mr. Gleissner has worked for the Scott-Fanton Museum (now the Danbury Historical Society). His interests include historical research, archaeology and photography.

Mr. Gleissner had on display a document recently purchased at auction testifying that on December 3, 1780, a Jabez Clark of Poundridge provided forage (corn and hay) for Sheldon's troops. On February 9, 1782 he was paid six shillings and ten pence for this service. This document has brought about frenzied research into the life and activities of our mysterious Jabez Clark. In the late 1700s he lived in the area of Stone Hill Road and Old Stone Hill Road.

By 1780, much of the military action took place in the Pound Ridge area. Sheldon's Light Horse was utilized for express, running messages between headquarters and troops. The horses were wintered in Danbury and numbered up to 140 head.

One of the most critical factors influencing success or failure was the ability to acquire food and supplies for horses and soldiers (even such basics as uniforms and clothing were in short supply). The outcome of the war literally depended on it. It was particularly difficult to locate forage because of the large number of Tory sympathizers in the area. It was often quite risky for local farmers to provide Washington's troops with provisions.

Mr. Gleisner wore the full uniform of an 18th century Continental dragoon. Sheldon's Horse, 2nd Continental Light Dragoons, is currently a ceremonial military troop mustered under the authority of the governor of Connecticut. For more information on Sheldon's Horse, see the web site www.dragoons.info.

Pound Ridge Historical Society · Annual Report for 2006

The Pound Ridge Historical Society continues to document all gifts received by the society on its computer. Any names associated with these gifts are recorded at that time to enhance “search” procedures at some later date, either for society exhibit purposes or for those people performing genealogy research. The number of items accessioned for 2006 was 94, with a total today of 1,526.

- The Pound Ridge Museum was open from March to December on Saturdays and Sundays, 2-4 PM with a group of some 50 volunteer docents assisting in this endeavor. Approximately 145 guests visited our museum during the year. An increase in the number of people researching their roots in Pound Ridge was significant. Specific requests for the year are recorded in our log book
- The annual meeting held in April featured a successful narrated bus tour entitled “The Three Bs: The British, The Battle, and the Bulbs.” The society also participated in the September Country Fair at the Town Park.
- There were two fund raising events for the society. An Afternoon with Jule Styne presented in March benefited the Nancy Wasserman Memorial Fund. The society's 33rd Annual Antiques Show was held in

(cont'd on Page 2)

2. Pound Ridge Historical Society · Annual Report for 2006 (cont'd from Page 1)


November 2006 at the Fox Lane High School. Approximately 1,200 people attended with 40 volunteers assisting at the admissions desk and with parking cars. The Antiques Show received financial support from local business establishments who subscribed with advertisements in the show's booklet.

- The transcription of the old Pound Ridge Presbyterian Church records relating to baptisms, marriages and deaths was published in July.
- Membership during the year totaled 186 with the following category classifications: 8 Under 62, 44 Over 62, 70 Families, 2 Businesses, 18 Patrons, 24 Sponsors, 4 Sustainers and 16 Lifetime Members. This number has remained somewhat constant over the past three years and the society appreciates this financial support.
- The society continues to endow two \$500 scholarship awards to Pound Ridge students at Fox Lane High School who show interest in the subject of history.
- A new exhibit presented in July featured the Marshall family of Pound Ridge. Ebie Wood served as curator for this exhibit.

The society was saddened by the death of Ethel Scofield. She was a founding member of our organization and served as president in its early years. She also served as the curator of our museum from 1983 to 1994.

I personally want to thank everyone who has so generously donated time and financial support to our organization.

April 9, 2007



Richard Major

President

Births/Baptisms/Marriages/Deaths 1787-1792, 1800-1808, 1822-1937 Poundridge Presbyterian Church

The short story on pages 3 and 4 of this issue was inspired by entries recorded from the records of the Poundridge Presbyterian Church published in this booklet.

This recent publication by the Pound Ridge Historical Society is drawn from Poundridge Presbyterian Church Records held by the Presbyterian Historical Society of Philadelphia as well as archival records of the Pound Ridge Historical Society.

It includes biographical information on Rev. Benjamin Judd 1755-1834, photographs and sketches and documents. The information indicated in the title has been transcribed from the original handwritten documents. Copies of the original documents are also included in the booklet.

This fascinating record of our past is available at the Museum for \$10.

BIRTHS/BAPTISMS/MARRIAGES/DEATHS

1787-1792, 1800-1808, 1822-1937

POUNDRIDGE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
POUND RIDGE, NEW YORK



Presbyterian Church, Poundridge.

From Robert Bolton Jr.'s *History of The County of Westchester*
Volume II, 1848

Thanks for your support of our 32nd Annual Antiques Show November 25th- 26th

The show was a great success because of over 1,200 visitors, dedicated volunteers and the support of our local businesses and patrons who advertised in our Show booklet. Under the direction of Show Chair Joyce Butterfield, and Show Manager Martin Greenstein, Fox Lane High School was the site of another fabulous show. We look forward to seeing you all at next year's show in November 2007.

Thanks again for your help and support!

Introduction

This story is entirely fictional, except for the names Joseph and Abigail Scofield. Dick Major had pointed me to the Session Minutes of the Pound Ridge Presbyterian Church (July 2, 1822 through June 21, 1949), while I was spending the afternoon as docent at the Pound Ridge Historical Society Museum. A copy of these historical church records had been recently acquired by the museum. When I started reading through the minutes, I realized that there were real, human stories buried in these dry and formal accounts of the meetings of the Minister and Elders. I was inspired to write a story, using extracts from the Session Minutes as the framework. *Josina vander Maas*

Sept. 6th 1834

The Session met according to appointment, and was opened with prayer. Present: Rev. R. G. Thompson (Moderator), Elders Reuben Ayres, Abijah St. John. Absent Thomas Peck and Jesse Jones. The minutes of the last meeting were read and approved. Joseph Scofield and Abigail his wife were received members in communion with this church, on certificate from the Congregational Church in New Canaan, Con. Mr. Epenetus Miller appeared before the session and requested to be admitted to the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. He was examined as to his piety, and knowledge to discern the Lord's body. The session being satisfied with his examination, resolved to grant his request. He was accordingly received and his name enrolled. Adjourned. Concluded with prayer. Attest: R. G. Thompson, Mod.

“ . . . Joseph reminded Abigail to be considerate of others and that singing should be done in Church only. And Abigail was careful not to sing again when she knew someone might hear. . . ”

Joseph was silent on the way home. Abigail glanced at him as they walked, wondering what he was thinking. She hoped that his silence did not mean that he was displeased with her, as he was so often. Did she behave properly enough in front of the Reverend and the Elders? Had she said the right words when they questioned her about her devotion to the Church? She knew that Joseph thought her too free and forward. She had a habit of looking directly at people and saying exactly what she thought. But on this occasion she had been very careful to look modest and act the dutiful wife, respectful of her husband, his family, and the representatives of the Church. She had stumbled over some of the words that she had memorized. But the Elders had not seemed to mind and looked kindly at her while she corrected herself.

When they got home, Joseph's mother Mary, who lived with them, was sitting at the kitchen table. Without asking Abigail how it went, she launched into a bitter complaint about how long they had been away, nothing had been done about the evening meal, and she was getting hungry.

Abigail was afraid of Mary, especially because Joseph was completely dominated by his mother. She was the one

who picked Abigail for his wife. She did not want competition for his affections. Abigail was the third of three daughters born to a common laborer and his sickly wife. Mary knew that Abigail was young, strong, and used to having to take care of a household. She would be a good, obedient wife for Joseph. Nobody had bothered to ask Abigail what she thought of this marriage. Her father told her that she was lucky to marry into the family of a landowner. Whatever expectations Abigail had of marriage, she had not counted on exchanging drudgery at home for slavery in her husband's family.

Joseph did not show any affection or love towards Abigail. He had married her almost grudgingly. But he did enjoy his marital privileges. Being a farmer, sex was a familiar function to him that did not get dressed up in moonshine and roses. Abigail was his wife, and that was the end of it. In time, he expected her to have children, who would inherit the land and farm, and take care of him in his old age. He had no patience with a wife who had opinions or desires.

When they were first married, Abigail would occasionally sing while she was working. Mary complained that Abigail was acting flighty, and that her singing was disturbing her, so Joseph reminded Abigail to be considerate of others and that singing should be done in Church only. And Abigail was careful not to sing again when she knew someone might hear. But sing she did. Not that she had such a beautiful voice. She liked to sing because it reminded her of happier days, when she and her sisters sang while doing their chores. And she vaguely remembered her mother singing her to sleep when she was little.

As the years went by, Abigail got used to her new life. She saw little of her family because they had moved from New Canaan to Pound Ridge. Her father did not have a horse, and walking would take too long. Every few months, Abigail would force herself to write a letter to her family.

She had had little schooling and writing was difficult for her, but it was the only way to keep in touch. The one time she had asked Joseph if they could not take a few days to visit her family, he frowned and said that he did not have time and in any case her father would be embarrassed to receive them in his house. She knew better than to ask again.

Everything changed on the day she met James. It was a day like any other, and it was only later that she thought about it as special. She had gone to the road in front of the house, where the blackberry bushes were now heavy with berries. She covered her arms and put a scarf over her head so that she would not get scratched when she tangled with the branches to get at the largest, juiciest berries which were always just out of reach. She was in turns humming and yelling "ouch!" when she heard someone laughing. She looked up out of her bramble prison and saw a man standing on the road. He made no move to leave, and she decided to recover her dignity by making as graceful an exit as possible and escaping to the house. But she had wandered so far into the entangling branches that escape turned into a struggle that made her feel even more foolish. Finally the man stopped laughing and slid down the embankment to help her. When she emerged, face red with embarrassment and her clothes torn and disarranged, the man still would not leave. He did not so much block her way as assert his presence by the way he was standing there. Somehow Abigail felt she could not just turn around and run off without thanking him. So she said "my name is Abigail Scofield and I thank you for helping me out". He took off his cap and said "my name is James Robbins." Without another word he walked away.

Dec 3rd 1837

The session convened at the call of the Moderator. Present: Rev. William Patterson, Moderator, Elders: William L. Smith, Amos Babcock. Opened with prayer. Mary, wife of Samuel Weed made application to be dismissed to join the Presbyterian Church at Binghamton, New York. The Session granted her request. The Session then adopted the following minutes, Viz.: Whereas common fame charges Mrs. Abigail Scofield a member of this church with the crime of bringing scandal on religion by holding too intimate connection with, and placing her affections on, another man. Therefore resolved that Messrs. Patterson and Smith be appointed a committee to enquire into the whole business and report to Session. Concluded with Prayer. Adjourned. William L. Smith, Clerk

Abigail shivered as she walked back to the house. Winter seemed to come early this year. She wrapped her shawl tighter around her. It was getting dark and the temperature was dropping fast. It would be freezing tonight. Pretty soon it would be too cold to meet James at their special place in the woods. They had been very careful

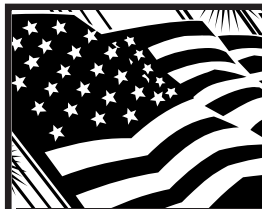
not to change their daily routines. Yet no matter how careful they had been, she sometimes had the uncomfortable feeling that people knew. There were times when she knew that what they were doing was wrong. And yet she could not envision living without him. He was all she had. The love and affection that she craved was what he gave so freely. She had never known how deep her need for love was until she met him.

James had talked about leaving together. To start a new life somewhere else, where nobody would know about them, or care. Where there were no small-minded, cruel busybodies and stern churchmen. He had even thought about moving to the West, where there were new lands and new opportunities. But Abigail was hesitant. A small part of her still clung to the life she knew, no matter how sterile and loveless it was.

As she neared the house and the entrance to the kitchen, she noticed that a light was on in the parlor. This was strange, for the parlor was only used on special occasions, and reserved for important visitors. As soon as she stepped into the kitchen, Mary launched herself at her. The old woman grabbed her by the arms and pulled her to the parlor door. Her cheeks were red, she looked like she was exploding with anger. She hissed at Abigail "I always knew you were no good, now look at what you have done." With that, she pushed Abigail into the parlor. Dazed, Abigail found herself standing in front of her husband, the Reverend Patterson and Elder Smith. They stood in the cold parlor, side by side, as if they were forming a solid barrier against whatever could be launched against them. They stood united in mind and purpose. Joseph was the first to speak. He spoke almost without passion or inflection, as if what he had to say was of no importance to him. As if he were only reading some inconsequential treatise, soon to be discarded and forgotten. "I have been told of your crime against morality. You have been seen with James Robbins. You have betrayed your marriage vows and sinned against God and my family." He stopped speaking as if there were nothing more to be said. The Reverend cleared his throat, as if he were giving her time to respond. Abigail was speechless, frozen, looking at Joseph but not seeing him. She was willing herself to wake up out of this nightmare. There was a hissing in her ears.

When the Reverend started to speak, she had to force herself to turn her head to him. Now she knew this was real. They had come to tell her to confess her sins or face expulsion from Church and public exposure. They made it seem so simple. As if the words they wanted her to say would wipe out all that went before. James would not exist. Their love would never have existed. These months of happiness would be denied, and what was worse, made to look evil, wrong, shameful, a subject of public ridicule.

(to be concluded in the Fall 2007 issue of The Pendulum)



Memorial Day Parade Monday, May 28th from noon *Pound Ridge School to Burial Hill*

Join us at at the Pound Ridge Cemetery on Burial Hill for the ceremonies.
Afterwards, enjoy a live band and refreshments in the Town Park.

God's Country can be yours!

If you missed the first reprint of Jay Harris Hess' definitive history of Pound Ridge, *God's Country*, the second printing of the book is available for only \$70 each. The hardbound book, complete with dust cover, is a full-sized facsimile reproduction of the original.

You may pick up a copy at the Museum on Saturday or Sunday from 2-4 p.m.

Or, you can order the book via email or directly from the Society by mail. There is a nominal charge of \$8 for mailing. Please make checks payable to the *Pound Ridge Historical Society*.

CABARET 2007, March 4th in the Hamlet — "An afternoon with Rogers & Hart"

Another wonderful musical afternoon was presented by **The '30s Quartet** — Dick Major, Pianist/Director, Barbara Earle, Soprano, Fred Stark, Tenor and Richard Simons, Double Bass, with guest artists: Ebie Wood, Alto, Nicole Patrick, Soprano, the Pound Ridge Garden Club "Flower Ladies."

Thank you to all who made this such a success!

The Art of "Page Turning"

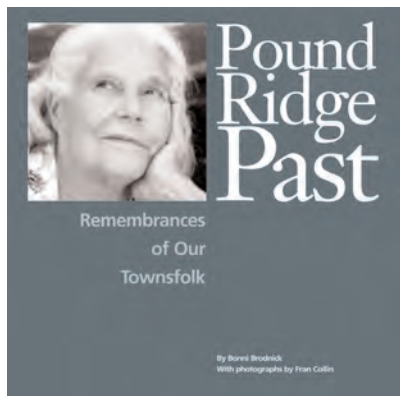
a tongue-in-cheek tribute to an unsung concert artist, the pianist's page-turner

Program Notes: Ruth Spelke, Page Turner

Tonight's page turner, Ruth Spelke, studied under Ivan Schmertnick at the Boris Nitsky School of Page Turning in Philadelphia. She has been turning pages here and abroad for many years for some of the world's leading pianists.

In 1988, Ms. Spelke won the Wilson Page Turning Scholarship which sent her to Israel to study turning from left to right. She is winner of the 1984 Rimsky-Korsakov Flight of the Bumblebee Prestissimo Medal, having turned 47 pages in an unprecedented 32 seconds. She was also a 1989 silver medalist (sic) at the Klutz Musical Page Pickup Competition: Contestants retrieve and rearrange a musical score dropped from a Yamaha. Ms. Spelke excelled in grace, swiftness, and especially, poise.

For techniques, Ms. Spelke performs both the finger-licking and the bent page corner methods. She works from a standard left bench position, and is the originator of the dipped-elbow snatch, a style used to avoid obscuring the pianist's view of the music. She is page turner in residence in Fairfield, Iowa, where she occupies the coveted Alfred Hitchcock Chair at the Fairfield Page Turning Institute. Ms. Spelke is married and has a nice house on a lake.



POUND RIDGE PAST: Remembrances of our Townfolk

Pound Ridge Past: Remembrances of Our Townfolk, by Bonni Brodnick with photographs by Fran Collin and graphic design by Gina Federico, is a collection of more than 30 first-person interviews with the town's elders. The recollections in this non-profit project span from the 1920s to the 1970s, and reveal what life was like in 20th century

Tallulah Bankhead, Frank Morgan (The Wizard himself!), Howard Cosell, Florian Zabach, Buster Crabbe, Shirley Jones, Eli Wallach, Ann Jackson, Westbrook Pegler and Stuart Ostrow were just a few of the screen, musical and literary celebrities dazzling the calm of the countryside.

Copies are available at the Museum. Or request from Pound Ridge Past, 217 Salem Road, Pound Ridge, NY 10576. For more information, call 763-3218.