

# Museum of Rhinebeck History

Celebrating Rhinebeck's Rich Heritage

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May 2012

## Museum Exhibit: Sweet Violets

The Museum board was stunned and delighted at the overwhelming numbers filling Upstate Films for the premiere of *Sweet Violets* on Sunday, February 12<sup>th</sup>, and doubly surprised that so many more came for an encore presentation February 18<sup>th</sup>—over 400 viewers saw at least one of the two presentations, and more had to be turned away.



The line outside Upstate Films waits for a showing of Tobe Carey's *Sweet Violets*. Items shown in the DVD are on exhibit at the Museum starting May 19. (Photo courtesy of Meg Carey.)

When board members worked with filmmaker Tobe Carey a year ago to pull together items from the Museum collection that he could incorporate into the DVD he planned on creating, the board sensed he would do an outstanding job and are very pleased at the public reception of his work. The filmmaker's interest in our collection occurred just when the board began planning this year's exhibit—that coincidence and the recollection of how well a

Museum exhibit on violets was received in 1997 served as another reason to focus on violets once again.

The Museum's Board of Trustees is very pleased to present this year's exhibit about an industry that was once the major economic engine for both Rhinebeck and the surrounding area in Dutchess County.

Intern Krista Miller of LaGrange, a graduate student at University of Albany—SUNY; Marilyn Hatch, Michael Frazier, and Steven Mann have assembled an exhibit that tells the story of Rhinebeck's violet industry. Kay Verrilli and her committee assembled a wealth of information for the Museum's first violet exhibit in 1997. This material was used in conjunction with newly discovered sources that were uncovered after many hours of research by Steven and Krista. These materials have been incorporated into the violet exhibit of 2012.



Two cypress wood ventilators serve as frames for photographs of the very same greenhouse where the ventilators once served their original function.

## EXHIBIT (Continued)

Curator Steven Mann reports that the hardest part of the whole work was the lack of adequate physical space to exhibit the first phase of the violet industry, namely the role of Mr. Saltford of Violet Hill. "We have a whole file of material on the Saltford brothers. Before Mrs. Herbert (Beatrice Faust) Saltford died a couple of years ago, I had called her at her Quaker retirement community in Gladwynne, PA, but she passed away before I was able to reconnect with her. Such a missed opportunity! We have also found some amazing facts about their connections to the wholesale flower market in New York City."

The exhibit is organized chronologically, starting in 1901-1902 using Kay Verrilli's research notes from the Museum's 1997 exhibit on the same topic, and working forward to the 1910s and '20s, the decline before WWII, and the 'end' in the 1970s. Patricia Curthoys has loaned parts of a violet house that is standing on her property. They were disassembled on site by Mike Frazier and reassembled at the Museum by John and Marilyn Hatch. The exhibit also includes a collection of postcards with violets, most notably ones intended for Easter, birthdays, New Year's, and of course, Valentine's Day."

The Museum will be open Saturdays and Sundays, from 2-4 PM, from May 19-September 30 (closed Fair week in August). Any groups interested in a special tour may contact the office at 845-871-1798 and a Museum representative will return the call. Admission to the Museum is free. Donations are of course always welcome.

## WURTEMBERG SAMPLERS

This past fall, the Museum was fortunate to receive three Dutchess County samplers. The works were done by women from the Stringham, Ackert, and Traver families of Rhinebeck. Like most of the Wurtemberg families, these three families were intermarried. They were not only neighbors, they were also kinfolk, or in-laws.



**Dorcas Stringham sampler**

The earliest of the three samplers, from 1825, is by Dorcas Stringham, a birthright Quaker from Clinton/Crum Elbow, descended from Thomas Frost of Oyster Bay, a Quaker. Yes, this is the very same ancestor of siblings Barbara V. and Benson Frost, Jr. of Rhinebeck. The Stringham sampler is done in a very simple yet typical Quaker style or manner. It is eerily similar to that of the student work identified as being from Nine Partners Boarding School in Mabbettsville. At NPBS, the young scholars were taught by the famed educators Deborah (nee Rogers) and Jacob Willetts. Deborah

Rogers Willetts is believed to have taught needlework as part of the curriculum. The Willetts later wrote early textbooks which were published by Paraclete Potter of Poughkeepsie. They later ran a private school at their home, which is still standing, on Route 44. The home is adjacent to the Millbrook Golf Club just north of the Nine Partners Friends Meeting House and Burial Ground.

Unfortunately, the school records for the NPBS have long been missing for the time Dorcas might have been a student there. Research has not unearthed any evidence that she attended NPSB, however it would not have been surprising if she had. The school had a reputation in the New England and Mid-Atlantic States as a fine educational institution run by the Society of Friends. This sampler was in good condition considering it had been affixed to a wooden board, which is a major no-no as the wood contains acid that can stain and destroy textiles.

The Ackert and Traver samplers are later than the Stringham sampler. They are, however, pre-Civil War and in very good condition. Their borders were gently stitched to cardboard. Again, this is not a preferred form of treatment for preserving samplers. They have survived remarkably well despite those conditions. These samplers consist of alpha-numeric content, while the Stringham one is a long Biblical verse with very little ornamentation and muted colors. The Traver sampler in particular is quite vibrant, the stitches probably made from vegetable oils, ergo its brilliant reds and blues.

### **INTERN KRISTA MILLER—A BIG HELP**

A new face has been busy at work this winter and spring at the Museum. She is Krista Miller of LaGrange, a graduate of Arlington High School, currently completing her studies at SUNY Albany.

Krista is the third intern over the past few years to work with members of The Consortium of Rhinebeck History, a committee of the Quitman Resource Center. She is doing an internship this semester in lieu of attending classes, for college credit.



**Intern Krista Miller in front of the entrance to the Museum's violet exhibit, which she played a major role in preparing with curator Steven Mann.**

Krista played a major role helping curator Steven Mann complete the 2012 annual exhibit. This year the museum is focusing on Rhinebeck's violet industry, which coincides with videographer Tobe Carey's film *Sweet Violets*, which previewed at Upstate Films in Rhinebeck on Sunday, February 12. As part of the project, Krista has researched information on the violet industry and contributed to the text in the exhibit. She also worked preparing several displays within the exhibit.

On February 14, Krista began working with Marilyn Hatch, Vice Chairman of the Consortium, to update the Village of Rhinebeck National Register District. The original Survey placed 388 structures in the Village on the National Register of Historic Places. At the time, it was the largest district of its kind in New York State. Later, Marilyn nominated a number of Town sites to be listed in a National Register Multi Resource District.

This project is being accomplished in cooperation with NYS Historic Preservation officer Nancy Todd. Krista has been walking the District Streets checking the "Blue" (known for the form's color) forms, making the corrections and taking new photos. Once back at the Quitman House, the updated information, including 911 addresses and pictures are entered on a template, and then placed on an external hard drive. After this work is completed each blue form is scanned. The original material is permanently housed at Peeble's Island outside of Cohoes, through the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation. The Quitman Resource Center and the Starr Library have copies of the printed material. Over the years, additional research materials have been added to these files.

This project will enable researchers to see the differences in each site over the past decades. This is a labor-intensive and time-consuming process, but one that has to be done. Having an

intern provides the necessary resource to complete this important project.

The Museum and all the other member organizations in the Consortium are extremely grateful to Krista for all of her efforts. She is not paid for this service as it is for college credit. Her professionalism, enthusiasm, and creativity have been very welcome at the Museum. She has definitely been a great addition.

### **MILDRED MILLER COLLECTION GROWS**

In prior years, Mrs. Mildred Miller, lifelong Rhinebeck resident, had given the Museum some fascinating objects for its collection, including a gentleman's 19<sup>th</sup> century beaver top hat and a pastel of a girl with a large lily in a period gilded frame.

Thanks to Marilyn Hatch the Museum was finally able to arrange a meeting with her as she had numerous other objects to donate. Marilyn received the equivalent of two large boxes of family objects from Mrs. Miller. Included in them, but not limited to, were the following, which have been accessioned.



**Hannaburg quilt from Miller collection**

Two family quilts belonging to Mrs. James H. Hannaburg, handmade in the 19<sup>th</sup> century – one is a child's quilt, both show quite intricate hand work. A nursing rocker belonging to the same

Mrs. Hannaburg has been given which has its original rush seat, probably c 1860. We believe this chair was originally a small straight chair later converted to a rocker. The bottom of the rush seat has old green paint which is typical of country furniture of that era and the top has a slight green hue from the old painted finish.

Several family pieces of 19<sup>th</sup> century American pressed glass have been given, including a water pitcher belonging to Mrs. Hannaburg and a smaller water pitcher belonging to Mrs. E. Traver. The donation includes postcards as well, including a rare 1924 photograph postcard of the Sand Bank Academy that was located in the town of Milan.



**Sand Bank Academy postcard**

Three pieces of porcelain, one a very beautiful c 1880s footed/painted candy dish from the Traver-Butler family (her first husband's aunt), were presented to the Museum as were several periodicals including a WWII-era 1941 LIFE magazine and a 1963 Farmer's Almanac.

We were also given a modern doll that Mrs. Miller won at a hospital event. She has given the Museum permission to have it appraised and sell it to benefit the Museum. We are most grateful to Mrs. Miller for her continued support as a loyal Museum member.

## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

As the newly elected President of the Museum of Rhinebeck History, I can only hope to be half as effective of our past presidents. Mike Frazier, for one, leaves an impressive legacy.

The premier showing of *Sweet Violets* by Tobe Carey at Upstate films was a tremendous success. Both days were "sold out" events. If you didn't get a chance to attend the viewing we have a DVD of the program available for purchase at the museum. We also have a great deal of our violet theme collection on display for this year's exhibit. Steven Mann has again, done a wonderful job putting it all together, and Krista Miller, an intern from SUNY Albany was also available to help Steve. The Museum opening is scheduled for May 19<sup>th</sup> from 2-4. Filmmaker Tobe Carey will be joining us. Please mark your calendars and join us on May 19<sup>th</sup>.

In an effort to bring the Museum to the people we would like to have a float or some other presence in the Memorial Day parade. It is too late to plan an exhibit for this year but not too early to think about 2013! If you have any ideas or would like to help putting it together please give me a call at 876-3894.

The Progressive Dinner in September was, again, a successful event. We plan on partnering with the Rhinebeck Historical Society for this year's dinner. Stay tuned for details; the dinner may be scheduled for mid-summer this year. The Holiday Auction held in conjunction with the Chancellor Livingston Chapter of the DAR was also a financial success, and also a jolly good time. We will be looking for donations of auction and white elephant items later in the year; think of us as you are doing your spring cleaning.

Thank you for your support.

Beverly Kane

# The Museum of Rhinebeck History and The Rhinebeck Historical Society

Proudly present

## Our Annual Progressive Dinner

Sunday July 29 - 4:30 - 7:45 pm



**HALF MOON**



**STONECREST**

Hearty appetizers, entrees, salads, and wine will be served at “Half Moon,” a spectacularly designed home (above left) built in the 1990s with an outstanding Hudson River view situated off County Route 85 on part of the historic Levi P. Morton property. The view explains why in 1686 the site was at the core of the earliest land transaction in northern Dutchess County. Dessert follows at “Stonecrest,” on a hill off the south end of Old Post Road. It is one of the finest examples of the Shingle style in the region. Built in 1905, this home also has impressive Hudson River and Catskill Mountain views, a pool with gardens, and a wonderful barn.

For information call 845.876.2436 or e-mail [bklaproth@ymail.com](mailto:bklaproth@ymail.com)

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Please detach and send with check payable to RHS. Mail to Rhinebeck Historical Society, PO Box 291 Rhinebeck, NY 12572

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ # of tickets \_\_\_\_\_ at \$35 (**\$45 if received after July 20<sup>th</sup>**) per person. Amount enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Attendance is limited to 100. Reservations required. Checks must be received no later than **July 20, 2012** for the lower \$35 rate.

**MUSEUM OF RHINEBECK HISTORY MEMBERSHIP FORM**  
**PO Box 816, RHINEBECK, NY 12572**  
Phone: 845-871-1798

**DUES INVOICE FOR THE PERIOD January 1 through December 31, 2012**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is my tax-deductible check in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please enclose your employer's form if your employer has a matching grant program (e.g. IBM).

**Please apply my payment for the year 2012 as follows:**

Lifetime.....\$1,000 \_\_\_\_\_ Family.....\$15 \_\_\_\_\_

Lifetime option \$250 x 4 years \_\_\_ Individual.....\$10 \_\_\_\_\_

Sponsor.....\$100 \_\_\_\_\_ Student.....\$5 \_\_\_\_\_

Business.....\$50 \_\_\_\_\_ Other.....\$ \_\_\_\_\_

Patron.....\$50 \_\_\_\_\_ Added Donation.....\$ \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL.....\$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Please make checks payable to MUSEUM OF RHINEBECK HISTORY and mail to the Museum at the address above. Thank you!**

**NOTE: If you have family archives that you wish to donate to us, please check below and someone from the Museum will be in touch with you. \_\_\_\_\_**

**DOCENTS NEEDED—A Message from Mara**

Attention Rhinebeck Natives!!!

Share your knowledge and wisdom of your town as a Docent at the Museum of Rhinebeck History. Hours for volunteering are Saturdays or Sundays from 2-4pm. Will be accompanied by a Member of the Board.

Contact: Mara Marrero 845-797-5070 for more information.

**MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL**

We depend on member dues. Our renewal form is on the other side of this page. Before you forget, please complete and send it in to us with your check. Your support is needed and very much appreciated.

**MUSEUM CALENDAR**

**Saturday, May 19 from 2:00 to 4:00**

Opening of Museum Exhibit on Rhinebeck’s Violet Industry, at 7015 Route 9, Rhinebeck (Quitman House) (see cover article).

**Sat’s & Sun’s through Sept 30**

Exhibit open to public 2-4, except during Dutchess County Fair week

**Sunday, July 29 from 4:30 – 7:45**

Progressive Dinner – great food at two wonderful sites (see pg 6)

**Friday, November 16 late afternoon**

Holiday Auction at Rhinebeck Town Hall, 76 East Market Street

**Museum of Rhinebeck History**

**P.O. Box 816**

**Rhinebeck, NY 12572**

[www.RhinebeckMuseum.com](http://www.RhinebeckMuseum.com)

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