

Museum of Rhinebeck History

Celebrating Rhinebeck's Rich Heritage

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In Memoriam

Barbara Vaughan Frost

1919-2009

President's Message

Rhinebeck is well known as a community wealthy in history and eager to preserve it. No one in Rhinebeck better understood the value of local history and its proper preservation than Barbara Frost.

Barbara left Rhinebeck forever on May 30th, and although she is no longer here, her presence will continue to be felt very strongly by the many Rhinebeck citizens who were fortunate enough to spend time with her and by the many nonprofit organizations that function so much more effectively today because of her lifetime of donating her time and energy and funds to help them better achieve their goals.

This special number of the Museum of Rhinebeck History Newsletter is dedicated to Barbara Frost. Our own Steven Mann knew Barbara quite well, and we include his article outlining the family's genealogy and a second article describing his own relationship with her. Steven has been the President of the Museum of Rhinebeck History and continues on our board and has recently retired from a stint as President of the Dutchess County Historical Society. We have also been fortunate in being able to share the comments of some prominent local citizens and their memories of this grand lady.

Mike Frazier

Lineage of Barbara Vaughan Frost

The following material was compiled by Steven Mann and is held in copyright by Steven Mann pending future publication. It may not be published by anyone other than members of the Frost-Closs family circle without his written permission. It is provided here as a tribute to Barbara and Elizabeth Frost's years of research updated by the compiler as recently as June 4, 2009.

Barbara Vaughan Frost was born April 27, 1919 at Rhinebeck, Dutchess County, NY and died on May 30, 2009 at Rhinebeck. She was buried June 3, 2009, at St. Paul's Wurtemberg Cemetery, Rhinebeck, in the Frost family plot. She was a member of St. Paul's Wurtemberg Lutheran Church and associated with the Rhinebeck Reformed Church and St. John's Reformed Church in Upper Red Hook. She was a graduate of Rhinebeck High School and received her Master's Degree from Columbia University in New York City. For 30 years she had been a school librarian at Bedford and Mt. Kisco School Districts in Westchester County, NY. She was the Frost family genealogist, a former church historian, member of the Chancellor Livingston Chapter Daughters of the American Revolution in Rhinebeck, Consortium of Rhinebeck History, and a longtime Northern Dutchess Hospital volunteer.

Barbara was the daughter of **Benson Ralph Frost**, born August 12, 1883 in Rhinebeck and died 1970 in Rhinebeck. He married the former **Elizabeth McRostie** before 1919. She was born 1884, probably at Ogdensburg, NY, and she died in 1962. They are both buried at St. Paul's Wurtemberg Cemetery in Rhinebeck, in the Frost family plot. Mr. Frost was a 1908 graduate of Brown University where he was senior class president. He was a respected attorney with a practice in Poughkeepsie and later in Rhinebeck for many years. He had been active with the Rhinebeck Development Company, the Dutchess County Agricultural Society, Northern Dutchess Hospital, and many other philanthropic and professional endeavors. He and his wife lived on Montgomery Street and later raised their family on Chestnut Street in the village of Rhinebeck. That home remained in the ownership of the Frost family until 2008. Mrs. Frost was a school teacher before marriage and had been church historian at St. Paul's Wurtemberg Lutheran Church in Rhinebeck. She was the Frost family genealogist and had been active with Chancellor Livingston Chapter, D.A.R.

Benson R. Frost, Sr., was the son of the late **Mandeville Samuel Frost**, born July 30, 1845 in Clinton, Dutchess County, NY and died in 1922. He married **Catharine Ann Marquart** November 25, 1868 in Rhinebeck, she was the daughter of George Marquart and Eliza Burger. She was born 1850 and died in 1928. They are buried at St. Paul's Wurtemberg Cemetery in Rhinebeck, in another Frost family plot. Mandeville was educated at the district schools of the town of Clinton and graduated from the DeGarmo Institute in Rhinebeck. He had been a school teacher and farmer and at one time had been town tax assessor and supervisor of Rhinebeck, a member of the Dutchess County Board of Supervisors, chair of its Equalization Committee and County Rebate Tax Commission. By profession he was a school teacher and later a farmer and violet grower. He and his wife were members of St. Paul's Wurtemberg Lutheran Church where he was a stock holder of the Shed Association and Cemetery Association. In 1867, he moved to Rhinebeck with his parents where he remained.

Mandeville S. Frost was the son of **Samuel S. Frost**, born 1819 and died April 13, 1885. He married **Barbara Eliza Traver**, daughter of Simeon Traver and Gertrude Rickert (Rikert). She was born November 28, 1819, and died February 5, 1912. They are buried at St. Paul's Wurtemberg Cemetery in Rhinebeck, in the Frost family plot. They moved to Rhinebeck in 1867. They were members of that Lutheran church, although Samuel was a birthright Quaker. He was said to have been a farmer by occupation.

Samuel was the son of **Benjamin Frost** who was born 1784 in Crum Elbow, Dutchess, NY and died 1834 in Clinton or Crum Elbow, Dutchess, NY. He married **Catherine Knickerbocker**, daughter of Harman Knickerbocker and Susan Barsoon. She was born October 28, 1778 in Dutchess County and died April 9, 1855 in either Clinton or Crum Elbow, Dutchess, NY. They are buried at the Providence Cemetery in Pleasant Plains, town of Hyde Park, NY. In his 1835 will written at Clinton, NY Benjamin left his "farm" to his son Benjamin. The Frost Mill was located in the hamlet of Frost Mills in the town of Hyde Park. The foundation for that mill is still visible from the main road.

Benjamin was the son of **Zophar Frost** who was born before 1750, and died March 22, 1818 in Clinton, Dutchess, NY. He married **Hannah Thorne** about 1768 in Crum Elbow, Dutchess, NY, daughter of Isaac Thorne and Hannah Haight. She was born April 19, 1748, and died July 8, 1825. They are buried in the Quaker tradition in unmarked graves outside the east wall of the Crum Elbow Friends Burial Ground, Quaker Lane, Hyde Park, NY. (Barbara told the compiler of this material that a Frost aunt had taken her to this cemetery as a young woman and pointed out the spot where they were buried. Quakers did not start using traditional cemetery stones until after 1850, although some earlier slates in the cemetery have initials and years on them. All of the stones in that section of the cemetery were moved around into neat rows for the sake of the lawnmower some years ago, but because Zophar and Hannah never had stones, this issue does not effect their burial site.)

Both Hannah and Zophar were both birthright Quakers and had been members of the Crum Elbow Friends Meeting (records from that meeting were unfortunately destroyed in a fire in 1820). Zophar is a remarkable man as Quakers did not often serve in the military, however he served in the Sixth Dutchess County Regiment of Militia during the Revolutionary War. In his will of February 18, 1811, written from Clinton, he leaves his farm to sons Benjamin, Jacob and William. His wife was given lifetime usage of the best rooms in the house as well as all of the household furniture and furnishings. The Thornes were from Flushing, Long Island and were very involved with the Flushing Remonstrances, a movement by the Governor of New York to drive the Quakers out of the English settlement of Long Island at which time it is believed Zophar and Hannah moved north through Westchester and into the Nine Partners Precinct of Dutchess County before finally settling at Crum Elbow (now the town of Hyde Park).

Zophar was the son of **Benjamin Frost** who was born June 9, 1710 at Mattinecock, Long Island, NY and died in Dutchess County, NY – probably in Crum Elbow. He married **Rose Springer**, daughter of James Springer and Hannah Dickinson. She died after 1758 in Dutchess County, NY. She was a descendant of the Tilley Family from the ship Mayflower, and as such Barbara became a registered Mayflower Society member. They are buried in unmarked graves at the Crum Elbow Friends Burial Ground, Quaker Lane, Hyde Park, NY. (They are probably not buried next to his son and daughter-in-law as often Quakers were buried in the order they died within that community as seen at Purchase and Scarsdale Quaker Burial Grounds.)

Our Memories of Barbara

Elma Williamson

I knew Barbara through her younger brother Benson. She was two or three years older than we were. I spent many enjoyable afternoons and evenings together with them. Saturday night was movie night in Rhinebeck, and a group of us often went together to the movies. At home Barbara enjoyed playing the piano—a favorite tune of ours was “My Hero,” from an operatta—she played and Benson and I sang.

Steve Cook

My first introduction to Barbara was a donation she made to the Starr Library that stipulated that the library should purchase *Statistical Abstract of the United States* and some heating oil. I knew then that Barbara was a librarian—for her book designation—and also someone concerned about the physical plant of the library.

Nancy Kelly

I remember Barbara and her family from my earliest days at the Wurttemberg Church. I remember stories she told me about her childhood, particularly about how her mother, who was very active in the DAR, would send Barbara on errands to deliver things for her. After her mother passed away, Barbara became very active herself in the DAR and helped a lot of people who were interested in their genealogy.

Ada Harrison

When I became DAR Regent in 2002, Barbara and Benson did something that touched me very deeply and I knew meant a lot to them both. They insisted that I receive their mother's Regent pin.

Lineage of Barbara Vaughan Frost (cont'd from page 3)

They were both birthright Quakers who lived at Wolner Hollow on Long Island and then moved to Nine Partners in Dutchess County circa 1755 (although their son Henry is said to have been born June 6, 1755 in Vermont, which is questioned by this compiler. We know that Hannah died after their youngest child, Rosannah, was born, which was December 9, 1758).

Benjamin was the son of **William Frost**, born 1674 at Mattinecock, Long Island and died there on November 29, 1728. He married **Hannah Prior** about 1700 on Long Island, NY, daughter of John Prior and Elizabeth Bowne. She was born October 22, 1681 and died December 18, 1771, location not yet uncovered by compiler. They were Quakers, and he was a farmer. He was said to have lived at Oyster Bay.

William was the son of **William Frost**, born in England and died on Long Island, NY. He married **Rebecca Wright** who died on Long Island. They are both said to have been birthright Quakers. They had another son, Wright Frost, born 1676 at Oyster Bay who died March 28, 1738 at Oyster Bay, NY.

Remembering a Rhinebeck Treasure

This week one of our town's matriarchs passed on after living an extremely incredible life filled with spending many years helping others in her community. Barbara Vaughan Frost was a pioneer in the area of historic preservation in Rhinebeck as well as an extremely hard-working volunteer who stepped in as needed for a myriad of local nonprofit agencies. She followed in the footsteps of her mother, the late Elizabeth McRostie Frost, and her late father, Benson R. Frost, Sr., who was a close confidante of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, a country neighbor so to speak. She and her late brother helped many people over the years through their generosity and civic pride.

Barbara loved Rhinebeck, she loved her family and friends, and she loved history. Barbara was a Renaissance woman in her own gentle way – a career librarian and educator who came home to Rhinebeck to take care of her family later in life. She was from a long line of Quakers, being descended from the large Frost Family of Frost Mills and Pleasant Plains at Crum Elbow (now the Town of Hyde Park). She told me that she had been shown as a young woman the unmarked burial site of her ancestors just outside the east wall of the Crum Elbow Friends Meeting House on Quaker Lane in Hyde Park by an aunt. Her forefathers and foremothers, the Frosts and Thornes (both families Mayflower descendants from the large Howland and Tilley clans), left Oyster Bay, Long Island as a result of the noted Flushing Remonstrances (a movement against the Quakers), up through Westchester to the Crum Elbow Precinct of Dutchess County. The family story is told in a genealogy I helped prepare for Barbara, using some of her own family records. I am still working with a cousin of hers who has taken over Barbara's role as the family history keeper. I am sure she would be very pleased that one of the younger generations of Frosts has taken an interest in her and her mother's years of work. Barbara's family genealogy is a who's who of Rhinebeck – Traver, Marquart, Lown, Closs, Schultz, Ackert, Coon, Burger, and Cookingham to name a few – many of the old Wurtemberg farm families on the east side of Rhinebeck. It is amazing that these families are still very much represented in our town today.

Barbara's mother was historian at St. Paul's Wurtemberg Lutheran Church in Rhinebeck, and Barbara intently shared that interest. To Barbara, history really was more of a passion, one a number of her friends shared with her. Wurtemberg was a topic of much conversation between the two of us. I always listened intently, particularly about the old schoolhouse, the shed association, the cemetery, and about the old chapel that was said to be on Primrose Hill Road at the Fraleigh property. This, she said, was the precursor of the current Wurtemberg Church as I noted one December 2007 day as I hurried home and typed up my mental notes from the afternoon's visit. Her beautiful painting of the sheds hangs today at Wurtemberg thanks to her generosity and love of history. It seems quite fitting that it should be returned to the very property where the sheds stood. In the collection of the Museum of Rhinebeck History are two carefully preserved receipts from the Wurtemberg Shed Association, one of the few remaining documents from that organization. It is just one of the many treasures preserved by Barbara and given to our Museum, as well as a lovely collection of family diaries, receipts, wills, deeds, and other important documents that she so studiously kept for the right group to save it for future generations. Again, that was the teacher and historian in her was coming out. As it always did. Barbara was very kind and would proudly correct me if I made an error, and she was always most thorough in her explanation of the correct information and knew her sources. She was definitely a marvelous historian. She left very big shoes to follow in that department.

Remembering a Rhinebeck Treasure (cont'd from page 5)

One of the things I most respected about Barbara was her mind. At 89, she was as sharp and precise as ever in recanting the early history of Rhinebeck which had been ingrained in her at an early age. A series of oral histories done with the Museum back in the 1990s are a treasure. To be able to hear in her own words her recount of growing up in a much smaller Rhinebeck, going to work in Westchester, returning to Rhinebeck and restarting her small-town life in the Hudson Valley, is a wonderful gift for future generations. I carefully used an excerpt from that interview when I edited the booklet *Rhinebeck: The Parlor City, An Oral History, Volume I*. Now that Barbara is gone, and while her words are fresh in my mind, I plan to finish work on Volume II, to be completed in her memory. Her words and those of others we have interviewed, need to be available for those who wish to learn more about our town's incredible past.

One of Barbara's greatest gifts was made back in the 1990s. She drove in to Poughkeepsie one day and donated to the Dutchess County Historical Society her uncle, Alvah Frost's, genealogical diaries. The information contained in these provides documentation of the years Mr. Frost spent going around the Northern Dutchess area working on his and other people's lineages. Barbara told me her uncle would always carry a pencil and a tiny diary so that he could stop his car at a long-forgotten country burial ground and look for the site of some of his forefathers' internments. Luckily, the Quakers started using cemetery stones in the 1850s, so much information was easily found once one came upon the proper cemetery. The Providence Cemetery in Pleasant Plains provides some of the earliest Frost grave stones, with a multitude of Traver relations at Wurtemberg, Old Stone Church, Fiddler's Bridge, and Rhinebeck cemeteries. And that does not include all the many Frosts and Travers buried at Poughkeepsie Rural Cemetery, another part of the family. The content of those diaries are cherished within the walls of the Clinton House in Poughkeepsie.

Our afternoon visits were hours that will forever mean a great deal to me. I wish they could have been more. However, how special those memories will remain as I work with Barbara's collection with my co-workers at the Museum in Rhinebeck and piece together even more of this family's incredible story. Good-bye, my friend and thank you for sharing of yourself. I hope our hours of conversation meant as much to you as it still does for me. Our time together was a tremendous gift I will always cherish. How lucky was I to have been given your gift of knowledge and friendship.

Steven Mann
Rhinebeck, NY

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**Cover photo of Barbara Frost
is courtesy of Diane Closs**