

SMITHVILLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

May 6, 2012

EVENTS:

Wanted! Cookie bakers and cookie sellers. See below.

Saturday, MAY 12: There's been a change in location for our Doug's Fish Fry sale. Look for Doug's-To-Go in GREENE at the Great American parking lot from 11 am to 6 pm. Take a day off from kitchen work; patronize Doug's and help the SHS's bottom line.

Since Doug's encourages other fund-raising during the sale, we plan to sell cookies. Contributions of home-baked cookies and brownies, packaged in portions that one person might eat, will be appreciated. They may be delivered to the site at 11:00 am. If you can't get out, we'll arrange to pick them up. We'll sell until they're gone. Can you spend an hour or two selling cookies? Email or give me a call at 656-4781.

Monday Evening, MAY 14: The Taylor Historical Society has invited us to "Upstate New York Stories" with Chuck D'Imperio. If you missed Chuck's sterling Smithville performance, or would like to be entertained again, Taylor is just a nineteen-minute ride up Routes 41 and 26. Once you've heard Chuck perform, you'll never forget him. He's a born storyteller. The program will be at 7 pm at the Taylor Town Hall, 3304 State Route 26, Taylor.

Friday Evening, JUNE 1: It's a one-time opportunity to tour the Loomis stone house and mammoth barn on South Tyner Road in Tyner. This home, built from local stone, is one of only four stone houses in Smithville. Since it's a private home, this event will not be advertised to the public. It is open only to SHS members and a guest.

In 1800, for cutting the first road through Smithville, Edward Loomis received a grant of 50 acres of land. He chose the site where the stone house now stands and built a log cabin for his family. In 1832, he built the present stone house and lived there until near his death in 1869. The house stayed in the family until recent times.

Dick Ridgeway of Virginia is the present owner. He has made a huge investment to refurbish and upgrade both the barn and house, and it's clearly a labor of love. While adapted to modern living—light and open—the house has kept its

charm and its deep stone windowsills. The property's smaller barn, tilted by floodwaters, was dismantled piece by piece and is being donated to the Chenango County Historical Society.

Our tour will begin at 6:30 pm. You may carpool with a group leaving the Community Center at 6:15, or you may drive to the site on your own. From Smithville Flats, South Tyner Road is the right hand turn at Tyner's four corners. The house is on the left several hundred yards from the intersection.

Saturday Morning, JUNE 2: We've scheduled a business meeting at 9:30 am at the Community Center. All members are encouraged to attend.

OTHER NEWS:

Peg Ross, Greene Town Historian, gave a fabulous program in March on the history of the Ku Klux Klan. Begun after the Civil War, it reemerged with a different focus in the 1920s. Peg shared chilling images and artifacts she has collected from throughout the Southern Tier.

SHS new acquisitions include an 1863 wall map of Chenango County (Auwarter family) and an 1875 atlas of Chenango County (Gertie Hakes). Both identify houses and owners of the time and are invaluable for research. Sharon Davis, Gary Huttleston, and Clifford Thomas have donated photographs. Vicky House, the Oxford Town Historian, has given us copies of Civil War-era letters.

Individual SHS members are providing support to a researcher of the Harrisons, a Scots-Irish family. The Smithville Harrisons settled here beginning in 1828. They were prominent farmers, quarry owners, and supporters of the Presbyterian Church. Some maintained businesses and residences in New York City, travelling back and forth.

Congratulations to member Bea Lobdell, who won first prize in the State Grange quilt contest for her full-size quilt. She said it was a lot of work!

Greetings to Bernie Kneller, who is undergoing medical treatments.

Several SHS members will attend May and June workshops to learn approved methods for organizing, storing, conserving, and protecting photographs.

NEWS NOTES FROM THE PAST:

Ten years after Edward Loomis built Smithville's first road (from Oxford to Smithville Flats), the 1810 census reveals the following about Smithville:

Number of households: 182

Number of people: 1,000

Number of slaves: 0

Smallest family unit: 2 members (22 of the above 182)

Largest family unit: 15 members (John French family)

Number of woman-headed households: 2 (Widow Phillips and Widow Collins)

We look forward to seeing you at our events.

Christine E. Buck

President