



A glimpse inside local history

By Griffin Cooper
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History, as a discipline, can be as elusive for some as it is pervasive for others – especially when it comes to our local past. The Hudson Valley, Columbia County and the neighboring Litchfield hills swell with stories from generations gone by. When it comes to recording the deeply personal history of our area, there is perhaps nothing more valuable than the presence of local historical societies. Historical societies of all sizes play a vital role in protecting and preserving the historical records of our area and their dedicated research helps to interpret the past to the public. In celebration of the contributions made by the dedicated historians and volunteers who help keep the past alive, here are three such societies in the Hudson Valley and Connecticut and some of the exciting bits of history they have to offer.

The Roe Jan Historical Society – *Revived in Wood*

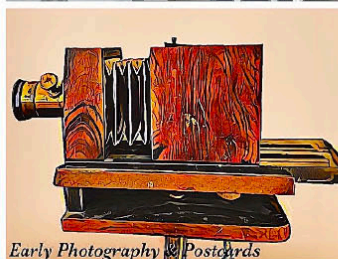
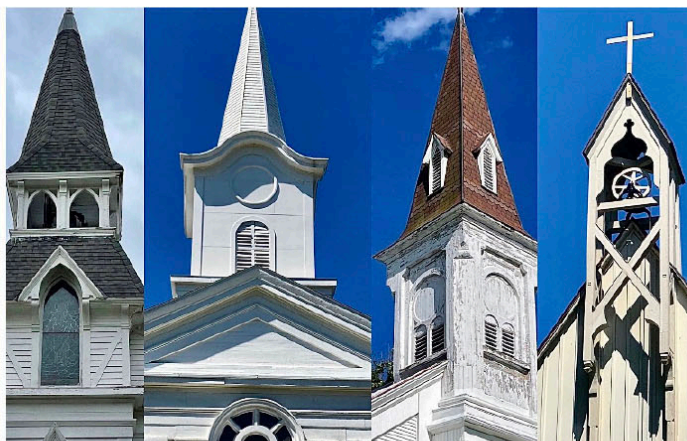
Founded in 1974 and chartered in 1975 as a non-profit organization by the Board of Regents of the State of New York, the Roeliff Jansen Historical Society (RJHS) serves the Towns of Ancram, Copake, Gallatin, Hillsdale, and Taghkanic. Its mission

is to preserve and present the history and cultural traditions of the Roe Jan community.

Through ongoing research, a speaker series, exhibits, and a multimedia archive, the Society documents and conserves local heritage. It is the mission of RJHS to bring recognition to the stories, skills, and traditions of local folks, past and present. The Society meets monthly from September to December and February through May at the Museum in Copake Falls, NY. An exhibit in the museum is open to the public during the summer months. The Society's Annual Meeting is held in June.

Inspired by Arthur Baker's seminal book of photographs, *Wooden Churches: Columbia County Legacy*, the *Revived in Wood* exhibit explores many aspects of the Greek and Gothic architectural styles as seen in 17 wooden church buildings remaining in the five towns of the Roe Jan area: Ancram, Copake, Gallatin, Hillsdale and Taghkanic.

The exhibit also features photographs, artworks, models, objects, antique tools and photography equipment, vintage postcards, original documents, memorabilia, and architectural plans dating from the 19th century. On view in the historic RJHS Museum building (formerly the Old Copake Falls Church) in Copake Falls until October 2021. An exhibition catalogue and guide to the churches is also available for purchase. The Roe



Early Photography & Postcards



Hand Tools & Architecture

Jan Historical Society has produced a 7-minute video featuring highlights of the exhibit narrated by RJHS President, Lesley Doyel.

The Roeliff Jansen Historical Society Museum is located on 8 Miles Road in Copake Falls, NY. For more details visit roeliffjansenhistorical.org or contact roeliffjansenhistorical@gmail.com or Lesley.Doyel@gmail.com

Above, top to bottom: A panoramic view of Roe Jan Historical Society's exhibit of *Revived in Wood*. One of Roe Jan Historical Society's promotional pieces for their exhibit.