

The Roeliff Jansen Historical Society



Roeliff Jansen
Historical Society
FOUNDED 1974

THE FIRST 40: *A Celebration of Local History Preserved*

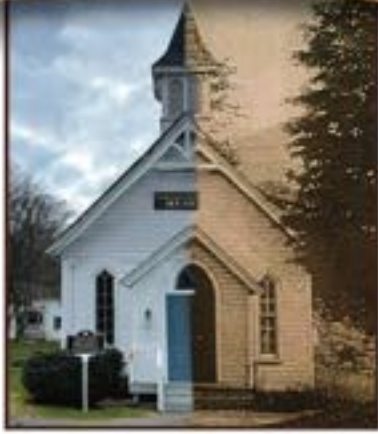
The 2023 Annual Exhibition **CATALOG**

Produced by the
Roeliff Jansen Historical Society
Copake Falls, NY

1983 - 2023



**The First 40: A Celebration
of Local History Preserved**



**At its best, preservation
engages the past in a conversation
with the present over a mutual
concern about the future.**

*Dr. William Murtagh, (1923-2018) first "Keeper of Records"
for the National Register of Historic Places.*

In summer 2023, the **Roeliff Jansen Historical Society** welcomed the public to enjoy an exhibit of objects from our collection preserved within the physical walls of this remarkable building dedicated as an historical society museum in 1983. The wooden church building itself, rescued and restored by the local community, constitutes the centerpiece of the Society's collection.

In this exhibition, the Society's mission to preserve the past for future generations is highlighted through a treasure trove of artifacts, documents, and objects from the Copake Iron Works, the Hamlet of Copake Falls, the Harlem Railroad, and many new and rarely seen items from the Society's collection. Additionally, we are deeply grateful to the numerous individuals, local businesses and institutions that have generously put historically significant items on loan.

Through many period newspaper clippings, we have endeavored to tell both the story of the evolution of the Roeliff Jansen Historical Society, founded in 1974, and that of the collective effort on the part of individuals, organizations, and the Town of Copake itself, to rehabilitate and repurpose the historic church building that has become the Society's permanent home.

The exhibit also chronicles the preservation of sites and traditions central to the history of our five member towns: Ancram's paper mill, Copake's Memorial Clock, Gallatin's venerable "Vedder Church," the Pulver family legacy in Hillsdale, and the legendary basket-makers of Taghkanic.

It is our hope that the summer exhibition in its entirety will bring to life the area's once intensely industrial and agricultural past. As our visitors will discover, many items reflect cultural and technological transformations that have sometimes subtly, yet, inescapably, altered the texture of rural and small-town life forever.

But while the local landscape and way of life have changed substantially over the years, artifacts, documents, and vintage images do not change, and can, therefore, allow us an unfiltered glimpse of the past as they paint a vivid picture of our collective history. We invite you to join us in this journey back in time as you view ***The First 40: A Celebration of Local History Preserved.***

***The past is a foreign country;
they do things differently there.***

J. P. Hartley, The Go-Between



The Backstory Miracle on Miles Road

The old church, which had first opened its doors to parishioners in 1892, closed those same doors in 1955. It would subsequently stand empty and unused for the next 30 years. "In 1979 the Methodist Church in Copake Falls, NY, was an abandoned and bedraggled building, windows broken, the door often left standing open, the front step littered with broken glass. Only the care of neighbors kept it from being overgrown and ruined." (The Roe Jan Independent, Pg. 28B, July 3, 1985).

Long-time neighbors from Copake Falls recall the indignities suffered by the building during the 30 years it stood empty. But, as life-long neighbor, Richard Barton recalled, "In spite of everything, the old building was remarkably sound, mostly needing a paint job, basic repairs, and a new roof."

Copake Town Supervisor, Alfred Near, an early advocate for saving the former church building said, "It was always my desire that the historical society should have a home for the things given to them," and suggested that the restored building be used to "establish a little museum." (The Roe Jan Independent, November 18, 1982).

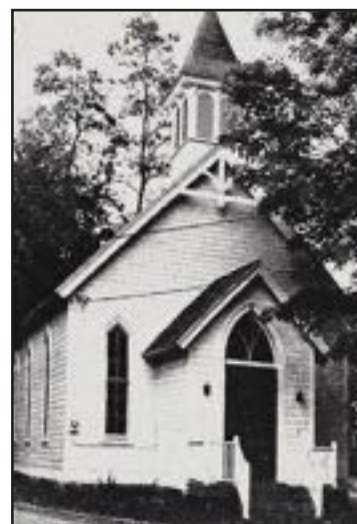
By 1981, the little church had begun to rise from the metaphorical ashes like a phoenix, and thanks to the vision and persistence of Supervisor Near, the local community and members of the Roeliff Jansen Historical Society (RJHS), the building was purchased by the town of Copake, restored, and in 1983 became an inspiring example of adaptive reuse, and home of the Roe Jan Historical Society Museum.

But before the building opened its doors once again, a committee, appointed by the Copake Town board, oversaw an extensive restoration. The Hillsdale-Copake Garden Club began a program of plantings on the property, and inmates from the Hudson Correctional Facility were brought in to paint the building inside and out. Copake Falls resident and current RJHS board member Mibs Zelley recalls how surprised these inmates were to find the structure's rear wall oozing with a viscous substance left by generations of honeybees.

Echoes of the past

The fact is that the restored church building, situated on what is still called Miles Road, formerly Mile's Grove, and recently adorned by a new Pomeroy Historic Marker, harkens back to the town's early origins and the industrial heart of the area, when the town itself was simply called Copake Iron Works.

This part of Columbia County was once part of the vast Livingston Manor, which became several separate towns, including Copake, established in 1824. Early on, two major figures greatly influenced the area's industrial and economic development: Lemuel Pomeroy, who started the Copake Iron Works in 1845 exploiting the local iron ore, and Frederick Miles, who improved and expanded the works following the Civil War. Perhaps best known as producer of particularly sharp and durable 'Chilled Plows' and other agricultural tools, the Iron Works continued into the early 20th century. Beginning in 1852, the New York and Harlem Railroad, with a prominent stop in Copake Iron Works, brought more prosperity and a larger work force to the area. These workers and their families, of different nationalities and faiths, all needed places to live and places to worship.



Looking Back: Tiny hamlet, Three churches

By the 1890s the tiny hamlet had no less than three wooden Gothic Revival churches, serving three different faiths. The first was the exceptionally fine Gothic structure of St. John in the Wilderness (1851) which is thought to have been personally designed by Richard Upjohn, noted architect of Trinity Church on Wall Street in Lower Manhattan. Built on a steep rise overlooking the hamlet, this church was funded by the Pomeroy family, owners of the Iron Works, for use by the more privileged members of the community. These days, the church is still an active Episcopal church, doing good works, and hosting musical programs, events and exhibits in the Burke Hall Art Gallery.



When Irish immigrants fleeing the Great Potato Famine arrived in New York City they were greeted with "Irish need not apply." As early as 1845, when the Copake Iron Works was founded, Lemuel Pomeroy, needing laborers of all kinds, hired many Irish workers who settled in the immediate area. In 1867, the Irish community built a Gothic Style Catholic Church, named for St. Bridget of Kildare, fittingly enough the Patron Saint of blacksmiths and travelers. In 1959, when the concept of adaptive reuse was still relatively unknown, St. Bridget's of Copake was closed, ultimately demolished, and replaced by a modern church called Our Lady of Hope Catholic Church, which still thrives on Route 22 near Copake Falls.

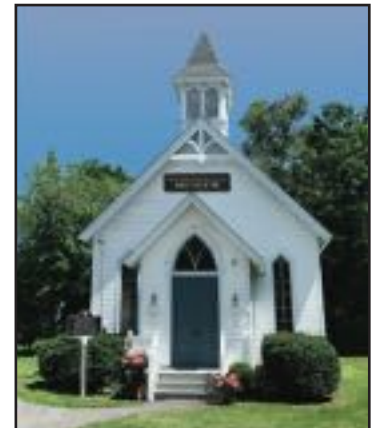


An indenture dated November 28, 1891, between Frederick Miles, then owner of the Iron Works, and the Methodist Episcopal Church Conference, deeded the land on which the new building was erected in consideration of the sum of one dollar. The new church, built between 1891 and 1892 at the cost of about \$2,000, was described around the time of its completion as "neat and comfortable and sufficiently commodious." (Our Building, RJHS Website, www.roeliffjansens.org). Like both St. John in the Wilderness and St. Bridget's, it was built in the "Carpenter Gothic" style, with tall lancet windows, soaring belfry tower, clad in what's commonly known as "novelty siding." The doors of the church remained open for the next 63 years.



RJHS: A Gift to the Present

Reflecting, as it does, so much local history, the former church building has become the repository of objects, documents, books, and memories. Each year the Historical Society hosts a rich variety of public programs. But, these days, lecturers speak from the former church pulpit to audiences seated in the original wooden pews. In the summer months, the "sufficiently commodious" interior becomes an exhibition space for installations revolving around over two centuries of local history. And how fitting that the repurposed Old Copake Falls Church building, once the spiritual and social center of its community, continues to play a central role in the present community – as a place for discovering, sharing, and celebrating the rich and varied history of the Roe Jan area.

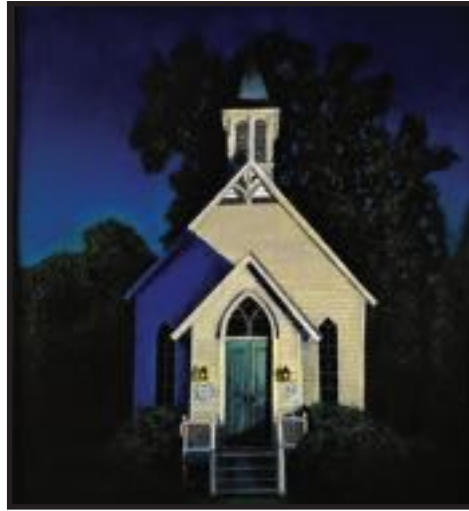


Right side of page top to bottom: The Church of St. John in the Wilderness, St. Bridget's Church (demolished), and two views of Old Copake Falls Methodist Episcopal Church of Copake Falls, NY, circa 1900 and present day.

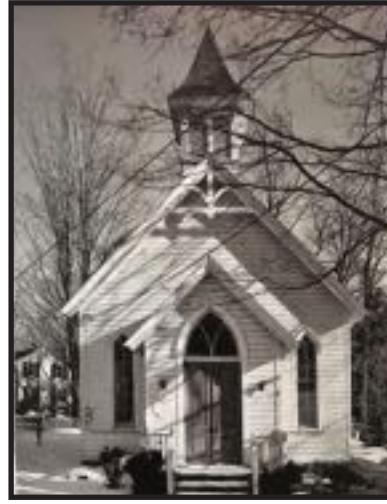
Bottom: Cast iron Copake Road Sign, circa 1900. Presented to the Roeliff Jansen Historical Society, June 12, 1983 at the dedication ceremony by Highway Supervisor, Jesse Head. Dimensions: 6"W x 12"L.

THE CATALOG OBJECTS

Two Visions of The Old Copake Falls Church Building



(ABOVE LEFT) **The Old Copake Falls Church Painted by Peter N. Fritsch, 2019.**
On loan by the artist. Dimensions 16" x 20"



(ABOVE RIGHT) **Photograph of the Old Copake Falls Church from *Wooden Churches: Columbia County Legacy*, 2003.**

By Arthur Baker. Original print gifted to RJHS in 2003 Dimensions: 10.5" x 13."

(ABOVE LEFT)

Peter N. Fritsch is an artist who paints local night scenes and landscapes from his studio in Copake, NY.

This simple country church building, bathed by the glorious white light of a flood lamp and offset by a fading misty blue horizon of twilight, to me, represents a perfect, heightened balance between the small and fragile values associated with rural existence, rendered in maximum relief by an ennobling, public light - a light reserved for heroes and landmarks".

(ABOVE RIGHT)

"Wooden churches form an integral part of Columbia County's visual heritage. It is part of the continuum of past, present, and future". - Arthur Baker

"Arthur Baker's stark frontal close-ups of Columbia County's wooden churches provide a compelling visual study in theme and variation. The photographs reveal the different ways in which bell tower, window, and porch embellish the rectangular clapboard form of the nineteenth-century American church. The additions and renovations that Baker documents mark the passage of time and teach valuable lessons in how to (and how not to) modernize. This beautifully designed book richly fulfills its aesthetic and historical objectives". Bonnie Yochelson, Consulting Curator, New York Historical Society.



Plein-Air Painting of Yonderview Road, Hillsdale, NY painting by Richard Bazelow, Oil on Canvas, 2021.

"Most of my life has been spent in the beautiful Hudson River Valley of New York State. The Catskill Mountains were to our north, Hudson River to our east and the Shawangunk Mountains to our west. Surrounded by that kind of beauty and nature, it's easy to grow up and appreciate the many wonderful perspectives that nature offers. Yes, there are so many beautiful places. When I was very young, I loved to go out into the woods and paint. I guess you could say I was involved in Plein-Air painting and didn't realize it."

Since 2006, Richard has been a devoted plein-air painter and can be seen at his easel in the countryside capturing the scenery that lies before him. RJHS Collection, gift of the artist, 2021 Dimensions: 18" x 24"

A Panoramic View of the "Copake Iron Works" by John Bunyan Bristol, circa 1850s



Oil on canvas.

On special loan from the Church of St. John in the Wilderness, Copake Falls, NY Dimensions: 3' x 5'

John Bunyan Bristol (1826–1909) was an American landscape painter born in Hillsdale, NY. Bristol was a largely self-taught artist. He first painted portraits, but switched to landscapes when he grew frustrated with trying to please his sitters. Bristol moved to New York City in 1862 but spent his summers traveling the countryside painting scenes of rural New England and the Adirondack Mountains. A member of the National Academy of Design, Bristol was well respected during his lifetime: he received a medal at the Centennial Exhibition of 1876 in Philadelphia and an honorable mention in 1900 at the Paris Exposition.

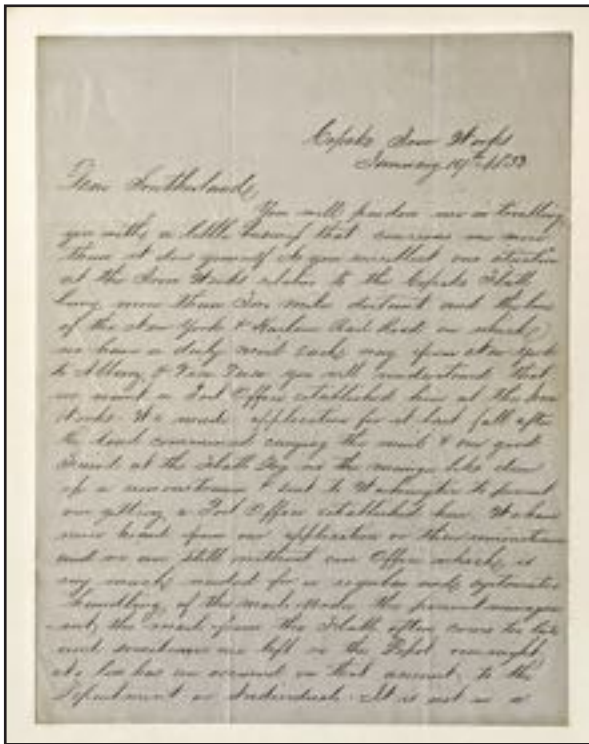
At the middle ground of the painting above is a detailed view of a rail yard with buildings, numerous railroad cars and workers dressed in mid to late 19th century garb. Below there is a sandy pit with wagons and cattle. In the foreground green grass and meadow. In the background are green foothills, presumably of the Berkshire mountains. Nestled in the green trees of the foothills are several buildings, one of which is the Church of St. John in the Wilderness; the steeple and end gable are visible. The clouded blue sky portends a storm with low clouds skimming the ridge of the hills in the southeast. Smoke can be seen rising from the Copake Iron Works or Furnace, which was shut down about 1900.

The mitered frame of gold leaf on gesso on wood and molded and gilded composition is commonly referred to as a 'Hudson River School frame'. At the bottom center of the cove is an applied gilded plaque which reads "*Copake Ironworks. N.Y. to the Memory of Mary Aurelia Rest in Memory of Aurelia Pomeroy Platt Cassard*".

John Bristol's uncle Stephen was the father of Flavia Bristol. Flavia grew up to become a prominent Hillsdale citizen and at her death, bequeathed a substantial endowment to build and maintain a library in Hillsdale. (The Roeliff Jansen Community Library owns two Bristol paintings which are on display there.)

Aurelia Pomeroy Platt Cassard, to whom the painting is dedicated was a descendant of Iron Works Owner **Lemuel Pomeroy**, founder of the "*Rest*" – a summer camp for the children of the congregation of the **Church of the Heavenly Rest**, on Fifth Avenue in New York City. The Camp utilized the buildings originally used for housing the management of the Iron Works, as dormitories for the summer attendees.

The Copake Iron Works

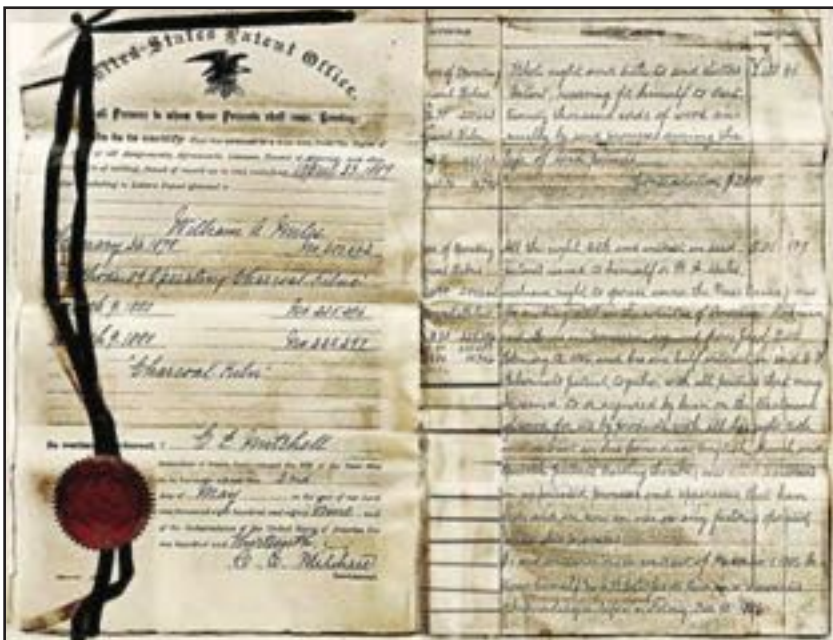


1853 Letter written by Lemuel Pomeroy Jr. to the United States Postal Department.

A beautifully penned letter by Pomeroy urgently requesting that a post office be established at Copake Iron Works for use by both the Iron Works and surrounding community.

The Copake Iron Works was first established in 1845 by Lemuel Pomeroy II and his sons. Moving to the area from Pittsfield, Massachusetts, *The History of Columbia County New York* (1878) by Captain Ellis states that the Pomeroy's had previously been running the Livingston furnace in Ancram. Lemuel Pomeroy II was also a prominent gun manufacturer.

The letter, along with the black and white framed photograph of the Iron Works seen from above and 3D aluminum design of a Columbia Chilled Plow are all on loan from the Collection of Robin Bruce. Dimensions: 8" x 10"



1889 patent held by William Miles, owner of the Copake Iron Works

Originally dating from 1878, the patent was renewed in 1880 and 1889. RJHS Collection, gift of Bill Miles.

Patent for *"Method of Operating Charcoal Kilns"* The essential materials needed to establish an iron works facility in the mid-19th century were raw ore, limestone, wood, and waterpower. All four ingredients were abundant in Copake Falls, the site of the Copake Iron Works. Founded in 1845 by Lemuel Pomeroy, the Miles family purchased, owned, and operated the Iron Works from 1861 to

1903. The patent was issued in 1898 to William A. Miles, the last owner of the Copake Iron Works.

To smelt iron efficiently, a blast furnace had to continuously burn very hot. Charcoal burns much hotter than wood (even seasoned wood) and at a more consistent temperature. Charcoal is generally prepared by burning wood in a kiln or oven, and by extinguishing the fire just before the wood turns completely to ash. Charcoal-making became an extremely important industry, and colliers (charcoal-makers) were essential. The three-page patent granted to William Miles for his method of operating charcoal kilns is well preserved and complete with a ribbon and official seal on the first page. Seals of this kind inspired the expression "seal of approval," which refers to receiving approval from an authoritative person or institute.

Dimensions: 14" x 11.7" when open

The Columbia Chilled Plow



The Columbia Chilled Plow was manufactured at the **Copake Iron Works**. The “chilled plow” was patented in 1868 by James Oliver, a Scottish immigrant who had settled in South Bend, Indiana. Oliver devised an ingenious method of cooling the wearing surfaces of a plow more quickly than the body of the plow.

In 1857, Oliver received a patent to make “chilled” plows. The plows were cast in a mold which allowed the metal to be cooled rapidly, resulting in a hard surface that kept a sharp edge. The plows were also extremely smooth, alleviating the problem of sticking soil. The patent was used widely, but the popular Columbia Chilled Plow was always associated with the Copake Iron Works.

The chilled plow on view is from the RJHS Collection but is usually on view at the Copake Iron Works Museum in Taconic State Park, NY.

Framed American Flag with 45 Stars



This small flag dates from when Utah Became a State, July 4, 1896. The American flag remained at 45 stars between 1896 and 1908 when Oklahoma was added on July 4, 1908.

Fabric is a central component of how a flag functions. These days, flags are produced from nylon, polyester, or cotton. Historically, flags were hand sewn and made from natural materials such as hemp, silk, wool, and linen.

RJHS Collection, Gift of Carolyn Barton, 2004.
Dimensions: 20.5" x 30.5" framed

The Jiffy Way Egg Scale & Grader



Egg scales are used to separate eggs into predetermined grade levels for customers. An egg scale is a useful item as it is light and can be transported from market to market. In 1924, Acme inventor N.E. Chapman received a patent for what he referred to as an egg-grading device. An example in the RJHS collection is a Jiffy Way brand egg weighing scale, which was first patented in 1940. This portable device allowed farmers to weigh one egg and easily recognize the weight of a dozen similar-sized eggs. Further, by placing an egg on the nickel-plated cradling arm, the machine not only tells the specimen's weight in ounces but also its grade, from small to extra-large. RJHS Collection, gift of Connie Near, circa the 1950s.

Dimensions. RJHS Collection Dimensions H 5" x L 7"

Copake Iron Works Post Office



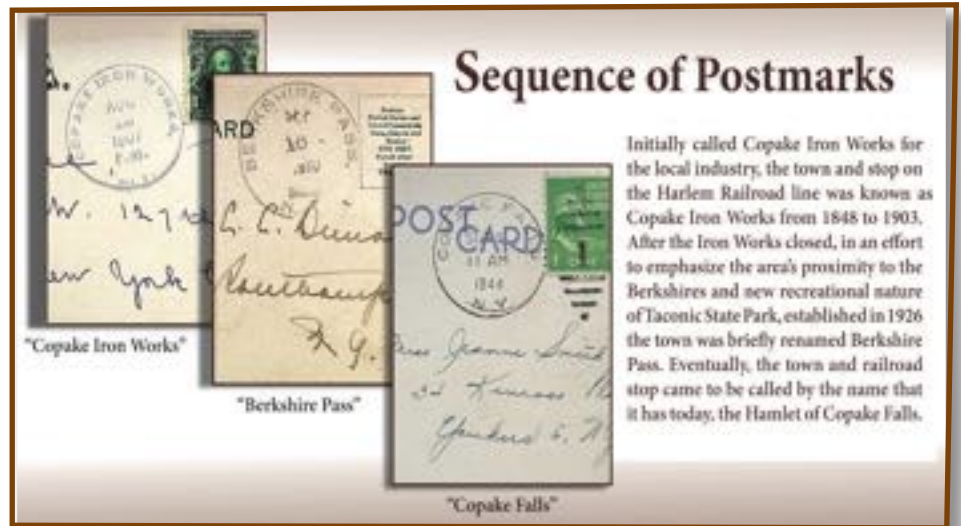
(Above)
Postcard of Keating's New York Store that stood on Route 344 in Copake Falls, NY. The image shows the store in the 1920s. RJHS Collection. Dimension 5" x 7"



(Left)
Document appointing **Thomas Keating** Postmaster of Copake Iron Works in 1884. On loan from **Bob and Richard Barton**, great-grandsons of Thomas Keating. Dimensions: (Framed) 18" x 22"

(Right)
Details of postcards with three postmarks, all from the same post office in different years; "Copake Iron Works," **Berkshire Pass**" and "Copake Falls." The postmarks illustrate the area's transition from industrial to recreational parkland.

The postcards are from the collection of Robin Bruce.
Dimensions: Postcards are 5" x 7"



From a Biographical Review dating from 1894 found among the geneological papers of the Barton family, descendents of Thomas B. Keating.

One can hardly visit that part of the town of Copake rightfully known as the Copake Iron Works without seeing this gentleman, who there carries on a prosperous trade in the village store. Thomas Keating had entered the office of the local iron works under Frederick Miles, but continued to attend school part-time. In time he became an assistant book-keeper, and kept the position four years. In 1880, when twenty years old, he opened a store for himself in small scale. By trading slowly and carefully, he built up a reputation for industry and honesty which has placed him in the front rank among his fellow-townsmen. Mr. Keating is a republican, and since 1884 has been Postmaster of the village.

NY and Harlem Railroad Objects



From the Copake Iron Works stop on the Harlem Line:

Copake Falls Depot Luggage Cart, ca. 1905.

On loan from Bobby Matthews and Melissa Dipper of the Depot Deli, 64 Miles Road, Copake Falls, N.Y.

The original Copake Iron Works station catered to a local community that was served by the New York & Harlem Railroad, later the Harlem Division of the New York Central Railroad. The railroad between Dover Plains (to the south) and the end of the line at Chatham (to the north) was constructed between 1848 and 1852. Passenger service north of Dover Plains to Chatham ended on March 20, 1972, and the station was closed. The tracks were then only used by freight trains until that service ended in 1976. The rails were removed in 1981, and the right of way was converted into Harlem Valley Rail Trail (HRVT) in the 1990s.

Pictured Top to bottom:

A. Copake Falls Station Luggage Cart ca. 1905.

On loan from Bobby Matthews and Melissa Dipper of the Depot Deli, 64 Miles Road, Copake Falls, N.Y.
Dimensions: L 4.6' x H 4.5 x D 26"

B. Railroad Lantern with Red Glass.

At the turn of the 20th century, railroad operators used colored globe lanterns for illumination and signaling at night. The meanings of the colors were the precursors to our modern traffic light system. White was used to indicate that it was safe to proceed, green signaled caution, and red meant stop or danger.
RJHS Collection, gift of Jane Peck, 2023. Dimensions: Height 10"

C. Brakeman's Hat and Uniform

Worn by Ray Snow of Hillsdale, NY. Ray Snow worked on the Harlem Division Railroad Line from 1944 to 1976. RJHS Collection, gift of Ray Snow 1989.

D. Illustration showing the dangerous job of being a Brakeman. A dangerous job before George Westinghouse invented and patented a compressed-air brake system in 1869 for trains, to replace the standard manual braking system, which was often faulty and extremely dangerous for railroad brakemen. *American Heritage History of Railroads in America*, By Oliver Jensen. RJHS collection.

E. Two Rail Spikes from the tracks of the former Harlem Line near Craryville. On loan from Howard Blue. Dimensions: L 7"

F. Hemingray Glass Lightning Rod Insulator. Found near the former Harlem Railroad tracks. Used on telephone poles, Hemingway insulators were made in the USA starting in the late 1850s until 1967. Found and loaned by Milbrey Zelley. Dimensions: H 4"



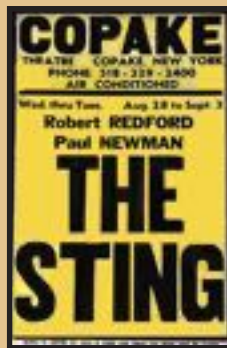
Wristwatch & Pocket Watch of Isidor Skupen (1900 - 1979)

Top: Wristwatch used by Isidor Skupen during his years as a conductor on the Harlem Line. Recently gifted to the RJHS collection by the Fagan Family.

The wristwatch was well used during Isidor's years of service, and had received a new watch band. The American Waltham retirement pocket watch is inscribed with Isidor's name. Originally from Poland, Isidor was married to Sara Fagan of Copake Falls, NY.

Dimensions: Wristwatch 7" Long x 1" Pocket watch 1.5" diameter

THE COPAKE THEATER



THE COPAKE THEATER

First opened in 1933 by local businessman and entrepreneur, **Edward McIntyre**, the Theater was later run until 1990 by **Allen Lampman**. The elegant theater, which had beautiful floral plantings in front, and was open from April to Thanksgiving each year. Destroyed by fire in 1990, the theater was beloved by the entire community, and its loss is still deeply felt.

“It was a gem of a theater” said Elinor Mettler, curator of the local historical museum.”

‘Somehow its loss is the saddest of all. It was our “Cinema Paradiso.”

From *“Town’s Serenity Shattered by 17 Fires Linked to Arson”*, *NYTimes*, June 16, 1990, article by Harold Faber.

Cast Iron Art Deco Bas Relief Seat Sides and tickets from the Copake Theater

Top: Rescued by Michael Freedman, Following the fire that destroyed building in 1990. RJHS Collection, gift of Michael & Florence Freedman, 2023.

Supports for the heavy cast iron seat sides designed and fabricated by Bob Callahan. Dimensions: 9.5" W x 22" x 22" H

Poster for The Sting

Poster for the 1973 film starring Paul Newman and Robert Redford.

On loan from Marilyn Herrington. Dimensions: 14.5" x 23"

Poster for Candleshoe, The Cheap Detective and Convoy, 1977

Also advertising Soft Ice Cream across the road at **the Hub**, and a painted wooden miniature of the Hub by "Duke," (Frank Case) On loan from Jed & Sharon Luchow.

Bottom right: **Ed McIntyre pastel portrait** - On loan from the Copake Grange #935. Dimensions: 10" x 13"



Oak Magneto Hand Crank Ringer Box

The Copake Telephone Company was a rural system founded in 1908, by a group of investors headed by John D. Ackley. The vintage oak crank ringer box from the RJHS collection once belonged to this small but dynamic company. The equipment was made by Western Electric and includes a handset. Many early manual telephones had an attached hand-cranked magneto that produced an alternating current (AC) at 50-100 V for signaling and ringing bells of other telephones on the same "party" line. This ringing would alert an operator at the local telephone exchange. The handset with receiver and cradle relied on operators to put calls through to the exchange and predated telephones equipped with self-operated rotary dials. RJHS Collection, gift of Judy Ackley Whitbeck.

Dimensions: (wooden box) 8" W x 10" x 6" D



Whitetail Deer - Running Buck

Louis Paul Jonas, & Louis Paul Jonas, Jr.,

At the age of fourteen Louis Paul Jonas immigrated to the United States where he joined his older brothers at the Jonas Brothers Taxidermy Studios in Denver, Colorado. Subsequently he was selected to assist the internationally renowned Carl Akeley at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City where, after serving in WW I, Jonas worked with Akeley to complete the famous African elephant group considered the centerpiece of the American Museum's Hall of Mammals.

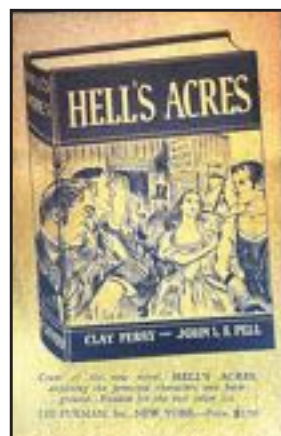
Perhaps most spectacular and widely publicized of the sculptor's works are the nine full size dinosaurs created for the 1964 New York World's Fair, that Louis Paul Jonas, Sr. and his son, Paul worked on together.

Following the death of Jonas, Sr. in 1971, his work was continued under the direction of his son, Paul, other family members and a staff of skilled artists. Jonas, Sr. had created a series of miniature animals. Under the younger Mr. Jonas, the series of miniatures expanded to include 350 pieces.

The Running Buck is part of this group of miniature animal sculptures produced by Paul, who lived with his family on Mitchell Street in the town of Hillsdale. Made from a latex-strengthened porcelain clay-based material, on a walnut base.

White tail Deer sculptue, RJHS Collection, gift of Gary Williams, 2023. Dimensions: 7" x 10."

B&W Photographs of Paul & Ginny Jonas above (with miniature Running Buck figure), below **Jonas with Elephant Maquettes,** and **Dinosaur Figures,** photographed for *The Independent,* RJHS Collection, gift of Elinor Mettler, 2007.

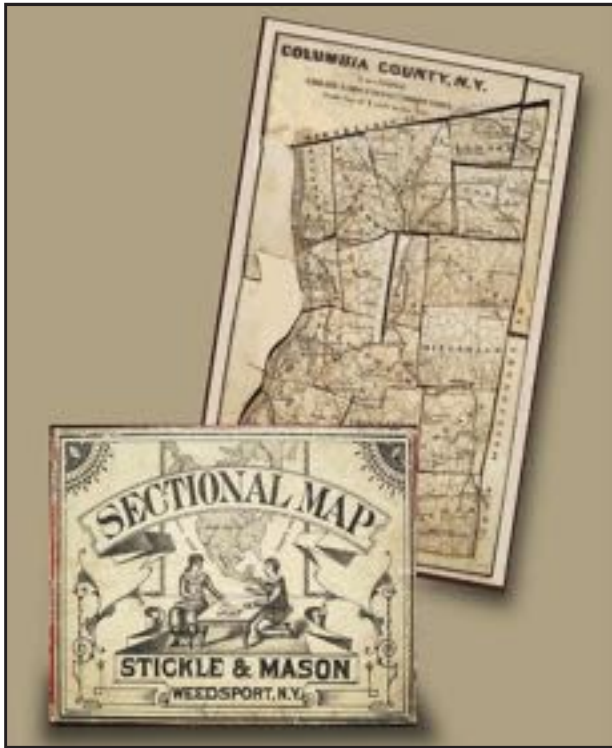


Original "Hell's Acres's" Promo Card

Hardbound First Edition of Hell's Acres

First Edition 1938, Lee Forman, Inc, N.Y. A Historical Novel of the Wild East in the 1850s, by Clay Perry and John L. E. Pell

From the book's Forward: This fictional story, a romance of the western borders of the Berkshire Hills County, is based upon history which has never been published save in fragments appearing in old newspapers, and scattered and forgotten documents buried in musty archives - this is a tale of the early days of Saratoga as a spa and the strange climax of an era of lawlessness in a no-man's land of the wild East, of Black Brant and his Black Grocery Tavern...of prize fighters and horse thieves and their ilk, and of "rogues and scoundrels galore and brave men and fair women of yore." Promotional card and book. RJHS Collection, gift of Hazel O'Hara, 1988.



Stickle & Mason Sectional Puzzle Map of Columbia County, circa. 1880

The earliest puzzles were created as educational tools to teach children geography. The earliest commercial publisher of these puzzles was John Spilsbury, a London-based cartographer and engraver. Spilsbury created puzzles known as "dissected maps," by pasting a paper map onto a thin piece of mahogany wood, he then used a marquetry saw to section and separate the pieces. The idea of reassembling an image from a myriad of pieces became very popular and, in addition to maps, puzzle imagery expanded to include farms, animals, and religious scenes.

The term jigsaw puzzle only came into use later during the 1880s when a tool called a jigsaw was used to cut the intricate and interlocking pieces that would stay together. The sectional puzzle of Columbia County in the RJHS collection was made by Stickle & Mason, of Weedsport, NY, and originally had 22 pieces. When assembled, the pieces become a map of Columbia County (founded in 1786). Printed on paper applied to card-board.

RJHS Collection, gift of John Jones, 2000. Dimensions: 6" x 8"



Schoolhouse Items

School Desk believed to be from the Copake Falls School which still stands near Bain Road and Route 22.

RJHS Collection, Gift of John & Elinor Mettler, 1993

Dimensions: 26" Long

School Bell from Hillsdale District School.

Historically, many european churches shared space with local schools, so the church bell became a way to alert students to the start and end of the school day. Around 1700 in England, two brothers named William and Robert Cor, invented the handheld bell. These bells were also served as musical instruments used in bell choirs.

RJHS Collection, gift of Mr. & Mrs. Charles Porteous, 1984.

Array of Late 19th and Early 20th Century School Books from various subject area; *Manual of Geography*, *Fun for Juniors* and *The Gateway to American History* by Lawler, RJHS Collection.

Slate Board

Slate boards were small portable blackboards on which students wrote daily lessons. They were widely used in the United States when paper was scarce and expensive. Many children in rural schools still used slates for writing their assignments after 1900.

The largest example from the RJHS Collection was donated by Lloyd Williams.

A Double Sided writing slate board

This double sided slate board with a slot for a slate pencil was once used as a schoolhouse blackboard or chalkboard for children, late 19th to early 20th century. This example once belonged to Theodore McDowell of Kinderhook, NY, and dates from 1872.

On loan to the RJHS from Richard Barton. Dimensions:(open) 11.5" x 16"

DR. WESLEY JOHNSON OF HILLSDALE: *A Gentleman of Talent and Liberal Education*

Researched and written by RJHS Board Member Ron Otteson

Wesley Johnson was born in 1813, the son of Quincy and Abigail Johnson of Hillsdale. The family home is still on Old Town Road (right where it forks to the west off of Route 22). Wesley matriculated at Philadelphia's Jefferson Medical College in 1836 where he studied with Dr. Jacob Green, a prominent academic and a significant early contributor to natural sciences studies in America.

In August 1837, immediately after receiving his medical degree, Dr. Johnson travelled to Africa to begin work in a small seaside settlement of former American slaves located about 70 miles south of Monrovia, the present-day capital of Liberia. The Bassa Cove community was part of the wider African colonization project that had links to the northern American anti-slavery movement. The project was funded jointly by the New York and Pennsylvania Colonization Societies which had grown increasingly concerned about the high rate of mortality in the community and so Dr. Johnson was employed as a physician to care for the population there. He worked closely with Thomas Buchanan, cousin of the U.S. President, who was then governor of the larger Monrovia colony up the coast. In a government dispatch of 1840, Governor Buchanan referred to Dr. Johnson as a "physician of high respectability..." ¹

Within a year, after Thomas Buchanan's untimely death, young Wesley Johnson of Hillsdale was unexpectedly appointed the governor of Bassa Cove and in command of the small militia responsible for protecting the settlers from attacks by the surrounding native population."

After the murder of the leader of another colony, Dr. Johnson was injured in the ensuing battle involving a notorious slave trader named Captain Canot.

After recovering from his injuries, Dr. Johnson led the establishment of a high school near Bassa Cove on a small island in the St. John's River. He organized the construction of a two-story brick building and taught its first classes. The curriculum was designed to develop a cadre of leaders and administrators for the settler community. There were lessons on mathematics, bookkeeping, surveying, and navigation.

Dr. Johnson's practice of medicine and work on the school was tragically cut short by poor health in 1844. Tropical illness had damaged his spleen, and while he was able to make the long journey home to Hillsdale, he quickly succumbed to his illness at the age of 31. His grave can be found today next to his father and mother in Hillsdale's Old Town Cemetery just off of Route 22.



(top) 1841 letter from Africa by Dr. Johnson to his mother Abigail in Hillsdale.

(middle) Frontispiece and title page of "Captain Canot: or Twenty Years and African Slaver" by Brantz Meyer, published 1854.

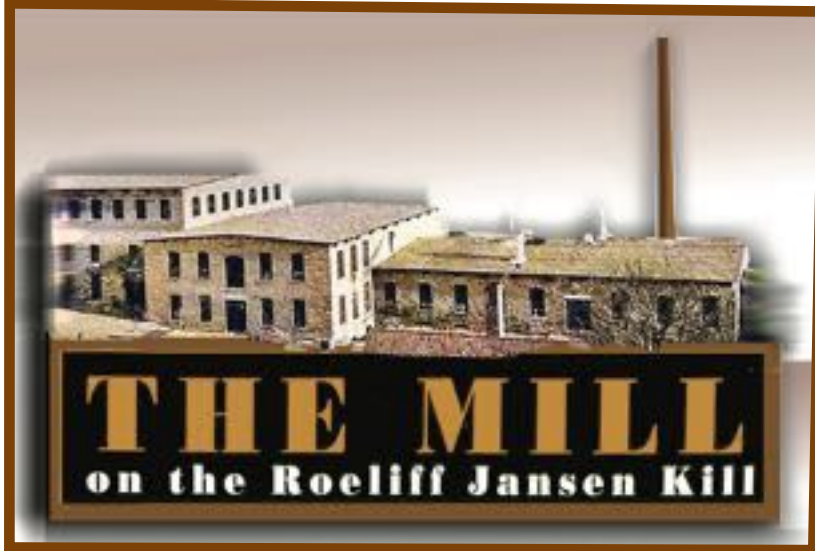
Loaned by Ron and Yukiko Otteson

"...we have lost a devoted teacher, and Africa - a devoted friend and martyr." ²

1. From an 1840 dispatch by Liberia's Governor Buchanan to the American Colonization Society in Washington, D.C.

2: Tribute of Respect to the Memory of Dr. Wesley Johnson, Annual Report of the Board of Directors of the American Colonization Society, January 21, 1845, Hon. Henry Clay, President.

The Roe Jan Towns ANCRAM



The Ancram Paper Mill

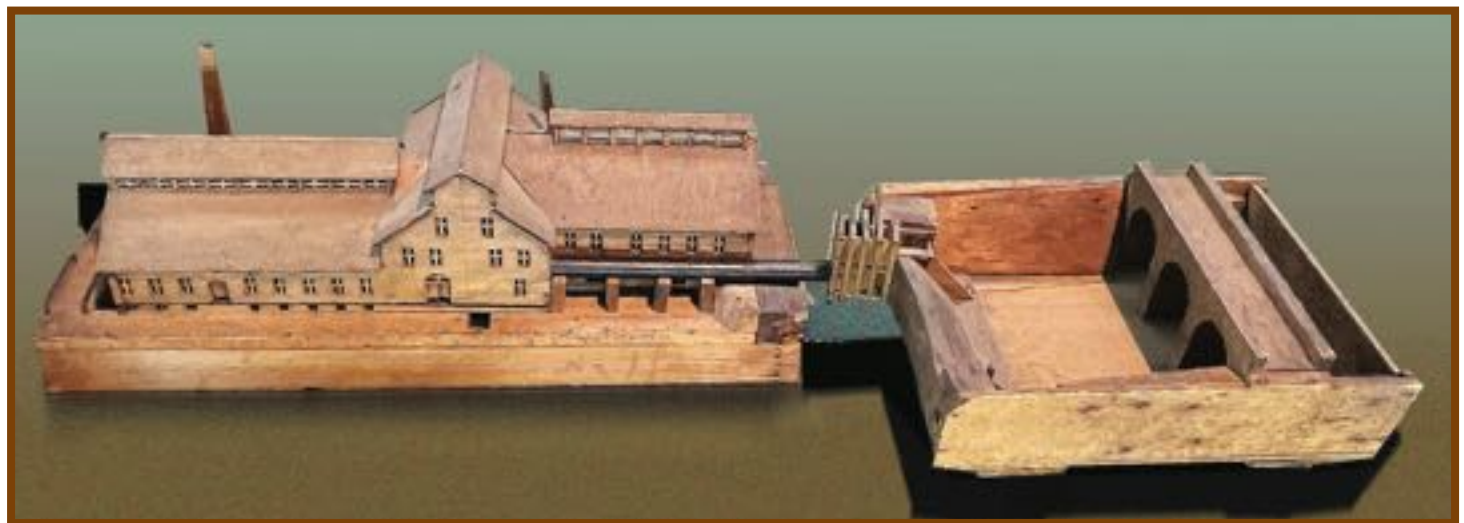
SWM International Inc.
2424 State Route 82
Ancram, NY

One of the oldest and most significant industrial sites in Columbia County is the original site of the Livingston Iron Furnace at Ancram on the Roeliff Jansen Kill. The furnace erected here in 1742-43, the first in the province of New York, was in use until 1845 (*Looking for Work: Industrial Archeology in Columbia County*, Peter H. Stott).

This iron works became a paper mill in 1854 and still operates as a paper mill today. Now 280 years old, it is the longest continuously operating mill in New York State and one of the largest employers in Columbia County.



The three-span stone Ancram Paper Company Bridge over the Roeliff Jansen Kill was built in 1850. It is recognized as the oldest known bridge in Columbia County. (left) A 1937 postcard of the Old Stone Bridge at Ancram. (right) A more contemporary photo of the bridge from the book "Looking for Work in Columbia County" by Peter Stott (1989/90)



Hand Carved Wooden Model of the Ancram Mill from 1896

This wood model of the Ancram Mill was carved by hand in 1896 by Mr. Harry M. Miller of Ancram, N.Y. Miller operated a hardware store in Ancram and when making the model he stood on the porch of his store and had an excellent and clear view of the actual mill. The model is considered an excellent reproduction of the mill in every exterior detail.

On Loan from Dwayne Hotaling and SWM International, Ancram Dimensions: 12"W x 30" L.



THE COPAKE MEMORIAL CLOCK

Photo of original 1944 dedication (left)
The Bristol sisters at the 2011 re-dedication (below) (Rus Davis collection)



Sometime during the Battle of Anzio, during WWII, Steven McIntyre, the favorite nephew of Ed McIntyre, was killed when a mortar round hit his jeep.

This is where the story of the Memorial Clock begins.

Ed wanted to create a memorial for veterans specifically from the town of Copake. He enlisted the help of A.C. Bristol who owned the local lumber company. These two men spearheaded a campaign to raise the money to erect the original memorial. All the funds used to purchase the clock were donations from private citizens. The original purchase price for the clock was two thousand, six hundred dollars. Eventually the clock memorial was updated to include veterans from both the Korean and Vietnam Wars.



By 2010, The Memorial Clock had suffered significant damage. The base and upper supports were both rotted through. The inside structure of the pedestal was deteriorated. The copper shell that housed the clock was damaged in many places, the original tube chimes were gone, and the hammers needed to be rebuilt.

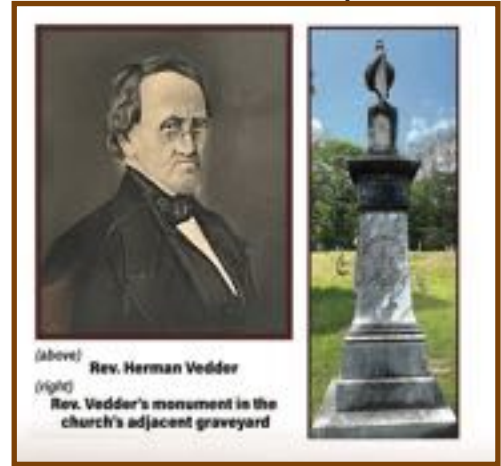
Photographs and original documents above pertaining to both the original 1944 design and installation and 2010 restoration are on loan from Hugh (Rus) Davis.

Originally built by the O.B. McClintok Company of Minneapolis, the clock was removed from its base in December of 2010 and completely rebuilt by the Regulator Clock Company of Manhattan, Kansas. The clock was replaced on its base, and a rededication ceremony was held in June of 2011. Sixty-seven years after the original 1944 dedication, the chimes of the four-sided stained-glass clock chimed again.



GALLATIN VEDDER CHURCH

(now The Gallatin Community Church)



Being listed on the State and National Register of Historic Places serves as a formal acknowledgment of the Gallatin Community Church's (formerly the Gallitan Dutch Reformed Church) lengthy history and

distinguished architectural character as it approaches two hundred years of active use and service to the community. First organized around 1750 as the Greenbush Dutch Reformed Church, the present building was dedicated in February 1824 and is an outstanding example of early nineteenth century American meetinghouse design. The building remains today largely as first dedicated in the mid-1820s.

From the dawn of the nineteenth century to the Civil War the church was led by the Reverend Herman Vedder. So deep was Vedder's imprint that the church for many years took his name as its own. Also notable is the church's role as the mother religious organization of many churches established as offshoots of it, including those located in Ancram, Copake, Milan, and Pine Plains. The surrounding cemetery serves as a backdrop to the meeting house and was established prior to the American Revolution, forming a remarkable touchstone to that earlier period of Gallatin's history. Vedder's tombstone stands just outside the church as a monument to his faith and devotion.



(above) Original 1803 Articles of incorporation signed by the Church Fathers, including Rev. Vedder (left) Document placing the church on the National Register of Historic Places in 2021. Both documents on loan from Gallatin Community Church. Dimensions 17" x 23"



In recent years, the Reformed Church of Gallatin, which turns 200 in 2024, like so many others, has faced a dwindling congregation and skyrocketing costs. Since 2016 a successful fundraising campaign has been the sale of homemade soup. Money raised from soup sales has paid for essential maintenance, including the repair of the roof. Melissa Curtis and Pastor Bob Rogoshewski have been at the forefront of the preservation efforts, allowing the church to remain a central spiritual meeting place for the surrounding community in the 21st century.

The Roe Jan Towns HILLSDALE



The Pulver Family Legacy in Hillsdale, Lives On

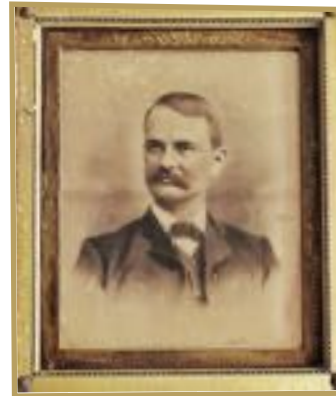


Photo-Portrait of Freeland Pulver (1850 - 1939)



Photo-Portrait of Orsen Pulver (1872 - 1947)

RJHS Collection, both donated by Sharon Flitterman-King - Dimensions (left) 19.5"H X 17.5"W (right) 35"H X 26.5"W

Around 1890, Freeland Pulver and fellow clerk Henry Best opened a general store – Pulver and Best – in the what was known as the Mercantile building constructed around 1851 at the intersection of Anthony and White Hill Streets in Hillsdale, NY. Today the restored building is home to the Roe Jan Brewing Company. When Henry retired, Freeland and his brother, Wesley, renamed the operation Pulver Brothers, which sold a variety of goods including food and clothing. When Wesley retired, Freeland simply named the store Freeland Pulver.

In 1875 Freeland Pulver built an Italianate style house across from the store at 25 Anthony Steet. The house still stands and had remained in the Pulver family until it was purchased in 1976 from Freeland Pulver's granddaughter, Louise Leonard, by David King and Sharon Flitterman-King, who still owns the house. At the time of purchase, the Kings were given original documents, including a survey and deed, dating from the original purchase of the land from the Bixby family. Freeland Pulver paid \$549 for the acre he purchased. He proceeded to build his house where he could keep an eye on the store.



(Left to right) Photograph of the Mercantile Building with handwritten names, indentifying Freeland Pulver as the man with his hand on post, RJHS Collection. Photo of David and Sharon King on steps of the Pulver house, 1983, from *The Independent*, and the original deed dated 1874 on loan from Sharon Flitterman-King.



Top of Showcase (Left to right)

Taghkanic Baskets by Elizabeth Proper.

Three rare Bassinets at either end of top shelf, an array of seven baskets on middle shelf, and three nesting baskets on bottom shelf from the Maryanne and Mike Fallon Collection.

Taghkanic Apple Basket on top shelf right side. 20" diameter. On loan by Kathy and Alan Friedman.

Photograph of Elizabeth Proper, circa 1972, by Helen Maria Ofield.

Bottom shelf. RJHS Collection, gift of Jack and Helen Ofield.



Photograph of Child in large Taghkanic basket, date unknown, top shelf and enlarged below left. On loan from the Maryanne and Mike Fallon collection.



Two Taghkanic Drop Handle Baskets, bottom shelf.

One example given to RJHS by Barbara Ackley, 2012, and one on loan from Jane Peck.

Small signed Basket by Elizabeth Proper,

Bottom left. RJHS Collection, gift of Gary Williams, 2023.

Slideshow, Old Photographs of Taghkanic, bottom shelf right.

Provided by Nancy Griffith, *Taghkanic Town Historian*.

Adapted from an article from the Magazine ANTIQUES entitled **TAGHKANIC BASKETS**

By Ben Davidson and Pippa Biddle, Published November 29, 2019

A classic example of regional folk craft, Taghkanic baskets have been woven in a small corner of the Hudson River valley since the mid-eighteenth century. Though not all do, the archetypal and most collectible Taghkanic basket has a rounded bottom with a center that pokes upward. It is made of oak and ash. The splints—a weaving term that can describe both the horizontal and vertical components of a basket—vary in width and are very strong, and the rim is lashed in a criss-cross pattern. Most have either a single handle or a pair of handles, and some have a swing handle.

Taghkanic baskets are often mistaken for Shaker pieces, mixed into collections of such work, and misidentified by auction houses. While there are striking

similarities, Shaker baskets were made on molds that guaranteed uniformity, while Taghkanic basket makers used only visual models and muscle memory as guides. This increased the variation in form and weaving pattern—working with thinner splints, smaller, nimble hands could do more detailed work—and allowed for more creativity and invention.

While a comprehensive reconstruction of the history of Taghkanic baskets is likely impossible, there remain particulars upon which all agree. They are unique works of functional art that can be fixed to a particular place and time, wrought with ingenious craftsmanship by a small number of skilled hands hard at work. In this, they are spectacular. There seems to us no higher praise we can give.

THE ROELIFF JANSEN HISTORICAL SOCIETY PRESENTS

THE FIRST 40:
A Celebration of Local History Preserved

The 2023 Annual Exhibition open from July 15th thru October 15th 2023

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Judy Whitbeck

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Copake Grange No. 935

Copake Town Hall

The Depot Deli

The Roe Jan Community Library

The Church of St. John in the
Wilderness



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