

January 1, 2013

Ms. Leah Lennon
Duanesburg Town Clerk
5853 Western Turnpike
Duanesburg, New York 12056

Dear Members of the Town Board:

Historian Report for the Year 2012

It is with deepest pride that I provide you with this comprehensive report.

I remain active in the historical society, having attended and made audio recordings of each of the (nine) Duanesburg Historical Society presentations this past year. These meetings covered topics including Darby Hill Anthropology & Archaeology, Astrophotography, the Anti-Rent Wars, deForest Family History and stories of local Delaware & Hudson Railroad employees. I have also attended a number of meetings of the Esperance, Knox, and Schenectady County Historical Societies.

I've recently purchased an item on eBay related to a bee farm that had been owned and operated by the Alexander family on Alexander Road in/near Delanson. The bee farm was quite extensive, and was known as the Alexander Apiary, and was claimed to be the world's largest Apiary, containing over 700 hives in the yard. Research on this topic has led me to a woman living in Altamont whose father worked on the bee farm as a child. Collaboration with her should result in a written article about the Alexander family and the bee farm.

A majority of the requests for information from the historian are related to genealogy. Therefore, over the past year I have created a surname index, drawn from both Federal and New York State Census data, for Duanesburg residents covered in the census information available to me. The file has over 7,300 family names in eight Federal Censuses, and four New York State Censuses. The census years covered include the following: 1790, 1800, 1810, 1820, 1850, 1865, 1870, 1875, 1892, 1905, 1930, and 1940. During the past year I have responded to email requests for information on the following families: DeLaMater, Hoag, Klein, McClain, Miller, Moore, Norton, Taber, Tripp, Tulloch, Ladd, and Wood.

Other requests for information via E-mail were received on the following topics: The former Congo Dance Hall (~1940s : "Round & Square Dancing - Admission: 25 cents") on Route 7, the Dodge Coal Storage System of the Delaware & Hudson Railroad in Delanson, and the West Wind Farm, which is actually in the Town of Knox, and other topics.



Another request from information came from a gentleman named Mr. C. Adams of Woodside, California who had purchased a barn frame from Waco, Texas based Heritage Restorations, a company that "locates, dismantles, restores and re-erects historic timber frame buildings" for clients. Mr. Adams wrote to me inquiring about the background of his barn, which had come from Duanesburg. I happened to have photos I'd taken of this barn the previous winter while it was being dis-assembled. I was also able to visit the former barn site and homeowner at 143 McGuire School Road in addition to a former resident of the farm, to chat and gather background information to share with Mr. Adams.

During the year I've taken an interest and lent my support and encouragement in an ongoing effort to save the historic 1886 bridge frame spanning the Normanskill from Depot Road to the site of the former Van Patten Mill on the property of Mr. Peter Watrous. The goal is to have the bridge moved away from the stream safely before it is lost to deterioration.

I have been keeping a "scrap book" of local stories gathered from newspapers and periodicals. News stories covered the following topics: the 46th State Senate District Election, Animal Cruelty, Camp Bisco XI, the Ash Lane Bridge, a Duanesburg Family Escaping the Costa Concordia cruise ship, highway fatalities, the Harley Rendezvous, the Highcliff Horse Farm, a marijuana arrest in Duanesburg, a fuel delivery truck rollover, and many others.

Before James Duane died in 1797 he had begun the construction of his home in Duanesburg, however, due to his death the construction did not precede beyond the foundation work. In April I was able to organize a visit to the site in order to document its location and condition, 215 years later. I've also documented a number of things in Duanesburg with photos, including the previous and current Duanesburg Stewarts, the Hurricane Irene washout of the Duanesburg Churches Road culvert, and a family heirloom of the late Arthur Willis; a Hardee (Civil War) Tactics book carried in the pocket of his great-grandfather, Lieutenant Mark Dare. Dare's life was probably saved when an enemy bullet struck the book in his pocket. The infantry tactic book still bears the bullet hole.

In February I was able to obtain a historian's library card for use in the New York State Library in Albany. This card permits broader access to research materials and collections on hand.

It has been my pleasure to serve as your town historian. Thank you for this opportunity and thank you for the printed Town Historian business cards.

Warm Wishes for Good Health and Prosperity in 2013,



Howard C. Ohlhous

Treasurer - Duanesburg Historical Society

Historian - Town of Duanesburg