

## Greetings from Australia

by David Prentiss



I am an Associate Professor in Economics at La Trobe University, in Melbourne, Australia, where I was born and have lived since completing graduate school in the US in the late 1990s. In the fall of 2007, was very fortunate to visit the Natural Cement Museum on the Snyder Estate and to spend a couple of hours talking with Dietrich Werner about the history of the Rosendale cement industry.

This came about while on a short sabbatical at Lehigh University, in Bethlehem PA, researching the economic history of the early Portland cement industry near there. I was also aware at that stage of the importance of the Rosendale natural cement industry. Hence we decided to combine a trip to Peekskill (where my wife, Khayen, went to see “America” in concert) with a visit to the Museum (having made contact with Dietrich via email). While Khayen and my daughter, Lauren, walked around Rosendale, Dietrich and I talked almost non-stop for about two hours while he showed me some of the items in the amazing collection at the museum. I remember Dietrich showing me the letter from the Portland cement pioneer Isaac Johnson which was exciting to see! He said that there weren’t many people he could show this to who would appreciate its significance. As well as spending time in the museum, Lauren and I walked around the estate visiting the mine and the kilns (where the photo was taken). It was a lovely afternoon and I learned a lot about the Rosendale cement industry that day.

Since then have become increasingly interested in the economic history of the natural cement industry which am continuing to work on, comparing the development of the great natural cement industry at Rosendale with the much smaller Lehigh Valley one.

I haven’t had a chance to go back to Rosendale since though now have done more work would love to visit the region again for a longer period on my next sabbatical. Until then am continuing to follow the Century House Historical Society on Facebook. It is great to see all the good work the local volunteers are doing in keeping the Society and Museum going and important that those of us further away support them in the way we can. The very interesting history of Rosendale and the natural cement industry can then be saved for others to appreciate and learn from. The website and, especially the newsletters are also greatly appreciated and themselves are valuable resources.

In between teaching, completing other research, spending time with my family and pursuing other interests in genealogy and “park and street orienteering” around Melbourne, I am (slowly) getting my research written up. Some readers might find an earlier piece on the cement industry of the Lehigh Valley at <http://digital.lib.lehigh.edu/beyondsteel/business/cement/> of interest, as well as the other material in the digital archive. I also recently discussed my work on the economic history of cement on <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lzSw8lu2GI4>. Finally my website at La Trobe University contains more information on my academic publications on cement (and other topics) at: <http://www.latrobe.edu.au/economics/about/staff/profile?uname=daprentice>. And am always happy to email or chat about this work too!

# The Century House Historical Society

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[www.CenturyHouse.org](http://www.CenturyHouse.org)  
*Friend us on Facebook!*

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## A Message from the President

Dear Friends and Members:

I write this to you, after witnessing the most well attended Fall Clean Up Day that I can remember. We had about 15 young scouts and their leaders volunteer their high energy and enthusiasm to help button-up the property for the winter (yes, all those carriages need covering). We watched the scouts transform into raking machines! In total, there were about 40 people who came out to donate their time and energy on a terrifically sunny day. Remember, Century House is an all-volunteer organization, and we depend on everyone pitching in. Thank you volunteers!

Our season was a whirlwind of events, starting with a large tour of the New York and Pennsylvania Canal Societies in the spring, and ending (fittingly) with an event for about 100 cavers, hosted by the Shawangunk and Catskills Area Grotto. Cavers enjoyed lectures, emergency response practice and trainings, as well as bat decorated cupcakes. There were many events in between: a summer solstice celebration, Taiko drumming in July followed by the performance/installation Dada Spill, and the 23rd Annual Subterranean Poetry Festival in August. The Rosendale Improvement Society Brass Band and Social Club made our ice-cream social (free to members) even more memorable. Scattered over the warmer months, we also enjoyed photo and film shoots and musical recordings. We've literally had thousands of people enjoy the property this year.

And you should see the events we have cooking up for next year. Stay tuned...

We have about 18 months left on the Century House property loan, and look forward to this being paid off even sooner, so we can turn our attention to vitally important improvements to the building and property. Any help you can give toward this goal is welcomed with deep gratitude. Note that we've added a "Lifetime Member" category to our membership possibilities to assist us toward this goal.

Please join us for the Annual Meeting on December 7th at 1pm at the Rosendale Rec Center. We're looking forward to speaker Bill Rhoads give a talk on Ulster County architecture, focusing (of course!) on Rosendale. Dr. Rhoads will sell and sign copies of his latest book. In addition to our popular Penny Social, we'll unveil our new Century House t-shirts (need a last minute gift?), and we'll also have some special holiday items created for sale at this event by the artists on our Board of Trustees. It promises to be a terrific afternoon. See you there!

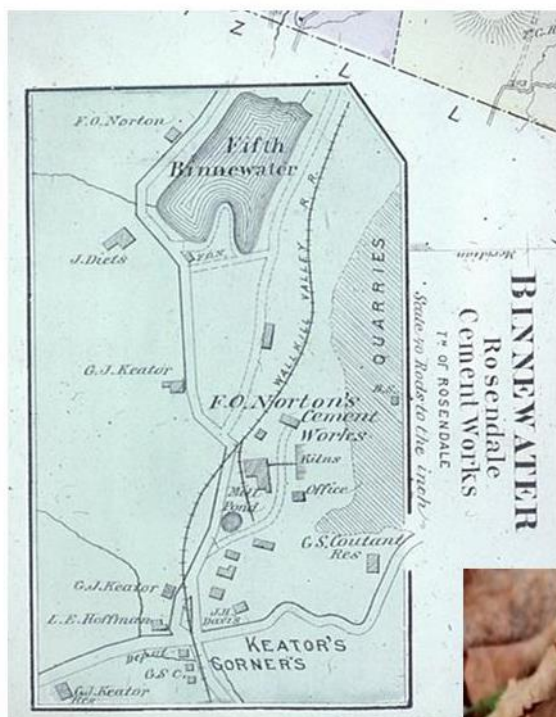
– Anne Gorrick



*Photos from the Shawangunk-Catskills Area Grotto NRO Meeting on September 20-22*



# KIOSK PROJECT: Century House Historical Society Helps Interpret 1.5 Mile Section of Wallkill Valley Rail Trail

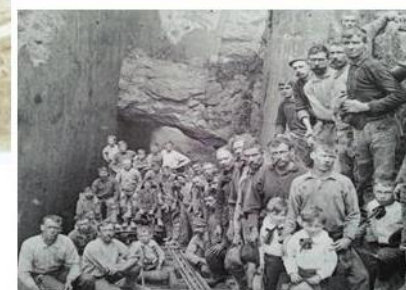


Beers Atlas 1875

Rare images from the collections and years of research accomplished by the Century House Historical Society now have a special place on kiosks that welcome visitors along the newly opened 1.5 mile spectacular section of the Wallkill Valley Rail Trail. This portion of the trail runs through the former Williams Lake Hotel property in Rosendale. The property holds resources of lands that were once owned by three companies that were among those consolidated in 1902: F.O. Norton, The Lawrence Cement Company and the Newark & Rosendale Lime & Cement Company. Following this section of the trail, you will see the cement mines, kilns, tall chimneys and remains of cooper shop foundations and mills. Kiosks interpret the sites of cement works, explain calcination, room and pillar mining and transportation methods. The Williams Lake Project had the kiosks designed, fabricated and installed along the trail. Each kiosk refers visitors to the society web site. Make your plans to hike or bike the total length of the 23.7 mile trail between Gardiner and Kingston. Save some energy and let us know what you think of our efforts to share the history!



Along the trail: Burnt rock & coal noticed hidden in the fall leaves.



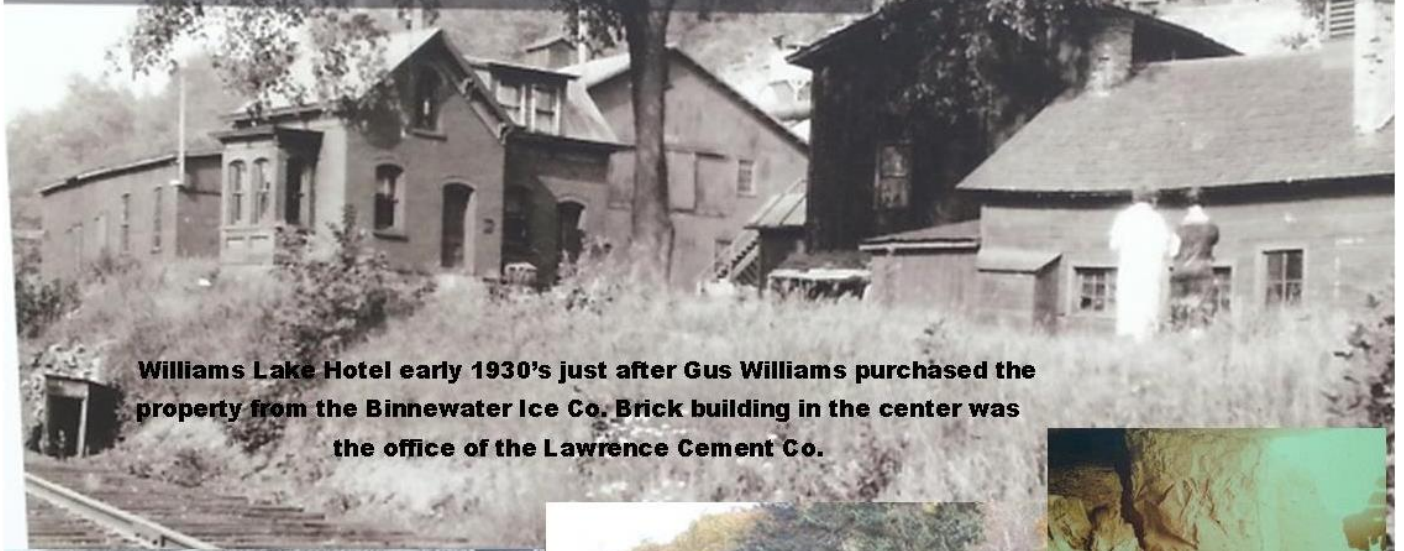
At the peak of its output, this steam-powered plant and its ten kilns were capable of producing over 1,000 barrels of cement daily.



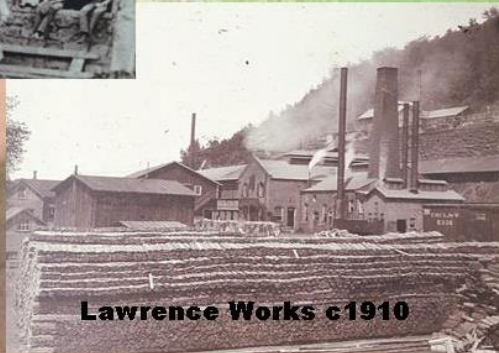
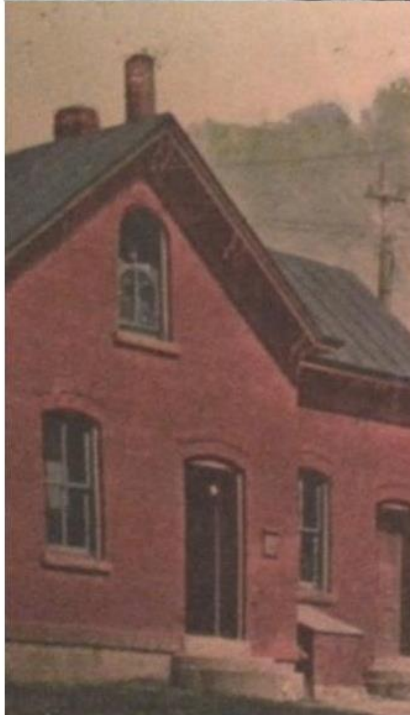
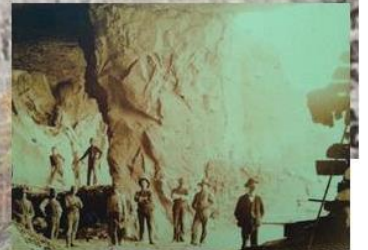
Engineer Theodore Cooper worked on the Eads Bridge which like the Brooklyn Bridge was built with Rosendale Cement. Norton hired him to design this plant.



The Lawrence Cement works was by far the largest cement company operating in the Binnewater area.



**Williams Lake Hotel early 1930's just after Gus Williams purchased the property from the Binnewater Ice Co. Brick building in the center was the office of the Lawrence Cement Co.**



**Lawrence Works c1910**



Located north of the Delaware and Hudson Canal, the Lawrence Cement Co. & The Newark & Rosendale formed the Plank Road Co. in the mid 1850's . It later became the Hickory Bush Eddyville (horse drawn ) railroad. That is how they sent products to market. Then in 1872 the Wallkill Valley Railroad passed through these cement works.



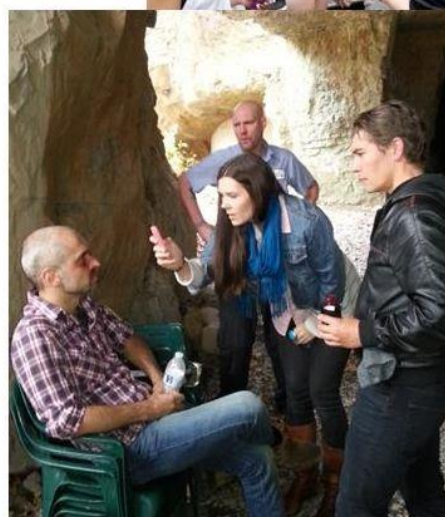


Ikebana arrangement created by Youko Yamamoto and Nancy Graham, members of New York Tachibana (<http://www.nytachibana.com/>), a Hudson Valley-based chapter of the Ikenobo school of ikebana adorn the mine entrance for the TAIKO drumming concert this summer.



### LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION! "Hollywood" Comes To The Widow Jane Mine!

The versatility of the Widow Jane Mine has attracted several independent film shoots this season. The mine has served as an unknown planet, a gangster hide-out and a spiritual oasis. "We Are What We Are" with several scenes filmed last season at the site, opened this summer!







### **Photo of Rosendale NY Baseball Team Added to the Society Collection!**

**Dated "Around 1904"**

Coming across this early baseball photo with players wearing uniforms marked "Rosendale" is exciting! Keep in mind though there are at least four other states that have a town named "Rosendale". Could this photo be part of "our" history? As most of us know, we often intend to mark our photos to help our future generations decipher the people in it. Life being the way it is, we decide to put that off until some other time which never seems to come. When the opportunity presents itself to acquire photos, it takes a special eye and knowledge of the terrain, architecture and history to determine if they have a place in the collection. Some detective work is in order.

The back side of this photo contains something rare: a listing of the names of the players and the name of the person that listed them. In examining the notations on the back of the photo, some of the family names sound familiar. On closer examination, the listing of the players was notated by "Joe Fleming 1936" as well as an entry "Date about 1904". Joseph A. Fleming was born on the fourth of July 1881 in Rosendale, New York. He wrote a local history column for the Rosendale News. In August 1939, he started a tradition of adding photos to his "Do You Remember?" articles. Many of these articles focused on the Rosendale Natural Cement industry (Visit the CHHS website for *Natural News*, Vol. 9, Issue 4, Winter 2007-08 article by D. Werner). Be sure to contact the historical society if you can add something to the story of baseball in Rosendale or if you can tell us about someone on these bleachers.

*Left to Right:* Front row: Frank Murphy, Lawrence (Duby) Smith, Joseph Delaney (Mascot), Hugh Malia  
*Centre Row:* Will Flanigan, Ira Dubois, Will ("Dinks") Delaney, Dan Delaney Mgr, Frank ("Dutch") Van Ostrand and James Smith  
*Rear row:* Joe ("Striker") Delaney, Joseph Smith, Joe Daly, Joe (Bobbie) Connelly and William ("Adam") Fleming