

The
Century
House
Historical
Society

NATURAL NEWS

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Thank Rosendale

NEW YORK - THE EMPIRE STATE

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CENTURY HOUSE HISTORICAL SOCIETY ANNUAL MEETING

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2005 2 PM

WILLIAMS LAKE HOTEL
ROSENDALE, NEW YORK

ANNUAL MEETING & PROGRAM

Come celebrate a year of
accomplishments!

“The Only Ones Who Will Be
Disappointed
are Those That Come Too Late!”

PROGRAM

Scenes From the Natural Cement Revival
along with A Special Movie Featurette,
Natural Cement, full of material from the
archives of The Century House Historical
Society

Join Ken Uracius, an expert on natural cement mortar, in a stunning visual presentation. His quest takes him across the country. Hear the intrigue, the mysteries and enjoy some humorous moments along the way to understanding the contributions made by natural cement to the building of the nation.

Join him high atop skyscrapers.

Visit the Dry Tortugas where the towering walls of Rosendale Natural Cement confined the famous prisoner of Fort Jefferson: Dr. Samuel Alexander Mudd.

Message from the President

The American Natural Cement Conference held in Rosendale this Spring is starting to shake up the preservation industry. The knowledge that Rosendale and other American natural cements was used in the construction of many extant structures now historically important is just beginning to be recognized by those in the preservation field.

The Century House Historical Society is well situated to aid in the search for this seemingly forgotten industry of the nineteenth century. Adding to the collections and archives [records created by 4 generations of the Snyder family involved in the cement industry] purchased from the Huguenot Historical Society in 1989 [originally donated to the Huguenot Historical Society by Andrew Snyder in 1975] the Society now has documents, books, images from many aspects of the cement world.

The presenters of the 2005 conference held in Rosendale have submitted papers which will be published by the Association Preservation Technology Institute, North East Region. Dr. Kurt Burmister and I have co-authored a paper on the Rosendale Cement Region for the APTI publication.

Plans are afoot for the Second American Natural Cement Conference to be held in Washington, DC, next March. Next year's event will be called the “International Natural Cement Symposium”.

Dietrich Werner

Keeping Cool ---- Rosendale Style



Rondout Swim , July 1929 [Photo Century House Historical Society]



Else Spindler, Summer 1923 [Photo—Robert Spindler Collection]

Back in the days when Rosendale had many small resorts summer time would guarantee a trip down to the Rondout Creek for a refreshing dip. Pictured above are some summer visitors splashing along a small sand beach in what today is known as the Town of Rosendale's Hardenbergh Park. Another popular swimming spot was in the Delaware & Hudson canal as shown in this 1905 post card. This swim spot was at the west end of Main Street, near the bridge across the Rondout leading toward St Peter's R.C. Church. Some of the stone walls shown in the image still remain, but the canal has been filled in. Swimming pools like the one at the Rosendale Recreation Center did not exist in

those days. The Rondout Creek, Wallkill River, the Binnewater lakes and other smaller lakes, as well as many brooks dammed to form a pond like the one at the Le-Fever Falls Mansion, kept visitors and local residents cool.

Now it seems that many homes have a pool in the backyard. But the backyard pools need to be filled each summer. The Turco Brother's Water Company, which draws water from an abandoned cement mine, does just that. Water formerly pumped out so mining could continue now is pumped into large tanker trailer trucks and delivered to fill those backyard swimming pools [DEW]



Rosendale Bathing Place D&H Canal west end of Main Street 1905 post card

Goings on at the Snyder Estate

Testing the Waters

by Rochelle Riservato

The Ulster County Environmental Management Council (EMC) got together on Saturday, May 14 to conduct the second training session on testing water quality.

The event took place at a stream located on the Century House Historical Society property and kept the attention of nature lovers aged 6 to 60 years of age.

Miriam Strouse, program coordinator at the EMC, taught this enlightening lesson to a grouping of interested "stewards of the land" organized by the Caretaker's Society.

Strouse explained the purpose of the lesson was to become skilled at identifying Benthic Macro Invertebrates—otherwise known as BMI.

"There are different types of bugs that survive in different types of water," stated Strouse, "some can survive in poor quality, others in a moderately good quality and some in the purest waters." She continued by explaining that species mix through variable types of waters with creatures in the pure water not able to survive in poor water. Young or immature stoneflies, many mayflies, and water pennies (a type of beetle larva) are alike in that they all require high concentrations of dissolved oxygen as they breathe through the surface of their skin or through gills located on the outside of their bodies. Therefore, if this type of bug is found, one can deduce that the water is unpolluted.

She clarified that if just one sample of water is taken, "it's like a photo of that particular moment. Testing must be done periodically to get a longitudinal picture of the bugs."

Before the water-waders and nets were handed out to the specimen seekers, co-leader of the Caretaker's Society Paul Tobin told participants what they were doing was probably no different from what their ancestors did many years ago. He said everyone there had something in common and what was to be learned would be a preservation technique to ensure safe water for many generations to come.

Tobin detailed that the human body is composed of 75 percent water and compared it to the coincidental amount of the earth's surface covered by water...also 75 percent. However, he lamented that, at this point in time, only two percent of the earth's water is drinkable.

Tobin then pointed to the stream, a tributary of the Rondout, and called it PomPee LeeWah—which he said was

Native American for "It is a stream."

With wader gear on and tubs and nets in hand, several of the people went into the shallow, rocky stream where Strouse demonstrated that most of the bugs sought after would be lurking under rocks and stones. She exhibited how to disturb the rocks a bit to loosen the bugs so that they could be scooped up in a net or bucket.

Starting in the downstream location first and then heading upstream, tubs of water were sampled and brought up to an

identification area where Strouse handed out spoons to place the squiggling BMI specimens into ice cube trays.

With magnifying glasses and sharp eyes the bugs were compared to drawings on pamphlets handed out to each "water tester"...then the job was to identify whether it was a mayfly, stonefly, caddis fly, riffle beetle, damselfly, dragonfly, scud, sow bug, beetle larva, black fly larva, midge, crane



Care Taker's separate specimens taken from Tan House Brook

Photo: Rochelle Riservato

fly larva, leech, or an aquatic worm.

The type of creature that is found in any given area indicates the water quality and once it was decided what type of BMI was collected they were compared to a chart identifying what type of water in which this creature would be found.

At this particular sight, it was concluded that most of the "captured" were scuds—although it seemed quite hard to pinpoint exact identities of some, as many types are similar in the larva stage.

Basically, the scuds signified that the quality of water at this particular location was moderately poor and on the chart position it was marked "not suitable for drinking."

Future water testing classes will instruct other levels of testing the water qualities by going to other streams and creeks and also by gathering the BMI at several locations on each of these waterways.

For more information call the Ulster County Environmental Management Council at 687-0267.

[editor's note: the above article was reprinted with permission by Lori Childers, publisher of the Blue Stone Press. The BSP carries on the tradition of a long line of local newspapers that reported the goings on in the Rosendale area. The above article relates the activities of Care Taker's second [May 14, 2205] visit to the Snyder Estate and the Tan House Brook or PomPee LeeWah.]

Peter C. Lefever Early Rosendale Cement Manufacturer's Letter Surfaces

The Society recently acquired a letter written December 17, 1847 by a New York City merchant and sent to Peter C. LeFever. They ask him to send them 100 barrels of cement.

The full text of the letter:

*New York 17 Dec 1847.
Messer. Peter C. Lefever
& Co.*

Sirs. We meant to have wrote to you as I promised you that I would on Monday last. But having been busy & the weather being so rainy I have neglected to do so until now. If after the receipt of this you have any vessel coming down with Cement you may send us 100 Barrels. And oblige.

(signature) 41 Tompkins St.



Front of letter sent to Peter C. Lefever in 1847 requesting shipment of 100 barrels cement


Peter LeFever, like the Snyder family, managed to transform marginal farmland and wood lots into a far more financially rewarding endeavor; the manufacture of Hydraulic Natural Cement. There can be no doubt that Peter LeFever's cement business was one of importance. Mr. Warman, superintendent of Hugh White's cement works on the Greenkill, expressed his concerns about the competition LeFever was giving them in the Boston cement market in a letter written to Hugh White in 1842. LeFever had extensive cement properties in Eddyville, NY which, over time, he sold to the Lawrence Cement Co.

Peter LeFever, while remaining in the cement business, would run for office and was elected Town of Rosendale Supervisor in 1851. He would also be one of the founders of the State of New York National Bank in Kingston, NY. He served on the banks Board of Directors from the date of incorporation in 1853 and remained on the board for many years. [DEW]

Butter, Cheese, Eggs, Potatoes & Cement!

In the Spring issue on page ten we reproduced an advertisement that ran in the Essex County Mercury & Weekly Salem (Mass.) Gazette and in the Salem Observer in 1873. S. Flint, the company that advertised Cement Pipe made using Knight's Patented Hydraulic Cement as well as Lime, Cement, Bricks and Sand, together with other mason's building materials was acquired by W. C. C. Moulton

W. C. C. MOULTON,
(Successor to Estate of S. Flint,) DEALER IN

LIME, CEMENT, CALCINED AND GROUND PLASTER, FIRE BRICK, SAND, KAOLIN, KALSOMINE,		PLASTERING HAIR, AND ALL KINDS OF MASONS' BUILDING MA- TERIAL.
---	--	---

ALSO COMMISSION DEALER IN
Butter, Cheese, Eggs, Potatoes, Beans, Hay, Straw, &c.,
52 TO 58 CENTRAL STREET, SALEM, MASS.
Please Return Bags at Once.

Back of Trade Card

after the death of Mr. Flint. The Moulton firm issued a trade card which informed the public that his firm was the successor of the Estate of S. Flint.

The business had moved from Derby St. to Central St. In addition to Cement, Lime and other mason's materials Moulton added butter, cheese, eggs, and other farm produce to the list of items sold. The sale of cement and other seemingly unrelated items like eggs and cheese or even cement and drugs was common practice. [DEW]



"Scrub Race of Boston Light"

High Falls Cement

When and where Cement was First Discovered in Ulster County

It is easy to understand how it is possible that the location and date of the discovery of Natural Cement in Ulster county appears to be an elusive fact. The date of discovery ranges between 1825 and 1829 depending on what source you happen to be reading.

One of the Kingston newspapers had evidently published an article about the discovery of cement to which a reader sent a letter to the Kingston Freeman. It is to this letter that, the Kingston Argus or the Kingston Daily Leader, rival papers, took issue with. This controversy over the discovery of cement in Ulster county was played out in the summer and fall of 1878.

Was one side or the other correct in its position? The full text of the article as it originally appeared is reproduced below. [DEW]

For the benefit of those living, as well as those who must come after us—let it be known James Elmendorf knew cement before Mr. James S. McEntee ever thought of living in Ulster or surveying the Delaware & Hudson Canal. The engineers did not know the country, and being strangers thought beforehand they must import cement. They must have been poor workmen not to have discovered it until they passed Cole's Basin.

Cement was used by the fathers of Ulster long before the canal was thought of. James Elmendorf built a kiln in Coxsing and tried to make or coax people to use it, but they were slow to adopt it instead of lime. A wall still exists, built of light cement long before the canal was projected. The kiln of Elmendorf was in Coxsing. The wall is a hundred years old and more. An Ulster county man built the wall, burned the cement, and mixed it into mortar.

The above is in answer to an article in the issue of the FREEMAN on Saturday last, and appeared in a morning paper yesterday. "For the benefit of those living as well as those who must come after us" let us see who is right, Mr. McEntee or Mr. Jonathan W. Hasbrouck, the historian of Ulster county. Canvass White, Who was a brother to Hugh White, and who was sent to Europe to purchase mathematical instruments for use in engineering the Erie Canal, and for general information regarding the construction of canals, first discovered cement in Madison county in

this State, in 1818, and that discovery prevented the importation from Europe of the cement used in the construction of the Erie Canal. After the completion of the Erie Canal and while the Delaware & Hudson was in course of construction, Canvas White had a petition before the Legislature to grant him the sole privilege to manufacture cement in this State for twenty years as a compensation for his discovery. The petition was before the Legislature for three or four years, when finally the sum of \$20,000 was voted Mr. White for his discovery, but the exclusive right to manufacture cement was not granted him. Had "the fathers of Ulster used cement long before the canal was thought of" would Mr. White have received \$20,000 for discovering cement in this State and while "the fathers of Ulster were represented in the Legislature by such men as John Brodhead, of Leurenkill in Wawarsing? If, as asserted, "James Elmendorf built a kiln in Coxsing and tried to make or coax people to use cement." why, when he knew the engineers of the canal were experimenting with cement and he was in almost daily intercourse with them, did he not ventilate his knowledge on the subject to their relief and his own pecuniary benefit? Where is the wall a hundred years old and lain in light cement, and what is the name of the Ulster county man who built it? Mr. McEntee is well acquainted with Coxsing and has been for more than fifty years, yet he never heard of such a wall there, or elsewhere in Ulster county, and doubts if Mr. Hasbrouck, or anyone else, ever did. The light cement spoken of by Mr. Hasbrouck needed no grinding after being burned; a little water poured upon it would have reduced it to a powder. "They (the engineers) must have been poor workmen not to have discovered it (cement) until they passed Cole's Basin." Granted they were poor workmen, yet they did work entrusted to them, and having experience only with the Madison county cement, from which the Ulster county cement differs in being much darker in color (as well as better in quality), it was some time before the value of their discovery was patent to themselves, though "the fathers of Ulster" who, it is asserted, had a knowledge of cement years before the canal was projected, yet let Canvass White take \$20,000 of the taxpayers' money for claiming to have discovered what they knew of and had used. And beside the engineers were not, as Mr. Hasbrouck evidently thinks they were, working from tide water to the summit level, but from the summit level toward both ends of the canal, and it was near High Falls they first struck what they supposed was, and what afterward proved to be, cement.

Weekly Freeman—September 20, 1878

(To be continued)

ULSTER CEMENT WORKS

Recently someone asked if American Natural Cement was only made in Rosendale. Well the answer to that question is a most definitive no. American Natural Cement was made in several Ulster County towns as well as in other localities in New York State and in other states. The number of cement companies that operated at one time or other in Ulster County is amazing. A list of incorporated cement companies that filed property deeds prior to 1900 at the Ulster County Clerks Office follows:

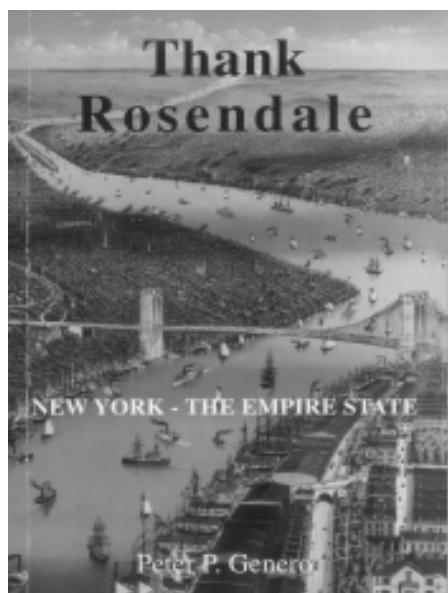
1. **Binnewater Cement Company**
2. **Capital Lime & Cement Company**
3. **Cohoes Lime & Cement Company**
4. **Connelly & Shafer**
5. **Delafield & Baxter Cement Company**
6. **F.O. Norton**
7. **Hudson River Cement Company**
8. **Hoffman**
9. **Jersey City & Rosendale Cement Company**
10. **James Cement Company**
11. **Kingston Lime & Cement Company**
12. **Kingston Cement Company**
13. **Kingston Limestone Company**
14. **Lawrence Cement & Manufacturing Company**
15. **Lawrence Cement Company**
16. **Lawrenceville Manufacturing Cement Company**
17. **Lawrenceville Cement Company**
18. **Newark Lime & Cement Manufacturing Co.**
19. **Newark Lime & Cement Company**
20. **Newark & Rosendale Lime & Cement Company**
21. **Newark & Rosendale Cement Company**
22. **New York & Rosendale Lime & Cement Co.**
23. **New York & Rosendale Cement Company**

24. **New York Cement Company**
25. **Newburgh Cement & Plaster Company**
26. **Ogden Rosendale Cement Company**
27. **Rosendale Cement Company**
28. **Rosendale Cement Works**
29. **Rosendale Lime & Cement Company**
30. **Rosendale & Kingston Cement Manufacturing Co.**
31. **Rosendale & Kingston Cement Company**
32. **Rondout Limestone Company**
33. **Warner Lime & Cement Company**
34. **Union Cement Company**

Not counted in the above list are cement companies that were not incorporated. Cement works owned by individuals or partnerships or filling after 1900 are not in the above list. An example would be A.J. Snyder & Sons which was a family owned company. Also not included in this list are some of the early Ulster cement works mentioned by Wm. Mather in *Geology of New York* published in 1843.

1. **Lawrence & Austin**
2. **Benjamine & Co.**
3. **Taylor & Little**
4. **Thaddeus Phelps**
5. **McNulty & Chapman**
6. **Whiting & Weeks**
7. **Dusenbury**
8. **White & Co.**
9. **Flint**
10. **Lawrence & Co.**
11. **O'Neil**
12. **Isaac Hasbrouck**
13. **Thomas D. Robinson**

These lists, County Clerk's office and Mather's are not complete but are an indication of the magnitude of the cement industry in Ulster County. [DEW]



Thank Rosendale by Peter Genero

"Peter Genero was born in Rosendale, New York, and holds a BS degree from the University of Maryland and an MS degree from George Washington University. He also attended the University of Pittsburgh Graduate School for International Development.

He was a career logistics officer in the US Army and the US Agency for International Development. He lived in foreign countries for thirteen years and was advisor to two foreign governments (Ministries of Finance and Interior).

Later, he was an economic development officer for the Florida Department of Commerce, president of his own international trading company and frequent guest lecturer at the University of Miami School for International Trade and Finance.

Upon retiring, he decided to apply a lifetime of experience and lessons learned to his hometown of Rosendale. This book is the result."

[Comments from the book jacket]

The book is available at \$16.65 + \$4.45 S&H (New York residents add sales tax)

News Flash ! Cement Prices Flat !

That could have been the headline of the Atlanta Daily Constitution's business section in the summer of 1879.

ATLANTA, July 2. —Lime—Dealers inform us that the sale of lime and cement at present is larger than it has ever been known to be in Atlanta and our city is commanding the most extensive trade in lime and cement in the southern states. The sale of cement alone has nearly doubled itself in amount, which is indeed an item to be Considered. While, sales are thus largely increased, prices seem to be unmoved. Cement has not shown the slightest variation in nearly two years, a most unusual occurrence. We quote as follows: Rosendale cement \$2.50 per bbl. Of 300 lbs. neat; Louisville cement, car-load lots, \$1.75; less than car-load \$2.00; Portland cement, car-load lots \$4.75; less than car load \$5.00.

Daily Constitution—Atlanta, Ga.—July 3, 1879

Summer Doings at the Snyder Estate



Dr. Russell Waines, SUNY New Paltz geology professor (center) at the Living on Karst presentation co-sponsored by the Society and the Ulster County Environmental Management Council and Town of Rosendale Environmental Committee in June.



Mules pull wagons loaded with stone from the Widow Jane Mine



Jimmy, Mikey & Boss at the kilns

**A DAY
AT THE
MINE**
with
Widow Jane
Boss
Mikey
Jimmy

Not all is work at the Snyder Estate. This June Soup-2-Nuts Theater Co., Margo Muller director, ran a Summer Theater camp at the Snyder Estate. A week-long, unique "full-process" experience for children interested in Dramatic Arts, Local History and the Great Outdoors. All aspects of story (play writing) and theatrical art was explored thru the fun and magic of a live Production.

Rosendale Street Festival—Century House Bubble Palace Once again the Society participated in the Rosendale Street Festival by creating a fun destination in the Lower Esopus River Watch Park for street fest visitors with kids. John and Joan Trapnal and kids from the Rifton Bruderhof took care of face painting the youngsters and young at heart. Many thanks to Anchor Fence of NY, Hanaford Kingston Plaza, C.A.R.S. Highland, P&T Surplus, and Central Hudson. And of course all of the Society's volunteers for two fun filled days.



Steve Sulko sells Ice Cream Social Tickets



Gary Trapnell & Steve—Bubble Masters



Ma, what's in there?



Witness Protection Plan — before



And after



Short & tall, volunteers all



John & Joan Trapnell

Round Top Cement Co. Logo 1905



CENTURY HOUSE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

★ EVENTS ★

Annual Meeting

Williams Lake Hotel

Sun Dec 4th 2 pm

See Notice inside