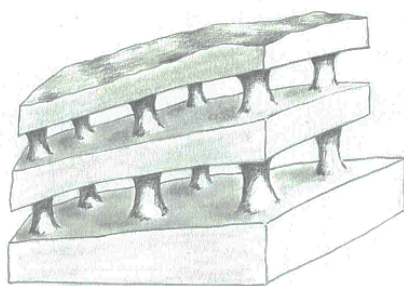


Links to the Past

by Steven Schimrich

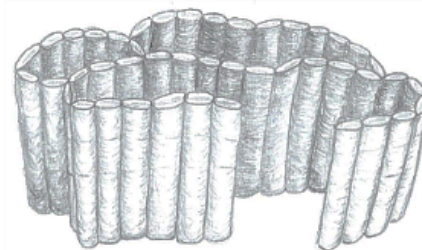
Readers of this newsletter will know that the Rosendale region is well-known for its natural cement. While the Century House Historical Society is interested in preserving the history of the natural cement industry, for a geologist like me, the “real” history of the region began some hundreds of million years ago when this area was the floor of a shallow tropical sea.



Rosendale natural cement actually comes from two separate layers of a rock unit formally named the Rondout Formation (after, of course, the surrounding Rondout Valley). These layers are separated by a third member of the formation, one not as suitable for use as cement rock, which was typically left behind. This is why many of the old mines in the Rosendale area are “double-deckers” with two excavated layers – the “lower cement” and the “upper cement” – which were separated by what the old miners of the time called the “bastard limestone” or, more politely, the “middle ledge” – a rock unit modern geologists have named the Glasco Limestone Member of the Rondout Formation.

While the two layers of cement rock in the area are relatively unfossiliferous, the Glasco Limestone contains a number of interesting fossils. These are the remains of a diverse group of marine invertebrates which lived during a period of time known as the Late Silurian dating to around 420 million years ago.

One of the fossils from the Glasco that I find particularly interesting is *Halysites catenularia* – commonly known as the chain coral. Chain coral is aptly named since, viewed from above, it strongly resembles the links of a chain. Each of the small oval openings is the top of a straw-like tube (the corallite) within which a coral polyp once lived. Sediment filled in the spaces between the chains forming the coral colony. In life, this mass sat on the floor of a warm shallow sea with each of the polyps extending out tentacles to capture and feast upon any plankton unlucky enough to drift within reach.



Chain coral fossils can be seen throughout the Rosendale cement district – all it takes to find them is a willingness to get out and look at some of the gray limestone cropping out along local roadsides. And the next time you visit the Widow Jane Mine at the A.J. Snyder Estate, look up at the ceiling. That’s the “middle ledge” Glasco Limestone. A short walk around the side of the mine will reveal a number of fossils including the beautiful chain coral (no collecting allowed – leave the fossils in place for everyone to enjoy!).

These chain corals forge a real link to our past – a snapshot image of a scene from our ancient Earth’s long history.

Mine and chain coral drawings by Jennifer Schimrich

The Century House Historical Society

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Welcome Henry!

A big welcome to our newest Century House Board of Trustees member, Henry Lowengard who was elected at our December 7th Annual Meeting.

A man of many talents, Henry works as a computer programmer (mobile iOS apps and web applications) but is also an accomplished artist and musician.

Congratulations Susan!

Century House Board of Trustees Member Susan Lewis has recently been elected to be a Fellow of the prestigious New York Academy of History.

Dr. Lewis, a Professor of History at the State University of New York at New Paltz, is a founding member of the Century House Historical Society.



A Message from the President

As I write this, daffodils are poking their heads up late this year, after a very hard winter (the sixth coldest March in Poughkeepsie since they started keeping track). But Century House was well tucked in, and we're starting to wake up with the flowers.

New in 2014, we're hosting a "Walks & Talks" Series devoted to all sorts of fascinating local topics. CHHS Board Member (and geologist extraordinaire) Steve Schimmrich will lead a geology walk at the CHHS property; Gail Whistance will give a talk on the Honk Falls Electric and Power Company and how the transmission line was rediscovered near Hurley through some intrepid industrial archeology; there will be a bird walk with the John Burroughs Natural History Society; and author Ed Renehan will join us to celebrate the publication of his latest book: *Pete Seeger vs. The Un-Americans*. These events are free to members.

Other news? Board Member Laura Moriarty is curating an invitational exhibition of installations and sculpture that will be shown onsite at CHHS. Our newest Board Member Henry Lowengard is busy updating our website, so get ready for a new look. And don't forget: we've got t-shirts for sale in the museum designed and printed by Wayne Montecalvo and Board Member Mau Schoettle.

Taiko Masala will be back on Sunday, July 13th. If you've never attended this event, make it happen. You will find yourself wearing a large smile. It's not to be missed.

Lastly, I urge you to attend our potluck Clean Up Day on May 4 (if you're not too far flung) – many hands make less work, as we open up the property and buildings for the summer season.

I hope to see you at one of our many events! Not a member? Become one (you can even become a "lifetime member" now) by downloading the form on our website. And "like" us on Facebook to keep up with all our latest and greatest.

A big heartfelt thanks for all our volunteers. We literally can't do it without you.

Happy Spring!

– Anne Gorrick

MINERS: An outdoor sculpture exhibition on the Snyder Estate

Curated by Laura Moriarty June 29 – October 25, 2014
Opening reception on Sunday, June 29, 1-5 pm

Century House Historical Society is very excited to announce **MINERS: An outdoor sculpture exhibition on the Snyder Estate**, featuring site-responsive works by some of the Hudson Valley's most innovative and engaging visual artists.

Featuring: Michael Asbill, Lorrie Fredette, Norm Mangusson, Portia Munson (*Fox Maze* at left), Wayne Montecalvo, and Chris Victor.





2014 Season

“Walks & Talks” at The Snyder Estate

Century House Historical Society

668 Rte. 213 Rosendale, New York 12472

www.centuryhouse.org

845.658.9900



Visit Us on Facebook

Sunday, May 18 at 1:00 pm

Geology Walk with Steven Schimrich

Ever wonder why geologists claim a shallow, tropical sea once covered Rosendale? Or what kinds of fossils you can discover in this area? Why the rocks on the Snyder Estate are especially suited for use as a natural hydraulic cement?

Join SUNY Ulster County Community College geology professor and Century House Board of Trustees member Steven Schimrich for a leisurely walk to the Widow Jane Mine where he will discuss the unique and fascinating geology of this area, point out the location of some interesting fossils, and teach you how the rocks allow geologists to visualize ancient seas teeming with life.



Saturday, May 24 at 8:00 am

Bird Walk with Linda Fagan

Sponsored by the John Burroughs Natural History Society

SIGN UP REQUIRED: We will walk about two miles, with some uphill: wear sturdy shoes and be prepared for muddy trails. Participation is limited to 20. Please contact Lin Fagan (845-339-2054 or faganlin@verizon.net) to sign up. The John Burroughs Natural History Society (JBNHS) is a local organization that studies nature in the spirit of the Ulster County author, John Burroughs, who was nationally influential in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. JBNHS offers many field trips throughout the year that are open to the public free of charge. For more information check our website www.jbnhs.org.

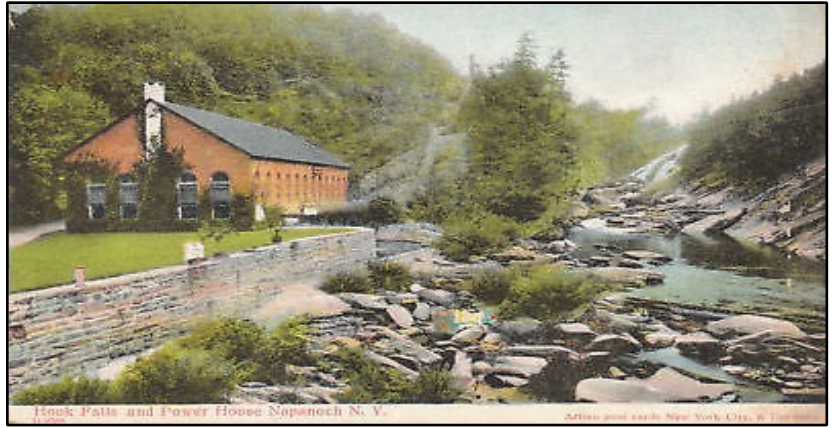
We are pleased to be exploring an area new to us – the Century House Museum and grounds – to look for spring birds. We will look for migrants and early nesting species during this three to four hour morning walk. Because birds get up early, we'll meet at 8:00 am in the Museum parking lot. Bring binoculars and field guides if you have them. We may also see spring flowers, unusual trees, and some reptiles or amphibians.



Sunday, June 1 at 1:00 pm

Talk by Gail Whistance

Connections: The Honk Falls to Kingston Electric Line



One autumn day in 1903, a small squad of men "went over the top" and spread out across the farmland and hamlets between Napanoch and Kingston to quickly purchase easements from landowners before they could conspire with neighbors to press for higher prices. This time the land grab wasn't for a railroad or a telegraph or telephone line – this time it was to obtain a right of way for the first high-voltage electric transmission line to service the bustling city of Kingston. This 26-mile line from the Honk Falls hydroelectric plant on the Rondout in Napanoch to Kingston was up and running only 8 years after the famous and historic Niagara-Buffalo line.

This lecture tells the story of the building of this line and how it was recently rediscovered near Hurley through some enthusiastic industrial archeology. Come and enjoy a slice of unusual history from the earliest days of our electrical power grid which was the underpinning of modern industrial development. On display will be some examples of the early and extremely rare glazed porcelain insulators from this line, the only line known to have used this particular model. The presentation does not dwell on the technicalities of electrical transmission but rather concerns the narrative of searching the line, gathering clues and making connections between people, places and ideas.

Gail Whistance is an amateur local historian and a previous presenter for the Hurley Heritage Society and the Ulster County and Century House Historical Societies. Gail is retired after a 30-year career with IBM where she was a technical writer and programmer for large commercial systems. While at IBM, she published several papers in technical journals and presented at international conferences. She holds a Bachelor's degree in mathematics and English from the University of Illinois. She was born and raised in northern Illinois where her father worked with the Rural Electrification Administration to deliver three-phase power to remote farms. She now resides along the Hurley-Rosendale town line with her husband Bruce and two sons.

Her interest in the 1904 Honk Falls electric line stems from Bruce making a chance discovery of early porcelain insulator fragments on their property which led to an exciting hunt over hill and dale pursuing the story of this forgotten bit of Ulster County history.

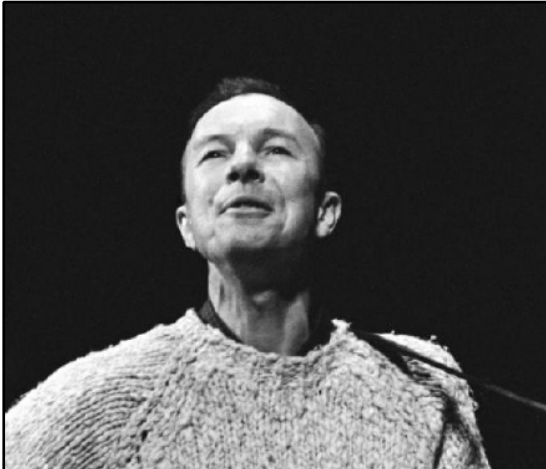


Sunday, June 15 at 1:00 pm

Talk and Book Signing by Ed Renehan

Pete Seeger vs. The Un-Americans

A history of Pete Seeger's black-listing and his battles with the House Un-American Activities Committee and Justice Department, 1955-1962



**Pete Seeger vs. The
Un-Americans
Edward Renehan**



Pete Seeger vs. The Un-Americans comprises the first book-length study of the folksinger and Hudson Valley resident's blacklisting, and his battles with the House Select Committee on Un-American Activities [HUAC] and U.S. Justice Department, 1955-62. Seeger was brought before the HUAC in August of 1955. Like many other principled individuals he refused to cooperate with the committee; Seeger remained silent on most questions asked. Unlike the majority of such principled individuals, he refused to rely on the Fifth Amendment in failing to respond, but instead (like playwright Arthur Miller) asserted his right to silence under the First Amendment, which guarantees freedom of speech and association. As Seeger well knew, this left him open to charges of contempt of Congress, and a likely jail term. As with Miller, Seeger was put on trial and found guilty of contempt. He received a sentence of 10 years in prison on ten counts of contempt, those sentences to run concurrently for a total of one year in federal prison. A successful appeal got Seeger's conviction reversed – but only on a technicality of court proceedings. Seeger explained to the media during and after this experience that he refused to take the Fifth because he did not feel he was guilty of anything, and also because he questioned the very legitimacy of the HUAC. "To take the Fifth Amendment is to say you don't have the right to ask *me* these questions. To take

the First Amendment is to say I don't believe you have the right to ask *any American* these questions." Seeger's conscientious stand cost him greatly in terms of his career at the time. Using previously untapped primary resources, this book -written by a longtime friend of Toshi and Pete Seeger – tells the tale.

Edward Renehan serves as Managing Director of the publishing firm New Street Communications, which includes the subsidiaries Dark Hall Press and New Street Nautical Audio. He is the author of many books including *John Burroughs: An American Naturalist* (Black Dome Press, 1992), *The Secret Six* (Crown, 1995), *The Lion's Pride* (Oxford University Press, 1998), *The Kennedys at War* (Doubleday, 2002) and *Dark Genius of Wall Street* (Basic Books, 2005). His articles and reviews have appeared in such publications as the *San Francisco Chronicle*, Hearst's *Veranda* and the *Wall Street Journal*. Renehan was close friends with Toshi and Pete Seeger for more than four decades. He lives near Newport, Rhode Island.



The Century House
Historical Society

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Natural News

Century House Historical Society

2014 Events Calendar

Spring Spruce-Up Day (Volunteers Needed!)

Sunday, May 11 from 1:00 – 4:00 pm
Annual Museum Opening Day

Sunday, May 18 at 1:00 pm
Walks & Talks: Geology Walk with Steve Schimrich

Saturday, May 24 at 8:00 am
John Burroughs Natural History Society Bird Walk

Sunday, June 1 at 1:00 pm
Walks & Talks: Lecture by Gail Whistance

Sunday, June 15 at 1:00 pm
Walks & Talks: Talk & Book Signing by Ed Renehan

Saturday, June 21 at 6:00 pm
Summer Solstice Event with Amy McTear

Sunday, June 29 from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm
Miners: Outdoor Sculpture Exhibition Reception

Sunday, July 13 at 3:00 pm
Taiko Masala Drummers in the Widow Jane Mine

Sunday, August 10 from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm
Annual Ice Cream Social – Free for Members

Saturday August 16 at 3:00 pm

Andrey Tamarchenko Art Exhibit & Jazz Concert

Sunday, August 24 at 1:00 pm

24th Annual Subterranean Poet's Fest

Sunday, October 19 from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm

Annual Fall Clean-Up Day (Volunteers Needed!)

Saturday, December 6 at 1:00 pm

Annual Meeting at Rosendale Community Center (TBA)