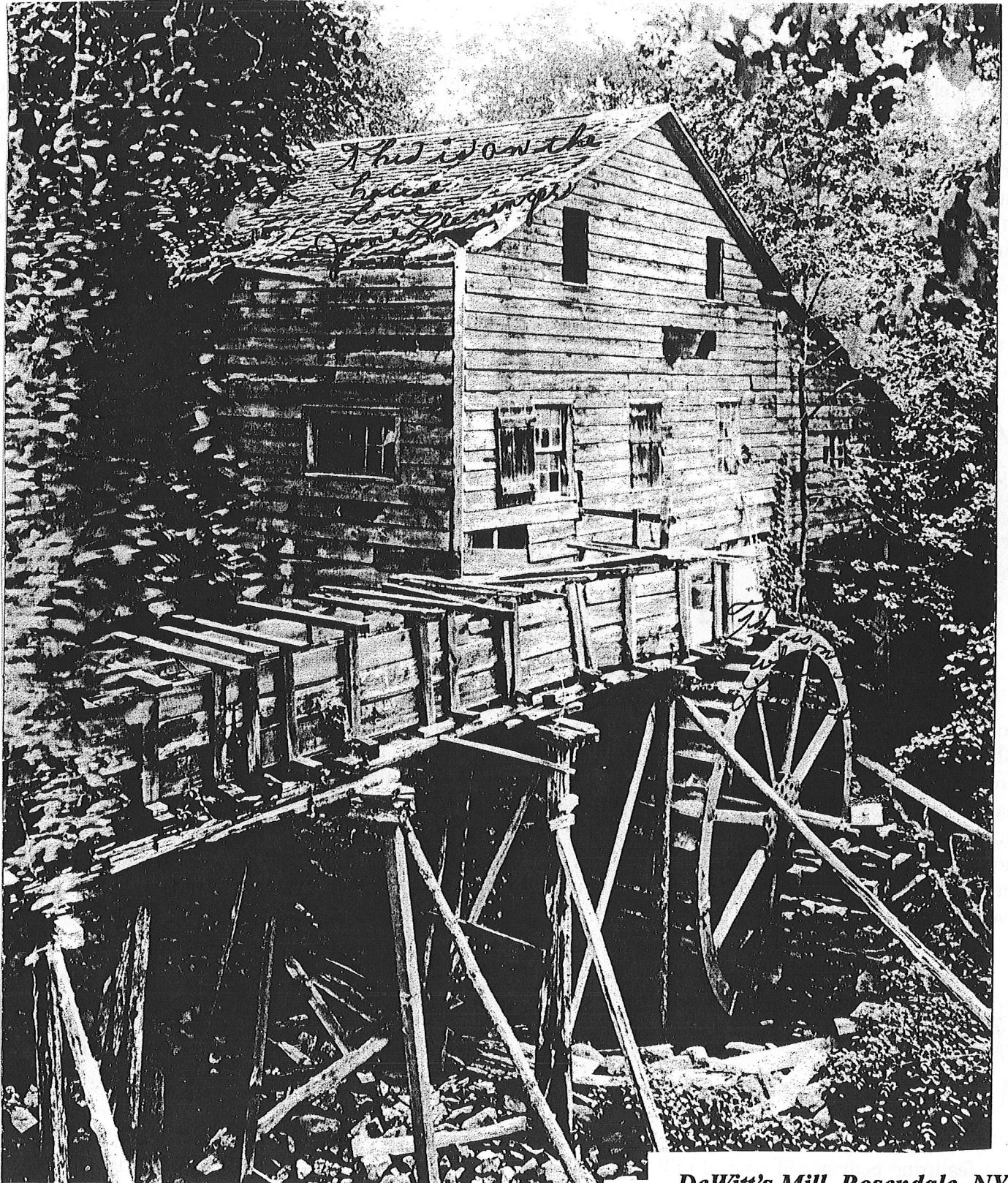


NATURAL NEWS

Volume 2 Issue 1

A Publication of The Century House Historical Society

Spring 2000



*DeWitt's Mill, Rosendale, NY
(circa 1910)
Story on page 4*

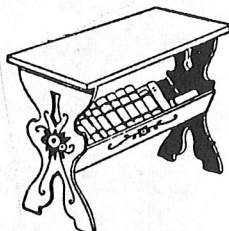
EVENTS

Local History Weekend Williams Lake Hotel May 19 - 21

Spend 3 days and 2 nights at the famous Williams Lake Hotel. Eat, sleep and learn about the industries that made the Mid Hudson Valley great in years gone by. This is a great opportunity for those Society members who do not live in the area to come and visit. Call the Hotel at 914-658-3101 for information or check the hotel's web site at www.willylake.com.

Wallkill Valley RR Company Rail Trail Clean Up May 13 - 14

All those interested in the history of the Famous Wallkill Valley Railroad as well as those interested in using the rail trail should come on out and join the folks that will be working to tidy up the Whiteport to Kinston section of the trail. For information on how to volunteer call the folks at Table Rock Tours at 658-7832 or check their web site at www.tablerocktours.com



"Great Treasures" Old Fashioned Community Yard Sale Saturday May 20 9 am - 5 pm Rosendale Recreation Center

Saturday, May 20, 9 am - 5 pm, "Great Treasures", a "Old Fashioned Community Yard Sale" sponsored by the Century House Historical Society at the Rosendale Recreation Center, Rt. 32 Rosendale. SELL—BUY—or BROWSE! Rain or shine! COME SELL! Here is a perfect day to spread out your checkered table cloths, display your attic treasures and to sell them to those from far and near. Call the Society early at 914-658-9900 to reserve a very reasonably priced booth space. Tons of publicity will make this a grand event! Win prizes for the prettiest booth! COME BUY! Bric-a-brac, the vintage and the new, books, household items, fancy frills, decorative items, buttons, bangles and bows, games and toys and wonderful things. COME BROWSE! Put the date on your calendar now. Call your friends to join you. Hook up your wagon and come on down for a day of fun.



Memorial Day Parade Monday May 29 Starting 10 am Hurley, New York



The Society will participate in the Town of Hurley Memorial Day parade on Monday, May 29th with a float featuring cement miners and mill operators of days gone by. Join us, be a miner or miller. Want to help with the float? Contact Brenda Wood at 331-1357 or e-mail Brenda at veggie30@aol.com. This is a first for the Society, it should be great fun.

Century House Historical Society The Snyder Estate

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Web: www.centuryhouse.org

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Gayle Grunwald — Secretary
Harriet Lettis — Treasurer

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Welcome new Members

- 234-F Steve Ladin - New Paltz, NY
- 235-I Lester Felton Jr. - Ruby, NY
- 236-F Ken Walsh/Kim Papa - Rosendale, NY
- 237-F Joseph Manner - Rosendale, NY
- 238-I Bea Conover - Rosendale, NY
- 239-I Steve Burricelli - Vallejo, CA
- 240-F Margaret & Gary Kraisinger - Halstead, KZ
- 241-F Mickey Duncan - Whiteport, NY
- 242-F James & Brenda Wood - Whiteport, NY
- 243-F Leland & Shirley Eaton - Whiteport, NY
- 244-I Louise Breitung - Rosendale, NY
- 245-I Leala Valier - St Petersburg, FL
- 246-F Barbara & David Carlson - Kingston, NY
- 247-I Wade Lewis - Binnewater, NY
- 248-I Rosalie Zimmerman - Woodstock, NY
- 249-F Renee & David Smith - Rosendale, NY



EVENTS

Spring Spruce Up Day At Snyder Estate Sunday, April 30 10 am - 4 pm

Winter is but a memory. Spring is here in its full glory. The grounds have changed from winter's brown to the deep green of spring with spots of bright color here and there. Each Spring a dedicated group of volunteers gather at the Snyder Estate to tidy up the grounds for the coming season. Not all the work is grounds work, some volunteers spend more work on the pot luck covered dish that each member brings for lunch. This year **Spring Spruce Up Day will start at 10 am and go till 4 pm.** A great opportunity to meet other Society members. Bring a rake, a warm jacket if cool weather, and don't forget that covered dish. Call the Society at 658-9900 to tell us your coming.

"Barrels & Bags" Opening Day at Snyder Estate Sunday, May 7 SPECIAL

* Music by Lee Eaton and Friends *
1 - 5 pm

The Snyder Estate will open this year on Sunday, May 7. The museum will have a special exhibit "Barrels & Bags". The exhibit will show visitors the old fashioned way cement was shipped from the factory to the customer. This exhibit was inspired by our new members Margaret and Gary Kraisinger. (see story on page .) A special feature at the opening will be a musical performance by Lee Eaton and Friends. They will perform on fiddle and guitar music that would have heard in the Valley 100 years ago. 1—5 pm. Free admission.



The Greenkill Grist Mill

Visited by Governors John Jay and George Clinton

Every era seems to have its important industrial regions. During the 18th and 19th century Greenkill was one of those regions. Today, when asked where Greenkill is located most people would not be able to correctly guess its whereabouts.

Two years from now we will be able to celebrate the 325th anniversary of the founding of the first mill at Greenkill in 1677. During the early period of Ulster County history a dozen years after the British had gained control of New York (in 1664) Mattys Mattysen Van Keuren was granted land along the Greenkill with the condition that he build a mill on the stream.

It was through the marriage of Mattys Mattysen Van Keuren to Tjaatje DeWitt in 1677 that the DeWitt family eventually gained control of the grist mill.

By the time of the American Revolution the Greenkill grist mill was owned by Charles DeWitt, the great-grandson of Tjaatje DeWitt's father. The mill played a very important part in supplying flour to the American military during the war. It was during this period that John Jay and George Clinton visited Charles Dewitt and the Greenkill mills.

After Independence was gained and peace declared the Greenkill mill area settled down to the steady production of flour which had gained a reputation for being extra fine. The Greenkill area was to also become one of the centers of the natural cement industry. It was on land adjacent to the Greenkill and the grist mill that Hugh White (who during his ownership of the cement works in Whiteport became a US Congressman) was to build and operate one of the early (1836-1848) cement works.

When the Michael Pavlov, the current owner, purchased the lands of the mill site he was given a hand written history of the mill by a former resident of the area. What follows is a portion of that history which takes us from the early 1800's to the end of the grist mills operation in 1920.

The Greenkill mill, which began as a smaller local mill, was extensively improved and altered in 1806 by Garrett Dewitt who built the old stone house which stood near the mill site. The mill soon became the scene of a big business. Farmers from all over the county brought their wheat, rye, corn and buckwheat to be made into flour and meal.

It is said that George Washington also had many sacks of flour ground in this mill for the Revolutionary Army.

My memory goes back to 1865 when my Grandfather had a farm a mile distant from the mill. He raised grain for all the flour we used. I can remember going

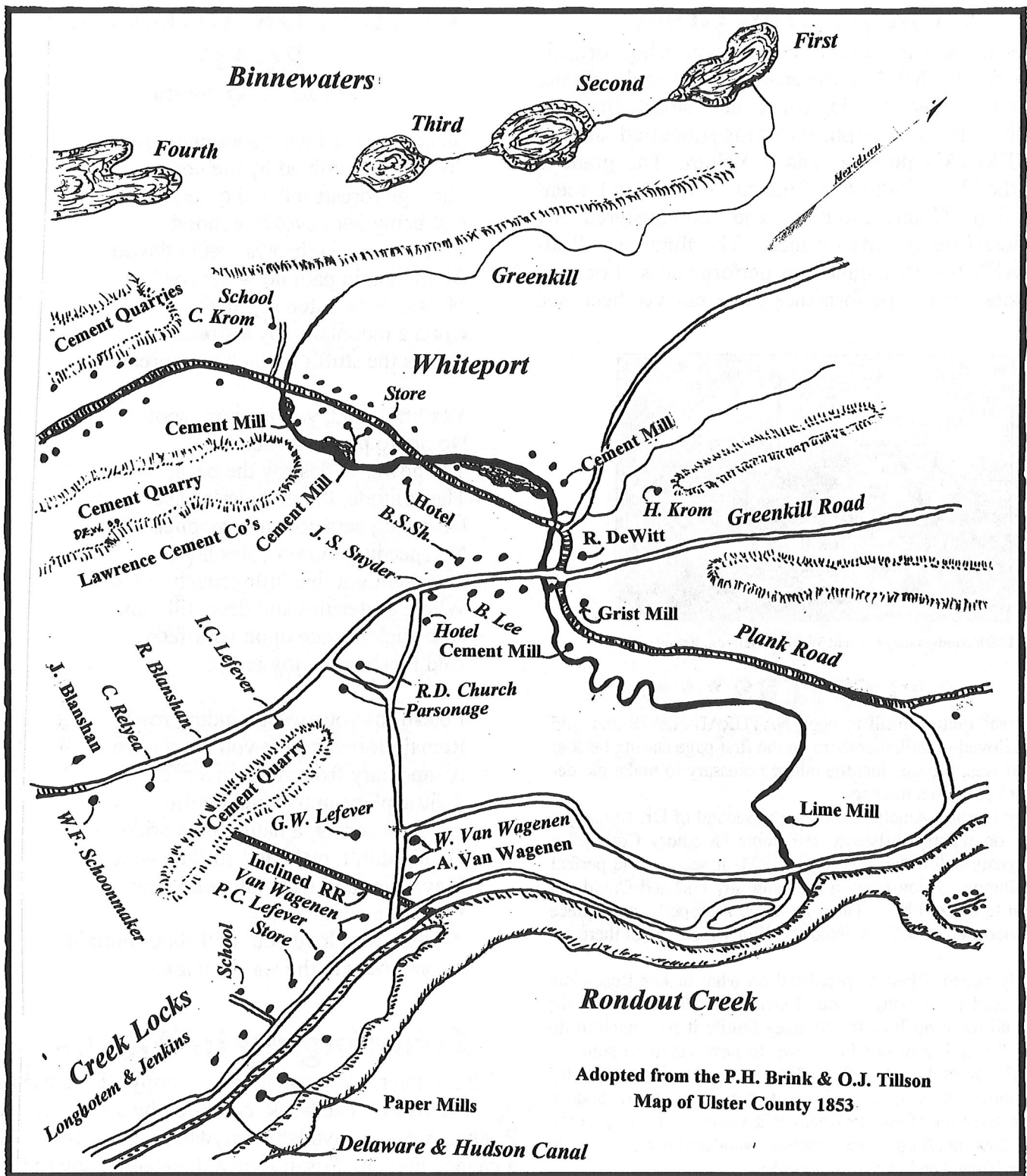
to the mill on the farm wagon drawn by our black team Prince and Nanny, the wagon piled high with sacks of grain. The mill floor was all in one big room, white dust over everything, the noise of the wheel and of the rushing water filling it with a rush of sound. The whole mill trembled and shook as the wheel turned the big grind stones. I was half afraid as I stood waiting while my Grandfather carried the sacks of grain and chatted with the miller.

The first miller I remember was Dicky Dewitt, the son of Garret Dewitt. I always think of him as I saw him standing in the mill door powdered all over with flour dust in his hair and beard white with age. His ruddy complexion looking redder still from the white surroundings, no dust could dim his keen black eyes. I remember Mrs. Dewitt better. She was a great church worker and many a church social was held in her roomy hospitable house. The kitchen in the house was a huge room. Plenty of room to "swing your partner" in the quadrilles we danced at the socials. They had one son, Charles, who married Nettie VanWagenen. Their daughter is Mrs. Myers.

The miller who ran the mill, after Mr. Dewitt became too old to carry on, was Mr. Samuel Collard from New Jersey. He and his family, Mrs. Collard, Hannah, Carrie, Hattie and Sam Jr., lived in the cottage across from the mill. Many fine times I enjoyed in their cozy home. My brother Will, older than I, was very much in love with Hattie Collard. I had a lot of sleigh rides from Will taking Hattie and with some young man taking me for company. It was not considered good form for one young couple to go sleigh riding alone, though each couple had their own cutter and horse with bells. This romance ended some what abruptly. Mr. Collard went to New Jersey, he could make more money there. The next miller was Mr. Benjamin Apgar. That family lived in the cottage too but the son was much younger than the young people who composed our set at that time. They lived here a long time and Alfred grew up with the next lot of young people.

After Mr. Apgar removed to another town Mr. Christiana with his family came to take their place. Mrs. Christiana I remember was very successful with flowers and sometimes roses she raised. Charles Dewitt by this time married Nettie VanWagenen and took over the mill. His uncle Simon Peter Freer did most of the mill work. They continued the business up to 1920. Perhaps 1919 when the mill was condemned as unsafe. The business had fallen away, only local orders were brought in and it was decided to abandon it. The old building was torn down but the wheel fell to decay bit by bit seemingly so strong and sturdy it was hard breaking it up. It had been made in times when building was a fine art and men made things to last: but now no trace of the old mill remains. Greenkill brook still rushes along its course to the Rondout Creek for men may come and men may go but the brook goes on forever.

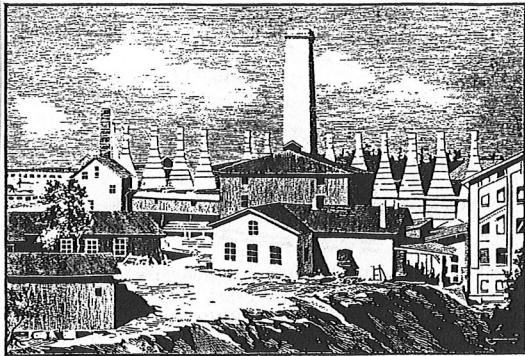
The photograph of DeWitt's Mill at Greenkill was first published in the October 1911 issue of *Olde Ulster*. The copy used as the illustration on the cover of this issue of *Natural News* appeared in the 1945 Kingston High School yearbook. [dew]



Map notes. The roads as shown in this 1853 map of the Whiteport/Creek Locks area of Rosendale are somewhat different from the present roads. The road marked Greenkill Road on the map is the present Route 32. In the area near the grist mill Route 32 has been realigned leaving the grist mill on the northerly side of the road. The road marked Plank Road on the map now follows more or less Whiteport Road and Mountain Road. The cement companies eventually built the Hickory Bush - Eddyville Railroad to replace the Plank Road. The western abutment of the railroad bridge crossing Route 32 still remains. There is a historical marker next to the Whiteport Fence / Cobra Systems office marking the location of the grist mill.

WEMBA Wins Grant

The Society is proud to be the sponsoring organization for WEMBA a Rosendale based multi-ethnic, multigenerational music, dance and storytelling ensemble. The grant application was submitted last fall by WEMBA's director, Dawn Valdez. The grant is from the New York State Council on the Arts Decentralization Grant Program and administered by Dutchess County Arts Council. The funding will allow WEMBA to mount two performances. Location and dates of the performance have not yet been set. [dew]



125th Anniversary Cement Works in Kunda, Estonia

* * LETTERS * * *

It was quite a thrill to open NATURAL NEWS and find my beloved grandfather there on the first page staring back at me. It was, I guess, just the nudge necessary to make me decide to become a member.

My mother, Amelie Mooney, the second of Dr. Mooney's three daughters, christened our home "Memory Cottage" a few years before her passing in 1994. It seemed the perfect appellation. Upon hearing the name my husband David ran down to our old barn. There he found a properly sized piece of wood and proudly painted the sign which hangs there today.

My cousin Charles speculated on what makes Rosendale so special to so many people. I can't speak for others but for me and my branch of the Mooney family it has much to do with the ability of our little town to have captured some of the flavor of by gone days. Rosendale remains suspended somehow in a time warp that permits one to believe (especially on Mountain Road) that we are not really in the year 2000 at all but have somehow wandered back in time to a less harried and more romantic era.

I'm enclosing a poem I wrote when there was a great hub-bob going on in Town about widening Mountain Road. The poem says it all!

Thanks once again for running Charles' piece!

Memory Cottage still rings with children's laughter just as it did in the early 1900's. My grandchildren call it "Nee Nee's Heaven" and spend many happy days here on Mountain Road. Five generations so far have enjoyed my grandparents haven and hopefully there will be many more!

Sincerely, Renee Smith

A PLEA FOR MOUNTAIN ROAD

by Renee O. Smith

Oh county road what soothing power
To walk untroubled by the hour
Through forests tall and quietude
Just being here evokes a mood
That broader highways would devour
Oh mountain path no wider road
Must ever threaten my abode
Upon a mountain, by a stream
This is the stuff of which men dream.

Yes little road, you memory spot
Do not to progress then a lot
The power to destroy the peace
The solitude, the dreamer's ease
No racing cars nor snowmobiles
No speeding motorcycles hum
Should blight this little stretch of past
Where butterflies and deer still come
Nor truck intrude upon your face
And this bucolic joy erase.

I plead for you sweet winding road
Remain forever what you once were
A sanctuary from modern strife
A little place untouched by life
A poet's corner, a naturalist's pride
Oh no, don't make its' surface wide
Stay little road what all men knew
Perhaps a century ago
And we who love you will shout hurrah!
As you remain the way you are.

Growing up in Tillson

This winter I wanted to buy a copy of **Growing up in Tillson**. The book, compiled by Judith Clark Renker, was not available anywhere. As a result of a chance meeting Susan Lynch donated a copy to the Society. I had also contacted Judith Clark. To find out if we could get copies to sell in the Society's Company Store. The upshot of all this is That the Society will publish a revised and expanded third edition. We are hoping to have this project completed by October 2001, the 10th anniversary of the books first publication. Looking for Tillson stories, items, and photographs. Contact the Society.

Focus on the Future

by Susan Lewis

On a beautiful Sunday afternoon, eighteen energetic members spent a couple of hours focused on the future of the Century House Historical Society, and came up with a multitude of great ideas. The meeting began as a brainstorming session, with the uncensored exchange of suggestions that ranged from the practical to the imaginative, humorous, and fantastic. It eventually developed into a planning meeting and resulted in: 1) the formation of a number of specific committees and 2) a concrete, immediate plan of action. * * * *

The September 26th meeting was followed up with another meeting on November 14th. The Brainstorming session was broken into five sections; fund raising, marketing, membership, events, and long range planning. The planning part of the meeting was broken into three topic areas. 1) planning ideas, 2) immediate action items, and 3) establishment of three committees. The committees formed are Events Committee, Development Com-

mittee, and Needs/Asset/Strategic Planning Analysis Committee. [dew]

Stay in Touch via E-groups

Michael Montella, has set up a free e-mail chat room for those Society members who have internet access. Contact Michael at centuryhouse-subscribe@egroups.com to be added to this e-mail chat room. Only Society members may subscribe to this free service. Joining the Society egroup is a convenient way to connect with other Society members and share your thoughts on the future direction of the Society. [dew]

Society Elects Board Members

At the December Annual Meeting members of the Society re-elected Harriet Lettis and Peter Haberland to serve on the Board of Trustees. Dietrich Werner, Peter Haberland, Gayle Grunwald, and Harriet Lettis were reappointed as officers of the Society.

Michael Montella was appointed by the Board to fill a vacancy on the Board at March 9th meeting of the Board of Trustees.

Spring Newsletter Sponsors

Williams Lake Hotel

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Society Members Donate Cement Bags

by Margaret Kraisinger

Gary Kraisinger has been in and around the cement industry for 33 years. Being a construction superintendent's son, he grew up around construction sites, unloaded rail cars for local lumber yards when in high school, and then hired on as a salesman of cement with the General Portland Cement Company (now LaFarge Cement Co.) when in his mid twenties. Now at the age of 60, he is the Vice President



Gary Kraisinger

of Production of the Rich Mix Products Division of the Ritchie Corporation, a licensee of Quikrete. He has been with the Richies for 28 years. He is the past president of the IP-CMA (International Packaged Concrete Manufacturers Association) which is a trade

association of ready mix-in-a-bag producers. Currently he is responsible for production in six concrete manufacturing plants and two related products plants. The Rich Mix Company handles millions of bags of cement and concrete mix annually.

Early in his career, Gary learned that early or older cement bags had been made of cloth. When he expressed an interest, he was often given "an example" by a friend or acquaintance. Now he enjoys a small collection of these bags which predominately come from mills in his working territory of Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas.

One story that Gary likes to tell is when he was fortunate enough to acquire a couple dozen of the Victor Cement bags from Fredonia, Kansas, he decided to have two shirts made from some of these bags. (This was many years ago when bags were not considered collectible!) He had a few of the bags professionally cleaned and then took them to a seamstress friend. She made two shirts, but the dust from the bags so badly clogged up her machine that Gary had to go to the expense of having her machine cleaned. Even then, she said the machine was never the same and ended up getting rid of it!

Gary has donated one of these Victor bags to the

Society. The Victor Portland comes from a mill in Fredonia, Kansas, which is now a division of the LaFarge Cement Co. The mill is still in operation.

Gary lives in Halstead, Kansas, with his wife Margaret. They have three grown children.

The Farmer's Friend.



AUTOMATIC
BAG HOLDER AND SCALES

Indispensable to the Progressive Farmer.

County, Territorial and State Rights
FOR SALE.

Manufactured by the
PUGET SOUND MANUFACTURING CO.,
BUILDING CONTRACTORS
—AND—
HOUSE PAINTERS,
726½ St. Helens Ave., - - - TACOMA, W. T.
AUGUST CULTUM, Supt.

1. Advertisement: Northwest Horticulturist, Agriculturist and Stockman, Tacoma, Washington Territory. February, 1889. [CHHS Archives]

Another collection of cloth cement bags was also recently donated to the Society by Dietrich Werner. This second collection of seven bags consists of bags from cement mills in New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Missouri, and Texas. A description follows. The dates, if given, are the dates that the bags were manufactured. Thomas Millen Co., Jamesville, NY. Giant Portland Cement Co., Egypt, PA. Saylor's Portland Ce-

ment, Coplay Cement Manufacturing Co., Coplay, PA (1915). Alpha Cement (1920). Vulcanite Portland Cement Co., Vulcanite, NJ (1927). Red Ring Brand, Missouri Portland Cement Co., St Louis, MO. Lone Star Cement Corp., TX (1941).

These eight cement bags and a Consolidated Rosendale Cement Co. (1909) bag, donated by John Rahl, form the nucleus of a collection of cloth bags, forerunners of the modern paper bag used by today's cement industry.

These cloth bags, like the wooden barrels they replaced, were recycled. There was a refund that users of the cement shipped in these bags could claim upon the return of good sound bags to the manufacturer.



Above: Filling cloth cement bags at a Alpha Portland Cement Co. Mill c. 1915

CAUTION -- KEEP SACKS DRY

Consumers of "Golden Gate" Brand Cement are requested to comply with the following:

Tag each bundle of sacks returned with one of these tags properly filled in.

Put 50 sacks in each bundle, tie each bundle of sacks securely.

Form 46 TO
Pacific Portland Cement Company, Consolidated
CEMENT, Via TOLENAS, CAL.

SHIPMENT OF RETURN, EMPTY CLOTH CEMENT SACKS.

SHIPMENT Consists of _____ Bds. _____ Bags

Shipment from _____

Shipped by _____

For Credit of _____

CHARGES PREPAID (SEE OTHER SIDE)

INTERNATIONAL TAG CO. CHICAGO

Above: Shipping tags for the return of Pacific Portland Cement Co. cloth bags to the mill located in Cement, California c. 1913

Below: Shipping memo for the return of cloth bags 1913.

Form 80 7-25-19-5M

NOTE: When returning Empty Sacks, kindly Tag each bundle of sacks with the Tag which we furnish for that purpose, and fill in and Mail this Memorandum. Note that sacks are to be shipped to Cement, care of C. T. & T. Ry. at Tolenas, and this memorandum mailed to CEMENT, CAL. Be sure and enclose shipping receipt with this Memorandum.

Mark Shipping Receipt "RETURNING EMPTIES."

1913

Give name of Place from which Sacks are Returned. Give Date:

PACIFIC PORTLAND CEMENT COMPANY, CONSOLIDATED

Cement, Solano County, California.

GENTLEMEN:

We have sent you today by freight to Tolenas, Cal., charges PPd., via _____ for which we enclose shipping receipt, _____ Bundles of Sacks, each bundle containing _____ Sacks in good condition, making a total of _____

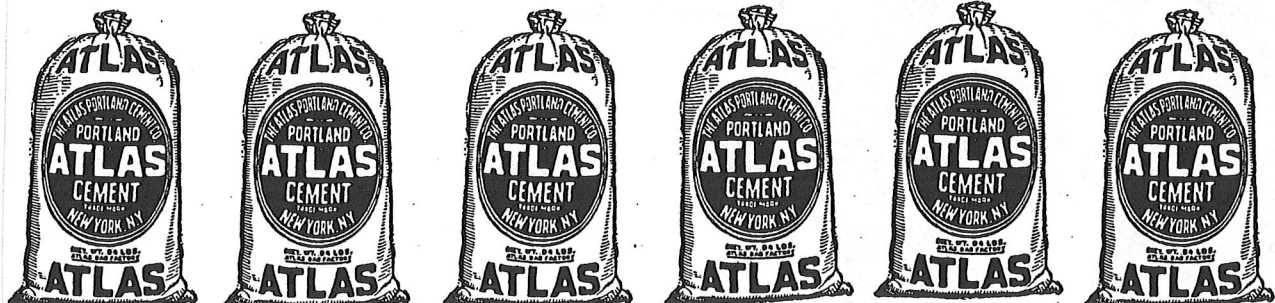
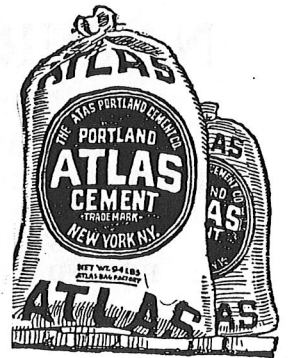
Give Name of Railroad Give number of Bundles

each bundle containing _____ Sacks in good condition, making a total of _____

Give No. of Sacks in each Bundle Give Total No. of Sacks

Sacks returned, for which please give us credit.

Yours very truly,



"BARRELS & BAGS" * SUN. MAY 7 1 to 5 pm

A new exhibit at the Century House Historical Society Museum

CENTURY HOUSE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

**** EVENTS ****

SPRING SPRUCE UP DAY * SUN. APRIL 30

At the A.J. Snyder Estate, Rosendale 10 AM - 4 PM

"BARRELS & BAGS" * SUN. MAY 7

A new exhibit at the Century House Historical Society Museum

WALLKILL VALLEY RR COMPANY

RAIL TRAIL CLEAN UP

SAT. & SUN. MAY 13-14 Whiteport to Kingston

WILLIAMS LAKE HISTORY WEEKEND

3 days and 2 nights Fri. - Sun. May 19-21

COMMUNITY YARD SALE * SAT. MAY 20

At the Rosendale Recreation Center, Rt. 32, Rosendale 9 AM - 5 pm

MEMORIAL DAY PARADE * MON. MAY 29

Society float in Town of Hurley Parade !

SEE PAGE 2 & 3 FOR DETAILS

NATURAL NEWS

Spring 2000

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 1

CENTURY HOUSE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

A.J. SNYDER ESTATE

POST OFFICE BOX 150

ROSENDALE, NEW YORK 12472

**ARE
YOUR
2000
DUES
PAID?**

Check in-
side for de-
tails

