

## CHHS Climate Initiative

### CHHS Climate Component: Looking to the Past to see the Future

The CHHS board has enthusiastically voted to add a Climate component to the excellent work CHHS is already doing that is both informative and positive, focusing on Climate Science and Solutions.

The CHHS is an educational not for profit, and we will be coordinating with other institutions county wide to present opportunities to the public to learn about the natural history of this region, First Nation respect for land and harmony with living beings, the fall and rise of the local Eagle population, how Dietrich Werner got George Pataki to get Christie Whitman, then head of EPA, to get General Electric to cleanup the Hudson River PCBs, and how the cement and coal industries affected the environment.

This aligns with the climate initiatives outlined in the recent Ulster County Exec Order and Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA).

The CHHS is working up plans for adding climate science and remediation displays and pamphlets that would come out of this program. We plan to present public speakers, make our site available for climate based conferences and events like Science Fairs, and to install a solar workstation to demonstrate solar power.

All this will require fundraising and coordination with the Ulster County Climate Smart Committee and other organizations, which will, we hope, expand our community involvement. We'll try to keep you informed about our progress with this initiative.

*If you think you would like to help with ideas, funds, or volunteering for this project, get in touch with us at [climate@centuryhouse.org](mailto:climate@centuryhouse.org)*



A solar workstation. We're planning on installing one as part of this initiative.



Kayla Gibbons' Cippus II stands near the Estate's entrance. Coal enabled the D & H Canal, and powered the kilns and factories, but carbon based energy like this is at the root of the climate crisis and should remain historical.

## Century House Historical Society

Rosendale, NY 12472-0150

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Web: <https://centuryhouse.org>

### 2025 Officers:

President –

Vice President – Henry Lowengard

Secretary – Louisa Duffy

Treasurer – Andrea Brown

Site Manager – Althea Werner

Board – Diana Smith

Board – Anton Werner

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*A view from the Marbletown Day Camp, where Henry encourages the campers to "SCREAM REAL LOUD".*

We had great turnout for Gratefully Yours, the Sauce Boss, Magic Lantern, and of course Dracula, Secret Mysteries release concert, and Hallowed.

We're hoping to have some of the crowd pleasing acts back, and like to keep the talent local and mine-appropriate!

## Message From The Vice President



Another year has flown by and it's been busy! We had a few visits with the Rosendale Library, the Hudson Valley Maritime Museum, Summer Campers, and Daisies. We had goats, turkeys, and chickens, a boutique, Dracula, The Greatful Dead (almost), and gumbo!

It was a packed season, leading off in May with three Vasser choirs that made excellent use of the Mine's acoustics. I have to say, we lucked out on weather, it was mostly very dry in the mine.

You may have noticed a whole lot of barrels on site, donated by the Widow Jane Distillery. Contact us at [info@centuryhouse.org](mailto:info@centuryhouse.org) if you'd like to buy one or more!

Mike McCabe has left the board, so I'm stepping in to write this summary. We have a lot of new board members to approve, and I hope you do vote for them if you are a member yourself. If not, I encourage you to join or rejoin by printing out the form on the last page, or going to:

<https://centuryhouse.org/membership>



**The board wishes to thank Michael McCabe, former President and Vice President, for his expertise, faithful volunteerism, carriage research, for bringing in the Sauce Boss this year, event work and cleaning up! Might as well also thank his wife Cheryl Rice, also a former board member, poet, and volunteer!**

# EVENTS OF 2025



**THE VASSAR CHOIRS**



**GRATEFULLY YOURS**



**MARK DELGADO**



**TAIKO MASALA**



**SAUCE BOSS**



**MAGIC LANTERN**



**POET'S FEST**



**GREATER MYSTERIES**



**DRACULA**



**MAKBET**



**SUBTERRANEA**



**HALLOWED**



## A partial transcription of Dietrich Werner's lecture given on March 31, 2005, at the Williams Lake Lodge for the American Natural Cement Conference March 31 – April 2, 2005 Rosendale, NY

*Here is an excerpt of a transcription of a lecture that Dietrich Werner presented with slides the the William's Lake Resort lodge in 2006 to an audience of interested cement and industrial history professionals. This article has been heavily edited for space and clarity!*

*The entire lecture can be heard at: <https://www.centuryhouse.org/dw-2005-03-31-lecture/>*

### Welcome to Rosendale.

Twenty years ago, if you would've asked just about anybody that was sitting in your position at your offices [people in the cement business] and asked or mentioned natural cement, probably, you would've gotten a shrug and they'd say, "What's that? I mean, what are we talking about? Is that like a brand or a thing? Or what is it?" And you would've gotten sort of blank stares.

I'm a historian, and president at the Century House Historical Society. It's a volunteer job. I'm retired, I used to be a contractor. My job is as president of the Society, and that society's function is preserving, interpreting, and collecting the history of the Rosendale Natural Cement region, which is basically the industrial history of Ulster County or the industrial history when it relates to construction and cement, for instance, in New York State, and eventually our connection to the rest of the world.

### Canvas White

What I want to do is bring you back to 1817 when Canvas White, who, if engineers and architects and this particular industry would have saints, he would probably be the patron saint of the industry.

When Canvas White was a young man, along with all the other engineers in that period of American history in construction, we didn't have engineering schools. RPI, for instance, one of the earliest ones in New York State, didn't exist yet. So the engineers at that time had no documentation or documents. They had maybe learned surveying, and that was a very straightforward, simple sort of trade compared to the surveying that you may be used to doing now. But they're the folks that were required as part of the construction of the canals in America. And Benjamin Wright, being one of these gentlemen, did not learn engineering in school as such, engineering, but was a surveyor, and then from that, he became a canal builder. He brought on a young man, Canvas White, who, like I say, should be considered a patron saint for the cement industry, not just natural cement, but cement as a material altogether.

In 1817, he had gotten hired to work on the Erie Canal by Benjamin Wright, and they were actually family-connected friends because they both came from central New York. Canvas White, from an area now called Whitestown in New York, went to England to do a little bit of "espionage", because we didn't have the knowledge of how to make a mortar cement at that time for building the canal.

Originally, I guess their idea may have been to import cement from England, because by that time they'd already been making cement there, what they called "Roman cement," a hydraulic cement.

So checking out not only the cement making process, but also building the canals, because making locks and everything like that, that was all new stuff. Nobody could open a book in 1817 and say, "Okay, this is how you build a canal".

They just didn't have that. So, seat of the pants learning.

Canvas White comes back after having spent almost almost eight months or so in England walking, actually over 5,000 miles of England. Checking out the canal systems over there.

In turn when he comes back to the States in 1818, along the route of the Erie Canal, the proposed route of the Erie Canal, he discovers limestone rocks that he figures they are going to be possibly suitable for making a hydraulic mortar. They test it, they go through the process, burning it, calcinating it, grinding it. And of course we're talking about grinding it, not in a modern day mill, obviously, we're talking about grinding in a mortar and pestle type of situation.

### Hugh White

Canvas White had a younger brother, Hugh White. And I want to sort of dive into my presentation, I'm going to constantly jump around a little bit because sidebars are so important in this kind of thing.

*Continued on P. 4*



Unlike most cement companies the Snyder's lived where they operated. The Estate had numerous animals. We invited the goats to come and munch away at some of the overgrowth and invasive plants around the grounds. While off duty they happily greet our guests and beg for yummy snacks. We also had happy hens laying eggs that were made available for sale throughout high season. All proceeds were put back into the cost of their care. -- AW

*Continued from P. 3*

We have a little hamlet called Whiteport, right here in Rosendale, that is are seven miles away from the Hudson River, so it's hard to conceive of a seven-mile-away town called "Whiteport". It's not even on the canal, but it's "Whiteport" because much later on it became the location of one of the larger cement manufacturing companies, which Hugh White, our gentleman over here, was the owner of.

So there were Canvas White, the canal engineer, and his brother Hugh White, before the Rosendale Cement era. Hugh White was in Fayetteville, in the central part of New York. He was operating the cement works for his brother. By 1825 or so, he's already left the Erie Canal, and he's working on the Union Canal. Just like the other engineers, they jumped around from one project to the next without finishing the first one, and already signing on to the next one.

But each time that Canvas White, as the engineer, specified the product, (and of course, at that time, the only person that was really making natural cement for Canal Construction was his own company in Fayetteville, New York), he would correspond back and forth with his brother: "I need more cement! We're going to be letting the contract shortly" on the Union Canal, the Chesapeake, Ohio Canal, the various other canals that he worked on, and Hugh would be constantly supplying the market that his brother Canvas was creating.

Much like Roebling, who built bridges, there was an ulterior motive: he had a company that made wire rope. He needed a project to use that wire rope. So he engineered bridges that used his product, and that's sort of like what Canvas White was doing way back in the 1820s in the early 1830s with natural cement.

We have correspondence, that shows the fact that the D and H Canal had the same engineers as the Erie Canal. Canvas White was not one, but John B. Jervis was one of the engineers that worked on the Erie Canal, and now was one of the lead engineers on building the Delaware and Hudson Canal.

So these guys all knew each other in some fashion. They shared because it was such a new industry, canal construction in America. They shared their knowledge constantly. We find that in the correspondence. Here's a shipping document. At that time, parts of the Erie Canal were already open and they were shipping cement. This is natural cement, but then, they called it "water lime", much as now it's called "Rosendale Cement". "Rosendale Cement" became generically known as an American-made natural cement. If you're in, let's say Chicago, if you'd be buying natural cement, let's say from the Milwaukee Cement Company, they would call that "Rosendale cement". And of course it was made in Milwaukee by the Milwaukee Cement Company. So it's sort of like "Band-aid", it's actually a trade name belongs to Johnson and Johnson, but asks for "an adhesive". You might not get a "Band-aid", you might get something else.

So right from early on, the name, the nomenclature for this particular product, the natural cement, it was already confusing. When I got involved, initially, I was looking, trying to get research, trying to document, early things, and I was looking for "Natural Cement". That was my search in books or indexes and everything like that. Well, when you go way back there, they didn't even think of that as a name. It was called "Water lime". So I learned that, much later on, that I shouldn't be looking for "natural cement" if we're talking about the 1820s.

When they were building the D and H Canal through Rosendale, which is 106 [sic, we say 108] miles long, they were expecting to be bringing cement from Canvas White's place in Central New York down the Erie Canal, then ship it down to Hudson, and then from Kingston or Eddyville, bringing it to the site to build the D and H Canal.

But early on, the engineers there recognized the limestone as they were coming through Rosendale. They didn't want to buy Canvas White's stuff and have it all brought from there. Not only that, but they could make their own cement because it was a very simple process actually. You just calcine the rock, the right rock (that's the critical part), and grind it, and you've got your finished product.

So when the discovery of the rock in 1825 here in Rosendale was made that was suitable for making cement, they right away said, "Oh, let's forget about the Canvas White and Hugh White up there in Fayetteville. Let's see if we can do our own, make our own cement for the construction here on the canal."

And they hired a gentleman named John Littlejohn. Doesn't that sound like somebody made it up? "John Littlejohn. Yeah, sure. He's the one that made the first cement in Rosendale?"

Well, it sounded like sort of like King Arthur or something like that. But we finally acquired a document from 1826 that actually shows that John Littlejohn was the contractor on building the D and H Canal, the part that's going through Rosendale.

It's actually for lock 10 and 12, which are probably a mile to three-quarters of a mile from where we are right here. So John Littlejohn really was the first person hired by the D and H Canal as a contractor to make natural cement for the construction of the Canal. This is 1825.

By the way, here's another sidebar, Canvas White, the elder brother is constantly writing in his correspondence to his younger brother saying, "Where's my cement? You are a slacker", or whatever the terminology in 1824 or 1825 might be for "slacker". Evidently, the younger brother was not responding in a timely fashion with product according to his older brother. You can see this in his correspondence that brings it out.

Canvas was now working on the Union Canal in Pennsylvania, and he is writing his younger brother and saying, "Look, the local guys in Pennsylvania, Bald Mountain Cement is now coming on the market and we can't get a share because it's local and we're losing out."

He writes in 1826 to his younger brother, saying "Hugh, what's going on up there in Fayetteville? Where's my cement? What are the Rosendale guys up to?" Because he's aware he lost his business here on the D and H Canal to local production. Of course, that was not being used anywhere other than the D and H Canal yet.

But by 1827, shortly after the canal part was completed, Rosendale took over Kingston part. That part of the D and H canal was already open in 1827. And by that time, local guys were already actually already making cement for market in the fall of 1827.

Natural cement was being produced here in Rosendale, shipped down on the D and H Canal to Eddyville, and from that point went to the rest of the world.

In 1827, Kingston, the part where the water is, wasn't called Rondout yet, actually it was called "Bolton" in honor of one of the canal engineers, John Bolton. So boats were going down to Bolton at that time, from here going to market, and there were at least five or six different names in other words, local plants making natural cement for market. And this is 1827.

*The entire lecture can be heard at:  
<https://www.centuryhouse.org/dw-2005-03-31-lecture/>*

# BOARD CANDIDATE BIOS

It was pointed out that voters for prospective board members often don't know for whom they are voting! Herewith, some short bios of our proposed board members.



**Henry Lowengard** has been a board member since 2013, he's the webmaster, publicist, box officer, and cement museum docent. Henry was CHHS president from 2018-2024, and is currently the vice president.



**Andrea Brown:** CHHS's current treasurer, Andrea can also be seen at the box office table and planting flowers onsite. Andrea brings to the board her extensive experience in finance, having worked as a financial advisor in wealth management for many years. She has a Master's in Finance and Economics from the University of Chicago.

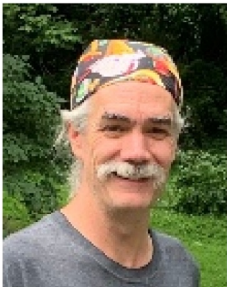


**Chelsea Miller:** is the co-founder of Curry & Miller and the Radical Capacity Alliance, two organizations dedicated to supporting nonprofits in fundraising and development. With extensive experience in the nonprofit sector, Chelsea is passionate about helping mission-driven organizations build sustainable growth and lasting community impact.



**Louisa Duffy:** Duffy was married in the Widow Jane Mine in September of 1998 and served on the CHHS Board of Trustees from 1999 to 2010. Duffy is the founder of the Rosendale Mermaid Parade, a proud member of the Women's Club of Rosendale, and the chairperson of the Rosendale Community blood drive which has run 77 times since 2001.

Duffy is employed at New York Blood Center, managing Operations for blood Donor Centers in the Hudson Valley, NYC, Brooklyn, Staten Island, and New Jersey regions. In her spare time, Duffy makes the content for the Widow Jane Mine Facebook page. She can frequently be seen at the Snyder Estate, on the top of the hill, parking cars for events.



**Anton Werner** was a founding Trustee and served on the original CHHS board. Mr. Werner attended Rondout Valley High School and Ulster County Community College. He is currently working for the Widow Jane Distillery as Northern Operations Security and at his own property management company Rustic Revelations. Mr. Werner has served the Snyder Estate providing help in everything from tree takedowns to roofing, and generator repair. He can frequently be seen at the Snyder Estate, on the top of the hill, parking cars for events in the mine.



**Kristina Knott** moved from South Florida to the Hudson Valley in 2017. She works a number of jobs including librarian, adjunct professor, yoga instructor and grant writer. She and her son live in Rosendale.

CHHS members can vote to approve our board candidates. The following members are running for election or re-election for a two year term on the century house Board of Trustees. Indicate your vote with a check or provide the names of other members as write-in candidates.

☐ **HENRY LOWENGARD**☐ **LOUISA DUFFY**☐ **ANDREA BROWN**☐ **ANTON WERNER**☐ **CHELSEA MILLER**☐ **KRISTINA KNOTT**☐

If you cannot attend the Annual Meeting, please sign here to request that the Secretary should cast your ballot for you at the meeting, and return this to the Society prior to December 7th, 2025

**PRINT:** \_\_\_\_\_ **SIGN:** \_\_\_\_\_

### JOIN OR RENEW YOUR CHHS MEMBERSHIP!

☐ **INDIVIDUAL: \$25**☐ **FAMILY: \$50**☐ **CORPORATE: \$250**☐ **LIFETIME INDIVIDUAL: \$500**☐ **EXTRA DONATION:** \_\_\_\_\_

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**RETURN YOUR BALLOT AND DUES TO:**

**CENTURY HOUSE HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

**PO BOX 150**

**ROSENDALE, NY 12472-0150**



The Century House  
Historical Society

668 Rt. 213, PO Box 150  
Rosendale, NY 12472-150

# NATURAL NEWS

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**This Year's CHHS Annual Meeting is on December 6th at 1pm!  
Mining of the Schawangunk Valley  
with Joseph Palumbo**

**A detailed presentation on the lives and work of miners in the cement, lime ,  
and lead mines of this area! Mr. Palumbo brings a lot of photos and first  
person experience to this lecture!**

**It's also a chance to visit the inside of the Century House (seating is limited)  
or tune into the streamcast on Zoom.  
The link will be posted on <https://CenturyHouse.org> before the meeting!**

