



Deerpark Diary

Town of Deerpark 1863 School House Museum

Town of Deerpark Historian, P.O. Box 621, Huguenot, NY 12746

845 856-2702 www.1863schoolhouse.org

March, 2016

Vol. 13

No. 1

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Mandeville Murder The Inquest Begins

In the December issue of the "Deerpark Diary," the events surrounding Chauncey Mandeville's murder were introduced. The focus of his murder investigation now turns to the Coroner's Inquest. Tuesday, Aug. 22, 1882 at 9AM, the inquest was called to order in room 19 of the Delaware House, located then on lower Pike St. in Port Jervis. The murder created quite a bit of excitement as a crowd of eager listeners huddled around windows, doors and in the hallways of the old hotel. T. J. Lyon and James Allerton conducted the examination on behalf of Mandeville. L.E. Carr and Cornelius Elting Cuddeback appeared as council for the accused Philip B. Elting. The Coroner's Jury was manned by Town of Deerpark residents Orville J. Brown, Oliver Gordon, Samuel Bevins, Samuel Conkling, Charles Morris and Francis H. Simpson. All were acquainted with Elting.

The first to testify was Dr. Solomon Cuddeback, who had been present at the autopsy. Holding Chauncey Mandeville's jacket and vest, Cuddeback pointed to the bullet holes and surmised the victim must

have been stooping when he was shot. Allerton asked the doctor if he could tell at what height the gun was fired from. Cuddeback answered, "From a standing position about 30-40 feet away."



**Elting Homestead
"Caudebec in America"**

After the noontime break, the next witness was called, Susan Stoll. Miss Stoll was a tenant of Elting's and she lived just up the road a little distance. She had been down the lane by Elting's house to fetch water, when she heard the shot. She ran over to the house and asked Blandina Elting to come with her. However, Blandina refused to go saying she couldn't. Susan was the first on the scene and found Chauncey lying on his back with a quarter-sized hole in his side.

James H. Brown was then questioned. Brown stated, "I heard that a man had been shot. When I arrived there were many people gathered and they had a wagon ready to load the

boy. I asked if anyone had looked for traces of who may have done the shooting? I went through the fence and about 100 yards away, I saw a man's tracks leading up towards where the shooting took place, about 25 feet from where the boy fell. The tracks came from Elting's house, both coming and returning. No other tracks but dog tracks. David Mc Combs came with me. The tracks were fresh."

Blandina, Philip Elting's sister, was called up. She testified that he came into the house 15-20 minutes before the shot was heard. He had gone upstairs to lie down. He told her to call him when the cows came for milking. She said she heard the shot and the groaning. Blandina went upstairs. Her brother was lying on top of his bed, fully clothed. She could not remember what was said, then Elting came down stairs. They both saw a crowd of people had gathered in the corn field, but did not go to investigate. Elting grabbed the stool and went to milk the cows. She added, "We keep 16 cows. He then took the milk to the creamery." Blandina claimed she knew that there were many guns in the house, but never knew her brother to threaten or shoot at anyone.

Numerous witnesses testified to quite a different story saying repeatedly that either they themselves or others had been threatened and or shot at by Elting. Numerous neighbors and passersby claim to have

seen Elting in the area of his lane just prior to the shot being fired. And again, numerous witnesses fixed the time of the shooting by the clock chimes from Robinson's and Dockerty's, the town clock and finally by the passing of the milk train.

With Allerton's flair for language, he described that lovely afternoon by saying, "It was a Sunday, for many it is a hallow day. The only day they can spare in the week to breathe the pine air of heaven. The only time they can go and bathe in the pure water of the Neversink." Many people were out and about, enjoying the break from their week's toil. They were sitting on their porches and along the train tracks, walking down the road and boating in the Neversink River. Mrs. Lambert had heard the shot, walked toward the sound, stepped on a chestnut stump and saw Elting by the river. She claimed he was trying to hide something when Charles Robinson, his wife and two children, who were sailing at the time, came into view. Mrs. Robinson testified that she was in their boat and saw Elting come down to the water, wash his hands and turn back toward the house.

Three days of similar testimony was documented in "The Evening Gazette." After looking over the proceedings, it is amazing how many people felt a connection to this case. Over and over again, testimony was given of having heard threats made by Elting and the irrational temperament that he readily displayed when it came to trespassers on his property.

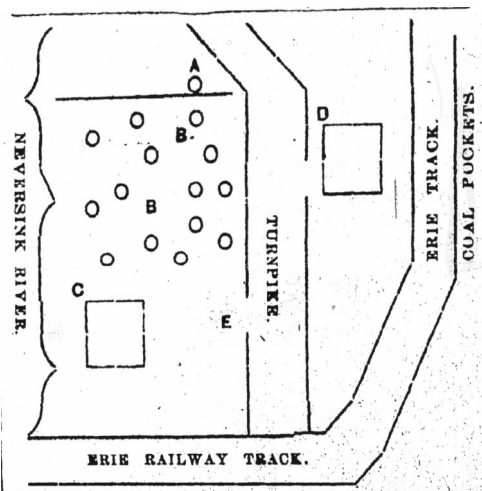
James Allerton was baffled to find a motive for the killing of such a peaceable young man as Chauncey Mandeville. He could ascertain no enemies from his inquiries. Allerton wrote, "So one must look to the character and disposition of the man charged with the act. A score of people testified to have seen him at the time and place, just before and after the report of the shot." The fact was that no one saw the actual shooting. However, Allerton said, "Unnatural

acts speak volumes. Every instinct of his (Elting's) nature would have driven him to the scene. On any other occasion, he had been swift to detect a trespasser track on his soil. But no, he took his stool and went to milking and left the dead for dead."

The inquest lasted three days despite having to change rooms because the roar of passing trains made hearing difficult. The jury was charged at 1:50PM and two hours later returned their verdict: "We, the persons impaneled to ascertain the cause of death of Chauncey Mandeville on Aug. 21, 1882 find his death came from a gunshot wound most probably inflicted by Philip B. Elting." Coroner Shaw said the man was not on trial and that all of the evidence presented was circumstantial. The prisoner was given a hearing at 9AM the next morning and sufficient evidence was found to hold him for an appearance before the Grand Jury in Newburgh, NY.

The final part of this series will appear in our June edition of the "Deerpark Diary." Is anyone convinced of his innocence or guilt? Do not assume to know the total outcome.

Location Diagram
"The Evening Gazette"
A—Apple tree in cornfield where Mandeville was shot, 29 ft. from road. B—Orchard where shot was fired from. C—Elting's house. D—Elting's tenement. E—Lane leading



Movies Before Hollywood

Part 2

Movies made in Cuddebackville during the years 1909 and 1911 involved local residents who played bit parts in some of the scenes. Standard melodramatic gestures were used in these early silent films to help make the story line clear. The audience knew what each of the gestures meant, so it was important that the actors were able to portray each gesture with ease.

The following are some of the gestures that had to be memorized by local residents who wished to be cast in some of the roles:

Resolution or Conviction—fists were clenched in the air and brought down sharply to the side of the body;

Despair or Shame—The actor's hands covered his face, or his head was buried in his arms;

Fear—Arms were extended with the palm out toward the fearful object, the other hand perhaps clutching the throat;

Help Me Lord—Arms were fully extended over head, sometimes hands were clasped;

I Love You—Both hands reached out to someone;

Feminine Distress—An actress' hand was held to her cheek, or her hands were placed on both sides of her face;

Come Away with Me—The actor held the woman's hand, and with the other hand points to the door;

Rejection—Brings hand up to chest and then down again.

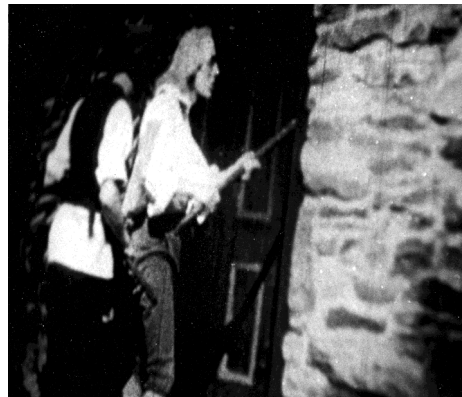
Other considerations during the filming were make-up and costumes. Everyone was responsible for their own make-up and costume. Actors applied their own makeup just as they had for stage roles in the theater. This

caused actors to have a highly unnatural look when filmed. Actors and actresses were also responsible for their own hairstyle and putting together the correct costume for each film. Since no one kept track of what an actor wore from scene to scene, the actor was obliged to remember for himself what costumes, make-up and hair--do was used in a previous scene. Sometimes an actor wouldn't be used because he or she couldn't find something in his or her own wardrobe to fit the scene. These same situations applied to the local folks who wanted to be in the movies. Most of the time, the actors helped the local residents with the correct gestures, make-up, and costumes.

Most directors and cameramen were not concerned with what they considered minor details. They lacked the understanding of the connection between black and white photography, lighting, and the type of makeup used. This made for very artificial scenes.

Other considerations were finding locations for filming scenes which met specific needs for each story. Two of the movies, "The Hessian Renegades" and "Leather Stocking" needed a pre-revolutionary war stone house. In early July, 1909, Mr. Predmore, owner of the Caudebec Inn, drove D. W. Griffith, director, and Billy Bitzer, camera man, around the neighborhood. They traveled down Graham Road (today's Guymard Turnpike) and saw the beautiful gateway to the Godeffroy Estate. Griffith asked him to drive into the estate, but Mr. Predmore stated that Godeffroy did not like automobiles, because they scared his horses. Therefore they

parked and walked up the winding road past the beautiful gardens and fields. Griffith knew that this was a perfect place to shoot a film. At the horse stable they met Godeffroy where Griffith explained that would like to make some of their films on the Godeffroy estate. He also mentioned that they were looking for a stone house for two of the films. Mr. Godeffroy told them that the old Gumaer stone house was nearby and they could use it. He also let Griffith use some of his riding horses for the movies.



"The Hessian Renegades"

Mr. and Mrs. Godeffroy enjoyed watching the movie making, especially "The Hessian Renegades" filmed at the Gumaer stone house. This story is about a young American soldier who is carrying a special message to General Washington. He is spotted and chased by a group of Hessian soldiers. Finally he reaches his father's home and hides in a laundry hamper. The Hessians enter the home and torture the father. Then they search the house and kill the young soldier. The father wants revenge and gathers all of the neighbors in the village to find and kill the Hessians. The villagers kill

them with the only weapons they have— axes, clubs and knives.

In August "Leather Stocking" was filmed at the Gumaer stone house. This is a short version of James Fenimore Cooper's famous Leather-Stocking Tales about "Hawkeye" and his exploits during the French and Indian War as he escorts a group of soldiers through enemy country. Many local residents watched the filming and upon its completion, the Godeffroys held an open-house in their "cottage" for the entire company.

Some other local scenes include Buttermilk Falls, the D & H Canal and the Neversink River.

"The Mended Lute" was filmed in July, 1909, starring Florence Lawrence, Owen Moore, James Kirkwood and Frank Power. This is an Indian story about Rising Moon who loves Little Bear, but her father prefers Standing Rock, a rich suitor. Standing Rock takes Rising Moon to his teepee under guard, but she escapes and joins Little Bear. They paddle down the Neversink River into the sunset as the film ends.



**"Mended Lute"
Neversink River**

Because D. W. Griffith felt that films were predominantly educational and should strive to uplift audiences, his films usually made a social comment. This is especially evident in "The Modern Prodigal" filmed at Cuddebackville in 1910, starring Guy Hedlund, Jack Pickford (Mary Pickford's brother) as well as Lester Predmore, a local Cuddebackville boy who received \$5.00 for his work as an extra on the film.

This film is about two young boys (Jack Pickford and Lester Predmore) who go swimming in the river. When one of the boys (Jack Pickford) has trouble, the other goes for help. An escaped convict rescues Jack from the water, only to be caught by the sheriff, who is also the drowning child's father. The sheriff's wife allows the convict to escape again, as a reward for saving her son. There are good scenes of Oakland Valley Road, Port Jervis and the D & H Canal in this film which emphasized an ethical problem and did not revolve around a chase scene.

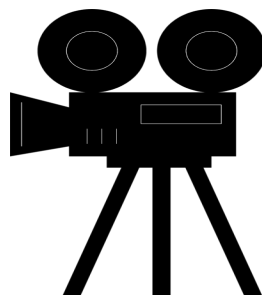
In 1911, D. W. Griffith had perfected additional camera techniques which are still used today. *The Squaw's Love* was made at Cuddebackville in 1911, starring Mabel Normand, Kate Bruce, James Kirkwood and Dorothy West. In this film Mabel Normand, after struggling with another Indian girl, has to do a back dive off a cliff into the Neversink River. This was the first time that three cameras were used to film one shot. One camera was in back of Mabel Normand, one on the bank of the river for a medium shot, and one in a rowboat in the middle of the river. With careful editing this was a significant scene in the movie. After the dive was completed, Mabel Normand was

rescued from the river and driven to the Caudebec Inn for a drink at the bar. It had been a harrowing experience for her, but she realized that it was a completely new way of filming harrowing scenes



Mabel Normand

Even though Griffith had chosen Cuddebackville for filming because of the scenery and good lighting, he realized that weather was a factor which limited filming to only a few months a year. After shooting a few films in California, he realized that was a better, more consistent place for making movies.



Deerpark Community Show & Tell

Open House—

September 18, 2016



Deerpark Museum plans to have residents share their history with our community by bringing some of their family treasures to the open House in September. Start the search for old photos, letters, cards, tools, household items, clothing, newspaper articles, paintings, quilts, crafts, artifacts etc. that tell stories of special interest to our community. Tables will be set up to display these items of interest and you will be able to share stories of these happenings. An appraiser will be available for those interested in finding out the value of their display items. **For additional information to take part in this exciting event, call 845-856-2702 or 845-856-4515.**