



Deerpark Diary

Town of Deerpark 1863 School House Museum

Town of Deerpark Historian, 25 Grange Rd., Huguenot, NY 12746

845 856-2702 www.1863schoolhouse.org

September, 2016

Vol. 13

No. 3

- **Jackson Brothers**
- **New Roof**
- **Fun Facts**
- **Local Artist Honored**
- **Patriotic Thoughts**
- **Deerpark Open House**

A Lesson in Road Building

In April of 2016, the historian's office was contacted by Sarah J. Brown, who was coming to Cuddebackville to search for the locations of her Cunningham and Jackson ancestors. We met at the Deerpark Museum, plotted a course and drove up Big Pond, Prospect Hill, and Oakland Valley Roads, and then over to the Cuddebackville Reformed Church on Route 209. Her grandparents were married in the house next to the church, corner of Routes 211 and 209. She found some of her family's old homesteads, a couple of which were across the street from the Prospect Hill School House. I received a lesson in local history. Before leaving, Mrs. Brown donated to the museum nearly fifty original photos showing the Jackson Brother's road construction business from 1912 and a copy of an article from a local newspaper documenting the new style of road construction that they were engaged in building.

In the early days of horse and wagons, roads were nothing more than dirt paths. They were dusty in the summer. They had deep muddy ruts in the spring and were nearly impassable in the winter. Plank or corduroy roads were later created by cutting

down trees and laying the logs side by side. These roads certainly had their share of travel problems and upkeep. Before towns took over the maintenance of their local roads, private property owners were required to see to it that the roads along their property lines were kept in good condition. Also, turnpikes were built by private companies with stockholders. Toll gates were placed every so many miles with a gate house, where the gate keeper collected the tolls and raised the gate for travelers. Deerpark had a number of these roads.

By 1910, a new era had arrived with the automobile. Better roads became a necessity. Along came the Jackson Brothers of Cuddebackville;



Robert, Nathaniel, Joseph and William. These merchants, blacksmiths and farmers also ran a blue stone quarry, which shipped stone to far-away places. The Jackson Brothers chiseled their names onto the stone steps they built at the Cuddebackville Reformed Church. Robert Jackson owned the blacksmith shop on the corner of Oakland Valley Road, Route 209 and the D&H Canal.

Opportunity knocked at the door of these local entrepreneurs. They set up a road construction company and put in a bid of \$90,000 to build a macadam road that would stretch along a section of old Route #4 from Middletown to Fair Oaks in Orange County.



This new form of highway construction created quite a stir, as it quite possibly was one of the first of its kind in the state. *The Middletown Times-Press* printed a front page article in their November 16, 1912 edition. It was proclaimed as "interesting in the extreme" and the process was described in detail.

The article read as follows; "The bed of the road is first excavated where needed and necessary fills are made to a grade eight inches below the grade line of the finished road. This work is made twenty feet wide, allowing plenty of room for the finished road, which must be sixteen feet wide.

"A fine grading is placed on the bed and rolled, to a depth of three

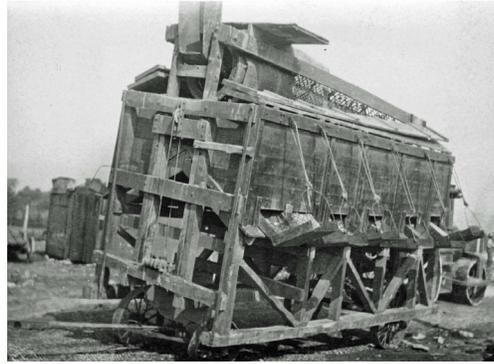


“After it is rolled all cavities which appear are filled with dust from the crushed stone and broomed well so that the surface will be absolutely level.

are thrown on and the road is rolled, and declared completed.



inches, this part of the work being sixteen feet wide.



Stone Crusher

“The sides of the road, which have been left alone, while the other work is going on, are then graded to conform to the formation of the ground over which the road runs, and the road is opened to traffic.



“Four inches of No. 3 stone, the next largest size, is then placed on the surface which is then rolled and a coating of asphaltum is applied. This is applied one and one third gallons to the square yard, after which it is covered with screenings and well broomed. The surplus which remains on top is brushed to the side of the road, which appears level.

“The camp of the Jackson Brothers which is located a short distance north of the Maples, is indeed a busy place, with gangs of men working on every part of the road, which is in all stages of completion at this point.

“Then a layer of four inches of what is known as No. 4 stone, being the largest size of the crushed stone, is placed on the road bed and rolled down.

“A pressure tank is then brought into play, which covers the road with a lighter oil, one third of a gallon to the square yard, after which screenings

“A visit to this work by residents of this city who do not understand the construction of a state road, will indeed be a treat and is well worth the time of anyone.”



Certainly, the newspaper of this time period, did not mention the combination of steam driven machinery and wagons drawn by teams of horses. Horsepower was on its way out.

The donated photos document the process so well. One can almost smell the odor of the heated tar (asphaltum) in the air. If anyone can identify the locations, please let us know.

New Roof

A bit like Christmas in July when I arrived at the Deerpark Museum on a very hot Tuesday morning, July 26th. I looked out the window and saw men on the roof of the Neversink Valley Grange and all of the roof shingles had already been removed. Hooray! We are getting a new roof at last. Good things happen to those who wait! The roof is now complete and we can move on to the other projects that need doing to make our Grange Building into a safe and attractive community center.

Thank you Town of Deerpark and Thank You, Jason Terpstra and your very hard working crew who braved terribly high temperatures, sun and humidity. A job well done!



Fun Facts

In those old days, our ancestors cooked in a kitchen with a big pot that always hung over the fire. Every day they lit the fire and added things to the pot. They ate mostly vegetables and did not get much meat. They would eat the stew for dinner, leaving leftovers in the pot to get cold overnight and then start over the next day. Sometimes stew had food in it that had been there for quite a while. Hence the rhyme: Peas porridge hot, peas porridge cold, peas porridge in a pot nine days old.

Sometimes they would obtain pork, which made them feel quite special. When visitors came over, they would hang up the bacon to show it off. It was a sign of wealth that a man could “bring home the bacon.” They would cut off a little to share with guests and would all sit around and “chew the fat.”

They used to use urine to tan animal skins, so families used to all pee in a pot and then once a day it was taken and sold at the tannery...if you had to do this to survive you were “Piss Poor.”

But worse than that were the really poor folk who could not even afford to buy a pot...they “didn’t have a pot to piss in” and were the lowest of the low!



Most people got married in June because they took their yearly bath in May, and they still smelled pretty good by June. However, since they were starting to smell...brides carried a bouquet of flowers to hide the body odor. Hence the custom today of carrying a bouquet of flowers when getting married.

Local Artisan Honored By National Magazine

Deerpark Museum member and local artisan Peter Koenig has been chosen by a panel of experts convened by *Early American Life Magazine*, to be listed in their 31st Directory of Traditional American Crafts. Thus making 2016 the fifth year he has earned this honor, due to his creative talents and dedication to historical accuracy. His work has been previously featured in three issues of *EAL*. This year he is being recognized in two categories, Ornamental Painting and Painted Framed Art. This year there were thirty-one judges in nineteen categories. The judges are required to choose the best artisans whose artifacts must resemble those made in the 17th, 18th and early 19th centuries. The object of the *EAL Magazine* is to preserve and perpetuate the legacy of fine hand-craftsmanship. They have been showcasing our American history since 1969, thus celebrating our heritage for forty-seven years.

“Squire” Paul Brennan
Koenig’s Latest Work



Against All Odds (1776-1783)

After eight horrific years fighting the Revolutionary War against the oppressive British Empire and their ruler King George, the battle was won by the courageous American Patriots. Their wisdom, determination and fortitude had brought forth a new nation under God, dedicated to liberty and freedom. Now these brave men were faced with another daunting challenge. How would these colonies be governed? After many long tedious hours of deliberating with uncomfortable conditions and conflicting opinions, these dedicated patriots established our Constitution. It is the very bedrock and foundation of our Republic, in order to govern and protect Americans from tyranny. Their wisdom and knowledge of human nature enabled them to give us a document which is as important and meaningful today as when it was written 229 years ago in September 1787. They gave us a Republic and it is up to us to keep it, by upholding our Constitution of the United States of America.

“We the People” Let freedom ring!

Contributed by Nancy Fitzpatrick Koenig,
Member of the D.A.R. Old Mine Road
Chapter



Join us for our annual
Open House

“Deerpark’s Attic”

Sunday, September 18, 2016

11A.M. to 4P.M.

Held at

The 1863 School House

and

The Neversink Valley Grange

Grange Road, Huguenot, NY 12746

Featuring

“Stand Hold”

The story of Joseph Brant’s Raid on
Upper Deerpark October, 1778

An historical skit performed on stage at the
Grange Hall

- **Broome St. Fife and Drum**
 - **Piranha Grill Food Truck**
With fresh baked goodies
 - **Petting Zoo**
 - **The Fanciest Display of Hats in
Tri-States!**
 - **Bring in those antiques and what nots**
An appraiser will be available at the
school house
to check out your items
- P.S. - we would love to hear their story!!!**

Follow us on Facebook

Deerpark Museum

