



DEERPARK DIARY

TOWN OF DEERPARK 1863 SCHOOL HOUSE MUSEUM

TOWN OF DEERPARK HISTORIAN, P. O. BOX 621, HUGUENOT, NEW YORK 12746
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2010 Deerpark Diary Preview

“The World has Been my School:
Nature my Teacher.”

James M. Allerton’s motto

The 2010 editions of Deerpark Diary will be about James M. Allerton’s life and his involvement in a murder that occurred on the Van Inwegen farm on Big Pond Road in 1877.



Newfoundland Dog

A number of years ago, I had read Allerton’s book, *Hawk’s Nest or Last of the Cahoonshees*. This story has everything neces-

sary to make a good story during the time of New York’s frontier: two orphaned children; a Newfoundland dog; an Indian chief; life at sea; and romance.

It was a stroke of good luck in 2005 when Brian Pawelski of Montgomery, NY brought two large boxes of old records to the Town Historian’s Office. While helping a friend move, he spotted the boxes in the attic and thought that our office would have use for them. Upon closer inspection, we learned that these were some of James M. Allerton’s original papers dating back to the 1870s.

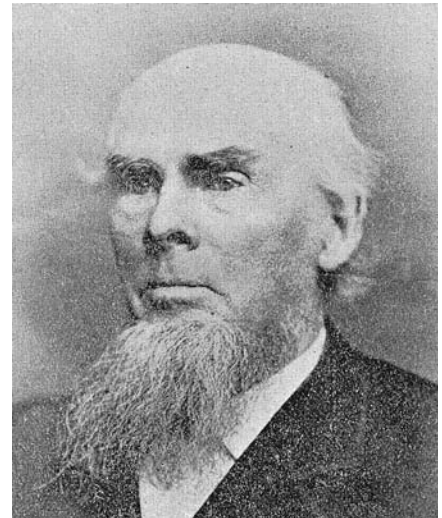
Ruth Carrington, a retired librarian, and I carefully cleaned years of dust and debris from the papers. Then they were sorted, repaired, and accessioned. Because many were very fragile, each page was photocopied for further study. The originals are stored in protective sleeves.

Of particular interest were letters written by John C. Baldwin, from Sing Sing Prison, Ossining, N.Y. asking for Allerton’s help in proving his innocence in the murder of William Springs-teen at Big Pond. Subsequent issues of the Deerpark Diary will cover the events surrounding the murder, the trial and “the rest of the story”.

Big Pond Murder

*Headline Port Jervis Daily Union
Oct. 18, 1877*

James M. Allerton 1822-1901



James Martin Allerton was born on the sloop “Neptune” on August 1822. His parents had been living in New York City and were sailing to New Jersey to escape the yellow fever that was raging in the city. The captain had lost his bearings and Allerton’s birth occurred somewhere between New York City and Elizabeth, N. J.

The family moved often until 1827 when they returned to his mother’s hometown, Town of North East in Dutchess County. James began his education at “The Hollow School House” near Millerton. Because the family often moved, James was sent to live with relatives. He attended schools wherever he was staying. The last time he attended a school while living with a relative ended with his expulsion. In the winter of 1837-38 James attended school

at Boson Corners while boarding with his brother-in-law, Nicholas S. Eggleston. Here he met his first love. He kissed a girl and the teacher ordered him to apologize or leave the school. He chose the latter, kissing all the girls before he left.

The following April his father purchased a canal boat in Alligerville, N.Y. and began work on the D & H Canal. James and his brother, Horace worked with their father on the canal. His father purchased a farm in Cahoonzie on the Forestburgh Road. During the winter months, Allerton taught himself arithmetic, reading and writing. He attended a log schoolhouse on the Forestburgh Road that opened on January 1, 1841 and graduated in twelve days. After that he walked to North East, to study phrenology and lectured about the topic from canal boats.

Allerton tramped his way throughout New York and New Jersey continuing work on various canals. It was while working on the Erie Canal that he met Maria Adams whom he married on April 3, 1848. He took his bride to the home that he had built in Cahoonzie. They had five children: Maria, Alexander, Gertrude, Horace, and George.

In 1852-53 the Mongaup Valley, Forestburgh and Port Jervis Plank Road was built. Col. Sam Fowler was president of the company. James Allerton was active in the enterprise. A tollgate was established at the Allerton house and he was appointed toll-gatherer at \$6.00 a month.

A family named Dodder was a neighbor. The son applied for the position of toll-gatherer, which led to trouble between the

Dodders and Allertons. There were frequent fights. One Sunday, Allerton saw Dodder chasing his (Allerton's) cows and knock one of them down with a pole. Allerton couldn't stand this and he threw three stones at the belligerent neighbor, none of which really hit him. Allerton was arrested for assault and battery.

In September 1854, the case came to trial. The District Attorney was Charles H. Winfield. Allerton's attorney did not appear in court therefore Allerton chose to be his own counsel. This led to Allerton's career as a lawyer.

Dodder swore that Allerton threw a dozen stones at him and that the last one hit him in the back of the neck. His testimony was confirmed by his son, who swore that he saw it all.

Upon cross-examination, Allerton ripped into the Dodders' testimony with great flare. He made the elder Dodder admit that it was the third stone that hit him so that the "dozen" was reduced to three and that they were coming toward and facing each other when the stone was thrown which "hit him in the back of the neck". In the cross-examination of the younger Dodder who saw the stones thrown, Allerton found out that he was in his own house, in the woods, and had to look over a hill twenty feet high, and over three stone walls and two slab fences in order to witness the altercation.

Everyone present, including the Court, was convulsed with laughter for the hours that Allerton had his victims on the grill. He took one hour and fourteen minutes to sum up his case. The

jury was out for just a few moments before they returned with a verdict of "not guilty". The delivery of this remarkable and unique plea was published the next day in the Newburgh Telegraph. Allerton had won the case brilliantly and lawyers who had been in the courtroom advised him to study law.

The Dodders were disgusted and moved west.

Not only was Allerton working as a toll-gatherer at this time, he was also employed as a chainman for surveyors as well as delivering sermons to the Baptist religious meetings at Cahoonzie. Rev. D. F. Leach had been pastor of the Port Jervis Baptist Church and opened religious meetings at Cahoonzie with a congregation of about forty residents. When Leach moved west, he sent his sermons to Allerton who committed them to memory and delivered them every Sunday.

On April 1, 1857, Allerton opened a law office in the Morse House, corner of Pike and Main Streets, and counseled with J. W. Gott of Goshen, who was his instructor. In December of that year he was admitted to practice at the bar and moved into Port Jervis.

After twelve years of marriage, his wife died on July 14, 1860. The following year he married Mary E. Goble of Greenville from whom he was divorced in 1885.

During the time of Lincoln's bid for the presidency, Allerton became active in the Republican Party. A number of his political speeches were printed in local papers. He was often sought after to speak at Memorial services and patriotic gatherings. Some

of his handwritten notes are in the Deerpark Historian's Office archives.

Allerton moved to Sparrowbush in 1862 and was appointed Enrolling Officer for the Town of Deerpark as well as becoming the law partner of Lewis E. Carr. This partnership lasted until 1868. From 1868 to 1872, he was employed as traveling attorney for the Erie Railroad Company under the Gould-Fisk regime. In 1873, Ira S. Mills, now Railroad Commissioner of the State of Minnesota, became a partner under the name of Allerton & Mills. In the same year he formed a co-partnership with Ira S. Goble and expended over \$12,000.00 in a lot, building and machinery for a planing mill. The panic of 1873 came and he lost all his property.

In June 1876, Allerton built a home in Tri-States and in 1885, he was elected Justice of the Peace serving four years. His last partnership was with W. P. Hyatt about 1883. He almost died in the terrible blizzard of March 11-12, 1888 which left him with partial deafness from the destruction of his left eardrum. This disability led to his retirement. In 1890 he disposed of his law library to H. B. Fullerton and retired from practice.

Although Allerton visited many major cities out west, much of his retirement was spent writing and publishing books: *The Deerpark Civil List*, 1891; *Hawk's Nest or the Last of the Cahoonshees*, 1892; *The Deer Hunters of Deerpark or the History of the Town of Deerpark from 1690-1779* and *The Volunteers of Sixty-one and Sixty-five, or the*

TOM QUICK THE AVENGER

OR,

One Hundred for One. An Historical Tragedy

— BY —

JAMES M. ALLERTON, Esq.

Plot laid in Orange, Sullivan, Pike and
Sussex Counties.

**AT THE OPERA HOUSE,
PORT JERVIS, N. Y.,**

Tuesday, May 22, '88.

History of the Town of Deerpark During the Slaveholders' Rebellion, 1893; and two dramas *Tom Quick, the Avenger or One Hundred for One* and *The Rag Picker or Servant Girl's Revenge*.

In the latter part of 1896, Allerton erected a unique monument in Laurel Grove Cemetery. On it is the Allerton genealogy from Isaac Allerton, who came to America in the Mayflower, landing at Plymouth, December 21, 1620, to James M. Allerton, grandson, born in 1881. The west side of the shaft notes the place and circumstances of his birth:

"James M. Allerton, arrived, August 18th 1822, on Board of the Sloop Neptune, Captain Bond." Beneath the inscription is the date of his death and under-

neath it states one of his many occupations, that of surveyor and civil engineer, complete with the representation of a transit and level and surveyor's bench marked "S, 76, W." showing the variation of the needle for all time.

The north side of the monument contains the epitaph of his wife. Under this is sculpted an open book, lettered "Blackstone," representing his legal profession, and another open book with the words, "Hawk's Nest," representing his literary work.

On the south side is a carving of the "Mayflower" along with the genealogy of the Allerton Family:

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------|
| 1. Isaac, the Pilgrim | 1585-1659 |
| 2. Isaac | 1630-1710 |
| 3. Isaac | 1655-1730 |

- | | |
|-----------------|-----------|
| 4. John | 1685-1767 |
| 5. Isaac | 1724-1807 |
| 6. David I | 1750-1828 |
| 7. Isaac | 1785-1828 |
| 8. James M. | 1822-1910 |
| 9. George O | 1858 |
| 10. James M. Jr | 1881 |



*Allerton Monument
Laurel Grove Cemetery
Port Jervis, New York*

There is a picture of a canal boat, horse and river, signifying his early years working on the D & H Canal. On the top of the stone are the three links of Odd Fellowship, of which order he was the oldest member and Past Grand of Ustayantha Lodge of Port Jervis.

The latter years of his life were spent with his son George O. Allerton, and his daughters, Mrs. R. L. Burns and Mrs. Joseph A. Wilkin, of Matamoras, where he died at the age of 88 on February 10, 1910.

The Friends of the Port Jervis Library Program

Thursday
March 18, 2010
7:00 pm

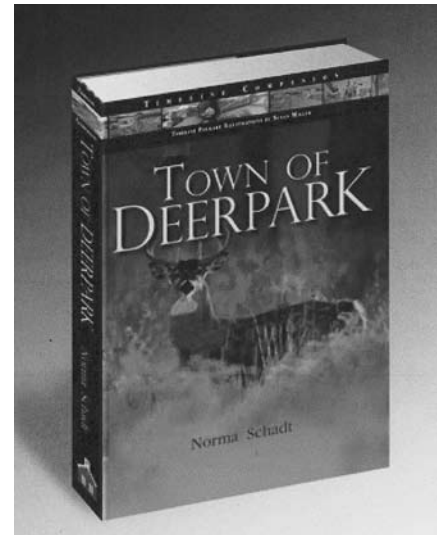
The Friends of the Port Jervis Library are sponsoring a program and book signing for the new *Town of Deerpark* book on Thursday evening, March 18, 2010 at 7:00. pm.

The Book *Town of Deerpark* is written and illustrated by Norma Schadt, Deerpark Historian. The stories complement the timeline murals painted by Susan Miiller.

This is Deerpark, from before the Ice Age, through the Stone Age, the eras of the Lenape, Border War, French & Indian War, American Revolution, the D & H Canal and the M & PJ Railroad right up to what concerns a couple of students in Hamilton Bicentennial School.

The book is a lively Timeline Companion to 17 large folkart-style paintings, included in color plates in the book and on exhibit at the 1863 Little Red Schoolhouse, the Town of Deerpark Museum.

Books are available in soft cover for a donation of \$19.95 and hard cover for a donation of \$39.95. All proceeds support the Town of Deerpark Museum, The 1863 Little Red Schoolhouse, 25 Grange Road, Huguenot, New York 12746. For information, call 754-8070 or 856-2702.



TRIVIA

NEWSPAPER ARTICLE

from
THE WORLD
May 3, 1898

“The oldest newspaper in the world is not, as is generally stated the thousand-year-old Kin Pan, but the Tsing-pao, or Pekin News, which was first published more than 500 years before the Norman Conquest, and which has been published without interruption for nearly 1,400 years.

“Two editions are published--an edition deluxe for the Court and upper classes in China, at a cost of 24 cents a month; and an edition, inferior in paper and printing, which costs 16 cents a month.

“The Tsing-Pao is the London Times of China and chronicles the wealth and movements of the Emperor, the life at Court, and the reports of Ministers. It is painfully significant that every error in printing is punished with death.”

NEXT ISSUE

THE MURDER OF WILLIAM SPRINGSTEEN AND THE ARREST OF JOHN BALDWIN