



THE BULLETIN

Cortland County Historical Society



Volume 5, Issue 3

August 2012

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Calendar of Events

August 25, 5-9, BBQ, Beer and Blues FUN-draiser at 1890 House Carriage House. \$10 donation. Music by Unreal City Band. Food and drink available by purchase (Smoking Mule, and Cortland Beer Company).

September 12, Mum Sale (see order form)

October 12 & 13, Attic Treasures Sale

A Tribute to Anita Wright—by Ed Hart

On June 30th, Anita Wright worked her last day as an employee of the Cortland County Historical Society. She retired after 37 years of extraordinary service under four directors and nine different Board of Trustees Presidents. (For historic interests the directors were Dr. Leslie O'Malley 1980–1987, Rachel (Dickinson) Savage 1987–1989, Mary Ann Kane 1990–2007, Interim Director Christine Buck, Jan-September 2008 followed by our current Director Mindy Leisenring. During Anita's tenure the board presidents were: 1975 Edward R. Brewer; 1976-1978 Charles A. Jones; 1979-1983 Joan Siedenbug; 1984-1989 Mary Ann Kane; 1990-1992 Keith Bundy; 1993-1998 James Sarvay; 1999-2006 Robert Ferris; 2007-2011 Diane Ames; and 2012 Yours Truly.)



Anita with students from Parker Elementary December 2011

Anita spent much of those 37 years both collecting and cataloging either pertinent information for the Kellogg Research Center or items donated and deemed to be relevant to Cortland County's history for the Suggett House Museum.

The tasks of collecting, documenting and cataloging enables the future researching of the archives. Anita's research talents were born of her diligent documenting and cataloging work. I do not think that it is possible to overstate the level of knowledge and information about Cortland County that she has acquired and retained over the years. What is more remarkable, and what has so amazed and delighted those who have been fortunate recipients of her research assistance, is that she has been able to draw on much of that knowledge at will. With this ability she has been able to provide a great deal of well documented information in a relatively short period of time.

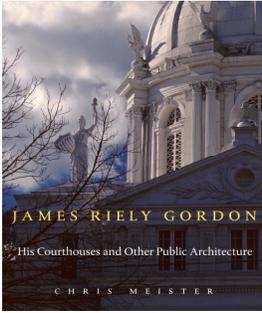
Another important task of Anita's was to guide tours of the facility and even acted as a tour bus guide around Cortland on one occasion. As one who was totally familiar with every aspect of both the Research Center and the Museum, Anita was a pleasure to listen to. There were few questions that she was unable to accurately provide answers.

Anita has promised to remain active and helpful at CCHS. One thing that she wishes to do is to research the history of her own family, a task that she has not found time for until now. She also has indicated that she hopes to continue some of the CCHS volunteer work that she has provided for many years. Some of that work includes talks on local history to Seniors at the hospital's short term care facility and many appearances before various community groups which have requested to hear her informative talks. She has also volunteered her time to host the evening meetings of the Genealogy Society at the CCHS Research Center.

The daily presence of Anita and her no-nonsense, lovable curmudgeon personality that is so filled with energy will be missed by many. As most of you know, to know Anita Wright....to really know her and experience her softer side, is to love her. I believe that one of the worst days of her life was when she realized that it was time to retire.

And then, just when she thought that things could not get worse, we told her that we would like to give her a "thank you for 37 years" party.

Thank you Anita!



**Chris Meister's Book
"James Riely Gordon:
His Courthouses and
Other Public
Architecture"**



Hailley has been hard at work creating a Brockway book. The book contains over 100 photographs of various Brockway Trucks, the factory, employees, as well as a history of the company. This piece will be a great addition to the publications of Cortland County Historical Society.



From Texas to Cortland, The Career of James Riely Gordon

Over the past few months, CCHS Director Mindy Leisenring, has been in correspondence with Chris Meister of Royal Oak, Michigan, the author of "James Riely Gordon: His Courthouses and Other Public Architecture." Chris was touring the east coast, and was interested in doing a program in Cortland on James Riely Gordon. He hoped we could schedule an appearance for him here. Thanks to the hard work of trustee, Kaaren Pierce, we were able to secure a location to hear Mr. Meister, as well as to allow those that were interested into the Cortland County Courthouse for a tour.

The third of July brought twenty interested people to the lecture given by Chris Meister, on James Riely Gordon. The society was excited to see many new faces; people who were anxious to learn more about the man who had created our county courthouse, seal, jail and World War I monument. Those in attendance learned about Gordon's early work. His first public commission was a jail for Val Verde (a West Texas county) (Meister, 11-12). Meister has been able to document about fifty courthouses that Gordon designed, and investigate correspondence suggesting the possibility of three others (Meister, 277). While Meister did not talk about each of these courthouses, he showed pictures of a number of those designed and built by Gordon. Meister concluded with the work of Gordon on the Cortland County Courthouse, not just because he was speaking here in Cortland, but as that was the final courthouse designed by James Riely Gordon. He mentioned that Gordon most have been happy that his final courthouse was not complicated by the political red tape that often would get in the way of other works, and that it was a smooth project. After several questions from the audience, those interested were able to tour the Cortland County Courthouse, including Mr. Meister.

It was our pleasure to host Chris for a brief period of time. We also have obtained a copy of his book "James Riely Gordon: His Courthouses and Other Public Architecture", for our collection, and may be viewed at the Kellogg Memorial Research Center, during our regular hours. All references refer to pages in this 2011 publication.

For more information on the book visit: <http://ttupress.org/books/james-riely-gordon-cloth>.

In an effort to support the work of the other local historians and historical societies in Cortland County, we will include lists of programs offered at their sites, as well as articles submitted for publication. We hope that our members will find these programs of interest and attend.

McGraw Historical Society programs:

All programs are held at in the Community Building, Clinton St., are free and open to the public.

Aug. 9 - 7 pm - Mary Ann Kane, City of Cortland historian, will tell about "Life Along the Narrows", a history of Blodgett Mills and Messengersville.

Sept. 6 - 7 pm - Jeremy Boylan, county historian, will give a program on "Naturalization and Cortland County". We will learn what procedure foreign citizens have to take in order to become a US Citizen.

In Sept., Randy Hopkins, historian for the Town of Freetown, will give a tour of the cemeteries in his area. More information on this tour will be included in our fall newsletter.

Oct. 11 - 7 pm - Allison Hinman, interpreter and research assistant from the Seward House in Auburn, will have a power point program on the Seward family.

Nov. 8 - 7 pm - the program will be on "The War of 1812" with Rev. Alan Ferguson, retired Methodist minister from Homer, guest speaker. There are seven 1812 veterans buried in the McGrawville Rural Cemetery.

Cortland County Historical Society goes tobacco-free

As of June 1st, 2012, the Cortland County Historical Society became a completely tobacco-free property, including all outdoor grounds. The tobacco-free policy includes any and all tobacco products, such as cigarettes, cigars, pipes, chewing tobacco. The implementation of this policy will reduce the harmful exposure to secondhand smoke when people visit the facility.

Tobacco Free Cortland, a grant-funded program through the Cortland County Health Department, partnered with CCHS to assist with policy language and signage.

By going tobacco-free, the CCHS is aligned with other area businesses and organizations interested in promoting, modeling and fostering good health and well being practices throughout Cortland County. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has classified secondhand smoke as a Class A carcinogen placing it in the same category as radon, benzene, and asbestos. Furthermore, the Surgeon General has declared that there is no safe level of secondhand smoke.

CCHS recognizes the power of nicotine addiction and encourages and offers support to tobacco users who want to quit. The New York State Smokers' Quitline offers free coaching and medication: 1-866-NY-QUITS (1-866-697-8487); www.nysmokefree.com

Introducing: Hailley Miller

As the newest staff member at CCHS, I would like to take some time to introduce myself. My name is Hailley Miller. I was initially introduced to CCHS by Dr. Gigi Peterson as a student at SUNY Cortland. Dr. Peterson arranged an internship for me at CCHS for the Spring 2012 Semester. During my internship, I worked on digitalizing a part of the Historical Society's Brockway photos collection. I sifted through hundreds of photos, scanned them, and then entered the essential data about them. In May of this year, I graduated from SUNY Cortland Summa Cum Laude with a Bachelor's Degree in History. In June, I was hired as a part time employee here at CCHS. Currently, I have been working on a Brockway photo-book for the Historical Society. The book outlines the history of Brockway Trucks and contains photographs that help to illustrate that history. I am so grateful to work with great people on such great projects.

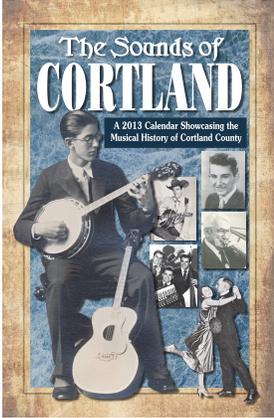
From the Director's Desk

While many of our members are within the borders of Cortland County, there are still others who are not. Those who are local, have heard about this from our local paper, but in order to be transparent with all of the members (as well as clear up some errors of the story in the local paper), I must report that on May 9, 2012, three items were discovered stolen from our premises. The missing items include a Savage Percussion Revolver (used during the Civil War), a Civil War jacket and hat. We know that it must have happened during regular business hours because our alarm system that monitors the building was never broken. There had been several tours in the building prior to the items being discovered missing. The tours did not occur on the day that the items were found missing. The Cortland City Police Department investigated the situation, and have unfortunately not been able to find the perpetrator. The serial number on the gun, is our best hope of these items being found one day..

To this end we have made several changes at Cortland County Historical Society. While the door was usually locked, there were times we would leave the door unlocked (when we had large groups coming). This practice has been ended, to make sure that no one gains access to the building without prior knowledge of staff and volunteers. We had already implemented a video system, and if the staff member does not recognize the person at the door, we go to the door to greet the guest. Locks have been secured and added to cases that were not previously secured. Tours were, and still are guided. Our insurance company was contacted, and we have been working with them, to recoup the loss. Any funds will be used for the purchase of like items for our collection..

After the items were found missing and the police and trustees had been contacted, the next day we reached out to our local museum community. The support of the museum community in New York State was not only helpful but meaningful. They offered insight, suggestions, tips, support, and to be on the look out for these items.

Unfortunately thefts like these occur at museums of all sizes. We continue to stand by our mission of collecting, preserving and educating people about the history of Cortland County.



You spoke, and we listened. Our 2013 calendar will feature musicians of Cortland County.

Trustees Kaaren Pierce and Mary Kimberly as well as Jim Coon of Carbon Copies have been working on putting together our 2013 calendar, to have ready in time for Holiday in Homer.

Calendars are available at CCHS, we will also have them with us at The Brockway Truck Show and Pumpkinfest.



The friends of CCHS had a great time in Ottawa. Be on the look out for more trips, you do not want to miss the bus!

Strong Desire for Band in Cortland

An Opportunity to secure a Capable Director

To the Editor of the Standard:

Sir - The city of Cortland should have a band. The musicians of Cortland as well as others seem to feel that way.

It would be a much greater inducement to have a band organized if it were possible to make such arrangements as would result in the locating here of George F. Dunbar, formerly director of the

Corona Typewriter band of Groton. The musicians of Cortland regard men of his caliber as exceeding scarce, and we consider it an opportunity that should not be passed by.

Before locating in Groton, Mr. Dunbar was director of the Illinois State band, succeeding Ellis Brooks, an internationally known conductor, having been recommended to that position by Herbert L. Clarker, formerly cornet soloist with

Sousa's band.

It is with pleasure that we pledge the hearty support and co-operation of our Musicians' Association, and we shall be ready at any and all time to do all we can to forward the project.

Harry B. French, president

Gerald C. Harrington, secretary

Cortland Musicians' Association

Cortland Standard, Nov. 10, 1925

CCHS Membership Renewals April-June 2012

Thank you to our new and renewing members.

Ms. Liza Adamitz
Mr. and Mrs. Harley and Teresa Albro
Lynda H Andrews
Charles and Denise Banner-Haley
Mary Lou Bordwell
Gordon and Patrica Bowker
Nancy EH Bowman
James and Theresa Bugh
Carolee Chrisman
Philomena Corsi
Beverly Cree
Nancy-Lee Cute
M.W. and Shirley Dickinson
John and Ingrid Dunham
William and Susan Eligh
Charlotte Farris
Robert Fouts
Louis Gebhard
Eileen Haggerty
Jack Hanson

Elima Higgins
Mrs. Jayne Howard
Joan Hoy
Dorothy Hunt
Place Insurance
Charles and Barbara Jermy Jr. and Family
Thomas and Beth Kanalley
John and Kathleen Kane
William and Linda Kline
Bryan Knickerbocker
Garrison and Katia Marsted
Mark and Janis Martin
Peter and Jeanine Masse
Anna McConnell
Brian Meddaugh
Ann Marie Mooney
Michael Morse
James Miller and Catherine Seager
John and Deborah Nadolski
Marlene Natoli
Richard and Jane O'Shea
June B. Paser

Robert and Elaine Perry and Family
Dorothy Roberts
Theodore Rowe
Bev Ryan
Dorothy Sarvay
Jane Schuehler
Amy Schutt
Donald and Catherine Smith
Chris and Amy Spadolini
Delores Taylor
Leland and Rosemary Taylor
Grant and Jule Van Sant
Dean L. Williams
Toni D. Williams
Anita Wright
George Wright
James Yaman
Sharon S. Zeches
Craig Zehner

You Will Be Missed—Catherine Hanchett

Catherine Marie Berfanger Hanchett, age 86, passed away the evening of February 29, 2012, slipping out of a day-long sleep. She had been battling congestive heart failure and the end came peacefully at her Carol Woods retirement community in Chapel Hill, NC with family at her side.

She was a lion for education. As PTA president in Troutville, Virginia, she raised money to buy the school's first movie projector. Moving to Cortland, New York, with her history professor husband Walter, she convinced officials to mow the fields behind Barry School to make it safer for all the neighborhood kids to walk to class. Then she took the Greyhound bus to night school in Syracuse, earning a master's degree so she could work as a librarian at SUNY Cortland, where she helped usher in the age of computerized cataloging. Her salary allowed her two sons to go to the colleges of their choice.



She never stopped learning, doing research on the Glen Haven community near Cortland and on the African American abolitionist activists at McGraw's New York Central College, both still cited by scholars today. In retirement she volunteered at the local public library, delighted in learning Spanish, and lived humbly so she could donate money to organizations devoted to the common good.

She is survived by her son Jim, Director of Communications for the School of Public and Environmental Affairs at Indiana University, along with his wife Sally and children Jack, Logan, Ben and Kara, and also by son Tom, community historian at Levine Museum of the New South in Charlotte, NC, along with his wife Carol and daughter Lydia. Husband Walter passed away in 1999.

Contributions may be made to the Walter Hanchett Award fund, Department of History, SUNY Cortland.

(Obituary provided by her sons).

Editor's Note: Catherine volunteered at CCHS between the 1960s and 1990s. I never personally met her, but had the pleasure of speaking on the phone with her on several occasions, and her love of CCHS always shone through in our conversations. I have compiled several memorials from those who knew her better than I.

Sometime in the late 1990's, I wrote a paper about the Underground Railroad in Cortland County.

Catherine Hanchett and I teamed up as speakers at one of the CCHS quarterly meetings. Her topic was about the Central New York College in McGraw. Founded by the Baptist Church, about 50% of the students were black, as well as at least two of the professors. As you might imagine, Catherine's research was very scholarly and extremely well-presented.

It was an honor for me to share the room with her. My "hobby" paper was certainly not up to the research standards Catherine shared with all that day.

Both Catherine and her husband Walter were staunch supporters of the Historical Society.

Submitted by: Diane Ames

From the McGraw Historical Society:

When Mindy notified us that Catherine Hanchett had passed away, we reflected on the tremendous amount of research she had done and how beneficial it was to our society. Her writings and pamphlets on the African American abolitionist activities at McGraw's New York Central College are still researched to this date. One of her major undertakings was the listing of all of the students who attended this college and we use this information many times in answering research questions posed by others.

We were in touch with Mrs. Hanchett a few times in the last two years. She continued to be interested in our work and the part she played in that period of history was meaningful to her. Without question, the work of Catherine Hanchett has enhanced the benefit of the McGraw Historical Society to other researchers. We are indebted to her and are thankful for her work and writings.

Carl Kimberly, president

CORTLAND COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

25 Homer Avenue
Cortland, NY 13045



*Your primary source for Cortland
County History*

Phone: (607)756-6071
E-mail: info@cortlandhistory.com

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HTTP://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/
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Permit No. 50

Return Service Requested

Membership Form for New Members

Senior (optional 65 years & older)	\$20.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	For "Family" Category please list
Individual	\$30.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	names of family living at this
Family	\$40.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	address.
Supporting	\$75.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Sustaining (Cody Higgins Club)	\$150.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Sponsor (Charles Jones Club)	\$300.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Curator (Mary Ann Kane Club)	\$500.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Benefactor (Joan Siedenbug Club)	\$1,200.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Life Member	\$10,000.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	



**Suggett House, Home of
Cortland County Historical
Society**

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Return to: Cortland County Historical Society; 25 Homer Avenue, Cortland, NY 13045