



THE BULLETIN

Cortland County Historical Society



Volume 6, Issue 2

May 2013

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Exhibit Opening

Join us on May 25th from 2-4 pm, to explore our new military exhibit. In an effort to bring new and exciting exhibits to everyone, the military exhibit has been moved to the first floor, and re-imagined.

Chuck D'Imperio

Join us May 8, 7pm at Beard Building (7-9 Main Street) for this look into Upstate New York History!

Mindy's Musings

Living in a small city like Cortland has its perks. Driving is easy. I get to know my neighbors. Occasionally someone will remember my picture from the newspaper and say, "I know you. You're the director of the historical society." Once, though, a lady asked if I would come polish her silver, so celebrity has its limits.

This issue of *The Bulletin*, is dedicated to true Cortland celebrities. These are Cortland natives who contributed to our community's history in various ways but who also impacted the state and world around them. Cortland boasts a number of famous individuals, from Alton P. Parker to John J. McGraw and a host of others in between. Here we pay tribute to their work and contributions.

You likely know of others whose stories we should share. If you have a nominee, feel free to submit it to info@cortlandhistory.com for inclusion in a future newsletter.



Marking off attendees at a CCHS Event

McGraw Historical Society—Provided by Mary Kimberly, McGraw Historian

The McGraw Historical Society holds its monthly meetings on the 2nd Thursday of the month from June to November at the village community building on Clinton Street. All programs are free and open to the public. The building is handicapped accessible.

Our first meeting will be held on June 13 at 7 pm with a brief business meeting prior to the program. Roger Karns will be our guest speaker and will share some history of farming in Cortland County. He is a member of the Living History Museum in Cortland and involved in the Tractor Museum. There will be a display table for anyone wishing to share farm related tools and photos of their farms.

"Baseball in Cortland County" will be the topic for our July 11 meeting. Tom Kissel from Cortland has done extensive research on baseball teams in Cortland County starting with the late 1800s. Those attending are invited to bring any old photos of sports teams in Cortland County.

The August program is still in planning and details will be posted on our website mcgrawhistoricalsociety.com

The society's Local History Room is located at the rear entrance to the Lamont Memorial Library on Main St. and open Tuesdays 2-4 pm and Saturdays 10 am - noon or by appointment. We welcome new members to our historical society and visitors to our history room.

Update for Tioughnioga Chapter DAR by Nancy Garvey

The local Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution has much to celebrate this spring. The local membership has been helping to plan and prepare for the 100th Anniversary Luncheon of the Southern Tier District with a Workshop to be held on May 4th in Cooperstown. The event will be take place at the Otesaga Resort Hotel and will include a continental breakfast as well as lunch. The Southern Tier District is one of the largest in the State and includes the following Chapters: Abigail Harper-Stamford, Ag-won-doug-was-Cunahunta-Bainbridge, Beulah Patterson Brown-Newark Valley, Chemung-Elmira, Chief Taughanock-Trumansburg, Go-won-go-Greene, Iroquois-Worcester, James Madison-Hamilton, Koo Koose-Deposit, Oneonta-Oneonta, Sidney-Sidney, Tianderah-Gilbertsville, Tioughnioga-Cortland, Tuscarora-Binghamton. This includes nine counties in the south central part of the State. Currently the District Director is Cecilia Russell of Oneonta and next year a Cortland native, who is also an active duty Veteran Robin Comerford will be the District Director for District 6.

Additionally the local Tioughnioga Chapter is pleased and proud to announce that a Cortland High School Senior is this years New York State Good Citizens award recipient as well as the District VI winner. Ruohan Zhang plans on attending Columbia University next year and will be eligible to compete for the Good Citizens Scholarship award at the National Level this spring.

There are over 133 Chapters of the New York State Daughters. There are about 3000 chapters in the United States and overseas. The New York DAR and the national DAR were founded in 1890. The National headquarters is in Washington, DC located across the ellipse from the White House. The address is 1776 D. Street NW, Washington D.C. 20006, Tel.202-268-4780, <http://www.dar.org>

Some of the activities include an extensive library facility with sophisticated genealogical capabilities, a museum which preserves and exhibits an extensive collection of Americana, support of educational facilities in several locations throughout the country for special needs children as well as native Americans and the preservation of historical sites.

Upcoming programs at the Taylor Historical Society:

Monday, May 6 at 7:00 pm –The New York State Barn—a Cultural Asset, Randy Nash, barn enthusiast, preservationist and owner of the New York State Barn Company, will speak on the history, diversity and preservation of upstate barns. He has inventoried thousands of New York State barns and will share his expertise. Guests will also be treated to an exhibit of drawings of barns by local artist Denise Cote-Hopkins.

Monday, June 17 at 7:00 pm—North Star Shining: New York State's Freedom Trail—an Illustrated Journey along the Underground Railroad. Milton C. Sernett, Professor Emeritus of African Studies and History, taught at Syracuse University for over 30 years. He has published eight books and numerous articles and essays, many of them dealing with American abolitionism, the Underground Railroad, and African American History.

Programs will be held at Heritage Hall in Cincinnatus. For more information contact: info@taylorhistoricalsociety.com



Uniforms on display as part of our new Military Exhibit (Opening May 25th, see front cover for more details)

From the County Historian

Due to the success of the first World War II Veteran's digital documentary, The Cortland County Historian's Office is seeking willing World War II vets to share their stories. Interviews will be conducted, edited and produced into a documentary to be shared for many generations. These proud veterans have stories that are often difficult to share, but it is important that the community understand and remember the sacrifice that these men and women made. To schedule an interview contact Jeremy Boylan at 607-753-5049 or jboylan@cortland-co.org

President's Corner

"Accolades"

When it was suggested that I, as President of the Board of Trustees, contribute a regular article to our newsletter I started thinking about what might be interesting enough to deserve the space. It quickly came to me that you were.

I've decided that in each issue I will try to share the work of members and volunteers who have been making good things happen at CCHS over the years. One shortcoming of this effort is that I have been involved for such a short time when compared to the many that have been a part of CCHS much longer. They have history with CCHS that I, as yet, may know little or nothing of. If you know of the volunteer work of someone, no matter how long ago, which you feel should be acknowledged, please let me know the story. My contact information is at the end of this article.

OK...the first volunteer work that comes to my mind is that of our ever diligent and faithful "cutters and pasters". Most of these folks come in each Thursday morning to carefully clip significant articles from newspapers, documents, etc. and paste them, individually, onto separate sheets of paper. Then they are filed in such a manner as to allow easy access by researchers. Because the Research Center is the "storage" center of Cortland County's written history and because this written history preservation is the central, mandated purpose of the Cortland County Historical Society, this work is crucial.

This group work effort has been an ongoing task for years. The current mainstays are Michele Ball, Betsy Beardsley, Betty Bonawitz (who religiously does the filing), Sandy Decker, Margaret Fiske, Madeleine Fortin, Helen Hart, Johanne Holcomb, and Lorraine Sherry. Until her recent death, Gwen McCabe had been a part of the group for years.

When I think about it, using the word "work" to describe their tasks seems wrong. The atmosphere seems to be more like that of a quilting club. Their hands are always busy but there is seemingly never a moment when any of these folks wish that they were somewhere else doing something else. Thank you so very much ladies!

With that said I believe that they would agree when I say they would always welcome more hands. If you think that you might like to give it a try contact any of these ladies or Director Mindy.

Ed Hart, President, CCHS Board of Trustees

Contact: email: edmundhart@twcny.rr.com ; address: 86 N Main Street, Cortland, NY 13045
Cell:547-7234



Cutters and Pasters hard at work



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Levi Chase by Kevin Favreau



**Levi Chase section of new CCHS
Military Exhibit**

March 13 marked the 72nd anniversary of Levi Chase's first flight. The decorated Cortland native fought in World War II, Korea and Vietnam. While stationed in Africa during World War II, he became the first American Ace, having successfully downed five German planes before General Eisenhower arrived on the shores of North Africa. His commanding officer during this time often referred to him as a "one man wave of terror". He completed his campaign in Africa with 9 downed German planes and 1 Italian before being transferred to China-Burma-Indian front. Major Chase led the two longest raids of the war from Burma to Bangkok and Rangoon.

The attack on Rangoon was almost the end of his heroic career when his plane was shot down in enemy territory. With his pistol jammed and only his hunting knife for protection, Chase was forced to hike through the Burmese jungle with a hastily bandaged and badly injured leg. As he attempted to sneak by a village he was discovered and was told that they would need to report his presence to Japanese officials. Suddenly Chase saw his comrades circling overhead, dipping in and out, and motioning for him to follow. The next thing Chase remembered was sprinting at full speed out of the village using his signal mirror to get their attention. One of the planes, piloted by Vermont native, Capt. Walter Eason, managed to make a rough landing. The plane however became wedged between the rocks in the rough terrain and they were unable to make a takeoff. Out of the brush the entire village emerged. Chase said that he was sure this was the end for him and Eason. They hesitated to use their rifles for fear of alerting nearby Japanese forces. By some miracle it became clear that the villagers wanted to help them and with their assistance Chase and Eason were able to get away. During his time in Burma Chase added three more enemy downs and became the second of only three American pilots in history to take down a plane from every Axis power: German, Italian and Japanese.

After WWII he returned to Cortland to become the first counselor for veterans affairs and later attended Albany Law School to become an attorney like his father. He was called back into the Air Force in 1951 and was assigned to Korea where he commanded the 8th fighter-bomber group. During this time he led several highly successful bombing missions on the North Korean capital city.

After his service in Korea he attended several Air Force colleges and in 1965 he served in his 4th and final tour in Vietnam as the commander of the 12th tactical Fighter Wing. This would prove to be his last tour in combat. All told, he is credited with thirteen downed enemy planes, over 5000 hours of flight time and 512 missions.

General Levi Chase was a decorated hero. He was awarded the Silver Star with two oak leaf clusters, the Legion of Merit with two oak leaf clusters, the Distinguished Flying Cross with five oak leaf clusters, the Bronze Star Medal, Air Medal with 27 oak leaf clusters, an Army Commendation Medal, a Purple Heart, a Distinguished Unit Citation Emblem with oak leaf cluster, the British Distinguished Flying Cross with bar, the Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citation Ribbon, the French Croix de Guerre with palm, and the Chinese Order of the Cloud and Banner.

Nathan Miller (submitted by Stephen Hopkins, Great Grandson of Samuel Miller)

Solon native Nathan Miller was born on October 10, 1868 to Almira Russell Miller and Samuel Miller, a tenant farmer and former Union Solider. He attended Groton Union School then the Cortland Normal School (now SUNY Cortland), graduating in 1887. For the next few years, he taught school in Cortland while clerking at the law firm of Smith & Dickinson, where he read law books, teaching himself the law because he could not afford tuition. Soon he was trying cases and dabbling in politics, having joined the Cortland Republican Committee. He became a regular stump speaker for the party. By 1893, he was admitted to the New York Bar and became a partner in the Cortland law firm of Dougherty and Miller. He served in various local posts then filled several statewide offices, including a seat on the state Supreme Court and the Court of Appeals. In 1920 he defeated incumbent Governor Alfred Smith for the state's highest office only to be himself defeated by Smith in the 1922 election. He served during the early years of a turbulent decade, then left public office to pursue his private practice. Miller married Elizabeth Davern, who was the proprietress of the Marathon academy, at St. Mary's Catholic Church on November 23, 1896. He died on June 26, 1953 and is buried in the Cortland Rural Cemetery.



Nathan Miller and family.

Membership Renewal January—March 2013

Thank you to our new and renewing members.

Leonard and Linda Cohen
Rick and Kathie Arnold and Family
Sandra Attleson
Betsy Beardsley
Ed and Kathy Beardsley
G. Fred Beaudry III
Robert C. Bell
Charles B. Bernheim
Valerie Brown
John and Christine Buck
Karin Burgess
James Carrington
Jean Caughey
Dixie Lee Christenson
Donald Colongeli
Isabel L. Coon
James Cornwall
Patricia Davis
Yvonne Deligato
James and Jan Dempsey
First National Bank of Dryden
Michael Dexter
Maria Dillingham Purcell
Yvonne Divak
Mary Donovan

John and Ingrid Dunham
Warren S. Eddy
Jean Edwards
Suzanne Etherington
Bella Fabrizio
Tom and Toni Gallagher
W. Sanford Gay
Mary Giamei
Doyle Glover
William J. Haight
John and Martha Hamel
Jaffrey and Nadyne Harris
Douglas and Nancy Hatch
Lewis and Judy Heath
Elima Higgins
Jayne Howard
Kevin and Ann Howe
Betty Hudson
Rhoda Jones
Margarette Kabanuk
Mary Ann Kane
Robert D'Addario and Ms. Kate O'Connell
Patrick Kiernan
James and Lucille Kinsella
Tony Kissel
Kent and Sharon Klanderan
Lynne Lash
John Mandarano

Thomas and Lynn Meldrim
Marlene Natoli
Patricia O'Mara
John and Barbara Palmer
M.K. Peace
Marsha Powell
Judith Pribula
Leonard and Eleanor Ralston
Edmund Raus Jr.
Don and Carol Reed
Norma Riley
Kate Rodgers
Barbara Ryan
Chris and Michelle Ryan
Merton Sarvay
Richard Sickmon
Linda Sorber
Charles and Stephanie Spina
Sharon Stevans
Martin Sweeney
Rosemary Theisz
Dorothy Troike
Linda Underwood
Deborah Van Auken
Marion Vosburg
Russell Wanish
Malcolm and Margaret Watrous
Harry J. Weston
Kevin and Carrie Whitney
Katherine Wickwire
Kay Zaharis

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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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"/>	



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

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

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