

THE BULLETIN

Cortland County Historical Society

Volume 7, Issue 3

August 2014

Inside this issue:

Mindy's Musings	2
President's Corner	3
Letter from Gettysburg Continued	4
Membership	5
Tweets from the Past	5
Dollhouse Holiday	5

Special points of interest:

- August 14, CCHS director presenting at McGraw Historical Society (more details on page 2)
- August 30, Mum Sale Order deadline (see insert)
- September 26 (10-4), September 27 (10-3) Attic Treasures Sale

A Letter from Gettysburg

John G. Pierce was born in the town of Locke, Cayuga County, raised in Truxton and educated at Homer Academy. He studied law with Horatio Ballard, and was admitted to the bar. He raised Company G, 10th Cavalry, and rose to captain, sometimes commanding the entire regiment himself. He resigned on Dec. 13, 1863, and apparently returned home. He died suddenly at Groton, on July 15, 1868, at the age of 26. Long before the battle, Gettysburg was a training site and supply depot, but as far as known, this was merely a coincidence and did not precipitate the battle, as the military presence had long since vacated Gettysburg.

Eight companies of the newly formed 10th New York Cavalry, the Porter Guards, arrived in Gettysburg by train on Christmas evening 1861 and spent the night in rail cars. Since adequate quarters had not been prepared, the next day the men were billeted in town at several locales. There they remained until their encampment was ready for occupation. During their stay, the Gettysburg Adams Sentinel published several articles commenting on their presence from New Years Day until mid-March 1862.

Introduction by Richard F. Palmer, Syracuse, N.Y

Gazette & Banner, Cortland, N. Y.

Jan. 9, 1862

Army correspondence

Gettysburg, Pa.

Dec. 18th, 1861

Headquarters of the Porter Guards

10th Reg. N. Y. V. Cavalry

Dear Editor: - According to your request the last time I saw you in Cortland, I take the privilege now offered me by a slight cessation of duty, to inform you of our whereabouts, health and prospects, &c., &c. You will remember I told you of our anticipated departure from Elmira, on Tuesday, the 17th inst., and that we were ordered directly to Washington. But as fortune would have it, these orders were countermanded and instead of marching direct to Washington, we were thrown into a very quiet little town on the Maryland border, where we are now situated. We did not leave Elmira as soon as expected, owing to some hindrances occasioned by the consolidation of the Porter with the Morgan Guards, thereby delaying our departure just a week, from our first marching orders.

I cannot say I am remarkably pleased with the new arrangement of substituting as a place of rendezvous, Gettysburg for Washington, although the former place is in every way worthy of our



**John G. Pierce of the 10th
NY Cavalry**

(Continued on page 4)

McGRAW HISTORICAL
SOCIETY PROGRAMS:

Thurs., Aug. 14, 7 pm, power point program on the history of Cortland County towns. Guest speaker, Mindy Leisenring, director, Cortland County Historical Society. Come and learn more about our county.

Wed., Sept. 10, 7pm, "Eleanor Drops By". Through Nancy Snedeker, guest speaker, Eleanor Roosevelt will come alive to share stories of her time as 1st lady and her life before marriage to FDR. Mrs. Snedeker was archivist at the FDR Library, Hyde Park, for 20 years and also served as staff photographer. Nancy will relate stories and share photos of the entertainers, politicians and visitors who came from around the world to visit Hyde Park.

Thurs., Oct. 9, 7 pm, "The Erie Canal and the Chittenango Landing Canal Boat Museum". Diane Brandt, coordinator of the museum will share stories and photos of how the Erie Canal related to Chittenango.

Our programs are held in the village community center, Clinton St. and are free and open to the public. The building is handicap accessible.



Mindy's Musings

"History will be kind to me," Winston Churchill famously said, "for I intend to write it." Many of the world's leaders pen memoirs to shape their legacies. Most of the rest of us, however, will leave it to others when we are gone to tell the stories that defined our lives.

Leaving our legacy in others' hands is a risky business. Just ask Cora and Flora Suggett, the twin daughters of James Suggett, whose great-nephew kindly donated the family home to the Cortland County Historical Society in 1964. CCHS Trustee Lynne Lash and I were recently researching in the Suggett family files for materials we plan to use in developing our new website and a new introductory exhibit at the museum. I was shocked by the details and the stories others told about the twins. In one clipping in our files, someone offered a description of how the girls ate and concluded: "Perhaps this would explain why they were big, fat women and looked 'like the devil's rag dolls'." The author hoped the unflattering detail might be a "tall tale" but added: "Miss Mary White, who lived her last years in their house, said she could not use any of the cooking utensils because they were so large." In a research file measuring more than one inch thick, I could not find a single kind word written about either of the twin sisters. Even their brother John, who is otherwise remembered for his kindness and dedication to local causes (including his support of the Normal School), was unsympathetically treated. I prefer to believe there was more to the Suggett sisters than what these records tell us though my evidence is scanty. We do have a photograph of them with a pet dog, so perhaps they were at least kind to animals.



Suggett twins with their pet dog.

In doing research we often stumble across interesting details about our families. Some facts we already knew: military service records, cause of death, where they went to school. Other, often surprising, details emerge from stories told by friends and from diaries, letters, or even newspaper articles: when Aunt Beverly had measles, that year when cousin Michael sang in the Christmas pageant, the fact that Mindy really was a cheerleader in high school. As many of you proudly claim the title of family historian, aim for a fair and balanced account of your family. Everyone has some good in them. We all have our faults. Remembering only the good white washes history in a way that is not truthful, but preserving only the bad tells a skewed story too. When my family looks back on my life, I hope they remember a quirky sense of humor and my service to others. To keep it balanced, they might recall that mornings were not my best time of day, and they might tease that when I ran I looked more like a waddling duck than an Olympian. But at least I tried. That's an ok way to be remembered.

President's Corner by Edmund A. Hart

"Is Getting Started Enough?"

Getting started is the hardest part of any effort that, for whatever reason, we dread. My hour long, every other day, stationary bike workout certainly emits 'dread' for me. On the other hand, my wife Maryanne, 'lives' for her twice a day 3 mile walks. Whatever the motivations (or lack thereof in my case) we know that exercise in moderation is good for our health.

Besides getting started there's another hurdle: "staying the course". Maryanne doesn't seem to have a problem here either. At times I try to discourage her walking, most often due to weather. I'm a fair weather walker. It's not for me if it's too hot or too cold or too wet. For her it's never too hot. She bundles up like an Eskimo when it's cold and her stock reply if it's raining is, "I won't melt." About the only thing that can keep her inside is lightening. (Her Mama didn't raise fools.) We've been at these exercise routines for a number of years now and, so far, we have been able to stay the course.

Without the "staying the course" characteristic, the Cortland County Historical Society would not have many of the dedicated volunteers that we have. Enjoying what you're doing makes any task easier and my observations tell me that our volunteers very much enjoy themselves while at CCHS.

Here are some examples: the cutters and pasters who gather weekly to clip and paste newspaper articles; Betty Bonawitz working diligently to keep the research material files current; Jaffe Harris, following monthly meetings of the Collections Committee, laboring to document and store the newly received Suggett House Museum collections to a location easily accessed later for research or exhibits; Jean Edwards sprucing up our flower beds; or, Len Ralston working on editing a draft of one of our publications. The Board of Trustees is another volunteer group that must not go unmentioned. They "stay the course" through monthly board meetings and as chairs and members of the many working committees that support the work of the Society.

I'm in awe of these people who are so diligent and persistent in their volunteerism. The one thing that they and all others who volunteer at CCHS have in common is that at some point they decided to try something new....to just "get started".

In closing let me put out a call to anyone who might consider volunteering some time on computer entry tasks. We are in the process of trying to obtain a grant to upgrade and increase our computerization capabilities and we will need volunteers with a variety of experience levels from basic on up.

Enjoy the rest of your summer and remember: "just get started" on whatever you wish to accomplish.

GRACE BROWN MURDER
PROGRAM BY AUTHOR CRAIG
BRANDON

CINCINNATUS HERITAGE
HALL

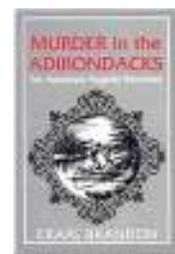
SEPTEMBER 12, 2014 – 7:00 PM

The Cincinnatus Area Heritage Society and the Kellogg Free Library are hosting a program by noted author, Craig Brandon. Using photos, video and recorded music, Mr. Brandon will bring the "American Tragedy" murder case to life on September 12, 2014 at the Cincinnatus Heritage Hall at 7:00 PM. He is the author of the widely read 1986 novel, "Murder in the Adirondacks – An American Tragedy Revisited", which is soon to be updated and republished for the centennial edition in 2015.

Starting with the case that attracted the attention of millions in 1906, Brandon shows how the story was transformed into legend through fictional accounts, movies, television shows and folk songs. He uses photographs and court room drawings from 1906-1908 to tell the original story, then uses video excerpts to show how the story was transformed.

Craig Brandon is a national award winning author of seven books of popular history and public affairs and a former award-winning newspaper reporter. He is also editor and publisher of Surry Cottage Books, a micropublishing company in the Monadnock Region of New Hampshire. Craig is the acknowledged expert on the Brown/Gillette case and has been interviewed about it by the New York Times, National Public Radio's All Things Considered, the History Channel and "Unsolved Mysteries."

The program will take place at the Cincinnatus Heritage Hall on the corner of Rt. 26 and Telephone Road in Cincinnatus. Funding for this event is provided by the Kellogg Free Library. There is a \$2 donation at the door and the public is invited.



Letter from Gettysburg continued

(Continued from page 1)

Attic treasures, basement gems, and baubles from every floor in between are being sought for our 2014 Attic Treasure Sale. Items can be dropped off at CCHS (25 Homer Ave, Cortland) Tuesday – Friday 9:30 – 5, Saturday 1 – 5. Please no: clothes, text books or cook books. If you need to arrange a pickup contact CCHS at 756-6071. Please have all donations dropped off no later than September 20, 2014 for this year's sale which will be held on Friday, September 26 and Saturday, September 27.

most august presence. It was not our intention when we left Cortland to remain a short time at Elmira, and then rush precipitately down the whole eastern coast, treading beneath our feet all of the hydra heads of secession immediately, and laying them in ignominious ruin, but we calculated on marching to Washington, and there breast to breast with our country's men, to fight for the glorious liberties of true and enlightened America. But for the present we are debarred from this privilege, and must content ourselves with our present situation.

To be particular with the discretion of our affairs, so that I may acquaint you with their general significance, I might as well give you in detail a short history of our proceedings up to the present time. I was quietly reading law, as you are aware in the office of the Hon. Horatio Ballard at Cortland, N. Y., about the latter part of September last, when I concluded to raise a company of mounted volunteers for immediate service. I repaired as soon as convenient to a proper recruiting station, and opened a recruiting office. I was sufficiently successful after a few delays to start for Elmira with a sufficient number of men to form a company organization.

During this, I had been so fortunate as to secure the services of Lieut. A. D. Waters, fresh from the 23d Regiment, N. Y. V., who gave a particular attention and energy to my endeavors. We proceeded to Elmira, as aforesaid, and after a series of military wiggling and shifting peculiar to military affairs at the present day, succeeded in filling a full company with a Captain at our head, of whom we can justly feel proud. We remained at Elmira some seven weeks from our first arrival, subsisting of course upon the hospitality of Uncle Sam, patiently waiting for orders for our removal farther south, to our field of future labor. I might say in relation to our regimental affairs, there were forming at Elmira, on our first arrival in that place two distinct, independent, regimental organizations, the Morgan Cavalry and the Porter Guards.

Our preference was for the Morgan Cavalry as we considered its privileges superior to the other organization. Owing to a partial delay in both departments, it was considered necessary and important to consolidate these two organizations into one, which was finally consummated, the new Regiment retaining the Morgan basis, and the appellation of the Porter Guards. This is the 10th Regiment of New York Volunteer Cavalry, denominated as the Porter Guards.

After receiving marching orders from headquarters, of course it was our business to conform in them, and accordingly every preparation possible was perfected for our departure. As I have said before, we were delayed a week in our preparations. Finally, however, on Thursday morning, the 24th inst., we took our departure for our Southern home. It was a cold, frightful, blustering morning, the very worst of the season in Elmira, except the day previous. But as the day further advanced, the darkened black clouds that had presented such a dismal appearance flitted away towards the mist and nature assumed a more generous hue.

We pleasantly rolled along the beautiful valley, in which Elmira is situated, looking out now and then, upon the broad opening prospect upon either side, joyous in our departure, hopeful as to the future, when suddenly upon the left, burst upon our vision one of those majestic ranges of hills preparatory to the entrance into the Alleghenies. In a moment all thought of future warfare and of departed scenes vanished, and every eye was trained to behold the monster Olympus, turning upwards amid the very clouds. But this scene, fills up the whole soul with a singular enthusiasm. Passing along through the valley which winds its serpentine course at the foot of these mountains, one is almost surprised at the sudden development of new ranges, spring up at intervals apparently transverse and at right angles with those favorable to which he is passing. This is owing particularly to the crookedness of the route.

(We will print continuous sections of the letter until the complete letter has been printed)



As part of Governor Andrew Cuomo's Path Through History Initiative CCHS received marker signs that direct visitors to our site!

Membership Renewals April–June

Thank you to our new and renewing members.

Harley and Teresa Albro

Lynda H Andrews

Charles and Denise Banner-Haley

Pierre Beaudry

Ruth Bennett

Helen K. Chase

Philomena Corsi

Nancy-Lee Cute

Helen L. De Haan

Yvonne Deligato

First National Bank of Dryden

Mary Louise Dexter

Joan Donnelly Marcoccia

Ward and JoAnn Dukelow

John and Ingrid Dunham

William and Susan Eligh

Mr. Robert Fouts

Nancy Garvey

Mary Giamei

John and Martha Hamel

Jaffrey and Nadyne Harris

Douglas and Nancy Hatch

Jayne Howard

Joan Hoy

James and Lucille Kinsella

Thomas Knobel and Catherine Bertini

Garrison and Katia Marsted

Mark and Janis Martin

John and Deborah Nadolski

Marlene Natoli

Colleen North

John and Barbara Palmer

Christine T. Place

Marsha Powell

Bev Ryan

Linda Saltsman

Dorothy Sarvay

David and Margaret Taylor

Don and Barbara Tisdale

Lawrence Wales

James Yaman



Tweets from the Past

It's 1862. How would you travel to New York City?

George Miner, a 25 year old farmer from Taylor, NY, set out on foot. But he was not alone. He was part of the 157th New York Volunteer (Infantry) Regiment. He was about to begin the life of a soldier. You will have the unique experience of sharing the journey with him. On September 25, George will begin his twitter feed. He will share his experiences of over 2 years - the hardships, boredom and horror of the Civil War.



Clinton Street Bridge, Cortland, NY

Dollhouse Holiday and Toy Exhibit

It may seem early but we are in the process of planning our holiday programs. There were 30 dollhouses on display last year and we would like to add more this year.

Along with the dollhouses, we will have an exhibit of toys on display in the dining room. Please contact Tabitha at cchsresearchrequests@yahoo.com or 756-6071 if you have a dollhouse or toy(s) which you would like to loan.

There will be holiday activities and programs to go along with the dollhouse and toy exhibits. Look for more information in our November newsletter.

In conjunction with our dollhouse exhibit, we will have a display of toys in the dining room. Please contact Tabitha if you have a toy(s) which you would like to loan.



Dollhouse from the 2013 Dollhouse Holiday

**CORTLAND COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

25 Homer Avenue
Cortland, NY 13045



*A window onto Cortland County's
Past!*

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

VISIT US ONLINE AT:
WWW.CORTLANDHISTORY.COM
HTTPS://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/
CORTLANDCOUNTYHISTORICALSOCIETY

Non Profit- Org
US POSTAGE PAID
Cortland, N.Y.
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"/>	

Check your mailing label has your membership expired? Use this convenient form to renew if necessary.



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

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____