



# DHS News

The Official Newsletter  
of the

Deposit Historical Society

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The Deposit Historical Society

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*Note: You can view our newsletters with color pictures in pdf format on our website!*

## President's Message

The Deposit Historical Society is open for the season and has been actively engaging local students through genealogy research, artifact learning, and museum tours. Recently, students from Mr. Matthews' class researched their family genealogy, and together with Mr. Lester's class learned about the museum's artifacts. The students then shared what they learned by leading third and fourth-grade students on a tour of the museum. We believe it is important for our students to learn about the history of Deposit.

We would like to thank the Kenneth Axtell Foundation and NBT Bank for their generous donation of funds to help in the repair of the front steps and porch of the Bundy house. We also received a generous donation from Broome County to be used on a project yet to be determined.

Hope to see you at the museum this summer!

*Terry Raymond President*

## High School students

Mr. Zach Matthews' History of Deposit class came to the Deposit Historical Society museum on several Tuesday mornings to do genealogical research on their own families or on Deposit's early families. During their tours of the two buildings, they learned about the history of early businesses and early family life through displays. Later, Mr. Shane Lester's Civic Seal of Literacy class joined with Mr. Matthew's class to learn more about our museum and the history behind the artifacts. The purpose of this was to let the high school classes team up, share their acquired knowledge and then guide the 3rd and 4th grade students on a tour of our museum. The students became teachers of history for the younger classes.

*Continued on page 3*



# Home Bureau

by: **Michele Shirkey**

Ruby Green Smith (1878 - 1960) was born in Indiana and received her B.A. at Stanford University in 1902. Then she received her Ph.D. from Cornell and promptly began a long career with Cooperative Extension. She is remembered for authoring the history of Extension, starting the bird watchers clubs, the house-



wives league and farmers markets. However, her legacy comes from starting Home Bureau clubs across NYS. In 1919, the NYS federation recognized Home Bureau as a way to promote all interests pertaining to home and community life. Women from all walks of life joined local clubs to increase their knowledge pertaining to homemaking. Clubs shared a vision in Ruby's creed.

Deposit had a very active club from the 1920's through the 1970's. The Cold Spring Home Bureau met monthly in members' homes. Their minutes included topics such as setting up a schedule to work in the homes of the needy and elderly, learning about new fabrics and their care, understanding your role in jury duty, how to make a wool skirt, a demonstra-

tion on cosmetics and skin care, growing a garden and canning, floriculture, balancing the household budget and how to prepare and freeze meats, just to name a few. Special guests included: the public health nurse, a local dignitary, Cornell educators, representatives from the women's auxiliary, and a local baker.

The women also shared trips they took, holiday ideas, recipes, and collected food and funds for local children in the community. In 1976, they celebrated the 200th birthday of America by making a quilt that has been displayed at the Delaware County Historical Association in Delhi.



**The Deposit Historical Society** has in its archives pictures, recipe books, and yearly meeting albums, if you are interested in exploring Home Bureau further.



**The Cold Spring Home Bureau 1941**

Back row L to R: Rhea Parsons, Rita Conklin, Maude Miner, Jennie Anderson, Mrs. Geoge Briggs, Marie Earl, Edna Couse, Minni Houghtaling Blowers, Louise Sanford, Minnie Axtell, Ethel Monson, Josie Axtell Law  
 Middle row L to R: Stella Huyck, Rowena Pellet, Nora Youngs, Beatrice Axtell, Jennie Hulbert, Madge Conklin, Viola VanValkenburg, Dorthea MacDonald  
 Front row L to R: Louise Axtell, Jessie Axtell, Ester Cook, Isabel Palmer, Alice Axtell, Frances Beebe, Mary Briggs, baby McDonald  
 Picture taken by Fannie Briggs at Ester Cooks home

Dear Deposit Historical Society, ★ ★

Thank you for all of your help and time when it comes to our studies in the history of Deposit class.

Because of you, we were able to dive deep into the history of our hometown and families. During my time at the historical society, I was inspired by your commitment to preserving true and unfiltered history. Without your commitment, I would know nothing about the town in which I grew up.

Thank you for everything that you have done for our class and community.

We are so grateful!!!

- Brooke

**One of many  
Thank You Notes  
from the  
Students**

# The Whitaker Women and the Revolution on the Frontier

By Dr. Samantha Misa

While the vast majority of Revolutionary War veterans were men, several notable women served their country through various forms of patriotic service during the war for independence. One of them was Elizabeth Ogden Whitaker who lived in Deposit.

Elizabeth Ogden was born in New Jersey in 1744, and eventually moved to New York where she married French and Indian War veteran Squire Whitaker in Goshen, Orange County in 1765. The couple had five children together and moved their family to the Wyoming Valley of Pennsylvania. During the Revolution, this frontier area grew dangerous for settlers when Loyalist commander Major John Butler of the British Indian Department began to encourage the Seneca and Cayuga to attack frontier families.

In July 1778, the Whitaker family took refuge in Fort Pittston, but the region was soon besieged by Major Butler's forces. The British and their Iroquois allies forced numerous frontier forts to surrender, but the militia occupying nearby Forty Fort attempted to fight back. In the ensuing Battle of Wyoming, over 300 American soldiers were killed. Major Butler reported that over 200 scalps had been taken as well. The event would later become known as the Wyoming Massacre, with exaggerated stories of British cruelties to civilians circulating after the conflict.

Elizabeth Whitaker was reported to have administered medical aid to wounded soldiers until the British forced the surrender of Fort Pittston as well. The Whitaker family managed to escape, and returned to Goshen, New York. However, their old home quickly proved equally unsafe. In July 1779, the homesteaders in the area were attacked by a force of Loyalists and Mohawks led by Joseph Brant. Elizabeth's husband Squire and his two brothers joined a militia unit that was organized to hunt down the attackers and retaliate, but Squire returned home (a twelve mile walk) to be with Elizabeth as she gave birth to their sixth child, Stephen.

Squire's brothers Benjamin and John took part in the

Battle of Minisink on July 22, 1779, where over half of the volunteer militiamen were killed in close-quarters combat. Benjamin Whitaker was severely wounded in the chest and arm, but was able to return to the Whitaker home where he was tended to by his niece, Sally. Squire Whitaker served as a Private in the Orange County militia for the remainder of the war, and had one more child, Jesse, born in 1782.

For her assistance at the Battle of Wyoming, Elizabeth Whitaker was later officially recognized as Patriot Ancestor by the Daughters of the American Revolution. She died in 1833 and is buried in the Revolutionary War Cemetery in Deposit. Her daughter, Sally, who was ten years old when the family fled the Wyoming Valley and scarcely a year older when she nursed her uncle's battle wounds, married Henry Sampson, a veteran of the Battle of Yorktown. Sally Sampson died in 1855, age 87, and is buried in Pennsylvania.

Dr. Samantha Misa is the Museum Educator at the Delaware County Historical Association (DCHA) in Delhi.



A portrait of Sally Sampson, mid-19th century. Image courtesy of the Delaware County Historical Association.

# The American Revolution and VOICES

Often times when we hear the words “American Revolution” we think of 1776, but the “revolution” started before that in many ways. By the mid 18th century the thirteen British colonies grew restless under British rule when parliament imposed taxes like the Stamp Act and the Townshend Act without colonial representation. These acts created a heavy burden for the colonists and they began to yearn for control of their own trade, laws, and government of its people. In 1773 American colonists staged a protest against British taxation, the famous Boston Tea Party, but it wasn’t until 1776 when the Declaration of Independence marked a formal break from British rule. While we hear about the Battle of Lexington and the victory at Saratoga, the battle of Concord, and eventually the Treaty of Paris in 1873, there were many battles fought throughout this span in history.

Have you heard about the Wyoming massacre, the battle of Oriskany, German Flats and Fort Stanwix? Or perhaps the battle of Johnstown or Caughnawaga? Or what happened in the battle of Downs Brook, the sugar bush massacre. or the many skirmishes of

## Glass Negatives from the turn of the last century

A cache of 148 glass photographic negatives has come to light at the Deposit Historical Society. The negatives had been properly archived but had never been printed out. The photographs were taken by a member of the Knapp family between the years 1893 and 1912. These photographs have not been seen for over 100 years.

A project was undertaken to digitally photograph the negatives, print them out and to make the photos available for research and display. The original photographer was clearly an amateur. The exposure (density) of the negatives varied greatly and the camera focus was hit or miss. Despite the technical limitations, the images produced are an amazing record of life in Deposit at the turn of the 19th to 20th century.

Colonel William Butler and the Native Americans and Tories? Some of these battles were very close to home. And as one result of these battles colonists started to migrate from the eastern seaboard inward.

Did you know that the Fort Stanwix treaty line goes right through Deposit? Or that we have several Revolutionary War soldiers buried here in Deposit along with their family members who settled here after the war? Well, if your curiosity is spiked please join us for our annual VOICES program. Save the date, October 17 or 18th. You can either join us at the Revolutionary War cemetery on the 17th, or in the historical meeting room on the 18th. Both start at 7pm. You will hear 10 VOICES from the Revolutionary War period, including captains of the Wyoming massacre and the battle of Oriskany, a drummer boy during the battle of Saratoga, the wife of a Boston tea party minuteman, a mother who fled the Wyoming valley with her children, a colonist captured by the Native Americans and a women spy for Washington’s army.

Nine of the photographs are now on display at the Sanford Town Hall.



3 Ice Teams on Front Street 1912

# Crowning Glory: The Evolution of American Women's Hats (1900-1950)

During the months of June, July and August, the Deposit Historical Society museum will have on display an exhibit of 20th-century women's hats from its extensive collection. Stop by during visiting hours to view examples of many hat styles described in the article below. The museum has been acquiring hats from generous donors since the 1980's. Take a step back in history to marvel at the designs and details of 20th century women's hat wear. The museum is open to the public Saturdays from 10:00 am – 12:00 pm and on Sundays from 2:00 pm -4:00 pm



From the extravagant, pin-secured Edwardian brims to the sleek, utilitarian shapes of World War II, women's hats in the early to mid-20th century were far more than mere accessories. They were powerful, daily reflections of societal etiquette, female

emancipation and economic shifts.

At the turn of the 20th century, etiquette dictated that no respectable woman step outside without her head covered. This era was dominated by monumental, wide brims that frequently extended past the shoulders. Edwardian hats were lavishly decorated with exotic feathers, stuffed birds, and opulent floral arrangements. Because these hats were so massive, they were secured to the hair using long metal hatpins, which occasionally served as handy tools for self-defense.

As the United States entered the 1910's and World War I, patriotism and practicality began to shrink hat sizes. Brims narrowed, and the styles began to hug the head more closely. The cloche represented female independence and emancipation. Without the need for

heavy, cumbersome pins, women enjoyed newfound mobility, perfect for driving early automobiles and entering the workforce.



As the roaring twenties gave way to the Great Depression, hairstyles softened and lengthened. Hat designs rapidly adjusted to accommodate this shift, becoming shallower to sit atop curled hair. Women embraced wide sweeping brims on summer days, serving as stylish sun visors. Tailored suits and mannish fedoras, borrowed directly from men's fashion, became incredibly popular, reflecting an assertive, sleek new style for women.



The 1940's reshaped American fashion through global conflict and material rationing. Because clothing was rationed, hats became the ultimate canvas for self-express-

sion, as millinery materials remained exempt from strict rationing laws. Women adorned their hats with creative bursts of feathers, artificial flowers and veiling. “Halo hats” became a massive trend. These perched neatly on the back of the head, framing the face and complimenting upswept hairstyles. Turbans were also embraced as both glamorous evening wear and practical coverings for women

working in munitions factories.

By the 1950’s, the strict societal rule requiring women to wear hats in public began to fade. However, the first half of the 20th century remains an unmatched era of sculptural artistry. To explore historical headwear further, you can browse the Vintage Fashion Guild.

## DEPOSIT HISTORICAL SOCIETY 2026 PROGRAM SCHEDULE

**All Wednesday evening programs are free of charge and everyone is welcome. Programs are held at the Museum, 145 Second Street, unless otherwise specified. Please check our website for any changes or cancellations. All programs are followed by refreshments.**

<b>July</b>	<b>1st.</b>	“250th Birthday Tea.”Our guest will be a historical reenacter. Tea and 1776 desserts will be served.	1:00 pm
<b>July</b>	<b>18th.</b>	Museum Open House	10:00 am till 4:00 pm
<b>July</b>	<b>19th.</b>	Stroll with us to explore the Deposit Button Factory, the Outing Publishing Company, and the history of the Deposit school system, including a tour of the current school facility. Meet in front of school	1:00 pm
<b>Aug.</b>	<b>8th.</b>	“Teddy Bear Tea. ” A conversation with a local children’s book author and a storytime will included with this tea and sweets.	1:00 pm
<b>Oct.</b>	<b>17th.</b>	Fundraiser: “Voices from the Past,” at the Revolutionary Cemetery.	7:00 pm
<b>Oct.</b>	<b>18th.</b>	Fundraiser: “Voices from the Past,” at the Museum. Meet voices from the Revolutionary War period and hear their stories.	7:00 pm
<b>Dec.</b>	<b>6th.</b>	“Holdrege Family Christmas”	2:00 pm

**Beginning Memorial Day weekend and through Columbus Day weekend, the Museum will be open for exhibit viewing on Saturdays from 10:00 am - noon and on Sundays from 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm. Admission is free.**

**Our Research Library in the Bundy House remains open year round on Tuesdays from 9:30 am until noon, or by appointment (607) 467 - 4422.**

**CELEBRATE OUR COUNTRY'S 250TH BIRTHDAY WITH A MEMBERSHIP**

Consider a lifetime membership as a way to honor USA's 250th

Gift a membership to a history buff

Introduce a young person to Deposit's history with a membership

Lifetime: \$250

Annual: \$20

*Deposit Historical Society*

*PO box 134 Deposit, NY 13754*

**Contact the DHS News editors for information, suggestions, or address changes...**

If you have information to share with us about our mysteries, historical events, or suggestions for new articles or projects at the Museum, **or if you have moved**, mail it to DHS Newsletter editors Michael and Gail Musante at PO Box 134 Deposit, NY 13754, or email it to one of us at [gail.musante@gmail.com](mailto:gail.musante@gmail.com) We will be delighted to hear from you! Thanks!!

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