

## LOOKING BACK

by Shelly Gautreau and Nancy Young

These are excerpts from an interview of Mary C. Beste (1883 – 1974) that was done by Virginia Shattuck and which were published in the November 1974 issue of *The Hague Chronicle*.

*Miss Mary Cutting Beste was born and brought up in New York City.*

*Miss Beste, who celebrated her 91st birthday in October, has lived in Hague for some seventy years off and on.*

*She refused to let us list her many contributions to the community, for which she is well known, but the following is a description, in her own words, of her reaction and appreciation of the opportunity of living here.*

*"In the foothills of the Adirondacks, there is a little town called Hague. It is situated on the shores of one of the most beautiful lakes in the world, deep set like a jewel in the surrounding mountains where game is plentiful and the lake abounds with fish."*

*"The pioneers who came this way stayed and built their log houses and later on, a little one-room school house. Hague grew and flourished and became a township of splendid people. They had their religious and other differences of course, but these seemed to be solved quietly and with ease, leaving a feeling of cooperation and brotherhood."*

*"Then gradually came an influx of other people having heard of the beauty of this lake. Among them came many doctors, captains, and generals to enjoy the peace and beauty of this place."*

*"Hague is still a community where men own their own land, build their own houses, and raise their own families. Each person knows his neighbors and each child his*



*schoolmates. If anyone is dishonest, word gets around quietly. There is no jail in Hague."*

*"The foundation for this peaceful atmosphere was laid in the one room schoolhouse and continues in the present well-equipped modern one. I am glad the proposition to abandon the local school for a larger one in Ticonderoga was defeated. This would have entailed much hardship for the children in winter. And reducing taxes for newcomers would prove a false economy if it introduced a new element in the Town of Hague, producing the kind of atmosphere which people came here to escape."*

### Update 50 years later

We are so lucky to have had such a wonderful, caring, and gifted soul as Mary Beste as a resident in our town!

She started the Mary C. Beste Scholarship in 1964, which provides money for college to children from Hague. This fund continues today and many children have benefitted from it, going on to better themselves and the world around them.

Each student now receives \$500 per year for four years, and this support continues into master's programs for those who remain in school, according to Kathy Santaniello. Donations to the fund are still welcome. Checks should be made payable to the "Beste Scholarship Fund" and mailed to: Kathy Santaniello, 14 Braisted Hill Road, Silver Bay, NY 12874.

The entire interview between Miss Beste and Virginia Shattuck can be found in the November 1974 *Hague Chronicle* binder in the Hague Museum at the Hague Community

Center, which is open from 8 am to 4 pm Monday – Friday.

While you are in the museum, be sure to also check out the writings and interviews by Judy Stock and Ginger Henry Kuenzel in the "Colorful Characters Research" binder. ■



Spectacular fall color from the Black Mountain Summit Trail. Photo courtesy of Sandy Powell.