



CHARLTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

FALL 2019

Volumne 27 NUMBER 4

<http://www.charltonnyhs.org>

UPCOMING EVENTS

Wednesday, November 6, 2019

ELIZABETH SCHUYLER HAMILTON: ALBANY GIRL, AMERICAN WOMEN



DATE: Wednesday, November 6th

TIME: 7:00 Refreshments 7:30

PLACE: Schoolhouse, 2009 Maple Ave,
Charlton

PRESENTER: Eileen Egan Mack will portray
Elizabeth Schuyler Hamilton

PROGRAM: "Elizabeth Schuyler Hamilton: Albany Girl, American Women," is a portrayal of the daughter of an American General and wife of the first Secretary of Treasury. Through story and song, Eileen Egan Mack brings to life one of America's ladies of liberty. Known as Elizabeth, Eliza, and Betsy, she is most remembered as the woman who Aaron Burr made a widow, but her story goes richer and deeper than that. Come meet the mother of 7, pioneer social worker, and the person responsible for rescuing and preserving the story of our Alexander Hamilton.



Holiday Party



It's that time of year again. Our annual Holiday Party is just around the corner, and it is time to sign up for an evening of fun, visiting with friends, and great food. The Tavern is one of our 5K Race sponsors and Mike and Sue do a great job preparing our party.

Date: Monday, December 2nd, 2019

Time: 6:00 Cocktails & light appetizers

7:00 Dinner

Place: The Charlton Tavern

THE MENU SELECTION IS AS FOLLOWS:

Filet of Beef Tenderloin – Slow roasted and grilled to perfection with homemade bordelaise sauce.

Salmon Oscar- Poached salmon filet topped with crabmeat and asparagus, finished with a homemade hollandaise sauce.

Chicken ala Charlton – Sautéed chicken medallions, smoked ham and roasted peppers in a savory sherry butter sauce, finished with gruyere cheese.

Pasta Prima Vera – Pasta tossed with fresh garden vegetables in a tomato basil cream.

Entree's served with potatoes or pilaf, chef choice of vegetable, garden salad, warm baguette, coffee, tea, decaf, and carrot cake for dessert.

If you have a special dietary need, please let us know.
Cocktail hour will include light appetizers and Cash bar.

This year's price per person is **\$38.00**, including gratuity.

To continue our festive tradition enjoyed by so many CHS members, we will have our popular raffle, a few Christmas Carols, and a short Christmas Trivia Game. You will still have plenty of time to visit with friends as you enjoy your meals.

If you have items to contribute for the raffle, please bring them unwrapped, on the night of the party, and be sure to include the donor's name. Once again, we have asked for a table on which to display the raffle prizes. Raffle participants will be able to put their tickets into cups by the prizes for which they want to compete.

To make your reservation for the holiday party, please contact Susan York, by phone: 518 399-3797 or E-mail: YorkMM474@aol.com with your menu choice. Of course you can also simply send payment for the Holiday Party and your menu choice with your 2020 dues. Your party reservation is confirmed with your check made payable to: Charlton Historical Society

Mail to: Susan York, 18 Cortland Drive, Charlton NY 12019-2644

Reservations will be accepted through Monday, November 25th

We Say Goodbye and Thank You

John and Carolyn Sakrison lived on Vines Road for 60 years and have been members of the Charlton Historical Society since 1985. Over the years they have been generous supporters and were especially interested that we be able to fund the recent repair of the museum weathervane. We thank them for their support over all of these years. John reports that they are both in good health

but needed to downsize. John and Carolyn now live in Saratoga Springs and we wish them all the best.

CHUCK LATHAM'S CHARLTON HISTORY—FACTS and LEGEND

We thank Howie Eskin for presenting his informative program on the Erie Canal and hosting the October program at Harmony Hall. Chuck has found an article on "Wintering Mules and Canal Horses" written by Winifred McConchie Palmateer that will be shared with you.

Today I want to write about things that happened when the farmers wintered the mules and canal horses that were used on the Erie-Barge Canal. Actually, I can remember very little myself, but I am supplementing it with things I remember Pa's telling about with information from a Notice and Affidavit that once belonged to Grandpa and which we came across when we had to go through Pa's papers after he died and by what I learned by talking to Aunt Marion Combes and Harold when I visited them a week ago yesterday and asked them what they could recall.

Practically the only incident I can recall is standing in the window in one of the west upstairs bedrooms as a very small child and watching a string of mules coming down over the hill from the Kraft place. I am sure it must have been Mama who was there watching us. I remember there was relief in her voice as she said, "Oh look! Here they come now!"

What I learned on my recent visit to Aunt Marion's has supplied me with the missing links which have enabled me to piece this story together. Only now can I understand the reason for the relief when that string of animals was finally moving.

Every fall in November the farmers went down to the Aqueduct (now called Rexford) and got the mules and canal horses to winter. All the neighborhood farmers kept as many as each had room for. This provided a means of increasing the farmer's income and kept the farmers busy the year around. In the summer he was busy growing hay and grain to feed them; in winter he was busy caring for them. He was paid a certain amount each week for each animal he wintered. Harold said it got to the point where the farmer's profit was greatly reduced because each was anxious to have his looking better than his neighbor's when they returned in the Spring and during the last few years animals were wintered, they began buying grain toward Spring instead of feeding their home-grown grains.

I cannot recall whether we actually kept any mules or not, but I expect we did. I know Grandpa did. He had some on the Kraft place as well as those he could stable at home. Aunt Marion said she thinks her father must have kept at least 25. She remembers each one had only a small space in the stable and that they were sometimes only separated by a pole because each farmer squeezed in as many animals as he possible could

Aunt Marion remarked that her father was a self-educated horse doctor and recalled the pride he took in working with the animals each Fall to cure the galls they had when they came there. She said many had great sores on their shoulders and top of their necks from their ill-fitting collars and hard work. It was their job to walk along the towpath pulling the barge behind them.

She said when the ice was gone from the river and it was time for the animals to return in the Spring, the farmer's troubles really started. It was never hard work to get the animals to the farms in the Fall because then they were tired, but in Springtime it was a different story. It required every available man and boy a farmer could muster to get a string of animals ready to return. She recalled how excited she got each Spring when it was time for her father's mules to go back and the neighbors came in to help. She said she liked to tag along and watch, but she always had to stay either in the corn crib or close enough so that she could duck in at a moment's notice because there was very real danger of either being kicked or trampled on.

I would judge we lived at least ten and possibly twelve miles from the headquarters where the animals were quartered during the summer months. This distance usually prohibits the men from returning the same day and made it necessary for them to return as many at one time as they possibly could. I am not sure now whether Aunt Marion said they too had five animals or five pairs at one time, but I am quite sure it was the latter. They began using a long strong rope and bringing the animals in one at a time and tying one on either side of the rope. The slowest and tamest were put on the head and tail while the liveliest ones were put in the middle. It took a long time to bring each one individual and tie it in place because after a long winter's rest they either wanted to kick or bite or in mule fashion, to be a little ornery. At the very end she was quite sure they tied one lone animal.

After the last animal was tied in place, the long journey to Aqueduct began. Usually the younger boys, from 15 years of age and upwards who were eager for excitement, accompanied the one who was taking the string at least as far as Charlton. If the animals misbehaved badly, they might go farther.

I remember the story Pa used to tell of the experience he once had trying to return the string of mules. All mules and canal horses were dreadfully afraid of water. Once he got his animals as far as the Little Troy bridge without incident, but when they looked down and saw water, they began to crowd. That time he was on horseback. In spite of his efforts he was unable to control them and turned him around and headed back in the direction he had just come from at a run. He just said he had an extremely difficult time to turn them around and get them across the bridge. I wish now I had pressed for details concerning the experience, as I am sure it must have been a story in itself.

There were instances when a farmer had to keep an animal longer than he had bargained for. Occasionally an owner was unable to pay his entire bill and one was left. I found a record showing that once a man never came back to claim his mule and Grandpa was forced to hire a lawyer. The mule had been left with Grandpa on November 20, 1914. He was to have received \$1.50 a week for the care of the mule, but when it was still in his possession in July, a notice was sent to the owner's last known address stating that unless the bill was paid by August 28, 1915, the mule would be sold at public auction to the highest bidder. The record show that on August 13, Grandma posted six notices in conspicuous places around the town stating that Grandpa had a lien for board and pasturage on one dark brown mule, that \$53.57 had been due him on July 28, and unless his money was forthcoming the mule would be sold. Further statements in the record show that the mule was sold on August 28, 1915 for \$40.00, but that Grandpa's bill against it came to \$60.21 so he was never fully paid.

I wish I knew the last date the mules were wintered in our community. I believe the change to motor-driven barges must have been made about the time of World War I because my memories about mules are so vague. He told me that the new road that runs north out of Rexford passes directly over the place where the old barn for the mules once stood. The old hotel that was one the headquarters still stands. Harold said it doesn't look one-bit better today than it did over 40 years ago. Time has changed many things, but apparently not that old hotel. The sign on the front still reads "The McLane Hotel". Probably few who pass today are aware of the part it once played in life on the canal.

July 13, 1959

- Remember that CHS is eligible to receive funds from THE AMAZON SMILE FOUNDATION. Log onto Smile.amazon.com. and select the CHS to receive .5% of your purchase price. Then proceed to shop.
- **Election of the 2019 CHS Board of Trustees will take place at the November 6th program meeting. If you wish to join the Board of Directors, please call.**

Slate for Board of Trustees

President	Alice Crotty	518-399-4153
Vice-President	Pat Parker	518-882-9099
Secretary	Nancy Bellamy	518-399-8508
Cor. Sec.	Stacey Fenton	518-882-6009
Treasurer	Susan York	518-399-3797
Curator	Bill Wehrle	518-399-7695
Trustee	Don Davis	518-399-1293
Trustee	Ken Crotty	Website, Maintenance 518-399-4153
Trustee	Mari Fettke	518-882-9502
Trustee	Chuck Latham	History Buff 518-384-0130
Trustee	Marv Schorr	Trust Fund 518-399-4161

Please call any Board of Trustees member with questions and comments.

