



Town of Middlefield Historical Association
P.O. Box 348 Cooperstown, NY 13326
Headquarters at the District No 1 Schoolhouse,
On County Highway 35, in the Hamlet of Middlefield
www.middlefieldhistorical.org March, 2014

President's message:

The TMHA board of Directors has been developing our schedule of events for the upcoming year. See the calendar of events below for highlights of the upcoming year.

Do you or someone you know make crafts and may be interested in being a vendor at either our summer or fall event? You can download vendor forms and information at our website <http://www.middlefieldhistorical.org/> (click on "Public Documents" link on left side of screen).

Please check the mailing label for your TMHA dues renewal date. Do you have friends who are not members? Please spread the word and help us increase our membership rolls.

TMHA's focus and main purpose is to promote the history of our Town, a passion that you as members also share. Is there a TMHA event that is your favorite? Do you have ideas about other ways of promoting TMHA? We are looking for help at **every** TMHA event. Interested? We always need: Bake Goods for the bake sale, volunteers to staff the Gift Shop, help with set up/take down of tents, assistance with promotional material distribution, and much more.

Please consider helping out at one or more of the events that are planned. These events are ways to get people into the Schoolhouse and for us to share our collections with visitors. We are working on developing new exhibits, any ideas or thoughts? Please share your thoughts and time. You can email us at tmhawebsite@gmail.com

This upcoming year promises to be an exciting one, I urge you to consider stepping out and be an active part of making TMHA grow. We look forward to hearing from you. Thank you in advance for marking your calendars - See you in July!

September

President T.M.H.A.

Community Day Town ball Game

This year a Town ball game will be part of our day long festivities, that also include craft vendors and food. If you have never seen a town ball game, this would be the perfect time to acquaint yourself with a predecessor of our National Game. The rules will be explained and you will have a chance to see the game played as it was any years ago. We will also have a game for anyone who wishes to play and for those who has never been a part of a town ball game. Mark your calendar for Sunday July 13, 2014 and enjoy community day with us.

Dates to Remember:

July 7 - 6 p.m. Annual meeting. Election of TMHA officers will take place. All members are encouraged to attend.

July 13 - 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. 41st Annual Middlefield Community Day

October 12 - 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Middlefield 9th Annual Fall Festival

December 7 - 1 p.m. - 5 p.m. Christmas at the Schoolhouse

NISKAYUNA ROCK

On the east side of NY State Route 166, about 2 miles north of the Rt 35 turnoff to the Hamlet of Middlefield, and just south of Dubbens Crossroad, is a rocky outcropping next to a ranch house currently owned by Herbert and Deborah Griffiths. It is known locally as “Niskayuna Rock”.



Niskayuna Rock

Rumor has it that there is a history behind the name and / or location going back to the Revolutionary War era. This is what TMHA has been able to determine at this point.

The consensus seems to be that Niskayuna is derived from the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) language, more specifically Mohawk, or a predecessor tribe. It refers to corn or maize in some fashion.

Relatively recent documentation (Letters of Walter Butler) suggests that a significant event in the days leading up to the Cherry Valley Massacre (or as we say in today’s politically correct environment, the Incident at Cherry Valley), appears to have taken place in the area of Niskayuna Rock.

When Col. Alden, commander of the forces at Cherry Valley was notified by messengers from Fort Stanwix that an attack on Cherry Valley was imminent, he sent out a small scout patrol (“Sergeant’s patrol”) to look for raiding parties. In the early morning hours of November 9, 1778 however, a scouting party consisting of a Sergeant and 8 privates was literally ‘caught sleeping’ by Butler’s forces, disarmed and captured without a shot being fired. Butler’s Rangers and the 321 Indians managed to extract significant tactical information from the scout patrol. On the night of November 10 the attackers

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encamped “within about six Miles of the Settlement” prior to attacking at daylight on November 11.

Niskayuna Rock is 6 miles, as the crow flies, south of Cherry Valley, on a slightly elevated mound that is off the flat ground along the banks of Cherry Valley creek.

An ideal campsite, a landmark and a distance that is consistent with a contemporaneous record. Niskayuna Rock may well have been a “meeting place” of sorts; a well used campsite along the trail; or simply the location where the troops of Butler and Brant found themselves when darkness arrived. It does seem that it could very well have been where the plan of attack on Cherry Valley was finalized.

(A more extensive version of this manuscript, with references, is available to anyone interested. Contact Dave Edwards @ 547-1161)

Answers to photos from page 4

- A. Holbrooks Store & Garage crn. of Hade Road and Cty Rt 33 (Middlefield Center Road) in Whig Corners.
- B. D.H. Keller Boot Shop on Cty. Rt. 33 (Middlefield Center Road) in Middlefield Center.
- C. Building at one time housed the “White Rose Cheese Factory”. Located on St. Rt. 166.
- D. Once the Bowerstown General Store. Located on crn. of River Road and Cty. Rt 52 (Murphy Hill Rd.)
- E. Gurney’s General Store in Westville. This would be tough to remember, as it burned in 1916 or 1917. That is Thomas Gurney in front with Edith Saxson. Gurney also had stores in Milford & Oneonta

Is it time to renew your TMHA membership? Your renewal date is shown on the address label on page 4.

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_____ New Member 2014 _____ Renewal 2014

Name _____ Tel. No. (____) _____

Address _____ Zip _____

email address _____

Please select one: _____ Single \$5.00 _____ Student \$1.00 _____ Couple \$8.00
_____ Sustaining \$10.00 _____ Patron \$25.00

Please consider an additional gift to:

Collection Care & Acquisitions Fund \$ _____ Building & Repair Fund \$ _____

Veterans memorial Fund \$ _____ Friends of TMHA fund \$ _____

Time & Talent

_____ I will volunteer to serve on the Board of Directors. Please contact me (email/ phone) _____

_____ I/We will help with the Summer programs. Please contact me (email/ phone). _____

_____ One summer Sunday Program Committee _____ Greeter

_____ Community Day/Marketplace _____ Fall Festival/Craft Show

_____ I/We would like to work on one of the following task groups. Please contact me (email/ phone) _____

_____ Publicity _____ Collection Care _____ Good ol’ yard work

Middlefield was home to many small businesses over the years. Do you recognize or remember buildings?
Answer key on page 3



A.



B.



E.



C.



D.

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Address Correction Requested