

The

Orangetown Crier

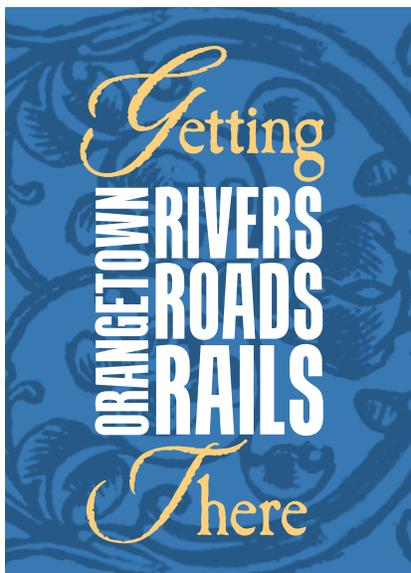
News from the Orangetown Historical Museum and Archives

FALL 2023



TAPPAN ZEE ORANGE FOUR SECTION PHOTO by Charles Norton (1936-2005) Grand View-On-Hudson

Charles Norton's photograph's of the Hudson show an understanding of the heart and soul of the river. From the vantage point of his back porch the thousands of images that he took chronicle the nuances of the river with the familiarity of an old friend. This sunrise typifies the Norton gesture in one sweeping and magnificent moment.



AS OUR EXHIBIT *GETTING THERE: RIVERS ROADS RAILS ORANGETOWN* IS COMING TO A CLOSE,

it's a good time to reflect on the impact this look back on local transportation has had. Our rail lines have transported strawberries to market and WWII troops to war. The river named for Henry Hudson that saw Benedict Arnold board the 'Vulture' and Robert Fulton's steamships still enralls with magnificent sunrises and inspires artists. Simple roads, an interstate parkway and now trails on repurposed rail lines get us where we are going - or give us a place to just meander. The 1851 Erie RR Guidebook called this place, "A happy mixture of the gentle and the wild, the sublime and the beautiful. There is an endless variety of romantic scenery and the broad expanse of the river gives a peculiar charm to the landscape." It's to this peculiar charm that the journey is the start of the adventure.

ROADS

FROM TRAILS TO ROADS

To understand the roads in Orangetown as well as in other communities, we must go back to the days of the Native American trails which followed every important and even unimportant brook or stream. Lesser trails connected them through whatever pass between hills and gave the easiest passage when main trails swung near to one another. They frequently split when they led directly to a hill. Along the streams, the trails avoided low ground which overflowed in the spring and where brush grew the rest of the year.

The Native American trails were gradually widened from a few inches in width, then widened by horses and cows and extended by carts and wagons by the patentee settlers. When these vehicles began to use and widened these trails, road commissioners had to insure the roads were passable and the residents had to supply the labor to remove rocks and tree stumps and build bridges along these roads. In the course of time and an increase of "traffic," road improvements were made and eventually roads were created uphill and then by the twentieth century, asphalt or concrete was used to pave new roads.¹



Today, some of the roads in Orangetown are based on these old Native American trails. **Greenbush Road and Kings Highway** are just a few roads to name. One of the major trails along the banks of the Hudson was **Piermont and River Roads**, also Native American trails which ran through Sparkill, Piermont, Grand View, South Nyack and Nyack. From what is now Upper Nyack, the detour off the main trail that was west of the Nyack Hills led back to Hook Mountain. It is along these major trails that settlers built their homes and barns.

Part of **Western Highway** is based on **Greenbush Road** which later was known as "**Kings Highway**." With the increase of commerce, boats bringing in an assortment of commodities from the city, roads were required to distribute these goods to the interior communities. **Washington Avenue to Pascack Road** and **Sicketown Road** are good examples of these Native American trails that have allowed for the distribution of goods.

¹How Things Began, Wilfred Talman

ABOVE: The Fisher Family taking a car ride on Greenbush Road in Tappan Ca. 1910-1920

PALISADES *Interstate* PARKWAY

In 1933-34 the first thoughts of a Palisades Interstate Parkway were developed by engineer and environmentalist William A. Welch who was general manager and chief engineer of the Palisades Interstate Park Commission.

The plan was to build a parkway to connect the New Jersey Palisades with the state parks along the Hudson River in Rockland and Orange Counties. Welch would soon garner support of John D. Rockefeller who donated 700 acres of land along the New Jersey Palisades overlooking the Hudson River in 1933. With this favorable momentum for the new route it was accepted as a Civil Works Administration project under Franklin D. Roosevelt's New



Deal coalition. When the New Jersey Highway Commission did not support construction, the idea of a parkway was put on hold.

During the 1940's Rockefeller renewed the push for a parkway along the New Jersey Palisades and teamed up with planner Robert Moses to establish and design the parkway. Construction began on the current PIP in New York on April 1, 1947. On August 28, 1958 the final piece of the PIP was completed between exits 5 and 9 in southern Rockland County. Known for its stone arch overpasses and scenic overlooks, in 1998 the PIP was designated as a national landmark by the National Park Service.

Allan Seebach

by Mary Cardenas

Sunday, October 1, 2023, was perfect day to celebrate the life of one of Orangetown's former resident. Allan was a native Tappanite who lived next to the West Shore line and waved to some of the train engineers. He was a volunteer fireman at the Tappan Firehouse for many years. In the meantime, he worked at the Blue Hill Golf Course for many years before retiring and doing was he wanted to do—open a model train store. His father had a model train store in the Red Pump Nursery on Washington Street in Tappan. Calling his store, the “Old & Weary Train Shop,” Allan opened his model train store in Tappan first on Route 303 and then on Old Tappan Road.

(The celebration was postponed from Saturday, September 30, 2023, due to bad weather.) Allan was remembered by some 100 people who attended the event including Allan's mother and uncle. A special song had been written by Tom Chapin called “All Aboard Piermont.” There were posters with photos of Al and a map of the Erie Rail Line and its history.

My first encounter with Al was back in 1988 when I was president of the Tappantown Historical Society and I had arranged to have a guest speaker at the annual meeting talk about the West Shore Railroad.

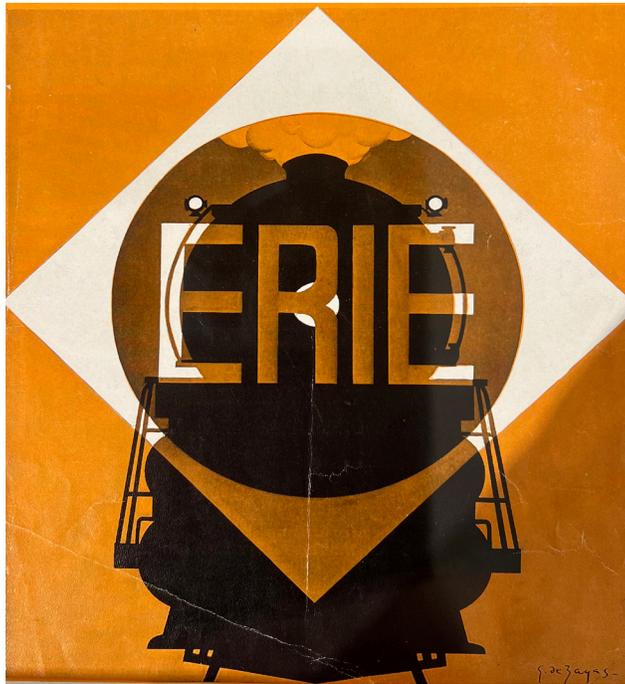
The guest speaker didn't show up and someone in the audience recommended Al and gave me his number. I called him and within twenty minutes, Al arrived with his son and a small

collection of railroad lanterns. Al gave a talk on the lanterns and their significance as well as some history of the West Shore Railroad. The audience was entranced by this very knowledgeable and personable young man.

Over the years, I have called on Allan's expertise on the railroad lines that ran thru Orangetown. This was due to the Orangetown Museum's exhibits on these railroads. In December 1997 the museum presented an exhibit entitled, “Riding the Rails in Orangetown: The West Shore.” Allan provided maps that showed all the abutting properties along the West Shore line in Orangetown. Needless to say, there were a lot of maps with the names of these property owners that were installed into this exhibit. He also loaned the museum several lanterns and other related objects from this rail line. In November 1998 the

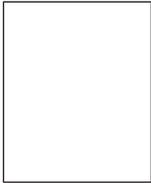
museum did an exhibit on the Erie Railroad Line. Once again Allan provided the museum with several objects from his collection that were relevant. In addition to the loans, Allan donated two model train sets that the Friends of the Orangetown Museum could raise money by raffling them off.

In more current exhibits, Allan supplemented some of his artifacts which enhanced the story of Orangetown that was being told. In short, Allan Seebach whose enthusiasm to share his knowledge regarding the train systems in and around Orangetown, is sadly missed.





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at The Salyer House
213 Blue Hill Road
Pearl River, New York
**A Spy in Our Midst,
Our Dutch
Sandstone Houses
&
Our Dutch Families**
by Appointment

at The DePew House
196 Chief Bill Harris Way
Orangeburg, New York
**Getting There
RIVERS
ROADS
RAILS**
*Closing Tuesday,
November 21*

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Email us at
friendsofohma@gmail.com
to get our eblasts!

UPCOMING :



Getting There RIVERS ROADS RAILS: Orangetown Open Tuesdays & Fridays 10-2, Sundays 1-4 at the DePew House. Find out why transportation matters in a place where the journey is a part of the adventure. Featuring models, paintings, maps, a film and more! Admission free; closing Tuesday, November 21



CREATING COMMUNITY 1950: THE HICKORY HILL EXPERIMENT

Here is an origin story not unlike that of our first Dutch settlers. Find out how a building, baby and business boom exploded in Orangetown in the 1950's. Opening April 2024.



ANNUAL DINNER: The Friends of the Orangetown Museum Annual Dinner's theme this year is 'FINDING ORANGETOWN'. Join us to celebrate our shared connections with guest speaker Randall Stuart and his Dutch descendant discoveries. Sunday November 12th, 3 pm, Historic '76 House Tappan. Ticket price: \$90. per person



HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE: The historic Salyer House is the perfect venue to grab some holiday cheer in our beautifully decorated homestead. Swing to carols performed live by Lounge Zotica 3000 and meet the friendliest Santa in town on the 17th. 3 Sundays in December, December 3, 10 & 17, 1-4 pm Historic Salyer House. Admission is free

THE ORANGETOWN HISTORICAL MUSEUM & ARCHIVES
Mary Cardenas, MUSEUM DIRECTOR • Stefanie D'Erasmo, CURATOR OF COLLECTIONS
Elizabeth Skrabonja, CURATOR FOR EXHIBITIONS • Steve Schwinn, BUILDINGS MANAGER
The Orangetown Historical Museum & Archives was founded in 1992 to acquire, preserve and exhibit objects which reflect primarily the history of the Town of Orangetown. The Museum's additional, but not lesser mission is to document, research, promote and publicize the town's rich, historical heritage of the town for the people of Orangetown.

TOWN OF ORANGETOWN

Teresa Kenny, SUPERVISOR
Jerry Bottari, Thomas Diviny, Brian Donohue and Paul Valentine, COUNCILMEN

FRIENDS OF THE ORANGETOWN MUSEUM
Your membership in the Friends of the Orangetown Museum helps to collect and preserve the history of Orangetown. Members will receive notices of programs and events as well as free admission to the Museum's special exhibits and events. The Museum is a 501 (C) (3) organization and all donations are tax deductible.
STUDENT/SENIOR \$25 | INDIVIDUAL \$35
FAMILY (up to 6 members) \$75
PATRON \$150 | HERITAGE \$1,000 | BENEFACTOR \$1,500