

WINTER 2023



Here at the Orangetown Museum we mark the passing of our friend and Founding member Catherine Dodge. As we prepare for our upcoming exhibit **Getting There: Rivers, Roads, Rails** we especially remember Catherine and her dedication to the Rails to Trails movement that she helped to make a reality. *Friends of the Orangetown Museum Board Member, Anne Pinzow has prepared this tribute.*

A Preservationist's LEGACY

by Anne Phyllis Pinzow

JAMES DODGE, son of the late Catherine Dodge, spoke to us about how Catherine's home was filled with history, from the furnishings, some qualified as antiques (more than 100 years old) to knickknacks, a family bible with a list of ancestors going back several hundred years, and even a box filled with locks of hair, as that was something people collected, and many still do, as keepsakes, what looks like a ca. 1700 hard leather pouch filled with buckshot, a gallstone from an ox, and postcards, some from the 1800's. "It's endless," said Dodge. "It's been passed down through the Dodge's and the Sickles who were here since the 1600s." Catherine's family, the Minfords came to Rockland a little later than that, said Dodge.

Catherine, born on April 26, 1929, and passed away on November 23, 2022, was an avid supporter of the preservation of history in Orangetown and was one of the founders of the Orangetown Historical Museum and Archives, as well as being the first Chairwoman of the Friends of the Orangetown Museum.

Mary Cardenas, the Orangetown Town Historian and Executive Director of the museum, and friend of Catherine's for more than 30 years, said at Catherine's memorial "Catherine was a preservationist—a proponent of retaining as much of Orangetown's heritage as possible. As an Orangetown resident, she believed that the old sandstone houses were left in our care as

a legacy to the history of the community. It was Catherine who guided me in transitioning the Michael Sayler House, donated to the Town by United Water, into the first museum building."

After Catherine's husband, her high school sweetheart and racecar driver, Joseph Griswold Dodge, got into politics she followed suit; she was friendly with pretty much everyone.



"She became District Leader, a Committeewoman for District 16. She loved to talk to people, to engage with people." Dodge recounted when he was a little boy and was taken shopping to the supermarket by his mother, "I dreaded it. Every three steps someone would stop her and she'd



Catherine Dodge, (in blue coat, left) at the dedication ceremony of the J.B. Clarke Pedestrian Bridge, November 30, 2006

Rails to Trails

Avid biker, naturalist and Orangetown Museum volunteer and Board Member, Steve Schwinn knows a thing or two about Rails to Trails. In assisting with the research for this section of our exhibit Steve has highlighted each bit of re-purposed railway – and helped to charter a path for the uninitiated. **Happy trails to you!**

-  ACTIVE
-  RAIL TO TRAIL
-  DERELICT/PAVED OVER



ORANGETOWN RAILS TO TRAILS

by Steve Schwinn



With evocative railroad names from the past such as Erie-Lackawanna, New York & Erie, and Jersey City & Albany, the Town of Orangetown has a rich history of railroading with four trainlines that traversed the Town for various periods of time (two are still in service).

In addition to active passenger and freight lines the Town is fortunate in having preserved the majority of inactive rail lines as a network of multi-use Rails-to-Trails.

From Oak Tree Road in Tappan to Cedar Hill Avenue in Nyack (Joseph B. Clarke Trail), from Depot Square in Sparkill to Western Highway in Blauvelt (The Old Erie Path), and the Piermont Pier (the terminus of the Erie Piermont Branch) these over nine miles of trails provide a great resource for multiple leisure activities. The existing and potential informational signage enhances the historical knowledge of the area.

A Preservationist's Legacy

continued from page 1

talk to them for 15 minutes,” as she seemed to know everybody and everyone knew her.

She was a mainstay at Orangetown Town Board meetings, always outspoken and there in support of historical preservation and the importance of history. She was the first female Town Supervisor, as in her appointed position as Orangetown Deputy Supervisor, served as Town Supervisor when, Orangetown Supervisor, Jack Cassidy was hospitalized in 1996

Catherine was a “go to” type of person, with a vast and eclectic list of qualifications and was always ready, willing and able to help out. “She excelled at sports” said Dodge, playing basketball, riding a sleigh, bike riding and was elected Nyack High School class president. She was in the rifle club and practiced at the YMCA shooting range. “The kids would walk from school with guns strapped on their backs to shoot and then to the soda shop afterwards. No one thought anything of it.”

Dodge spoke about how his mother went to college, graduating from Cedar Crest College when it was still rare for women to get a degree in anything besides education or nursing. Fighting the trend, as usual, Catherine became a buyer for Bloomingdales in Manhattan.

It was also not usual at that time for women to drive, but “She got her drivers license as soon as she could, driving the giant Cadillac around.”

“She enjoyed traveling in the late 80’s to mid- 90’s,” said Dodge giving a short litany of where she went. “England, Russia, Alaska, Hawaii, Grand Canyon,” pretty much around the western United States.

She was the founding member and chairwoman of the Orangetown Parks and Recreation committee and led the drive to make The Joseph B. Clarke 4.1-mile Rail trail stretching from Blauvelt to Tappan with a side trail to Piermont a reality.

“She was a type A, always going, always going, never slowed down.”

Catherine’s legacy lives on not only as an important person in Rockland, in hundreds of people’s lives but especially in the Rail Trail created from 25 acres of Clausland Mountain she and her husband donated to the Town. This founding member of the Orangetown Historical Museum and Archives will not quickly be forgotten.

In The Bag



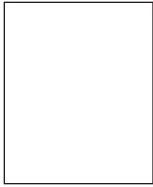
How can you support the Orangetown Museum and celebrate the extraordinary Dutch master painting recently added to our collection? Stop by the museum to purchase a beautiful tote bag. One side displays the Dutchman – the reverse an impressive painting of our historic Salyer House painted by Allen Trumpler. Whichever side you choose – the message will be clear – history matters!

Tote Bags available at the museum: \$15.00 each



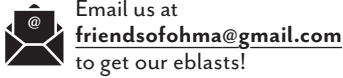


196 Chief Bill Harris Way
 Orangeburg, New York 10962
 Tel. (845) 398-1302
 www.orangetownmuseum.com



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**
*Opening
 April 23, 2023*



UPCOMING :



Getting There RIVERS ROADS RAILS: Orangetown Opening April 23 from 1-4 pm 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; open through November 2023



WINE & CHEESE & POETRY WITH MUSIC! Friday May 12th from 5:30-7:00 pm. Together with the Orangeburg Library the museum opens its doors for a tour of Getting There – Rivers Roads Rails and a wine & cheese event of note with a live band and literary libations. The musical accompaniment will bring out the poet in us all. Suggested donation \$5



RAILS TO TRAILS GUIDED TOUR. Join Steve Schwinn for a guided tour of the best of Orangetown's Rails to Trails. It's a historic re-purposing of the rail lines that's close to our hearts – meet up date, time and place TBA – see you in June!



ARTS SUNDAY. What better way to spend a summer Sunday afternoon than with a visit to the museum and the opportunity to view some local art as well. The museum will be open free of charge and there will be some surprise vendors sharing their wares on the beautiful grounds of the DePew House. Date and time TBA – see you in July!



REVOLUTIONARY FRIDAY. Looking for a way back to the past this summer? Fred Schoffer (aka 'Mountain Man') is ready to take us to the trapper days of yore with an outdoor demo for kids and their adult friends. The historic Salyer House will be open for view with some beautiful new additions to the permanent collection. Admission free: Date and time TBA – see you in August!

THE ORANGETOWN HISTORICAL MUSEUM & ARCHIVES
 Mary Cardenas, MUSEUM DIRECTOR • Stefanie D'Erasmus, 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.



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