

The

# Orangetown Crier

News from the Orangetown Historical Museum and Archives

SUMMER 2013

Were you a kid in Shanks Village? Did your parents live in the barracks or are you just interested in the 1950's in Orangetown? This program will offer an opportunity to learn more about this unique social experiment through first person reminiscences and a tour of the museum's current exhibit **ORANGETOWN 1950's - A PLACE TO BUILD THE FUTURE.**



On Sunday November 3<sup>rd</sup> at 1 pm at the DePew House the Orangetown Historical Museum & Archives in conjunction with the Orangeburg Library (register online! [www.orangeburg-library.org](http://www.orangeburg-library.org)) will present a special program **Shanks for the Memories - the Children of Shanks Village.** Serving as a reflection of a specific time and place important to Orangetown's history - the 1950's - and a reunion for the children who were born or grew up in Shanks Village.

From *An Encomium - or Let's Hear it for Shanks*, by Bob Sennish, written as "An honorific and sentimental tribute to the memory of a community that created itself and evolved a phenomenal and significant part of the history and culture of Rockland County."

..."It is remembered as a sanctuary during the stormy season of lost youth (the war) and found maturity (that's life) and the dreams (the doctorate, the happy marriage) and, as Yeats warned, responsibilities (read: money, 120<sup>th</sup> Street in the rain, up all night with a seminar paper and the kid's got the croup, money). Sanctuary? You bet - all the Shankers were in the same pew, all singing the same blues. All dreamed dreams, all faced responsibilities. And all

rejoiced in life's basics (the fresh cake of ice in the box, the new born babe and the neighbor's hand-me-downs, the tintinnabulations of the goo-hoo truck and the deadly perceptive cartoons it inspired)."

The rich diversity of backgrounds among Shankers (regional, ethnic, academic) gave the place color, oomph. Its flaws, all a part of the Zeitgeist that were outnumbered by its historic virtues.

Birds of passage, Shankers somehow cultivated their village, as if it had been in the family for generations. Before you knew it, there were political parties, a weekly newspaper, a food co-op and a clinker pool that amounted to limo service on the cheap.

Yes, Shanks Village had become its citizens' turf. They put down roots there. And when they left, their roots left with them and are carried around under the shirt of every Shanker who walks the face of the earth. That is why non-Shankers so often hear it for Shanks."

**Please contact the museum if you would like to share your story at this event!**



## Celebrating Camp Shanks 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

The film 'Till Then' by Vic DelRegno based on a Camp Shanks story will be shown at the Greenbush Auditorium, (behind the Orangeburg Library).  
September 22nd, 2013 at 2pm. Admission: free

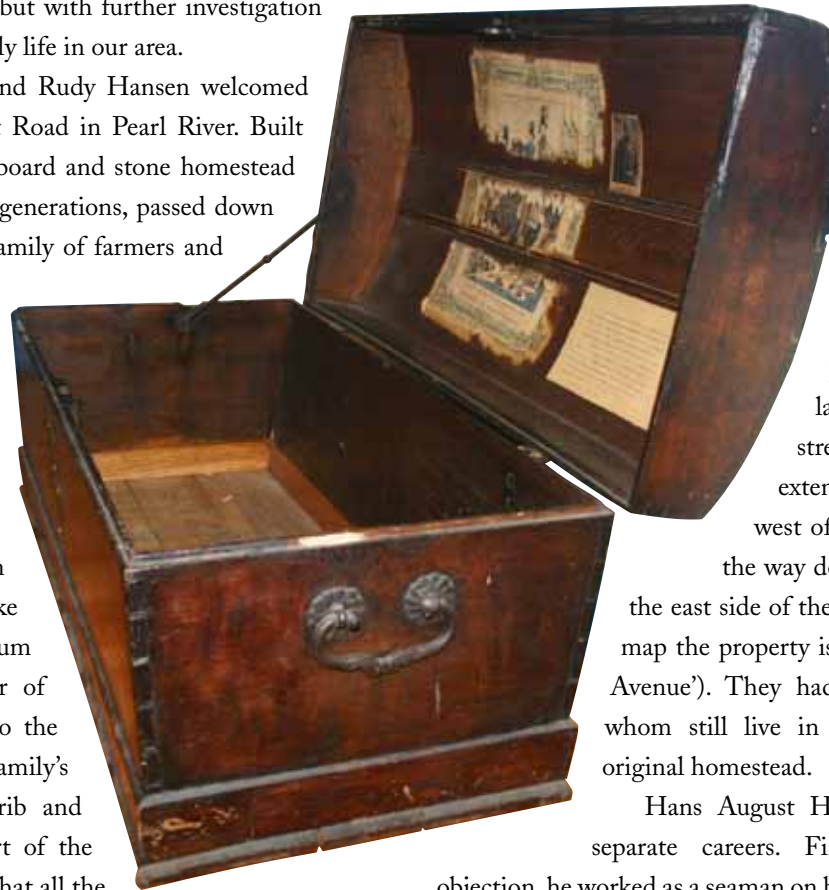
# Two Great Families – One Lesson for the Future

Without artifacts – those bits and pieces of life that somehow travel down through generations – history remains a series of temporal events, often too distant from our everyday to have any significance. A recent encounter with a couple representing two Pearl River families has brought this phenomenon to light – as we were able to retrace local history through select items from the combined Buhler and Hansen clans. The objects, some gifted to the museum, others offered on permanent loan, may seem rather pedestrian at first, but with further investigation reveal subtle hints regarding early life in our area.

Dorothy Buhler Hansen and Rudy Hansen welcomed us into their home on Erhardt Road in Pearl River. Built around 1905, the gracious clapboard and stone homestead has been in Dottie's family for generations, passed down through the maternal side. A family of farmers and landowners, the Erhardts came originally from Germany and enjoyed a rich family life in Pearl River, surrounded by children and relatives. Dottie's mother, Lona Buhler, brought her children up in the house as did Dottie and current plan for Dottie's daughter to take ownership presents a continuum rarely found today. A number of delightful objects were given to the museum reflective of the family's personal history; a wooden crib and high chair from the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and a baby walker that all the Buehler kids enjoyed. A kraut cutter, bread maker and pressure cooker from the 1930's designed to help the family chef produce in quantity and some Fairy Tale Dolls. A collection of WWII War Ration books used by Dottie and her extended family. Dottie's own collection of dresses from the 1950's, including two Pearl River prom dresses and her first married frocks worn to events as a Volunteer Fireman's wife.

When Dorothy Buhler married her high school sweetheart, Rudy Hansen, her lineage joined with another Pearl River family of merit. Rudy's paternal grandfather, Hans August Hansen, (1883-1973) journeyed to America from Denmark, bringing

with him a beautiful family chest to safeguard his belongings and mementoes of the life he left behind. This chest, embellished with carvings and family lore, is on display at the museum's Salyer House, as a part of our 'At Home in Orangetown' exhibit. It beautifully portrays how a family relic would have been incorporated into an Orangetown household – and serves as a reminder of things past. We also have a portrait of Hans, (known as 'H.A.') his no-nonsense visage completing the story.



He settled in Larchmont where he met and married the Swedish Anna (Nielson) Nelson (1884-1977). After moving to Pearl River they built a house on Lincoln Street and purchased much of the land on either side of the street. The Hansen property extended two or three acres west of Lincoln Avenue and all the way down to Muddy Creek on the east side of the property. (On a modern map the property is centered along 'Hansen Avenue'). They had six children, many of whom still live in close proximity to the original homestead.

Hans August Hansen maintained three separate careers. First, despite his wife's objection, he worked as a seaman on board ocean going vessels. He also served as New York State's Bee Inspector – a vital community role at a time when much of our region's economy was dependant on orchards and farms and also worked as an electrician at a time when electrical service was brought into the area. Anna was also active in community affairs, serving as a delegate for the Republican party and presenting a dissenting view from her husband's more liberal tone.

These donations, as well as the fascinating stories that accompany them, join the museum's lexicon of local history – answering the question – 'Who was here?' in a manner more precious with the addition of some simple objects.

# The Onderdonk House

UPDATE



Since our last issue, the Onderdonk House has seen some action. The house has been carefully taken apart and each piece of sandstone has been numbered. The new owner hopes to reassemble the house with the original stones and chemically treated timbers that will be 'sistered' with new timbers, to support most of the load of the house. The exterior will be restored along with the old windows and the roof will be replaced using appropriate materials. Ninety percent of the exterior will look like the exterior of the original Onderdonk House. Saving and restoring this house is important for the history of Piermont as well as the history of the Town of Orangetown.

## Are You Ready For Some Treasures?

Passions are rising as the Fall **Antiques & Collectibles Sale** gets closer. Already gaining a reputation as an annual event, make sure not to miss this season's trove of treasures. With the museum open free of charge offering our blockbuster **Orangetown 1950's - A Place To Build The Future** there is no reason not to stop by, get a private tour from the curator and bring home something special.

Sat., Oct. 5 (raindate Oct. 6)  
10 am to 4 pm  
DePew House  
196 Chief Bill Harris Way  
Orangeburg, NY





196 Chief Bill Harris Way  
Orangeburg, New York 10962

Tel. (845) 398-1302  
www.orangetownmuseum.com

☛ at The DePew House  
196 Chief Bill Harris Way  
Orangeburg, New York  
*Office, Archives by Appointment (845) 398-1302*

**Orangetown/1950s: A Place To Build The Future**



A building, baby and business boom exploded in Orangetown. See how life changed – the optimism, idealism and hula-hoops; Ike and Margaret Mead concurred; it was the place to build the future. Admission: your donation

☛ at The Salyer House  
213 Blue Hill Road  
Pearl River, New York  
*A Spy in Our Midst, Our Dutch Sandstone Houses  
& At Home in Orangetown*  
Permanent Exhibit: Hours by appointment  
(845) 398-1302

**THIS FALL AND WINTER:**



**Antiques & Collectibles Sale:** Saturday, October 5th, 10 am – 4 pm  
The museum will be open free of charge! Enjoy a beautiful Fall day with some fabulous Antiques, Fine Collectibles, Jewelry, Toys, Decorative Arts, Furniture, Fine Arts & Ephemera. Table Rental for Dealers is \$25.  
At the **DePew House** 196 Chief Bill Harris Way, Orangeburg NY. Please call (845) 398-1302 for further information.



**Shanks for the Memories – The Children of Shanks Village:** Sunday November 3rd, 2013, 1 – 3 pm. Were you a kid in Shanks Village? Did your parents live in the barracks or are you just interested to learn more about this fabulous social experiment? Reminiscences and a tour of the museum’s current exhibit. In conjunction with **The Orangeburg Library**. At the **DePew House** 196 Chief Bill Harris Way, Orangeburg. Admission is free: please call the museum to register or at [www.orangeburg-library.org](http://www.orangeburg-library.org)



**Holiday Open House:** Four Fabulous Sundays – December 1st, 8th, 15th and 22nd from 1 – 4 pm at the beautiful and historic **Salyer House**, 213 Blue Hill Road, Pearl River, New York. Enjoy hand made decorations, holiday music, vintage toys and local history – right in your own backyard! Admission your donation.  
Santa will be there on December 22nd.



**Get the book – ORANGETOWN.** Discover 300 years of local history!  
Pick it up at the DePew House, price: \$23.83 or let us mail it to you, price: \$25.00 (price includes shipping & handling)  
Make your check payable to *Friends of the Orangetown Museum* and mail to the museum at  
196 Chief Bill Harris Way, Orangeburg NY 10962.

THE ORANGETOWN HISTORICAL MUSEUM & ARCHIVES  
Mary Cardenas, MUSEUM DIRECTOR • Elizabeth Skrabonja, MUSEUM CURATOR  
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.



Andrew Stewart, SUPERVISOR  
Thomas Diviny, Tom Morr, Dennis Troy 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 \$10 SINGLE \$15 FAMILY \$20  
LIFE MEMBER \$100 CORPORATE \$250