

The

# Orangetown Crier

News from the Orangetown Historical Museum and Archives

FALL 2017

## COLONIAL LOYALISTS *by Todd Braisted*

### IT IS SEPTEMBER 1778.

The American Revolution ignited over three years earlier on a town green in Lexington, Massachusetts has made its way to Orangetown, New York. The war's events have occasionally passed through or skirted the town previously, but now there were six thousand British & Loyalist troops on the southern skirts of town, and extending south into Bergen County. These troops are here to forage, gather food, and they are interested in what Orangetown has to offer. Some in the town are interested in them as well.

While many residents of Orangetown and Orange County were caught up in revolutionary zeal, others were not. Probably all or most had some issue or grievance with the administration of British government, but not everyone was in favor of taking up arms against King George, his ministers and parliament. The situation was only exacerbated when Congress proclaimed the independence of the new United States of America on July 4th, 1776. Those that opposed this measure and continued their support for a political connection with the British became known as Loyalists. Abraham Lent was one of those. As the United States was created in 1776, Lent resigned his militia commission and bided his time at home in Orangetown, waiting for a restoration of the British government. Sensing the end was nowhere in sight, Lent used the opportunity of the British troops being there that September day and trundled off as a refugee to British-held New York City, with his family

and possessions in tow. Amongst the British troops scattered about Tappan and environs that September day in 1778 was a young officer named John André. Captain André at the time was an aid-de-camp to Major General Charles Grey. The night before, General Grey's troops had attacked in River Vale a regiment of American cavalry and nearly destroyed them. André's job going forward, though, would have more to do with gathering intelligence, handling spies, and dealing with those who could be brought over to the British side. His life would end in Tappan two years later for turning one of those American officers, Major General Benedict Arnold. Gathering intelligence was obviously a dangerous job, but it did not stop one of Orangetown's own, Theunis Blauvelt. The Blauvelt family was actually well represented on both sides of the conflict, actively fighting for both King George and George Washington. Theunis Blauvelt bore a British commission as a lieutenant and was active in informing people like André what transpired in his old neighborhood and elsewhere. One place Blauvelt informed on was the blockhouse built in 1780 by American troops at Sneden's Landing. If British troops had surprised this minor fortification, they would have been indebted to Blauvelt's detailed report on its situation and strength. With the defeat of the British in 1783, those Loyalists who could or would not return home were removed primarily to Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, in modern Canada, where free grants of land, provisions and clothing enabled them to start new lives.









# Annual Dinner

SUNDAY,  
NOVEMBER 12TH, 2017

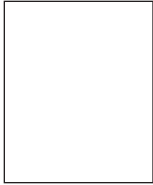


## Caring for a Treasure

Museum Collections Manager Colleen Moriarty cleaning the frame of the true 'destination piece' of the exhibit from George Way's Collection. This Portrait of Henrietta Maria (1609-1669) Queen of Charles I is an oil on canvas from the 17th century and attributed to the master, Sir Anthony van Dyck, (1599-1641). The youngest daughter of Henry IV of France and Marie de Medici, Henrietta Maria married Charles in 1625. Her Catholicism alienated many of her British subjects. She gave strong, loving support to Charles I during his troubles, and practical assistance during the Civil War by personally bringing munitions from France and pawning her jewels to raise funds.



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 Orangeburg, New York 10962  
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at The DePew House  
 196 Chief Bill Harris Way  
 Orangeburg, New York  
*Office, Archives by Appointment*  
 (845) 398-1302  
 Opening in October  
**LOYAL TO THE CROWN:**  
*British Art from the*  
*George Way Collection*  
 Open Tuesdays 10 – 2,  
 Sundays 1 – 4  
 or by appointment  
 Admission free:  
 donations accepted

at The Salyer House  
 213 Blue Hill Road  
 Pearl River, New York  
***At Home in***  
***Orangetown,***  
***The Tappan Patent***  
 Permanent Exhibit:  
*Hours by appointment*

UPCOMING :



**Loyal to the Crown : British Art from the George Way Collection.** Opening Saturday, October 14th at the DePew House. Loyalist or Patriot? This pressing question vexed our earliest residents. The might and glory of England presented a formidable draw – as will be presented through the magnificent collection of art and artifacts from the collector George Way. With paintings, objects and furniture from the 17th century, this impressive exhibit proclaims ‘God save the King!’.



**Friends of the Orangetown Museum Annual Dinner.** Celebrating the accomplishments of the Orangetown Historical Museum & Archives and the exhibit *Loyal to the Crown – British Art from the George Way Collection*. Join us on Sunday, November 12th at the '76 house for a rousing repast. Featured speaker and Catherine Dodge Humanitarian Award Recipient is collector, George Way. Tickets are \$55. Please call the museum for further information.



**VIDEO.** Museum Director Mary Cardenas interviews historian Todd Braisted. Get the lowdown about loyalists in Orangetown and vicinity in the American Revolutionary world. Click on the ‘video’ tab in the upper header of the Orangetown Museum website:  
 www.orangetownmuseum.com



**Annual Holiday Open House.** This year at the DePew House! Remember the sumptuous ambiance of the Downton Abbey Christmas? Join us as *Loyal to the Crown* offers up some British cheer with festive music and a cup of spiced cider. St. Nick will time travel to greet our youngest guests. Sunday, December 3, 10 & 11 from 1 – 4 pm. Admission is free.

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.



TOWN OF ORANGETOWN

Andrew Stewart, SUPERVISOR  
 Jerry Bottari, Thomas Diviny, Denis 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