

The

# Orangetown Crier

News from the Orangetown Historical Museum and Archives

SPRING 2018



## Representatives from the Yale Center for British Art visit 'Loyal to the Crown'

From left: Matthew Hargraves, *Chief Curator of Art Collections YCBA*; George Way, *Collector*; Mary Cardenas, *Director OHMA*; Elizabeth Skrabonja, *Curator OHMA*; Jessica David, *Senior Conservator of Painting YCBA*; Edward Town, *Head of Collections, Information & Access and Assistant Curator of Early Modern Art YCBA*; Courtney Skipton Long, *Postdoctoral Research Associate, Paintings & Sculpture YCBA*

Background image fragment: **London, Panoramic View**. Gerard van Keulen, active 1728; Engraving, hand colored. Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection

On March 15th a distinguished group of scholars visited the museum for a private tour of *Loyal to the Crown*. They were especially interested in some of the earliest 17th century paintings on view and made some interesting observations.

Context and a joy of collecting is immediately apparent in considering British art from the George Way Collection. Representative portraits of royals from as far back as the 16th century are joined with masterful pieces of furniture and objects of everyday and exclusive use. This combination enlivens the viewers experience and displaces our sensibilities while we consider a thimble, a walking stick or a coin within the context of a portrait of King Charles I. Unparalleled in this regard, the collection presents an immersive point of view. Many of the items on view are being exhibited for the first time creating a particularly rare opportunity for both scholars in the field and interested viewers. Sharing our vision with specialists from the Yale Center for British Art opened the door to further scholarship joining the histories of America and England.

# ANDRÉ MONUMENT in Tappan

by *Julian Harris Salomon*

The story of Benedict Arnold's treason and the hanging of Major John André, Adjutant General of the British Army in New York, has been told so often and so well, we will not repeat it here. We all know André's troubles began when he was picked up in Tarrytown by three 'skinners' who, in case you have forgotten, were guerrillas on the patriot side, the opposite numbers to the Tory cowboys. At this point, the controversy begins, for distinguished historians, including Woodrow Wilson, concluded that André's three captors were little more than highwaymen; others insist they were members of the militia acting only from the highest patriotic motives. André was tried as a spy, hanged and buried on Tappan Hill October 2, 1780. Eventually a monument was erected to mark the spot. It was blown up twice, sold for taxes, bought by a local politician and sold for a tidy profit.

From the beginning there was a certain amount of kindly feeling and sympathy for André. Even some of the most ardent patriots thought it was a shame that the stern laws of war required he be hanged. That is why two cedar trees were neatly planted at the foot of his grave and a kindly lady planted a flowering peach tree at its head. In 1821, President Timothy Dwight of Yale University wrote: "Perhaps no person in the like circumstances was ever more lamented by those whose prime interests he had attempted to destroy."

In that same year, 1821, the British decided to transfer André's remains to Westminster Abbey, where a handsome tomb had been erected. The task was entrusted to James Buchanan, a genial Irishman, who was Her Majesty's consul general in the City of New York. In Tappan he was received in a friendly fashion by the Rev. John Demarest, Dominic of the Dutch Reformed Church, and most of the villagers. In the crowd were also a number of vociferous and menacing 'patriots' who, like those in the generation to follow, felt that

any honor extended to André was an insult to Washington. When they became unruly, Buchanan displayed his finest diplomatic talent. He tells us:

"I deemed it prudent while the worthy pastor was preparing his men to open the grave to resort to a mode of argument, the only one I had time or inclination to bestow upon them, in which I was sure to find the landlord a powerful auxiliary. I therefore stated to these noisy patriots that I wished to follow a custom not infrequent in Ireland, from whence I came, of taking some spirits before proceeding to a grave. The landlord approved the Irish practice and accordingly supplied an abundance of liquor, so that in a short time, General Washington, Major André and the object of my visit were all forgotten by them, and I was left at liberty with the respectable inhabitants of the place, to proceed with the exhumation."

When the grave was opened, the coffin lid was found broken and "the roots of the small peach tree had completely surrounded the skull, like a net." Buchanan, who must have been a bit of a poet, thought it would be a nice idea to send the tree to André's surviving sisters along with a well preserved little leather thong that had bound their brother's hair. The tree was transplanted to Buchanan's New York garden but, even with the loving care of his young daughters, it did not survive. The two cedar trees, which were also removed, fared better. From their wood the Duke of York had made gold lined, silver mounted snuff boxes, one of which, along with a silver cup, he sent as a token of his appreciation to the Rev. John Demarest. The grave was filled with stones and marked with a tall stake.

In 1847 a New York merchant, named Lee, provided a more substantial marker, a flat topped boulder inscribed, 'André Executed Oct. 2nd 1780'. By that time the land was

## Sunday in the Museum with

# George



On Sunday, June 10th at 1:00 pm, join us for a champagne reception and 'Loyal to the Crown' gallery talk with George Way

owned by Dr. Morris Bartow. The site drew a constant stream of history buffs, tourists and miscellaneous Sunday visitors. They trampled the field, stole fruit and otherwise annoyed the owner, whose home was only a few hundred feet away. So Bartow had the stone moved down to the edge of the public highway, the grave filled in, plowed over and the field planted. In its new location the boulder was chipped away by vandal souvenir hunters so the exact location of the grave and hanging was lost. In 1876 during our nation's centennial, with the help of three elderly local residents who had been present when André's grave had been opened, the exact place of the execution was found again. By 1879 a monument was erected on the site by Cyrus W. Field during the 99th anniversary of André's execution. There were people who, through ignorance and prejudice, were opposed to the monument, calling it "an attempt to please the English nobility by erecting a monument on American soil to a British spy". The monument was chipped away at and dynamited several times before eventually being sold for unpaid taxes. The New York Times wrote of the transaction on October 24th 1904 "Certainly the Revolution is far enough off to be regarded temperately and a memorial of this kind erected to a young man who sacrificed his life for what he considered a noble cause, reflects honor on the people who are broad minded enough to distinguish the wide difference between the acts of an André and a Benedict Arnold." Rebuilt and recognized as forever controversial, the bronze tablet affixed to the current monument states its purpose to "commemorate the fortitude of Washington and his generals during the trying time of the Revolution".

From: South of the Mountain: Volume 28, No. 4, (October-December 1984) Adapted from one written by Mr. Salomon and published by *New York Alive*, April/May 1983

Our museum community has been saddened to learn of the passing of Luise Weischowsky on March 26th. Luise was the second Chairperson of the 'Friends of the Orangetown Museum' taking over from the group's founder, Catherine Dodge.

She was born Luise Guglielmo in 1932 in Massachusetts but lived most of her life in Piermont. Luise worked at Nyack Hospital and later as a master framer

while married to Joseph Weischowsky and raising two children. Her most significant accomplishments were attained in her volunteer work. Besides her commitment to the Orangetown Museum, she was involved with the Rockland County Heart Association, Rockland Center for the Arts, The Mental Health Association of Rockland County and Hospice of Rockland.

Her assistance to the museum's ongoing operations was immeasurable, from planning and hosting fundraisers to running meetings to applying her considerable talents as a framer to innumerable pieces that graced the walls of our exhibit spaces. Luise embodied the definition of a friend; we were always able to count on her. Our heartfelt sympathy is extended to her family and the many people whose lives she touched.



LUISE WEISCHOWSKY preparing frames for the museum's past/forward exhibit with Colleen Moriarity and Masako Birmingham

## Celebrate National Poetry Month

at the DePew House • Friday, April 27th • 5:30 – 7 pm  
Wine, Cheese & Poetry beautifully accompanied with a performance by harpist Barbara Allen

Word, art, and artifacts here in regal presentation  
A collection of British Art, be it in gracious celebration.

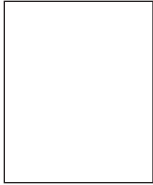
*Rose Marie Raccioppi*, POET LAUREATE OF ORANGETOWN



◀ **Portrait of the Poet, Ben Jonson (1572-1637).** From the collection of George Way Benjamin 'Ben' Jonson was a playwright, poet, actor and literary critic, whose artistry exerted a lasting impact upon English poetry and stage comedy.



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 Orangeburg, New York 10962  
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 www.orangetownmuseum.com



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

**LOYAL TO THE CROWN:**  
*British Art from the  
 George Way Collection*

Open Tuesdays  
 and Fridays 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.** Open Tuesdays and Fridays 10-2, Sundays 1-4, 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!’.



**Wine, Poetry & Music.** Celebrate National Poetry Month! The Orangetown Museum’s DePew House opens its doors for a tour of the exhibit ‘Loyal to the Crown’ with a wine & cheese event of note. Celebrate England’s regal past with Orangetown’s Poet laureate Rose Marie Raccioppi reading some of her poetry reflective of the period while the esteemed harpist – Barbara Allen – will perform. Suggested donation is \$5. At the DePew House. Friday April 27th, 5:30 – 7 pm



**Antiques & Collectibles Sale.** The museum will be open free of charge! Enjoy a day on the beautiful grounds of the museum with some fabulous, fine collectibles, jewelry, toys, decorative arts, furniture and ephemera. Table rental for antiques dealers is only \$25! At the DePew House, 196 Chief Bill Harris Way, Orangeburg, NY. Please call (845) 398-1302 for further information. Saturday, May 19th, 10 am – 4 pm



**Sunday in the Museum with George.** A champagne reception and gallery talk with collector George Way, whose English art & artifacts grace our current exhibit ‘Loyal to the Crown’. Find out how – and why – the George Way Collection came to be with the personal insights and amazing anecdotes of this fascinating collector. At the DePew House. Admission: Donations accepted. Sunday, June 10th @ 1 pm

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

Christopher Day, 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