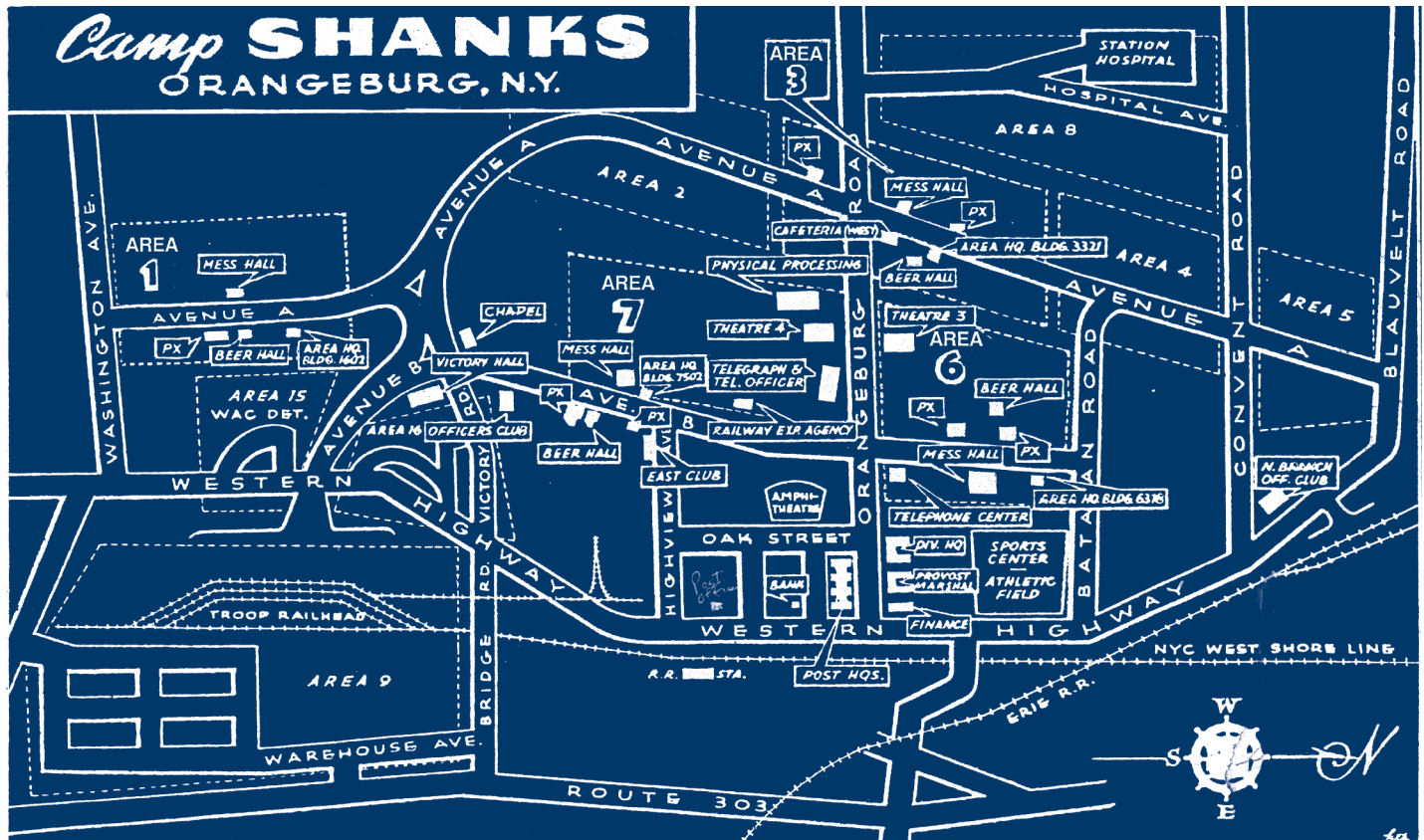


The

Orangetown Crier

News from the Orangetown Historical Museum and Archives

FALL 2018



Camp Shanks and Shanks Village are entities that transformed the Town of Orangetown, the legacy of which is felt until our present day. Camp Shanks was constructed on 2,040 acres in Orangetown which extended 2.5 miles north of Tappan along Western Highway, not far from where the foot soldiers of our Continental Army had camped in the 1700's. Its namesake was Maj. General David Cary Shanks, (1861-1940) Commanding General of the New York Port of Embarkation during World War I, from 1917-1918 he facilitated the departure of over 2 million troops to France and their return.

The western heights above Tappan and Orangeburg, the site of vegetable farms and orchards stretching as far as could be seen, was the chosen site for the camp. The county's change

SHANKS LEGACY

from rural community to crowded suburb did not begin with the opening of the Tappan Zee Bridge or the Palisades Interstate Parkway, but with the construction of Camp Shanks. The peaceful rural scene was quite suddenly transformed. Quickly constructed within a few months during the

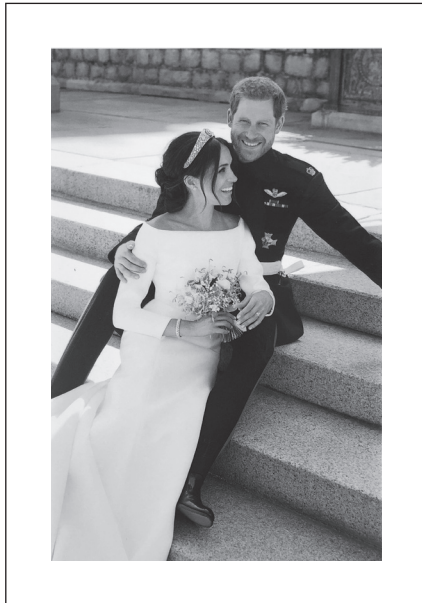
fall and winter of 1942, it opened formally on January 4th, 1943. The Camp Shanks staging area processed an average of 40,000 soldiers per month. A total of 1,362, 630 American Servicemen were moved through Camp Shanks, making it the major east-coast Port of Embarkation for troops headed overseas during WWII. The government added wood planking and a ferry slip to the Piermont Pier so that departing GI's could board the harbor boats that would take them downriver

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Ever Loyal to the Crown

The museum was delighted to receive this card from Buckingham Palace in response to our exhibit and well wishes to the Duke and Duchess of Sussex. It serves as a lovely closure to our year of exploring Britain's royal past within the context of our Colonial loyalists.



The Duke and Duchess of Sussex have been overwhelmed by all the incredibly kind cards and letters they have received on the occasion of their Wedding, and are so touched that you took the trouble to write as you did.

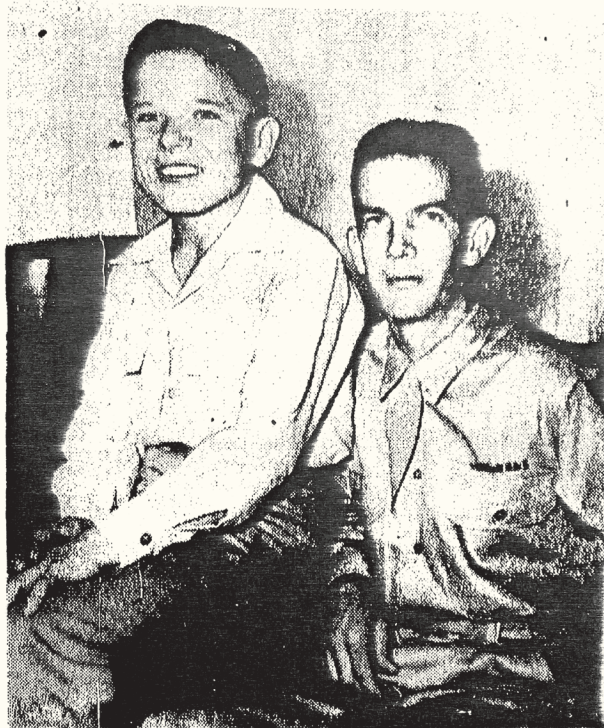
It really was most thoughtful of you and greatly appreciated by Their Royal Highnesses who send you their very best wishes.



Toyland OHMA ANNUAL HOLIDAY SHOW

Our Annual Holiday Show is at the Historic Salyer House, 213 Blue Hill Road in Pearl River, NY on four fabulous Sundays in December – 2, 9, 16 & 23 from 1 – 4 pm. Admission is free.

Our gallery will be filled with toys from across the decades to delight and enchant children of all ages. Beautifully decorated for the holiday, we invite all of our friends and neighbors to take a step back in time, share a cup of warm cider and enjoy some old fashioned holiday cheer! Santa will be on hand to greet all of our guests.



POLISH REFUGEE—Joseph E. Poremba, 12, and his foster father-to-be, Corp. Leroy Ritchey, stopped in Fort Worth Friday en route to visit Battery C, 38th Field Artillery at Camp Swift, the group which adopted Joseph in Germany and brought him back to the United States. (Staff Photo).

THE BATTERY C, 38TH BATTALION OF THE SECOND INFANTRY DIVISION STOWAWAY

Returning soldiers to Camp Shanks at the end of the war had many stories to tell, but the men of Battery C brought back more than just memories. Joseph Eugene Poremba was a 12-year old Polish orphan whose family had been decimated by the Nazis. Conscripted into forced labor in Frankhausen, Germany he was liberated by the second division and became their mascot, fighting along side them and serving as a messenger and a translator for three and a half months. Seven colonels and more than 3,000 other officers and men helped smuggle him aboard the transport Marine Panther that left Le Havre, France in July of 1945. Concealed within a barracks bag, young Joe was eventually adopted by Corp. Leroy Ritchey of Tulsa, Oklahoma. With many offers of adoption, the men of Battery C told officers at Camp Shanks that “he was too good to leave behind.”

SHANKS LEGACY

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to Europe-bound troop carriers awaiting them in New York Harbor. Troop ships were also docked in Piermont that would head out directly overseas.

The camp contained seven staging areas, including one for WAC's (Women's Army Corps) and one for medical units being sent overseas. In all the camp contained 1,800 buildings, consisting of barracks, headquarters buildings, post office, chapels, a laundry, bakery and a hospital. The huge camp had its own baseball team, newspaper and symphony orchestra, which hosted such guests as Oscar Levant, Frank Sinatra and Jimmy Durante. Both Italian and German POW's (Prisoner of War) were held at the camp.

At the end of the war and with the closing of the camp the desperate need for Veteran housing was satisfied with the establishment of Shanks Village in September of 1946. With the support of Gen. Dwight Eisenhower, (then President of

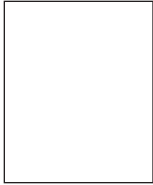
Columbia University) soldier students taking advantage of the GI Bill converted the barracks into housing while attending Columbia University, NYU, City College or Hunter College. Families were started and memories were made until the mid 1950's when the Public Housing Authority sold the Shanks property for \$2.5 million to the Sandra Construction company. The split level homes and winding streets that appeared may have erased the footprint of the Camp – but not its memory. The world had dramatically changed but the service and spirit of Shanks has prevailed, leaving behind a legacy of the greatest generation that passed through Orangetown.



**COMING TO
THE DEPEW HOUSE
IN APRIL**



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

Opening in April
SHANKS LEGACY

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

*A Spy in Our Midst,
 Our Dutch Sandstone
 Houses & At Home
 in Orangetown*

Permanent Exhibit:
 Hours by appointment
 (845) 398-1302

UPCOMING :



Holiday Open House – TOYLAND! The Historic Salyer House is the perfect venue to view the magical world of toys. Beautifully decorated for the holiday, join us for four fabulous Sundays of homespun cheer for children of all ages. Spiced cider and cookies will be served to all guests and Santa will be in attendance. Admission is free; donations accepted. At the Historic Salyer House, 213 Blue Hill Road, Pearl River, NY, Sunday December 2, 9, 16 & 23rd from 1 – 4 pm.



SHANKS LEGACY. The U.S. Army’s largest port of embarkation on the East Coast in World War II, Camp Shanks saw some 1.3 million troops pass through on their way to England and North Africa. Learn about how the camp looked and operated and what its transition into the residential ‘Shanks Village’ meant to the development of the Town of Orangetown. Opening April 13th 2019 at the DePew House; exhibit runs through November. Admission is free; donations accepted.



Antiques & Collectibles Sale. The museum will be open free of charge! Enjoy a spring day on the beautiful grounds of the DePew House with some fabulous fine collectibles, jewelry, toys, decorative arts, furniture and ephemera. Table rental for dealers is only \$25. At the DePew House, 196 Chief Bill Harris Way, Orangeburg, NY. Please call the museum at (845) 398-1302 for further information. Saturday May 18th, 10 am – 4 pm.

THE ORANGETOWN HISTORICAL MUSEUM & ARCHIVES
 Mary Cardenas, MUSEUM DIRECTOR • Colleen Moriarty, MUSEUM CURATOR
 Elizabeth Skrabonja, CURATOR FOR EXHIBITIONS • Giuliano Premus, 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

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