

The

Orangetown Crier

News from the Orangetown Historical Museum and Archives

FALL 2020

The 2020 Crisis

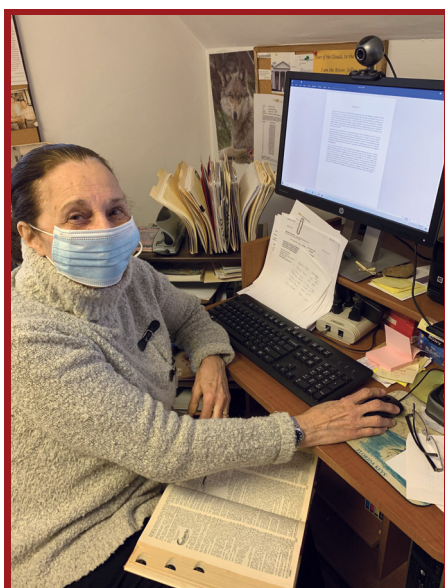
by Mary Cardenas, *Museum Director*

In just over a hundred years, the world would experience six major virus infections: Spanish Flu 1918-1920, the Asian Flu 1957-1958, the Hong Kong Flu 1968-1969, the SARS Flu 2002-2004, the Swine Flu 2009-2010 and now the Novel Corona Virus. Each of these viruses has their distinctive characteristics and vaccines have been developed to prevent or modify the strength of the illness in that person. In addition to these flu type viruses, there was measles, small pox and polio. All very specific viruses that were also highly contagious. During the course of time, vaccines would be developed to help stem the outbreak of these viruses and some of these vaccines were developed right here in Pearl River, NY at what is now Pfizer Pharmaceuticals.

Before Pfizer came to Pearl River, Dr. Ernst Lederle purchased a farm in Pearl River in 1907. At this site, Lederle developed the production of tetanus and smallpox vaccines. By 1910, the Lederle Antitoxin Laboratories were improving and producing antitoxins or vaccines which now included a typhoid vaccine. In 1916, there was an outbreak of polio which was epidemic in NYC. In 1955, Dr. Jonas Salk while working at Lederle, developed a vaccine to prevent an adult or child from contracting the polio virus. However, during Lederle Laboratories presence in Pearl River, many other products were developed such as digitalis and Aureomycin.



In its over 100 years of existence, Lederle Laboratories had changed ownership and names: it became American Cyanamide in 1994, then American Home Products and in 2002 the name changed to "Wyeth. Finally, in 2009 the company was bought by Pfizer Pharmaceuticals. Under this new leadership, a vaccine for the COVID-19 virus is now being developed at Pfizer and hopefully will save many people from contracting and spreading this dangerous and sometimes fatal disease. The current pandemic COVID-19, is a little more mystifying since it spreads very quickly-person to person and extreme personal health habits must be practiced as well as wearing a mask and maintaining six feet distances from person to person. Also gatherings of close family or friends is limited to ten people. It is hoped that by spring of 2021, that this new vaccine will be available to everyone and the COVID-19 virus will be under control.



Museum Director Mary Cardenas conducting a lecture for the 'Public History' class of Prof. Scott White, Dominican College

The Past is Present

DOCUMENTS FROM THE BLAUVELT / HUESTED FAMILY

by Emily Hingle, *Curator of Collections*

The past few months have been busy at the Museum. We have been receiving record donations (which we suspect is from all the house cleaning people now have the time for!) It's always exciting to see what people bring in for us - you never know what is going to come through the front door.



Curator Emily Hingle working on the Blauvelt / Husted collection

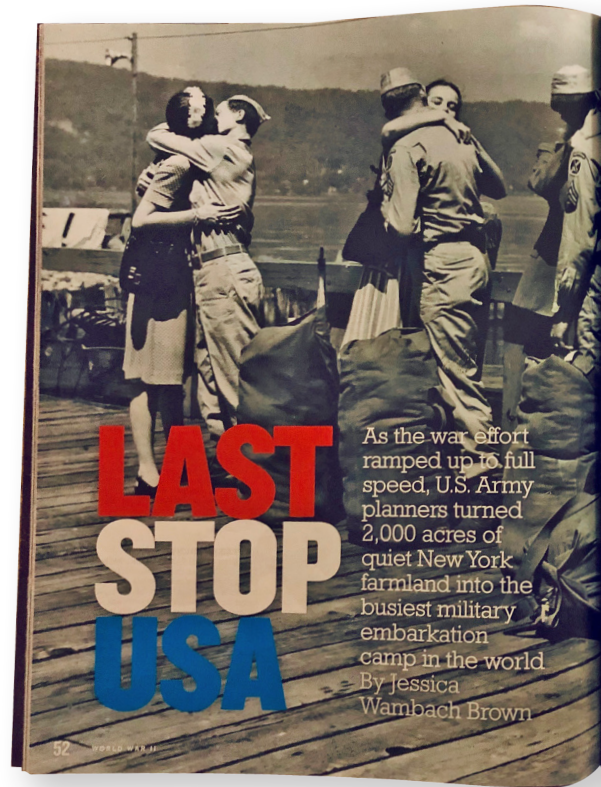
Last month, we received an incredible donation from Eleanor Anderson of Ulster Park, NY. She came in with her sister, Alison Church Hyde, and presented a small box – filled to the brim with antique Orangetown documents and manuscripts!

The documents belonged to their mother, Alice Catherine Husted Church, who was a direct descendant of the well known Blauvelt family, as well as the Husted family. Eleanor believes

the papers were saved from the Husted family house fire of 1929, and then passed on to Alice from her father, Percy Lafayette Husted (he was the owner of Rockland Nurseries which had been established by his father, Sylvanus Husted). After living in different family members' closets for decades, the documents have finally made their way into our collection!

There are about thirty documents in total, dating as far back as 1784 and going all the way up to the early 20th century. Ranging in various sizes, lengths and conditions, most of the documents appear to be indentures, with many familiar names like the Blauvelts, Perrys, Talmans, Demarests, and van Antwerps. We are anxious to research their contents further, and connect these new additions to our existing document collections from these families.

All the documents are folded several times over and creased, so my current project is to carefully unfold each and every one, which has proven to be extremely meticulous work. It's likely they have been folded for decades, so it's a slow and careful process to unfold and flatten the documents so they can be preserved for future generations to enjoy. Preserving history is a tedious endeavor, but so rewarding in the end!



World War II Magazine featured Camp Shanks for their



Brownie Girl Scouts visit the museum and learn about women's suffrage



August issue with an article researched at the museum



Curator Elizabeth Skrabonja visits the 'women's rights pioneers' monument in Central Park. Initial funding for this project came from the Girl Scouts of America.



PROLIFIC HISTORIAN | ECLECTIC COLLECTOR

THE

Bob Knight

COLLECTION

Prolific Pearl River native, Clarkstown town historian, author, journalist, tireless preservationist and avid collector of just about everything he could get his hands on, our close friend Bob Knight (1939–2018) will be sorely missed. But his spirit will live on in the Bob Knight Collection, our newest project now underway for the Orangetown Museum's historical archives.

It promises to be a fun, learning and daunting experience, for Bob left behind a jaw-dropping trove of vintage books, letters, documents, collections and so much more. All stacked shoulder high — and higher — in the 18th-century Clarkstown sandstone home he rescued from the bulldozers and occupied.

We're fortunate to have found a lot of valuable items in Bob's house and brought them into our museum, things like a vintage sewing machine, voting machines and furniture that we've included in our current Orangetown Suffragist exhibit.

We also carried in boxes of 19th-century magazines, books and frontline Civil War and other correspondence, plus early 20th-century color postcards and photos, legal documents for railroad and telephone expansion, and binders filled with first-day issue stamps and matchbook collections. There were also more recent things like framed photography, slides and 8mm films. That's just the start. There's still more boxes to open and treasures to find.

Bringing the Bob Knight Collection to completion will take months and months and maybe a year or two. Identifying, cataloging and photographing each item, and then entering them in our archives data base takes time and patience, as does placing items in protective storage. But when done, a part of Bob Knight's legacy will be preserved and readily available for research scholars, students and everyone interested in the prolific historian and eclectic collector that was and always will be Bob Knight.

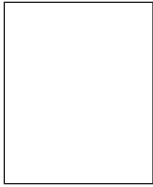
Volunteer Paul Clark analyzing Civil War correspondence from the Bob Knight collection



— Paul Clark



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 Orangeburg, New York 10962
 Tel. (845) 398-1302
 www.orangetownmuseum.com



PLEASE VISIT US WITH A FACE MASK.
 We can accommodate no more than 6 visitors at a time

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

ORANGETOWN Suffragist

Open Tuesday & Friday 10-2,
 Sunday 1-4pm
 Admission is 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**
by Appointment



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SUFFRAGE FORWARD!

Join us for a ZOOM Webinar on Thursday,
 December 10th at 7 pm – admission is free!

American women's fight for the vote was fought on many fronts, including here in Orangetown. Join us for an exploration of local women that joined the fight and the legacy they left behind. Orangetown Historian, Mary Cardenas and Curators Emily Hingle and Elizabeth Skrabonja will virtually guide you through an inspiring and informative ZOOM presentation and Q&A.

Please join us by clicking the link on our website: www.orangetownmuseum.com

This program is presented in cooperation with The Historical Society of Rockland County and SUFFRAGE FORWARD

THE ORANGETOWN HISTORICAL MUSEUM & ARCHIVES

Mary Cardenas, MUSEUM DIRECTOR • Emily Hingle, 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.



TOWN OF ORANGETOWN

Teresa Kenny, SUPERVISOR
 Jerry Bottari, Thomas Diviny, Denis Troy and Paul Valentine, COUNCILMEN



**Our annual holiday open house is cancelled
 this year – but accept best wishes from
 Salyer House Santa to you & yours**

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