

The

Orangetown Crier

News from the Orangetown Historical Museum and Archives

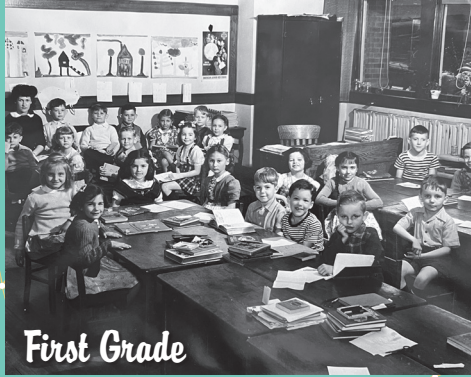
WINTER 2024

THE 1950s

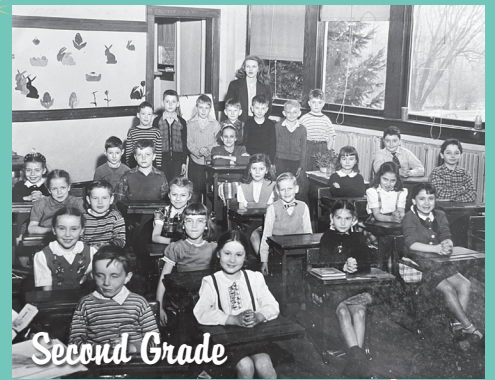
was a decade of Elvis and Marilyn, UFOs and Godzilla, the Cold War, the Red Scare and the Orangetown Fair. For one Pearl River resident – it was school days. Preserved here by BOB KNIGHT are his official school photos from 1946 – 1952; first through 7th grade.



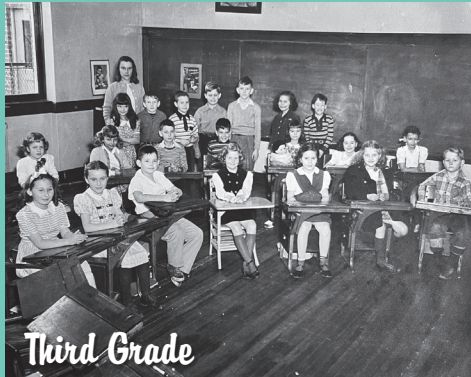
Can you find Bob?



First Grade



Second Grade



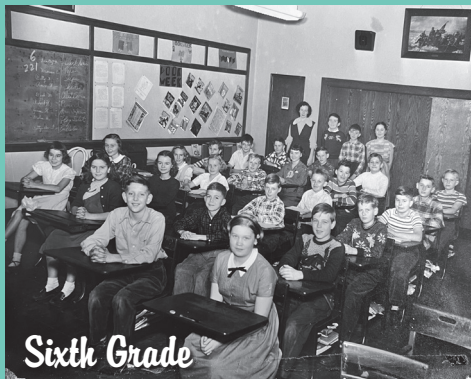
Third Grade



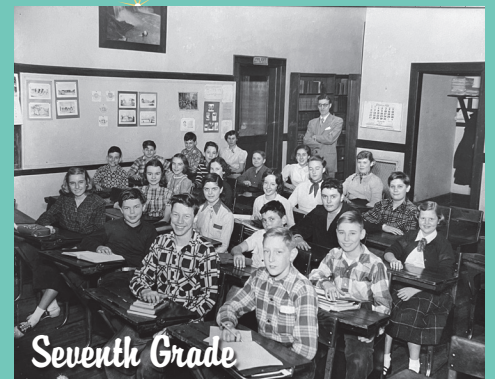
Fourth Grade



Fifth Grade



Sixth Grade



Seventh Grade



AWAY WE GO! The Pearl River Soapbox Derby



Ronnie Beasley, (center) celebrating his first place win in 1957; Competitors and onlookers at the derby; First Place trophy awarded to Ronnie Beasley at the Coaster Derby held at Pearl River, June 8, 1957.

by Stefanie D'Erasmio

FROM HOT WHEELS TO GO-KARTS, the concept of playful transportation and competitive racing has held a place in the hearts of children for generations. Today, children may have access to motorized Power Wheels, but what about the challenge of building your own? The idea of children designing, creating, and racing their own vehicles has a rich history right here in Orangetown.

In 1949, the John H Secor American Legion Post No. 329 of Pearl River, in conjunction with the Pearl River Board of Trade, sponsored a three-day circus and block party which held the first Rockland County Soap Box Derby. Thereafter, the derby was held annually, and in 1964, Pearl River was awarded a charter as a regional official Soap Box Derby until 1973. In fact, thanks to a donation made by the family, the museum's permanent collection contains a photograph and trophy of the 1957 winner of the Pearl River Soap Box Derby, Ronnie Beasley. In 1956, 10 year old Sandra Konazewski was the first girl to beat 60 competitors to win the title!

In the 2000s, the Pearl River Rotary Club revived the Soap Box Derby, which gave the children of Orangetown the opportunity to connect to the past by building their own cars and racing down Central Avenue. The Soap Box Derby was more than just a race for the residents of Orangetown – it highlighted the dedication of a community and the ingenuity of its children. Although the derby was discontinued in Pearl River, it continues to live on in photos, relics, and memories. An original Pearl River Boxcar will be on display in our upcoming exhibit – *Creating Community 1950*.

**SOME OF THE
BOXCAR DERBY RULES:**

- Wheels cannot be altered in any way such as buffed, drilled or repainted
- There must be sufficient clearance for the driver's hands when handling the steering wheel
- Seat back must be movable or removable for inspection
- The break foot pedal must have an opening required for kingpin inspection
- Total cost must not exceed \$20.00 exclusive of wheels, axles, paint and steering assembly
- Overall length cannot exceed 80", width cannot exceed 40"
- Every car must have a single drag break
- The steering wheel must be no less than 7.5" and firmly attached to the shaft
- The body must not confine the driver,
- Each racer must build their own car

More 17th Century Treasures

by Ashleigh Malone

SINCE "GETTING THERE: RIVERS, ROADS, RAILS"

came to a close in 2023, the museum has kept busy processing an extraordinary acquisition from Jonathan Z. Freidman. A frequent visitor to and collaborator with the museum, Mr. Friedman was intimately involved with our exhibitions **FROM HOLLAND TO HERE** and **LOYAL TO THE CROWN**. The objects in this donation represent invaluable pieces of history and art, and we are honored

to preserve and share them with the community of Orangetown. The first piece is a large English Bible Box, late 17th-early 18th century with an elaborate inlay of woods and forged iron hinges and lock. Such boxes were for safekeeping the most important book in the house as well as important deeds, wills and testaments. The second piece is a trio of Dutch tiles from the mid 17th century framed as one piece depicting a maritime theme of sailing ships. The third piece is a perfect compliment to our collection of Dutch artifacts; it is a magnificent Dutch 17th century hand carved side chair made of oak featuring a tulip flanked by grape vines on its back panel and a crest flower with a guilloche decorative technique. These three objects can be viewed on exhibit at the Historic Salyer House and keep company with our large format painting, 'Portrait of a Merchant with a Falling Lace Collar'.

Additionally, Mr. Freidman gifted the museum a mezzotint print of George Washington as a Freemason dated 1852, numerous reference books, and a carved oak cabinet panel



Curators Stefanie D'Erasmus and Elizabeth Skrabonja with benefactor, Jonathan Z. Friedman

c. 17th century embellished with entwining vines, florals, and gothic arches. However, one object in particular required further research into its provenance—and it is truly remarkable! Specifically, a portrait of an unidentified man was gifted to the museum, which we were later able to identify as Georg Schmauss. The portrait in our collection is based on a 17th century etching by Jacob Von Sandrart and originally included a decorative border with text written in German stating, "Mr.

Georg Schmauss, the little councilor and red beer brewer, in Nuremberg was born; 1619 died; 1682." In the portrait, Schmauss is depicted over a coat of arms and was likely a member of a noble family. Examination of the artist's signature led us to the possibility that this portrait was created by Paul Decker the Younger (b. 1685-1742). As Von Sandrart founded the Nuremberg Academy of Fine Arts, it is possible that Paul Decker could have seen the original etching of Georg Schmauss and used it as a study/practice/informal project, especially given the difference of mediums.

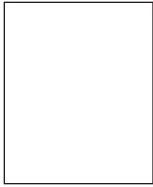
There is no question that Jonathan Friedman is a longtime friend, and we are incredibly grateful for the significant contributions he made to the museum. Enhancing the legacy of the European ancestors of Orangetown with these emblematic examples of material culture is invaluable – they bring history to life for our visitors, researchers and friends. As such, Mr. Friedman's generosity will be cherished for many years to come.



Portrait of Georg Schmauss by Paul Decker the younger after an etching by Jacob Von Sandrart, gouache & pencil on paper, ca. mid 17th c.



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at The Salyer House
213 Blue Hill Road
Pearl River, New York
**A Spy in Our Midst,
Our Dutch
Sandstone Houses
&
Our Dutch Families**
by Appointment

at The DePew House
196 Chief Bill Harris Way
Orangeburg, New York
Getting There
**CREATING
COMMUNITY
1950**
*Opening
April 21*

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to get our eblasts!

UPCOMING :



CREATING COMMUNITY 1950

Here is an origin story not unlike that of our first Dutch settlers. Find out how a building, baby and business boom exploded in Orangetown in the 1950s. Opening April 21, 2024.



ROMANTIC HICKORY HILL

Put this tagline in your SPOTIFY search to listen to some of the most beautiful melodies of the 1950s to get you in the mood for our next exhibit. Compiled for the Orangetown Museum by DJ Tedster.



WINE & CHEESE & POETRY WITH MUSIC

Back by popular demand! Enjoy the museum's new exhibit and the tunes of our house band *Lounge Zotica 3000!* There will be food for the soul, (poetry) wine and a selection of cheeses thanks to our collaboration with the Orangeburg Library. Friday, May 10 from 5:30 – 7 pm; Donation: \$5.



ARTS SUNDAY

What better way to spend a summer Sunday afternoon than with a visit to the museum and the opportunity to view some local art as well. The museum will be open free of charge and there will be some surprise vendors sharing their wares on the beautiful grounds of the DePew House. Coming in July.

THE ORANGETOWN HISTORICAL MUSEUM & ARCHIVES

Mary Cardenas, MUSEUM DIRECTOR • Stefanie D'Erasmo, 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.



Teresa Kenny, SUPERVISOR
Jerry Bottari, Thomas Diviny, Brian Donohue 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 \$25 | INDIVIDUAL \$35
FAMILY (up to 6 members) \$50
PATRON \$150 | HERITAGE \$1,000 | BENEFACTOR \$1,500