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Come visit the **1747 Nellis Tavern** on Sunday afternoon this summer. We are open every Sunday, June—September, 1:00-4:00 P.M. \$3.00



7355 State Rt. 5, St. Johnsville, NY

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Newsletter

Stenciling Restored

By Sandy Nellis Lane

Our annual Evening at the Tavern was overflowing with delighted guests on Saturday, September 24, 2016. They listened to period music performed by Ron Burch on harpsichord and ate and drank well. At that time we were able to present our newly restored early 19th c. stenciling on the remaining walls of the original three first floor rooms of the addition to the 1747 Nellis Tavern.



Nellis Tavern, the core of which dates to the mid-18th century, was refurbished after the War of 1812 by adding a two-story, five-room addition to the east, moving the front door to the north to face the new Mohawk Turnpike and by replacing the wide red clapboards on the three prominently visible sides with narrow yellow clapboards.

The interior walls of the addition were plastered and an itinerant artist was hired to stencil those walls with seventeen different stencils; each room receiving designs of varied combinations of some of those stencils. The walls were papered in later years and the stencils covered (and preserved!) until the paper started falling off when the house was abandoned in the 1960's. Several people have traced the stencils over the last 40 some years, including Phillip Parr of Rochester area, Ann Eckert Brown of Warwick, RI and more recently, myself.

I combined all three tracing interpretations and had new stencils made by MB Historic Design of Massachusetts. After I made computer designed wall renditions of the faint stencil placement, we had the remaining walls of the three rooms of the first floor sheet rocked to preserve what was left. The sheet rock was painted and we hired Ken Forcier of Rainier, WA to apply our fourteen new stencils to it and make the walls look as close to 'like new' as can be possible.

We look forward to restoring the two upstairs rooms with stenciling in the near future as the remaining three stencils have been ordered.



Building Committee Report—2016

By Donna Reston

By the end of summer 2015 we realized we had a problem with one of the two vertical posts that support our tavern sign; the old one had developed a rotten spot. Since we were afraid that winter winds could bring everything crashing down we had Rich Strunk & crew remove the sign itself and store it inside the tavern. The first order of business in spring 2016 was for Rich & helpers to return and dig up and replace the bad post and rehang the sign. As with all tavern projects it wasn't as easy as it sounds.

Before the Rhubarb Festival Ron & Donna did more work on the Nellis Exhibit incorporating some of the major pieces from the Weaver Family donation into the display including **the red & white quilts**, several family photos and the 1837 crib quilt. Trustees had previously agreed that in order to protect and secure the small quilt and make it available for visitors to see on a permanent basis it should be encapsulated in a deep frame so that it could be hung on a wall.



Donna transported it to Amsterdam where this work was accomplished by Oakes Framing using acid-free materials.

In the summer Rich & crew were back to get started on a large scale basement project.

Moisture against the north stone foundation wall (under the west room) had begun to cause the stone to move inward and as it moved the beams lying on that foundation wall (also affected by moisture) had begun rotting and sinking. The first thing we all had to assess was which beams needed to be reinforced and raised up. Rich recommended a process called "cribbing." Holes were dug in the dirt floor for footings, cement poured and new 8"x8" posts were installed. Metal end fittings attached the new posts to footings and beams so nothing can move.



More work this coming season will involve dismantling the curve in the north foundation and getting the wall straightened up and remortared. We also have one floor joist to replace.

By mid-summer Sandy Lane was able to locate a stenciler to take on the 1st floor restoration project. The trustees had decided that this, our most public room should have the original stenciled walls covered under 3/8" sheetrock so we

could have a more visually perfect outcome. This was one of several processes described by Brian Powell, conservation consultant, in his December 2014 stencil conservation survey for us.

The role of Donna & Ron was to find a sheetrock contractor who would handle the job according to Sandy's specifications. Chet Brown & Sons, who had worked for us previously just happened to be working in a house almost across the road from the tavern. When Ron & I met with Chet he told us he was completely booked up for the season but as we talked I think the proximity of his current work factored into his thinking plus it didn't hurt that Donna reminded him that his wife was a Nellis. After Chet finished, we noticed that there were missing pieces of baseboard on the mantel surround so we made a visit to Eli Kurtz who agreed to come down and replace it if Donna could ferry him, his helper and his equipment to the tavern.

Fortunately for all of us our friend Joe Fowler and his brother-in-law remained on call to lift the heaviest furniture for us. This had to be moved to the middle of the room and back. Since we hope to get all of the stenciling restored upstairs this year, I'm sure we will be calling upon them again.

Rhubarb Festival



A Remarkable Gravestone in the Klock-Nellis Cemetery

By Donna Reston

For a long time I have been fascinated by a tombstone in this early cemetery located just northwest of the Nellis Tavern and now marked by a state sign. On it are carved three hearts (in relief), one larger and two smaller and an incised inscription with the name Rabol. I had never previously seen or heard that name so I started researching and found that the family name shows up on the 1709-1710 Palatine Immigration lists.



The inscription under the hearts reads:

HIER RUETH IN GOTT	Here rest in God
ELISA:BEDA: RABOL.	ELISABETH RABOL
IST GEBOREN:IM:JAHR	is born in year
1758: UND GESTORE	1758 and died
N:DEN 18: MERDZ:	18 March
ANNO 1790	Year 1790

Further research located a George Rabol, a Revolutionary War soldier who fought at Oriskany in Bellinger's Reg't. (Watt & Morrison—name spelled "Rapp.") In checking out the various Palatine German genealogies for the Rabol name, I found it first in the "18th c. Failing Family." On p. 86—"On March 1786 Johannes Fehling and Elizabeth sponsored Catherina of Hans George Roabold and Elisabeth" (German Flats Reformed Church).

On p.11 of this same book are listed Johannes and Maria Magdalena (Wagner) Failing. I believe these two individuals were Elizabeth's parents but there is a gap between 1755-63—war years. There was an 18th c. Failing family just west of Christian Nellis' property. In fact there were intermarriages (Nellis genealogy). This may account for the local burial as opposed to the German Flats area.

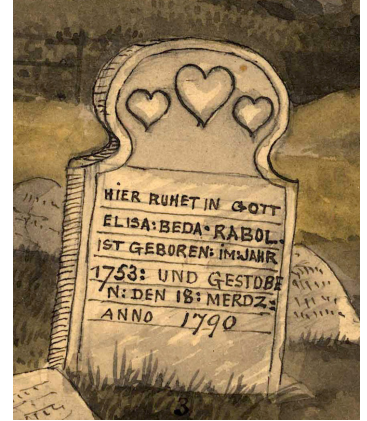
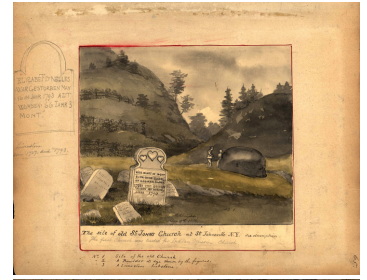
Another fact that I learned reading through the Failing family genealogy was that there were many births of twins and my theory is that those three carved hearts are for Elisabeth (large heart) and the two smaller ones for stillborn twins.

What became of George? He apparently got remarried to Margaretha Hellegas (mentioned in Failing genealogy) in 1793 and moved to Jefferson Co. The "History of Jefferson Co." by Durant and Pierce mentions George Rappole, a Revolutionary Pensioner age 89 in 1840. He died the following year.

What became of Catherine, the only child of George and Elizabeth that we have a record of—the baptism in 1786. On p. 351 of the Bellinger Genealogy I found "Caty" Rapool m. Frederick Bellinger.

We may never discover who executed this remarkable carving but it is certainly historically interesting and worthy of preservation.

Note: We used a Rufus Grider watercolor to illustrate this article. You can compare his transcription of the information on the stone to what is printed in this article and see that he has made several errors including Elisabeth's birth date.



Reenacted Reception

by Ron Burch

On the very warm Saturday afternoon of July 23, 2016, historic Nellis Tavern hosted for the second year in a row the “reception” following the reenacted wedding of Gil Martin and Lana Borst, characters in Walter Edmond’s famous 1936 novel “Drums Along the Mohawk.” Set in the Mohawk Valley, the novel was subsequently made into a movie in 1939 starring Henry Fonda and Claudette Colbert.

The recreated wedding took place, as it also did in 2015, at the historic 18th century Palatine Church in the hamlet of the same name a couple of miles east of Nellis Tavern. Palatine Church, known in the 18th century as Fox’s Mills, was the home of the fictional Lana.

Following the ceremony, and after a visit to the Klock Fam-



ily at Ft. Klock, the wedding party (riding in a buggy pulled by two beautiful horses) and “guests,” including the general



public, then retired to the Tavern for refreshments, conversation, and period music.

Marilee Urbanczyk, Olof Jansson, and Ron Burch of the colonial era music quintet “Liaisons Plaisantes” were joined by bassoonist Carle Kopecky to entertain with tunes from the



17th and 18th centuries, tunes that might well have been heard in the building on the eve of the American Revolution. Ron is a Palatine Settlement Society board member.

The bride and groom were portrayed by Ness Stark and Dave DeFazio, while Jeff Tew acted as the Reverend and Glenn Bentz was the Native American “Blue Back.”



The wedding reenactment and the reception were sponsored by “Mohawk Country,” a non-profit association of regional 18th century historic sites and living history centers reenacting life in Colonial America during the Revolutionary War.



The joint event was grant-funded by Stewart’s and the Montgomery County Local Tourism Grant Program. Dan Patterson drove the horses and buggy. The wedding cake was provided by Lesha Dolan of Bridge Street Bakery. Studio



Herbage donated floral bouquets that were placed around the tavern. Photos were taken by Carolyn & Matt Konicki, Ron Burch, Brian Mack and Sandy Lane.



Thank You

We gratefully thank those who have donated toward the maintenance and restoration of the 1747 Nellis Tavern and grounds.

Corporate:

- Montgomery County Local Tourism Grant Funds toward wedding reception, actors, etc. - \$750
- Stewart's Shops restoration grant - \$200
- Stewart's Shops Holiday Match - \$250

Business:

- James Dempsey—flower arrangements by Studio Herbage
- George Heigel—Antique Appraisals
- S & J Mihal—Heritage Meadow Farms B&B
- R Strunk and Windy Hill Restorations
- Wallace Schmidt—Antique Appraisals
- Leo Tomlin—fantastic grounds keeper
- Wine & Roses—appetizers

Monetary Donations:

- C & R Bailey
- P Balance
- J & P Case
- Dr. D Clement
- M Davis
- P Ferguson
- N Nellis Hodgson
- P Hutchinski
- M & C Konicki
- S Nellis Kuehl
- T LaClair
- S Lane
- K Nabors
- J Mendler
- Nancy Nellis
- J Reston
- G Snell
- K Stewart
- R & S Thomson
- I Wagner
- J Walker

Photos were supplied by:

- Elizabeth A. Tomlin
- Hal Sigurdsson
- Matt & Carolyn Konicki
- Brian Mack
- Jessica Hartman
- Peter Betz
- Ron Burch
- Sandy Lane

- and the many people who leave donations and no name

Special Donations:

- Robert & Mary Ann Van Gorder—in memory of J Lenecker
- Willis Barshied—many contributions
- Re-enactors donated time for period wedding
- Dr. James Reston—rental of tent for Rhubarb Festival
- Food donors for all events
- Ann Eckert Brown—donation of her 3 books:
 - American Wall Stenciling: 1790-1840*
 - American Printed Floors: before 1840*
 - Painted Rooms of Rhode Island: Colonial and Federal*

2017 Future Events for 1747 Nellis Tavern

February 25 Saturday—Annual Antique Show, Arkell Museum, Canajoharie 10:00 A.M.-4:00 P.M.; \$5.00 (Snow date March 11)

Open Sundays 1:00-4:00 P.M. June thru September (October); tours \$3.00 (Also by appointment)

June 4 Sunday—21st Annual Rhubarb Festival, Tavern, 11:00 A.M.-4:00 P.M.; pie baking contest (please sign up 315.866.2619); rhubarb treats and lunch available; entertainment; food donations accepted.

June 8 Thursday—Revolutionary War Tour in conjunction with **Ft. Plain Museum Conference** June 8-11

July 22 Saturday—Wedding Reception for “Drums Along The Mohawk,” 4:00 P.M.; after period wedding at Palatine Church; cake and punch; period music; \$5.00

(Sunday **July 16—Annual Nellis Association Reunion** at John Nellis Farm, Fort Plain, NY. Lunch at 12 noon; bring a dish to pass and your own table service—Information: 518.993.2978)

Recent Passings

(Olive) Jean Hearn, 94, of Pompton Plains, NJ, formerly of St. Johnsville, NY, died January 16, 2017. She was born May 31, 1923 in St. Clair County, MO, the daughter of the late Homer Clark Knowles and Florence Eugenia Adams. Jean was a charter member of the Palatine Settlement Society and a member of many other local historical and genealogical organizations. A private burial will take place in St. Johnsville Memorial Cemetery at the convenience of the family. A memorial service will be held at St. John's Reformed Church at a date to be announced. The family would welcome memorial donations to the Margaret Reaney Memorial Library, St. Johnsville, NY.

George Birge Snell, 93, of Hawthorne, NJ and Cooperstown, NY, died March 16, 2016, in Hawthorne. He was born in 1923 in Herkimer, NY, the son of Cornelius Harry Snell and Katharine Kinne. He is survived by his wife of 64 years, Sigrid Leube Snell, two children, four grandchildren, and three sisters. He graduated from Yale and New York University Law School and practiced at a large firm in New York City. He was a great philanthropist and included the Palatine Settlement Society, as one of his benefactors. Services were private. The family would welcome memorial donations to the Herkimer County Historical Society of Herkimer, NY or Otsego Land Trust of Cooperstown, NY.

PALATINE SETTLEMENT SOCIETY

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION 2017

For those interested in restoring the 1747 Nellis Tavern and preserving local history!

() Pioneer – Individual membership

- participate in events
- share in decision-making
- receive newsletter

Annual dues \$20

() Apprentice – Student membership

Annual dues \$5

() Homesteaders – Family membership

- participate in events
- share in decision-making
- receive newsletter

Annual dues \$35

() Mercantile – Professional or Business

- participate in events
- share in decision-making
- receive newsletter
- public acknowledgement of support

Annual dues \$50

() Hearth Keeper – Individual membership making a considerable donation to the Tavern

- participate in events
- share in decision-making
- receive newsletter
- public acknowledgement of your financial support in newsletter

Annual donation \$250

() Founding Father/Mother – Contributor of a substantial donation to the tavern, which can be directed to a specific restoration project

- participate in events
- share in decision-making
- receive newsletter
- public acknowledgement of your financial support in newsletter

Annual donation \$1,000

Complete this whole page and MAIL with your check to:

Palatine Settlement Society, PO Box 183, St. Johnsville, NY 13452

Date: _____ Our membership year is January 1 through December 31.

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Telephone: _____ E-mail: _____

* The Nellis Tavern is in need of individuals, couples and families who are willing to help prepare for and staff tavern events, assist with maintenance and chores, distribute flyers and assist the Board of Trustees in completing the mission of the Palatine Settlement Society. If you can offer a few hours of your time, please **check all** that may interest you:

- ___ Bake pies for Rhubarb Festival
- ___ Spring Building clean-up
- ___ Gardening (weeding, watering, etc.)
- ___ Fall Building closing
- ___ Historical research

- ___ Help at fundraiser event
- ___ Spring Grounds clean up
- ___ Scraping and/or painting
- ___ Contribute to newsletter
- ___ Other: _____

Donation: \$ _____ Membership: \$ _____ Total enclosed: \$ _____

Please make checks payable to: Palatine Settlement Society

Mercantile Members

by Sandy Lane

We would like to thank the following Mercantile Members of the Palatine Settlement Society for being supporters of the restoration of the 1747 Nellis Tavern:

Heritage Meadows Farm
B & B



510 County Hwy 140
St. Johnsville, NY
13452

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www.HeritageMeadowsFarm.com

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E-mail: Persse@FrontierNet.net

Tom Persse
Manager



1747 Nellis Tavern in Spring

Palatine Settlement Society
PO Box 183
Saint Johnsville, NY 13452

PalatineSettlementSociety.org

2017 Newsletter

Our Antique Show & Sale at Arkell Museum

by Donna Reston

Saturday February 25, 2017 is the date and we call upon our members and collector friends to attend and support the annual Antique Show and Sale at the Arkell Museum in Canajoharie. We will be having a few new exhibitors and a good showing of all kinds of antiques and collectibles, priced fairly and displayed by knowledgeable and friendly dealers. As usual, homemade food will be available, including soup, sandwiches, desserts and drinks.



Admission is from 10:00 A.M. - 4:00 P.M. for \$5.00; the appraisal booth at \$5.00 for one item or \$10 for two, is an added attraction. Donna Reston is Show Manager - 518.843.1601.

(Snow date: March 11, 2017)