

The Colonie Historical Oracle

Quarterly Newsletter of the Historical Society of the Town of Colonie
and the Historian's Office of the Town of Colonie

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What's in Your Family Bible?

Do you own a family Bible? The Colonie Historical Society has four (4) family Bibles. The Bibles are from the Onderdonk, the Miracle, the Haswell, and the Hills families. The families settled in this area. Information in the Bibles dates from the 1700's and the 1800's.

Why are family Bibles important? Many families traditionally recorded births, marriages and deaths in a family Bible. Some of the Bibles show family members birthplaces, maiden names, baptismal information and names of godparents. The Bibles are valuable sources of historical and genealogical information and when handwritten as the events occurred are usually very accurate. Many Bibles are in the family for several generations and contain some information that may not be found at the local court house.

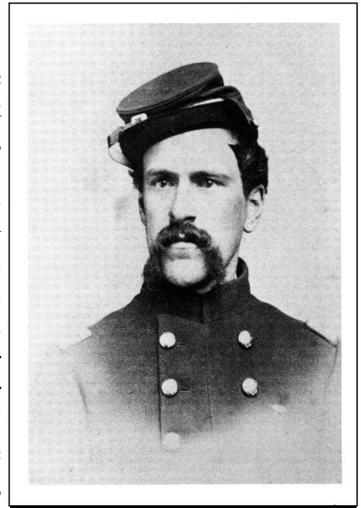
As advances in 19th century printing made Bibles more widely available, the family Bible became a domestic institution. Bibles were sold in stores, available from mail order catalogs, and sold by door-to-door salesmen. Even non-religious families may have owned a family Bible. The major selling factor was the "Record" or "Register" section usually located between the Old and New Testaments. The Bibles often had items tucked between the pages, such as newspaper clippings, funeral cards, pressed flowers, a marriage license, photos and handwritten notes.

Onderdonk Family Bible:

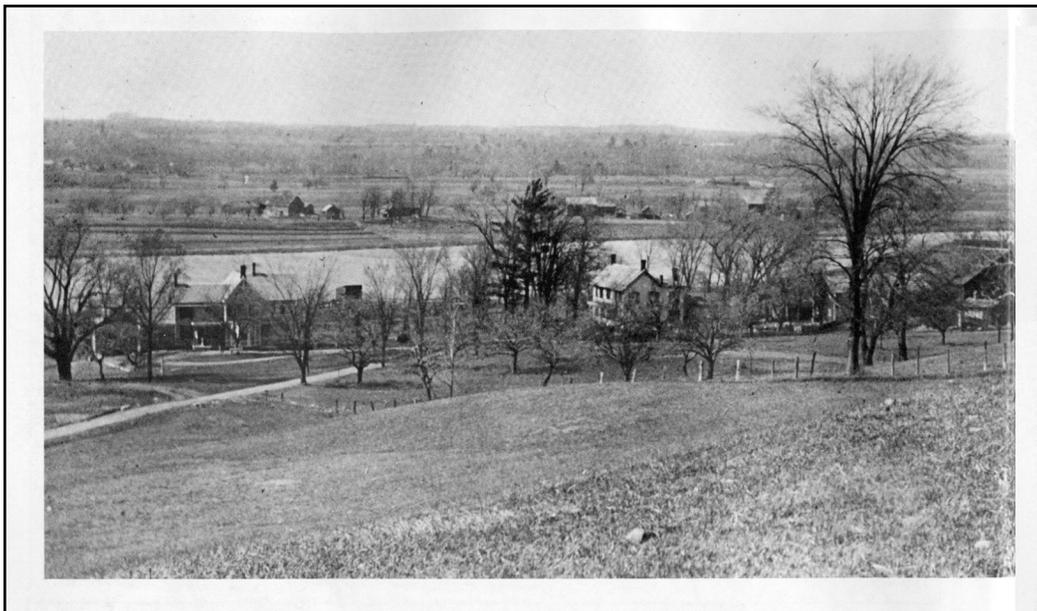
The Bible has extensive information on Onderdonk and Knox family marriages, births and deaths.

The Bible offers a chronology of events that can be pieced together about specific individuals. For example, Peter Onderdonk was born 12 August 1778. Peter Onderdonk and Eleanor Chatterton were married 17 January 1799. In a separate file apart from the Bible, there is a notation that Peter Onderdonk was Supervisor of Westerlo, NY in 1830. After talking to the Westerlo Historian, it is probable that Peter Onderdonk, Supervisor of Westerloo, is the same Peter Onderdonk as in the family Bible.

Onderdonk and Knox marriages are recorded from 1799 to 1844. Births are recorded from 1774 to 1847. Deaths were recorded from 1815 to 1891.



Civil War Pvt. James Onderdonk



These two Onderdonk family homes built in 1835 (right) and 1888 (left) still remain. They were known as O'Sunset farms because of the spectacular view over the Mohawk River at dusk



Onderdonk’s ice harvesting on the Mohawk River near Forts Ferry c. 1900

Editor’s note: [The Genealogy of the Onderdonk Family in America](#) by Elmer Onderdonk found on Google Books provides further information. Peter’s son James moved to the area of Colonie known as Mohawk View. James Onderdonk’s farm of over 100 acres was on River Road at the foot of Forts Ferry Road. James, aged 95, died from a fall received while going to bed. His son, Fletcher James died December 15, 1909 from a fall on the ice. The pictures are from the collection of Dorothy Onderdonk.

Miracle Family Bible

The Bible has information on Miracle, Levings, Ruby, and McCaffrey family marriages, births, and deaths.

The events listed are from 1767 to 1938. Some of the events are not just statements of name and date, but offer more personal information. For example, “My granfather John G Ruby died the 12th day of January 1838. In 69 years of his age he died at noon between 12 and 1.” And “My mother Sarah Ruby died the 29th day of September 1814. In the 69 year of her age. Her Maiden name was Sarah Haack. She died in the morning between the hours of 8 & 9.”

Haswell Family Bible

The Bible has information on two (2) Haswell marriages, one in 1863 and one in 1893. In addition there is a memorandum stating: “April 24, 1811, Wm. Gregory preached this Sabbath Evening his last Sermon as Pastor of the North Refd Church West NY. His text being the 122 Psalms 7 Verse viz: ‘Peace be within thy walls & prosperity within thy palaces.’”

Hills Family Bible

The Bible has information on Hills, Ladu, Oreluck, and Pearse family marriages, births, and deaths. The events listed are from 1818 to 1926. The people listed are from Watervliet and Colonie.

Welcome New Members!

The Historical Society of the Town of Colonie would like to greet our newest members: Lee Stanton; Colleen Noble & Peter Kounoupis; Doug West; Michele and Paul Polito; and Maryllis & Joe Capra. Welcome aboard, all!

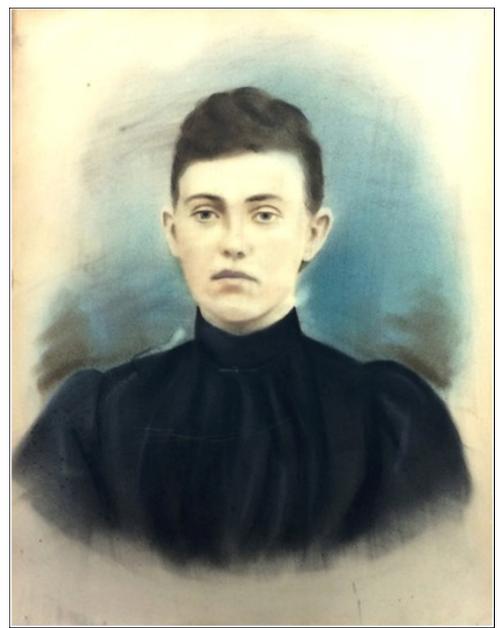
 Consider family Bibles the next time you are looking for that elusive piece of information that you can not find in any official source.

Submitted by Mary Alingh

The Knapp Family

Mr. and Mrs. Garry Slyke donated portraits inherited from his mother, Catherine Knapp Slyke, of his grandparents, Peter Knapp and Mary Ahl, and a certificate of their marriage in decorative frames. A quick web search of

Find a Grave located them at St John's Lutheran Cemetery on Sand Creek Road - Peter Knapp 1855—1920 and Mary Ahl, His Wife 1855-1938 (See photo, below.) The Town of Colonie Assessment Roll identifies several parcels of land belonging to the Knapps on Sand Creek Road. They were probably vegetable farmers.



Under the stern portraits of the grandparents is a younger couple. They are not identified.

Perhaps some family photos Mr. Slyke allowed us to scan offer a clue. We detect a resemblance between facial features in the people in the large pastel portraits and the groups of Peter and Mary’s sons and daughters in these photos.

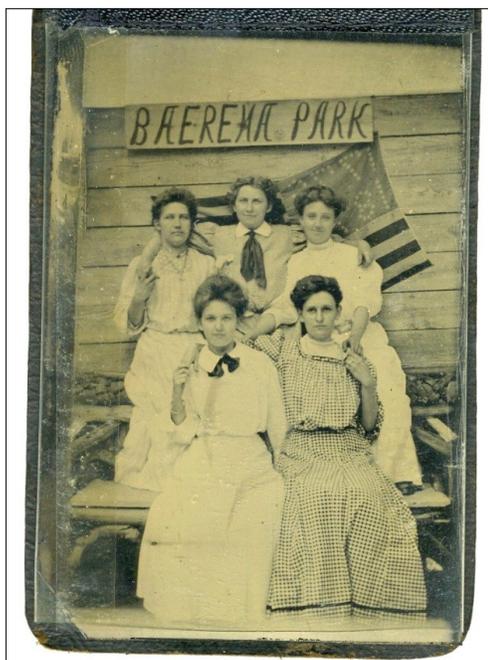


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Historical Society Town of Colonie



Left to right: Louis Knapp, Peter Knapp, William Knapp and John Knapp. Mr. Slyke says Peter was the owner of a saloon on Sand Creek Road. The Town of Colonie Assessment Roll identified the property as a hotel.

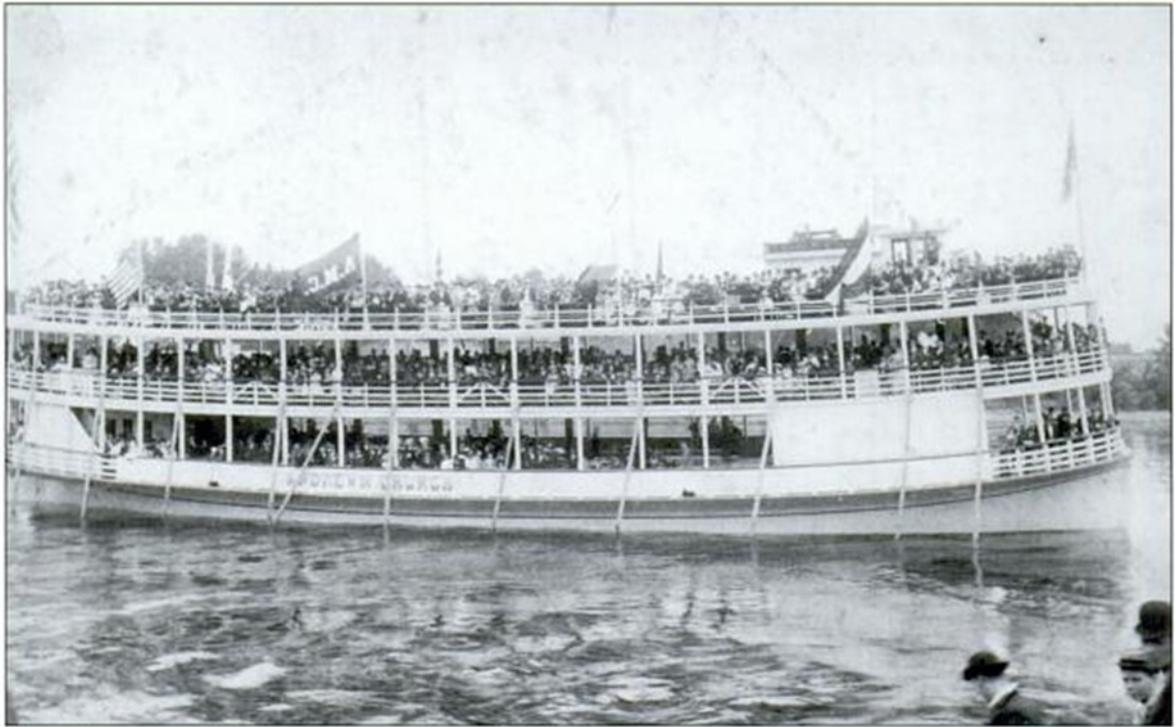


Bottom row: Catherine Knapp, Hattie Knapp. Top row: Mamie Knapp, Eleanor Knapp, unknown.

The sign in the background, Baerena Park, led to another web search:

<http://www.fultonhistory.com/fulton.html>
located a few newspaper articles pertinent information. “In 1879, John N. Briggs developed an amusement park called Baerena Park on Barren Island (south of Albany). The park included docks, a covered dance platform, a Ferris wheel, merry-go-round, refreshments and an Observation tower.”

Another article in the *Journal*, July 26, 1909 describes a church outing to Baerena Park with 3,000 people being transported by barge. Perhaps a barge such as this carried the Knapps down the Hudson River.



Towed excursion barges such as the *Andrew M. Church* earned owners income by carrying both people and baled hay. This barge, built at New Baltimore in 1891, frequently transported church groups and lodges to such amusement places as **Baerena Park** at Coeymans.



Finally, a photo of Grandma Maria Knapp, photographed on the same Baerena Park bench as the young ladies shown on page 4.

Submitted by Bebe Morehead

Yes, I would like to become a member of the Historical Society of the Town of Colonie, New York, Inc. in the classification I have checked or renew my membership as noted.

My annual dues payment in the amount of \$ _____ is enclosed.

Classification	Annual Dues	Classification	Annual Dues	Classification	Annual Dues
<input type="checkbox"/> Students and Senior Citizens . .	\$10.00	<input type="checkbox"/> Family	\$15.00	<input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor	\$250.00 & Up
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual	12.00	<input type="checkbox"/> Business	50.00		

Please accept my additional donation of \$ _____ as a gift to the Historical Society. *The Historical Society is a not-for-profit corporation.*

Name _____

Address _____

Post Office _____ Zip Code _____ Home Phone # _____

Cell Phone # _____ E-Mail _____

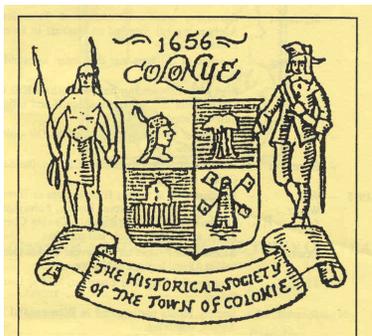
Please mail to Membership Chairperson c/o Historical Society, Memorial Town Hall, Newtonville, N.Y. 12128-0508

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Kevin Franklin, Town Historian

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Historical Society Founded 1971

MEMORIAL TOWN HALL
NEWTONVILLE, NY 12128-0508
518-782-2601

Support the Society’s efforts to stimulate an appreciation of the historical heritage of your community. Join Now!

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

A great big Thank You to the contributors of this issue of our newsletter. I can’t fully express my gratitude for your stories, photos and time in submitting your stories to me for publication. It’s more helpful than you know. Much appreciated!

Our next membership meeting is coming up on Sunday, Nov. 8th at 2:00 p.m. at the Town Library. Our presenter is David Chinery, whose topic is, “Lighthouses of the Hudson River.” Everyone loves lighthouses, right? The Giants don’t start until 4:05, so come to the presentation and enjoy a fun, informative, educational afternoon with friends.

Mark Bodnar, President