

# The Colonie Historical Oracle

Quarterly Newsletter of the Historical Society of the Town of Colonie

Volume 10, No. 4

October - December 2014

## It's All Relative



“It is indeed a desirable thing to be well-descended, but the glory belongs to our ancestors.”--Plutarch

Submitted by HSTC Trustee Jennifer M. Paley

It seems that in every family there is at least one person who is called to find their ancestors, to make them live again and tell their story. In my family, that person is me. In this issue of the *Colonie Historical Oracle* I wish to share some of my ancestors with you—to tell their stories and share their tangled roots. Most of the people I have chosen to share with you have local ties and some even have national recognition, but all of them encompass a branch on my family tree.

### Anneke Jans

*“Anneke Jans was perhaps the most “legendary” woman to live in early Albany!”*

Stefan Bielinski, NYS Museum

There are some people who claim that Anneke Jans descended from royalty—William of Orange to be exact. Others discount this information citing that there is no real evidence to prove it. Regardless of her birth, Anneke has left quite a legacy and a long line of descendants. She mar-

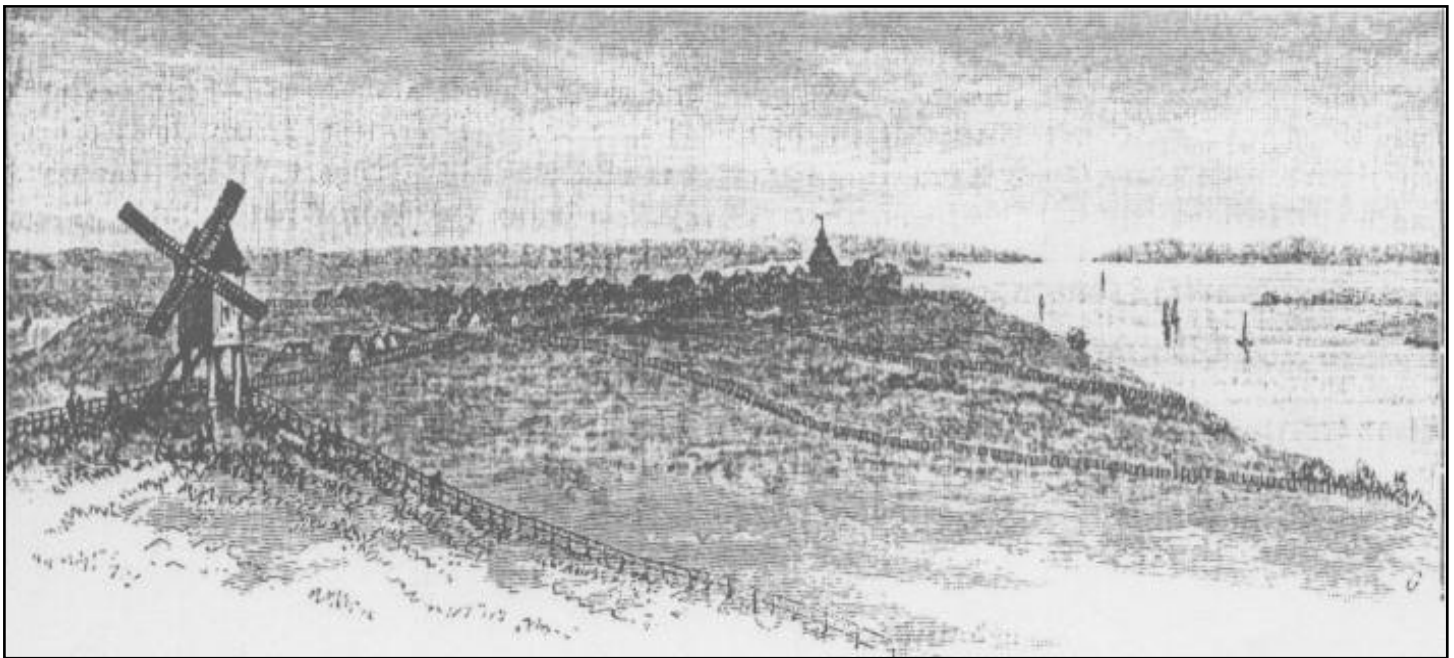
ried an agriculturist named Roeloff Jansen and together came to America where he was employed as a bouwmeester (chief farm superintendent) by Patroon Van Renssaelear in Beverwyck (Albany).



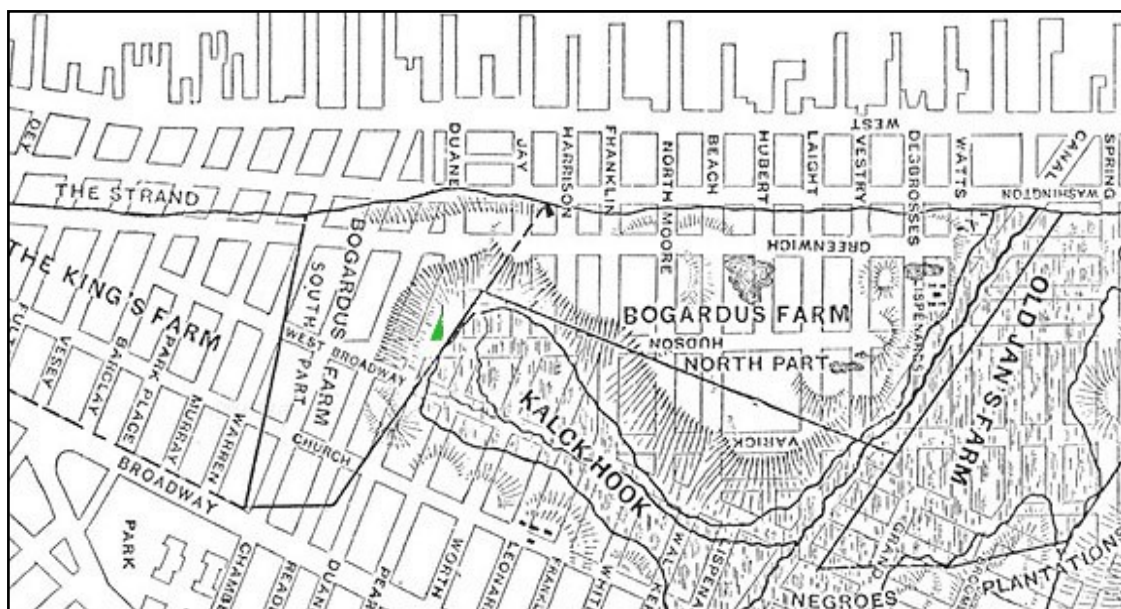
**Anneke Jans**  
My 9<sup>th</sup> Great Grandmother

In 1633, Anneke and Roeloff relocated to Manhattan where land was purchased from the Director General of the Dutch West India Company, Wouter Van Twiller. That tract of land was comprised of 62 acres west of Broadway, along the Hudson River, from the Battery past Park Row. At the time of Anneke's second marriage to Everardus Bogardus, the minister of the Reformed Dutch Church, she was described as "a small, well-formed woman with delicate features, transparent complexion, and bright beautiful eyes. She had a well-balanced mind, a sunny disposition, winning manners and a kind heart."

You might be wondering why I chose to tell you a little bit about Anneke Jans. Well, remember that land that she owned in Manhattan? That land is said to be perhaps the most valuable piece of land in the world today—on it sits NYC's famed financial district. Beginning sometime in the 1780's Trinity Church's claim on the land was contested in court by descendants of Anneke Jans. It was said that she held the original title to the property. The essence of the lawsuit stated that only 5 of the 6 heirs had conveyed the land to the English crown. Over the course of 60 years the battle was fought in court and lost each time. The attempt was even revived in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.



A copy of an early engraved picture of the farm looking south (from Harper's New Monthly Magazine )



Plan of the Bogardus Property superimposed over the streets of lower Manhattan. (from Harper's New Monthly Magazine)

**President Chester A. Arthur**  
21<sup>st</sup> President of the United States of America



**President Chester Alan Arthur in 1882**  
by Charles Milton Bells  
My 6<sup>th</sup> cousin 6x's removed

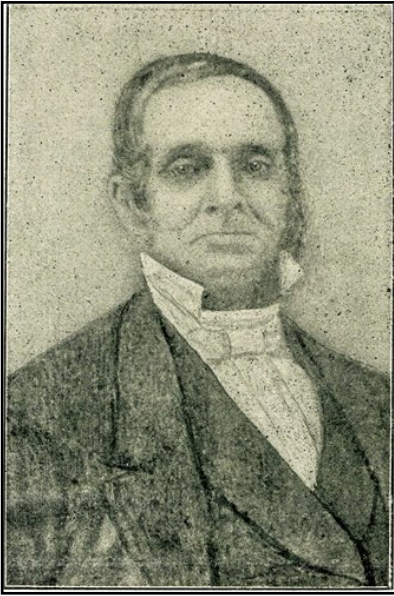
As many of you probably know, President Chester A. Arthur is buried in Albany Rural Cemetery. Every year there is a graveside ceremony to honor our 21<sup>st</sup> president, held on October 5th — President Arthur's birthday. I have been to his grave many times over the years to photograph the impressive memorial, even before I knew we were related. My genealogical research on my mother's line led me to my 11<sup>th</sup> great grandmother, Susanna North Martin, who just happened to be President Arthur's 5<sup>th</sup> great grandmother. Interestingly enough, Susanna North Martin was accused of being a witch in Salem, MA and ultimately hanged during the infamous Salem witch trials.

President Arthur had many local ties to our area other than being buried here. According to Wikipedia, Arthur attended Union College in Schenectady, NY and served as a teacher at a school in Schaghticoke. Around 1852, he moved to Cohoes, NY to become the principal of a school where his sister Malvina was working. He also studied at the State and National Law School in Ballston Spa, NY.



**Chester A. Arthur's home on Route 9, Colonie, NY**  
Photo courtesy of TimesUnion.com

## Reverend Selah Ireland



Husband of my 3<sup>rd</sup> great aunt.

Many of you may know of the Bowen Funeral Home on Old Loudon Road. What you might not know is that it was at one time known as Elmhurst. This was the home of my 3<sup>rd</sup> great uncle Rev. Selah Ireland. The house was built around 1840.

Selah Ireland was born February 19, 1785 in Easton, Washington County, New York. Selah married my 3<sup>rd</sup> great aunt, Catherine Noxon, in 1804. Catherine was the sister of my 3<sup>rd</sup> great grandfather, George Vance Noxon. Selah and Catherine came to Watervliet around 1805. Reverend Ireland was one of the early founders of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

In the pictorial history of the Town of Colonie, Selah's son, Asbury Ireland, is listed as one of the executors of his will in 1861. At that time there was an auction for Reverend Ireland's belongings. The auction took place on the "homestead farm which was situated on what was formerly the Albany and Mohawk Plank road, about 5 miles from Albany, and 3 miles from Troy." The auction took place on March 15, 1861 at 9:00 a.m. Items listed for sale included agricultural items like tools, seeds, buggies, and animals including one cow, two 2-year old heifers, one bull and three fat hogs. Also sold that day was the household furniture. I recently read online that the Albany Institute of History and Art has 3 items that belonged to my 3<sup>rd</sup> great uncle. I have reached out to them to see if I could obtain photos of those objects, but have yet to hear back. I would love to know if any of the contents of the Ireland homestead have survived all these years and still exist.

# EXECUTORS' SALE!

**THE SUBSCRIBERS** will sell at Public Auction, on the Homestead Farm of *Selah Ireland*, deceased, situated on what was formerly the Albany and Mohawk Plank Road, about 5 miles from Albany, and 3 miles from Troy, on Friday, March 15th, at 9 o'clock A. M., the following property, to wit:

1 Grey Mare, 16 hands high,	1 Yoke of Working Oxen,	1 Cow, 2 year old Heifer,	1 Bull, 3 fat hogs, 15 to
1 Double Timber Wagon,	1 2 Spring Market Wagon,	1 single Buggy Wagon,	1 Buggy Wagon with P
1 3 Spring Double Market Wagon,	1 Ox Cart, 1 Wheel Barrow,	1 Ox Sleigh, 2 Lumber Sleighs,	and Whiffletrees.
1 Covered Family Sleigh,	A lot of Whigh Crooks,	1-2 of Reaping Machine,	1 Grind Stone and Frame,
1 Buckeye Mower, 1 Fanning Mill,	2 Grain Cradles, 3 grass scythes,	1 horse power Thresher, and Saw attached,	
1 Scotch and 2 Square Harrows,	1 Hay Rigging, 6 Hay Forks, 6 Rakes,	1 Farmer's Furnace Kettle and Pipe,	
6 two horse Plows, 2 Corn Scythes,	2 Cultivators, extra set cultivator teeth,	1 Hay Hake, 1 Seed Sower,	
2 Betts Double Harness, 2 Betts Single do,	1 Grain Box and Measures,	2 Ox Yokes, a lot of Drain Tile,	
505 Seasoned Chestnut Posts,	A lot of Seasoned Posts,	A lot of Pine Plank and Boards,	
100 Pieces White Pine Lumber,	A lot of Fowls, 2 Horse Blankets,	A lot of Corn in the ear,	
9 1-2 bushels of Seed Sweet Corn,	About 300 bushels Oats,	1 Spring Wagon Best,	
1 New Frame Gate, 1 large Iron Kettle,	Large Lot of Peach Blow Potatoes,	Lot of Onion, Turnips and Ruta Baga,	
A quantity of Hay,	Large Lot of Long Johns,	A Lot of Oat and Rye Straw,	
10 Bush. Buckwheat, 1 Bush. Grass Seed,	Large Lot of Junce, a Lot of Grain Bags,	Lot of Potato Sacks, 4 Grain Hoppers,	
A Ladder and 8 Pike Poles,	1 Copper Pump, a lot of Lead Pipe,	and other articles too numerous to mention.	

Also will be sold at the same time and place, all the Household Furniture of the Deceased.

## Terms of Sale:

**Eight Months Credit for all sums over Ten Dollars, for approved joint notes, with interest, payable at the Bank of West Troy. All sums of Ten Dollars and under, Cash.**

Sale will be positive, without regard to weather, and will commence at 9 o'clock, A. M., precisely.

**ASBURY IRELAND,**  
**J. L. MITCHELL,** } *Executors.*  
WATERVLIET, MARCH 5th, 1861.

Auction ad courtesy of the Town of Colonie Pictorial History book.

### New Members Always Welcome

The Historical Society of the Town of Colonie is always happy to welcome new members to share in the rich history of the Town, as well as the surrounding area. If you know anyone that might be interested, let us know!

## Pasco Bartholomew Noxon

### My 4<sup>th</sup> great grandfather

When researching my Noxon line I came across many tangled roots whereas surnames were repeatedly intertwined. For instance, while conducting my research I would often come across the Noxon, Ireland and Levings surnames. Family members often used the surnames of relatives as first names and first names were often used repeatedly. With the Noxon line being so prolific this can create many genealogical entanglements. There are many branches and connection within this family. My 4<sup>th</sup> great grandfather was Pasco Noxon who was married to Eleanor Bogardus who descends from Anneke Jans and Everardus Bogardus who were mentioned earlier in this article. Pasco and Eleanor's daughter, Catherine Noxon, was married to Reverend Selah Ireland also mentioned previously. Now, back to Pasco Noxon. He was born March 27, 1759 in Beekman, NY. He was first married to Anna Harris (his cousin) and later to Eleanor Bogardus. Recently I was admitted to the Daughters of the American Revolution due to the service of my 4<sup>th</sup> great grandfather, Pasco. During the Revolutionary war, Pasco served under Major Brinton Pain in the 5<sup>th</sup> Regiment of the Dutchess County Militia. By 1800 Pasco had moved to Albany County, NY, where he died on January 28, 1828 in Watervliet.

## Governor Dewitt Clinton



My 3<sup>rd</sup> cousin, 6x's removed

My 3<sup>rd</sup> cousin, 6 times removed, was Governor Dewitt Clinton. He was born in 1769 in Little Britain, NY. He had an extensive career which ultimately led him to be referred to as the "Father of the Erie Canal." He was a strong proponent for building the canal through upstate New York. Many people who opposed his idea called it "Clinton's Ditch." When Clinton sailed from the mouth of Lake Erie to New York City he emptied two barrels of water from Lake Erie into NY Harbor. This symbolized the

connection of the East to the West.

Dewitt's career began as a lawyer when he graduated from Columbia University in 1790. He went on to be a private secretary to George Clinton, his uncle. He then joined the NY Assembly and the NY Senate. From 1803-1815 Clinton served as the mayor of NYC. Interestingly enough it was during this time that he was also a NYS Senator, and he also served as Lieutenant Governor! In 1812, Dewitt Clinton narrowly lost the race for President of the United States to James Madison. In 1817 he became the governor of New York State. After his first stint as governor he then went on to become the New York Canal Commissioner. His second stint as governor was from 1825-1828.

In the collection of the Albany Institute of History and Art there is a portrait of Dewitt Clinton painted by another one of my ancestors, Ezra Ames, who is the next relative I will talk about.

## DID YOU KNOW?

An engraved portrait of Dewitt Clinton appeared on the Legal Tender (United States Note) issue of 1880 in the \$1000.00 denomination.



Please visit our Facebook Page.

Just search:

**Historical Society Town of Colonie**

## Ezra Eames (Ames)



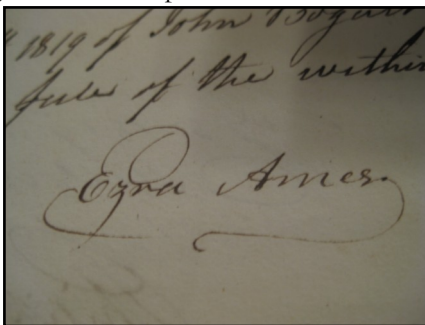
**Uncle of husband and sister-in-law of 3rd great aunt**

Ezra Ames was born in 1768 in Framingham, Massachusetts. In 1790 Ezra was working in Massachusetts as a painter of furniture and carriages. It was during this time that he began painting miniature portraits. In 1795 Ezra, his wife, Zipporah Wood, and their first child moved to Albany where he opened a sign painting shop on Mark Lane, which today is a driveway that separates the “old post office and the Federal Building on Broadway.”

Ezra’s artistic career spanned 30 years in Albany. He became a well-known portrait artist, painting the likes of Governor Dewitt Clinton, Vice President George Clinton, and Alexander Hamilton.

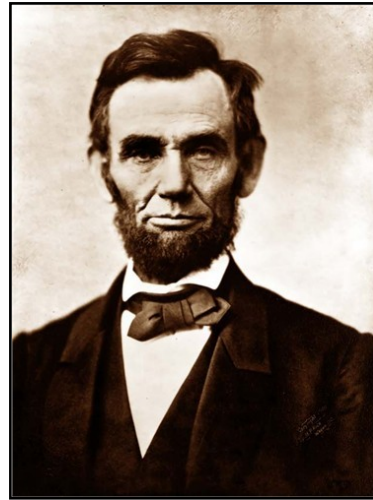
In *Ezra Ames of Albany* by Bolton & Cortelyou, it tells how in 1817 after Clinton became Governor, he began sitting for his official portrait painted by Ames. In Ezra’s account book it is noted that Governor Clinton was charged \$100 for the portrait and \$50 for the frame.

I own a receipt signed by Ezra Ames in 1819. It is also signed by Joh Bogart, Chamberlain in the Mayor’s office. It is a receipt for \$10.50. The mayor of Albany in 1819 was Philip Van Rensselaer. There is another signature on the receipt in which the first name is Philip, but I am not sure about the surname. I will have to do more research to see if it is the signature of Philip Van Rensselaer.



**Ezra Ames signature**

## President Abraham Lincoln



**My 5<sup>th</sup> cousin 5x’s removed**

Growing up I had always heard that I was related to President Abraham Lincoln. The story my grandmother Ruth and her sister Betty always told was that either my 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> great grandmother received a letter from Abraham Lincoln stating that they were cousins. Based on my research and the dates of my ancestors, the letter would have had to be sent to either my 3<sup>rd</sup> great grandmother, Mary Terrill Mason or her mother, my 4<sup>th</sup> great grandmother, Lorana Place Terrill (whose mother’s maiden name was Lincoln). I have heard two different stories regarding this Lincoln letter. The first story was that the great grandmother in question always kept that letter with her. After she passed away in a nursing home the letter was gone from her belongings. The second story was that the letter was donated to a historical society or library in upstate New York. Either way I am on a mission to find out if this story is indeed true and if so what happened to that letter from my 5<sup>th</sup> cousin, our 16<sup>th</sup> President of the United States of America.

Now, interestingly enough, I recently went on a walking tour of Albany Rural Cemetery. Our tour guide was Mark Bodnar, President of the HSTC. One of the headstones that we stopped at was that of Albany Judge and US Senator Ira Harris. Harris was also the father of Clara Harris. It was Clara Harris and her fiancé, Major Henry Reed Rathbone (also of Albany), who were in the balcony seat at Ford’s Theater on the night of April 14, 1865 when President Lincoln was assassinated by John Wilkes Booth (see Currier and Ives lithograph, below). Before taking the tour, I never knew that there was a local connection to the Lincoln assassination right here in our own backyard. The Harris-Rathbone story is a very interesting one. You might just want to Google-search them to find out more. Or better yet, take one of Mark’s tours!



## Robert Gally Noxon

### My first cousin 4x's removed

Now, while on the tour of Albany Rural Cemetery, we visited the grave of my distant cousin, President Chester A. Arthur. As we were leaving his grave I wasn't prepared for the next stop on our tour which was that of my first cousin, Robert G. Noxon, which is right near President Arthur's grave. As mentioned previously, our tour guide was HSTC President Mark Bodnar. Mark stopped right in front of his grave and rested his hand on top. I said, "Mark, this is my relative!" He looked at me and said, "Robert G. Noxon?" I then said, "Yes, his father was my 3<sup>rd</sup> great grandfather, George Vance Noxon's brother." I then told Mark that Robert's middle initial stood for Gally which was his mother's maiden name.

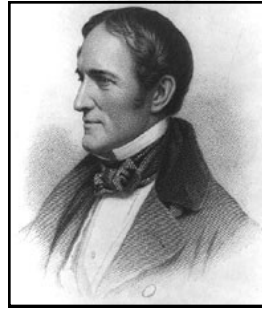
What's interesting about Robert Gally Noxon is that he was mortally wounded at the Battle of Gettysburg. According to *The Heroes of Albany*, his thigh was hit by a minnie ball that passed right through and fractured the bone. He lay on the field for 54 hours in great suffering. It was several days before he was removed to a field hospital. He once told his mother Helen that she should be proud to have a son in the American Army, to sustain the government and the union. I'm sure his mother was proud of him as am I. I was very excited to learn more about my ancestor from Mark Bodnar, who happens to be an expert on the Civil War soldiers buried in Albany Rural Cemetery. Now, if I could only find a photo of Robert G. Noxon.

Robert's father was Dr. Peter Bogardus Noxon. (Yes, Bogardus being from Everardus Bogardus.) Dr. Noxon received his diploma from the Albany County Medical College around 1824. When researching Dr. Noxon I came across his medical journal from 1822-1824 being offered for sale at a rare book store in Rhode Island for an astronomical price. It is stated that the journal lists some patient names, recipes, and medicines used. I contacted the bookseller asking questions about the book. All I got was a one sentence reply. Needless to say, his reply did not give me any information for this article.



Grave of  
Lt. Robert Gally Noxon  
and his father,  
Dr. Peter B. Noxon,  
at  
Albany Rural Cemetery  
(near Pres. Arthur's grave)

## William Prescott



My 5<sup>th</sup> great uncle

After reading the last two newsletters written by Colonie Town historian, Kevin Franklin, I thought it only fitting to continue on with the Prescott family. In Kevin's article he mentioned a book: *The Prescott Memorial—Genealogical Memory of Prescott Families in America, written by Dr. William Prescott, M.D. in 1870.* William Prescott, who wrote that book is my 5<sup>th</sup> great uncle. His sister Hannah is my 5<sup>th</sup> great grandmother.

While working on my genealogical research I came across an auction from 2009 in which a family heirloom was auctioned off. It was an 18<sup>th</sup> century Prescott Family Coaching Stick. Had I known about this auction I would have definitely been bidding on this item. Since I don't have the cane in my possession and probably never will, I at least have the photos from the auction listing. They are a great genealogical resource with names, rank and birth years. The auction listing states that the cane was a: hickory shaft topped by 3" cast silver head decorated with classical motifs, below a .75" brass collar, inscribed with *WP Aug 1769*, and another brass collar with rolled edges, inscribed with the initials and birth and death dates of additional owners, 50.5" in length. The stick's original owner, and family patriarch, William Prescott (1728-1811) was a New Hampshire resident who played an active role in the Revolutionary War, serving first in the militia and ultimately rising to the rank of Major. His son William (1762-1845) gained fame as a plough-maker. His initials on the stick note that he also achieved the rank of Captain (probably in the New Hampshire militia). His son William (1788-1875) graduated from Dartmouth and became a doctor, and compiled a Prescott family history of more than 600pp. Besides these first three Prescott's, the collar is also engraved with two additional initials, and birth, but no death dates. Wow! I wish could hold that cane in my own hands knowing that several generations of my ancestors held it in theirs before me!



When I purchased the Prescott Memorial book I also found some treasures tucked in between its pages. I found an old newspaper article about the Prescott coat of arms with a brief history of the family and I found another old clipping about a J. Allen Prescott winning an award. Written on the clipping was, "for your scrapbook-Just found it." While it didn't make it to that Prescott's scrapbook, it's nice to know that it is staying in the family.

So, while conducting your family research don't forget to check E-bay, auctions, and rare/used bookstores. You never know what treasures you may find.

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"/> Supporting . . . . .	\$100—\$250
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual . . . . .	12.00	<input type="checkbox"/> Business . . . . .	50.00	<input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor . . . . .	\$250.00 & Up

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

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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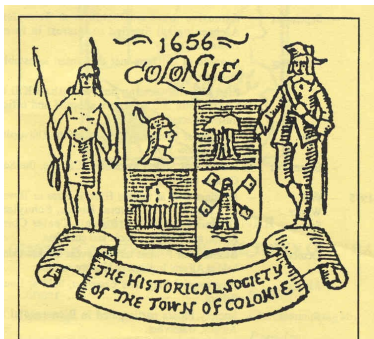
Please mail to Membership Chairperson c/o Historical Society, Memorial Town Hall, Newtonville, N. Y. 12128-0508

CHARTERED BY THE REGENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK

**THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF THE TOWN OF COLONIE**

**Kevin Franklin: Town Historian**

**Current Officers of the Society**



Historical Society      Founded 1971

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

**PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE**

I hope you’ve enjoyed reading this provocative newsletter. Seems like every time I talk with Jen Paley she says to me, “Yep, I’m related to him, too!” Her genealogical lineage is incredible.

Great news! HSTC Trustee Ann Eberle has kindly agreed to assume the Program Chair duties. We’re sure Ann will continue the tradition of coordinating excellent venues, speakers and field trips. Thank you, Ann! You’ll enjoy the fruits of your labors.

We hope you all enjoyed a wonderful Holiday Season, and we’d love to see you at our upcoming meeting on Sunday, January 25th at the William K. Sanford Library. Colonie Town Historian Kevin Franklin is partnering with Albany City Historian Anthony Opalka for a wonderful and informative presentation titled: “**The Origins of the Town of Colonie.**” Together, Kevin and Tony will illustrate how the boundary between Albany and Colonie has changed over the years, and how the names of both the city and the town have evolved over time. President Harry Truman said, “The only thing new in the world is the history we don’t already know.” Why not come and perhaps learn something “new” about our town?

*Mark Bodnar, President*