



WASHINGTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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FALL 2025 NEWSLETTER

Volume XXXV #3

Announcing WCHS 85th Annual Membership Meeting

October 25, 2025 at Skene Manor, Whitehall, NY

We are pleased to announce our 85th WCHS Annual Membership Meeting and Historic Preservation Awards ceremony will be held on **Saturday, October 25, from 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.** at Skene Manor in Whitehall, NY. We are coordinating a coffee hour and lunch option, but both require **ADVANCE RESERVATIONS**. Please read the information below and respond accordingly.

AGENDA:

9:00 a.m.-10:00 a.m. – Coffee hour with coffee, tea, and pastries (reservations required)

- Come enjoy light refreshments and conversation with other attendees before the business meeting. Contact Sarah Hall to reserve (518) 747-9108 by October 11.

10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. – Business Meeting and Award Presentations

- Review of committee reports. Membership vote and approval of the proposed WCHS Nominations Slate and the 2026 Budget (see page 3 for more detailed information). Award presentations will include the Cronkhite Award, Historic Preservation Awards and WCHS President's Awards.

12:00 p.m.-1:00 p.m. – Luncheon (advance lunch choice is required by October 11)

- Lunch begins at noon. We are asking for sandwich pre-orders at the request of Skene Manor to ensure the kitchen is ready for lunch for a larger crowd. Due to limited kitchen size, advance orders will help luncheon choices to be ready and served in a timely fashion. **We will not be able to take any last-minute orders for lunch past the October 11 deadline.** Thank you for your understanding.
- Please call Sarah Hall at (518) 747-9108 and provide your sandwich choice and type of bread (white, wheat, or rye bread) and any garden salad or salad plate choice.
- Skene Manor does not need beverage, soup, or dessert orders ahead; those will be taken during lunch. Skene Manor's menu is shown at right for your convenience to plan in advance.



Welcome to Skene Manor

Menu

Homemade Soup of the Day \$6

Sandwiches
(Choice of Bread: White, Wheat, or Rye)
Served with Chips & Pickles

Egg Salad \$11	Tuna Salad \$14
Chicken Salad \$14	Reuben \$16
Rachel \$16	B.L.T. \$14
P.B. & Jelly \$7	Ham & Cheese \$13
Grilled Cheese \$11	Turkey \$14

Salads

Garden Salad \$10
Salad Plate \$14
(chicken, egg & tuna salad w/cottage cheese)

Sides \$4

Pickled Beets Cottage Cheese

Beverages \$3

Coffee	Tea	Lemonade	Iced Tea (unsweetened)
Soda	Milk	Seltzer Water	Bottled Water \$2

Desserts

Brownie Sundae \$7
(Brownie w/vanilla ice cream, chocolate syrup, whipped cream and a cherry)

Dish of Vanilla Ice Cream \$5

1:00 p.m.-2:00 p.m. – Join us for our program in the Community Room (upstairs in Skene Manor)

- Washington County Historian Thomas Ruffing will discuss upcoming county-level events.

We encourage all members to attend this annual event, and we look forward to seeing you on October 25!

Washington County Historical Society Mission Statement

The Washington County Historical Society is an educational organization dedicated to engaging diverse audiences in the study and application of the collective heritage of Washington County, New York, and its environs.

- Rev. October 2005

WCHS has a constantly growing collection of information, original documents, and other items of interest about Washington County and its inhabitants, past and present.

If you would like to find out more about volunteering to help with the Heritage Research Library or other opportunities, please contact the Historical Society and let us know what interests you!

Heritage Research Library

Library and Bookshop Hours:

Now open Tuesdays and Wednesdays
9:30 a.m.—4:30 p.m.

Visits may be scheduled by appointment
(contact us)

Inquiries and appointment requests
can be emailed to library@wchs-ny.org
or made by phone.

Newsletter Editor:
Kelly Mead

How To Contact Us:



Phone: (518) 747-9108



Address: 167 Broadway,
Fort Edward, NY 12828



Web: www.wchs-ny.org



E-mail address:
info@wchs-ny.org

Visit us on Facebook!

Join the Knox Trail Activities!

The Washington County Historical Society (WCHS) has been one of the supporters of the Washington County 250th Committee, which is setting up events to celebrate the 250th Anniversary of the United States.

One of the events happening this year that celebrates the Nation's 250th Anniversary is a reenactment of Henry Knox's Noble Artillery Train. This event has been an ambitious collaboration between seven local counties that have been working together on the project since February 2024 (Essex, Warren, Washington, Saratoga, Albany, Rensselaer and Columbia counties). The Knox Committee has also been working with the state of Massachusetts for events commemorating the conclusion of Knox's train outside Boston.

Events for the weekend of December 12-14, 2025:

• **Friday, Dec. 12**—Warren County, Lake George:

Reenactment of the landing of artillery at Fort George, followed by an afternoon reception and evening public presentation with author Rick Atkinson.

• **Saturday, Dec. 13**—Washington County, Fort Edward:

Events include: wreath laying ceremonies at the three monuments, a parade through Fort Edward, and a transfer of the Knox sleds to Saratoga County at the Dix Bridge in Clarks Mills and Schuylerville. The festivities will continue at Fort Hardy Park in Schuylerville.

• **Sunday, Dec. 14**—Saratoga/Albany/Rensselaer/Columbia Counties:

The reenactment will resume, with a transfer of the Knox sleds to Albany County. The day will end with the sleds going through Rensselaer and Columbia Counties. That will end the reenactment until January 10, 2026, when the sleds will be transferred to the state of Massachusetts to continue the Knox Trail on its path.

The Washington County portion of the reenactment provides an opportunity for Washington County citizens to participate in the wreath presentations, parade, and to observe the transfer of the sleds to Saratoga County. All 17 schools in Washington County are invited to participate in the parade. Students are encouraged to show pride in their school by wearing school colors, marching with their bands and mascots to showcase their community and school spirit. Whether you are a veteran, history enthusiast, reenactor, community organization, school, or local business, we invite you to join the march and contribute to bringing this remarkable chapter of American history to life.

The 250th Committee would like to involve as many people as possible. Please call 518-747-9108 no later than November 30 and let us know you are ready to roll with Knox. To learn more about this event, visit <https://www.washingtoncounty.fun/henry-knox-trail-reenactment/>

Patrick Niles
Washington County Historical Society President
Washington County 250th Committee Co-Chair

Proposed 2026 WCHS Operating Budget

Below is the proposed 2026 WCHS operating budget, which will be reviewed at our annual business meeting on October 25, 2025. We will be requesting a vote of approval from members in attendance at that meeting.

Category	2024	2025	2026
Income			
Annual Appeal	15,000	15,000	12,000
Dividends/MS	1000	1000	1500
Fundraisers	3000	3000	2500
Events	1000	1000	500
Donations	2500	3000	1000
Gift Shop Sales	6000	5500	7000
Interest Income	20	20	20
Membership Dues	7000	7000	7000
Merrill Lynch	30,000	20,000	20,000
Income Subtotal			\$51,520
Restricted Income			
County Support	1856	1856	1856
Hill Trust	6000	7000	8000
Other	6980	8099	8724
Restricted Income Subtotal			18,580
Total Income	80,656	72,475	\$70,100
Expenses			
Administrative Expenses			
IRS/Financial Report	2800	2725	2700
Board/Staff Development	200	200	200
Insurance	4000	4500	4500
Office Supplies/Expenses	3000	1500	1000
Payroll Expense	3500	3500	1000
Postage	1000	1000	1500
President	150	150	150
Professional Dues	200	200	250
Property Tax	500	550	600
Telephone/WIFI	1000	1500	1800
Technology/Website	300	300	4000
Administrative Subtotal	17,650	17,125	\$17,700
Building			
Custodial	2000	1000	2000
Electric/Heat	850	850	2500
Heat	1600	3000	Now combined Electric
Improvement/Repairs	Hill Trust	Hill Trust	Hill Trust
Other Utilities	500	500	-----
Security	500	600	300
Building Subtotal	5200	5950	\$4800
Program Expense			
Educational Committee	0	0	0
Events	1500	500	500
Fair	250	0	0
Fundraisers	700	500	500
Library Operations	1500	1500	1000
Newsletter	400	300	300
Outreach/speakers/programs	0	500	500
Preservation Committee	1200	1200	1200
Promotion	800	800	800
Publications	1800	1800	1000
Roadside Markers	500	500	500
Shop Expense	2000	1800	1800
Program Subtotal	10,650	9400	8100
Payroll	40,000	40,000	39,500
Total Expenses	80,656	72,475	\$70,100

WCHS Proposed Slate 2026

The WCHS Nominating Committee respectfully submits the following proposed 2026 slate of officers and trustees to be approved at the Annual Membership Meeting on October 25, 2025. The following are the nominees for election this fall:

Officers: President, TBD; Vice President, TBD; Treasurer, Debi Craig

Trustees 2028: Michele Bromley (Argyle); Steven Mattison (Argyle); and Cheryl Putorti (Whitehall) and Arlyne Henley (Fort Miller).

- Submitted by the Nominating Committee Chair, John Mead

2025 WCHS Calendar of Events

Our programs are free (unless noted) and open to the public, donations are gratefully accepted. Questions? Contact the Historical Society. Latest updates and events will be posted on the WCHS website, our Facebook page and in local news media outlets.

October 9 / 6:30 p.m. / Lecture: The Patriots of Washington County

Presented by Sarah Hall / Location: Hebron Preservation Society, 6560 State Route 22, Salem, NY

Sarah Hall will present stories and information about Revolutionary Soldiers in Washington County: Lemuel Haynes, Israel Harris, Joseph McCracken, Tobias Van Veghten, and Samuel Standish.

October 22 / 4:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m. / Special Event! Join us for a fundraising event to benefit WCHS

Location: The Railyard Taproom and Restaurant, 209 Broadway, Whitehall, NY

Come to the Railyard Taproom in Whitehall on October 22 to enjoy a great meal, and the restaurant will donate 15% of your check to WCHS.

November 6 / 6:30 p.m.-8:00 p.m. / Lecture: Military Service of Salem's Citizens (1756-1865)

Presented by Alec McMorris / Location: Historic Salem Courthouse, East Broadway, Salem, NY

Alec McMorris will present "In the Middle of History: Military Service of Salem's Citizens (1756-1865) - The French and Indian War to the U.S. Civil War, the First 100 Years." The talk is sponsored by the Salem Town Historian's Office.

November 13 / 6:30 p.m.-8:30 p.m. / Lecture: Henry Knox Heavy Metal Tour

Presented by Pat Niles

Location: Hebron Preservation Society, 6560 State Route 22, Salem, NY

Patrick Niles will speak about Henry Knox and his artillery train from St. Johns, Crown Point and Fort Ticonderoga. Henry Knox's mission helped drive the British out of Boston in 1776.

November 29 / 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. / Special Event! Meet Santa Claus at WCHS

Location: Wing-Northup House, 167 Broadway, Fort Edward, NY

Bring the kids to meet Santa and visit the Wing-Northup House at a special open house celebration! Horse-drawn wagon rides will be offered for a small cost and other holiday treats available.

December 12-14 / Special Events! Henry Knox's Noble Artillery Train Reenactment

Events and programming commemorating this 1775-1776 event. See page 2 of this newsletter for more details.

Notes from the Washington County Historian's Office



As County Historian, there are a few things that I would like to bring to your attention, and hopefully get you interested in the future of the county, as well as your own town or village.

Sometime this fall, we will be holding dedications and presentations of artifacts and historic items at the Washington County Municipal Center, with plans for opening of space for a county museum. It is my hope to have representation from every town or village displayed for all to see and share the history of each town and village and what they offer visitors. I am looking to generate interest in what we, as a historic community, can offer the county and its citizens in building tourism based on our immense history.

I am also in the process of creating trails of historic significance to take people on a trip through the history of our county, providing a better understanding of what our county's history meant to the development of the State and the Nation. We will be adding technology on the trails to enhance the education and the experience, and expect to include local schools in the process.

(Article continues on page 5) >>>

(Notes from the Washington County Historian's Office, continued)

If you visited the Washington County Fair, I hope that you had a chance to stop by the Farm Museum and see the sledge (sled) that will be used for the Knox Trail event in December and perhaps had an opportunity to talk with members of the Washington County Historical Society or me while you were there. This photo shows Assemblyperson Carrie Woerner (right in photo) with BOCES instructors and some Washington County 250th Committee Members at the Fair.

As we welcome fall, I look forward to working with our historical community and assisting the county in the growth of awareness of the places we call home.



- Submitted by Thomas Ruffing, County Historian

Re-Dedication of Allen Family Historic Marker in Argyle



The Town of Argyle, partnering with Sarah Hall and the Washington County Historical Society, re-dedicated the new historical marker on Saturday, July 26, 2025, which honors the Allen Family and three enslaved people who were massacred on the evening of July 25, 1777 by a band of natives led by Leloup. This group was en route from Salem on their way to join the British encampment under General John Burgoyne's command near Fort Edward. After the Allen family was killed, the same group of natives was responsible for the death of Jane McCrea. These events were significant in Washington County, impacting how local residents viewed the British and their native allies, encouraging many to join the Patriot cause.

The ceremony began with bagpiper Joshua Bromley, followed by statements given by Argyle Town Historian Michele Bromley; Washington County Historian Tom Ruffing; President of the Washington County Historical Society Pat Niles; Argyle town supervisor Bob Henke; and Washington County Historical Society Administrator Sarah Hall. Representatives of the Sons of the American Revolution (SAR) were also present to lay wreaths at the sign. After the re-dedication, participants were able to visit the original cairn dedicated in 1927. Thank you to everyone who made this event possible.

- Submitted by Michele Bromley, Argyle Town Historian



The Bell

July 7, 2025 was a big day on my street in Fort Miller. The Reformed Church next door had to remove the church bell from its tower for structural reasons. The bell had to be hoisted from its perch up through the tower roof and gently brought down to the ground by a huge crane (see pictures below). There were many people watching this event – church members, neighbors, friends, passersby, and some press. It is not every day you see a bell that weighs more than 1,200 pounds dangling in the air! As the bell came closer to the ground, I was amazed by how perfectly formed it was and I was struck by how beautiful it was. It had a greenish blue patina resultant of the oxidation of the copper in it over time – quite a bit of time – 154 years.

On the bell's encasing, there was an engraving that said it had been made in Troy in 1871 by Jones & Co. This company started in 1852 and closed in 1887. The process of making a church bell at that time involved pouring heated up bronze (copper and tin) into a wooden mold. There was an inner core and an outer core which were produced so an air space existed between them which was filled with molten metal.

The pitch (the degree to which a sound is high or low) was determined by the bell's shape and size, the material it was made from, as well as how it was tuned. This involved carefully removing metal from certain areas in the bell's interior. This was done before the bell was cast. The goal was to achieve a desired pitch and harmonious overtones. The bell's shape, size, and thickness contributed to the frequency of the vibration.

The Reformed Church was built in 1816, and the bell has been at the Reformed Church since 1946 when it was brought over from the Baptist Church located, at that time, across the street further north (a stone's throw away). After a while, there was a lack of attendance and the Baptist Church fell into disrepair. Eventually, it was torn down after being in existence for 88 years. The bell will now be on the front lawn of the Reformed Church enclosed in a wooden structure that will be built around it. Every Sunday at 10:25 a.m., the bell will be rung. I've heard it a number of times now and to my ears it has a rich, sonorous, inviting sound.

Once the wooden structure is finished being built around the bell, the Fort Miller Reformed Church will have a rededication of it in late September or early October. The actual date will be announced and the public is invited to attend.

- Article and photos submitted by Jan Peterson



Volunteer Spotlight—Debbie Guynup

We are grateful to all our volunteers, and welcome the opportunity to spotlight their many accomplishments on behalf of WCHS. Learn a little more about Debbie Guynup, from Greenwich, New York. Debbie has been helping with the Revolutionary War Soldiers Project specifically.



Hello! I was born and raised in nearby Rensselaer County and moved to Greenwich in 1998 with my husband. I recently retired from St. Peter's Health Partners where I was a chemistry lab supervisor. I have loved history since 7th grade when I joined Yorkers (NYS junior historical association) at my school. I have two hobbies that relate to history. I collect matchbooks/covers and I have been working on my genealogy for over 30 years. I was the chairman for this year's international convention of the Rathkamp Matchcover Society that was recently held in PA and will be one of the co-chairs for next year in OH.

Shortly after I retired, my husband and I attended a presentation on Benedict Arnold in Argyle, and I decided to see if they needed volunteers at the Washington County Historical Society. Since then, I have been working on the Revolutionary War Soldiers project, which I really enjoy. I look forward to learning more about the history of this county.

Volunteering with the Washington County Historical Society is an excellent way to learn about our county's history while helping to protect and preserve the past. We welcome all who wish to help us with our mission, and all types of skills are needed!

A few examples of volunteer roles, but not limited to:

- Help with programs and events
- Read cursive and transcribe old documents
- Conduct genealogical research
- Help with mailings
- Serve on the Board of Trustees
- Digitize photographs
- Social media skills
- Garden or handyman skills

Interested in using your expertise and talents to volunteer with the Historical Society? Contact us to discuss various opportunities to help and learn more about the history of Washington County, New York.

WCHS 2025 Board of Trustees

OFFICERS

President	Patrick Niles
Vice President	Cheryl Putorti
Treasurer	John A. Mead
Secretary	Kelly Mead

ADMINISTRATOR

Sarah Hall

TRUSTEES—2027

Jeanne LaPoint Wood
Paul Lundberg
Alec McMorris

TRUSTEES—2026

Jane Hartnett

TRUSTEES — 2025

Michele Bromley
Debi Craig
Gary Hart
John A. Mead

STANDING COMMITTEES

Building — Paul Lundberg
Finance — Melanie Bock
Nominations — John A. Mead

TRUSTEE EMERITA

Joan Handy

WCHS HISTORIAN

John A. Mead

The Washington County Historical Society would like to thank Casella Waste Systems, Inc. for their generous donation of service for the Wing-Northup House. Thank you!





WASHINGTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY EST. 1940

167 Broadway, Fort Edward NY 12828-1709

Telephone (518) 747-9108

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Fall 2025 Newsletter

Full Name (please print)

NEW MEMBER

RENEWAL

Address

City/State

Zip

E-Mail

Phone No.

Please note WCHS membership year runs January 1st thru December 31. New memberships received after October 1st will be honored for the following year. Annual memberships and donations are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law.

Membership Categories:

- Benefactor \$500
- Sustaining \$150
- Contributing \$75

- Patron \$50
- Individual/Family \$35
- Senior/Senior Couple/Student \$25

Sign Up Online
at www.wchs-ny.org

I would like to include an additional gift of \$ _____

Check Enclosed (Payable to: Washington County Historical Society)

OR

Name on Credit Card

Card Number

Exp. Date

CSV Code

Questions (please answer):

1. I would like to receive my newsletter by email

Yes No

2. I would like to be contacted about volunteering

Yes No