

TOWN OF LEWISBORO
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Charles Duffy, Lewisboro Town Supervisor
Members of the Lewisboro Town Board

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I have prepared this overview of my year as Lewisboro Town Historian as required by the New York State Arts and Cultural Affairs law. I must admit, the last time I did this was about a decade ago, but since 2010 was a fairly typical year for this office, I will not attempt to catch the Town Board up on what has gone before! I have promised myself to keep a much better documented record of my time spent in historian affairs including answering genealogical questions and informational queries and visits to various scout groups. In the following paragraphs I will expand on some of the bullet points found at the end of this report.

In 2010 I met with about a half dozen Cub Scout dens to talk about the town's history and share items from the town's collection of memorabilia. With the Girl Scouts I took a delightful walk around historic downtown South Salem in the fall.

Almost a year was spent in the preparation and carrying out of Christoph Sawyer's Eagle Scout project on a town trail off Shady Lane in Lewisboro Hamlet. Christoph directed, with a few pointers from me and his leaders, an archaeological dig on a house site that had been leaf-covered and forgotten for half a century. It was one of the most exciting Eagle projects that I have had the pleasure to be a part of. So many volunteers were introduced to history first hand. And the many hundreds of artifacts are now in boxes in my VERY small room at Onatru. Several other potential Eagle candidates and Gold Award (Girl Scout equivalent of the Eagle status) candidates have come to me looking for projects, although at present I am not involved with any, but welcome all comers. In the past, these projects have included cemetery research and transcription of oral history tapes.

Probably the highlight of 2010 was the display of Russell family quilts at the Cross River Baptist Church during the month of October. The show was successful and had a steady stream of visitors, but I am sorry that more people did not get to see the fantastic quilts from the 19th and early 20th century that were on display; I would like to repeat the exhibit this year, if possible in another venue.

Also in October, we did a Parks & Recreation Ghost Bus Tour through parts of Lewisboro [we ran out of time!] that was very well-received and actually made money for P & R. In the spring, through the auspices of the Lewisboro Library, I conducted a Historic Bus Tour of Lewisboro [once again, we ran out of time to get to all hamlets!].

Many hours were spent on the telephone with interesting people from all parts of the United States who have ties to Lewisboro. I feel that I learn as much or maybe more about our town's

history through these contacts than I am able to give out to them. The majority of my e mails and phone calls are about genealogy. There are probably about five a month, sometimes more. Queries seem to come in bunches. In addition there are a number of calls from persons writing articles and need information. This fall there was a call from educational TV requesting help for a program about the Boss Tweed bell in St. Paul's chapel.

Henry Wolfe and I have filmed one segment of a ghost search for Channel 20 and we plan to do a series of walking tours in the coming summer months. The quilt show was taped and appeared on TV this fall.

An ongoing project for the last couple of years has been the transcribing of the diaries of Chapman Miller, Cross River's postmaster for most of the 20th century. These diaries are a treasure of life during the depression and the ordinary life of a local businessman, farmer and homeowner and the family members and neighbors he comes in contact with during 30 years of his life. Included is his first diary as a 15 year old in 1901.

Visits to classrooms were limited while I was teaching in Rye full-time, but now I have more opportunity to interact with the elementary schools and have contacted area principals to offer my services. Every December for the last 6 or 7 years I have participated in Dr. Linda Burke's Environmental Science class during their changes in land use and demographics study.

This year I did not spend as much time writing as I should have liked, which I regret and plan to get back to the word processor and more articles for the paper in the coming months. I spent several months collecting photos and notes for a book on Lewisboro , but have decided to take the information in another direction.

I am a member of APHNYS.

A few plans for 2011

This spring I will be presenting three programs at the Lewisboro Library on local history. I would also like to do a second series of programs in the fall. One of the most important projects will be to convert the Van Norden Manuscript, written in 1927 and detailing South Salem's history, to electronic data. This will involve scanning the 500+ type-written pages into the computer. I hope my home computer set up has the capacity to do this. To get the manuscript into readable condition with proper footnotes and on-line is a goal.

The Miller diary project is almost complete and it will need to be incorporated into user-friendly accessibility so that the public can share in this document.

I have a large backlog of items to be accessioned into the files in my office – that project will keep me busy all year.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Maureen L. Koehl". The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored background.

Maureen L. Koehl

Town Historian's Report

A listing of the business of 2010

Cub Scout visits to talk about local history

Girl Scout troop "history walks" in South Salem village

Eagle project: Mentor on Christoph Sawyer's archaeological dig at the Fitch-Davis Homestead site in Lewisboro Hamlet

Discussions with several other Eagle Scout candidates concerning possible projects

Quilt show featuring historic Cross River quilts at the Cross River Baptist Church in conjunction with Westchester County's Arts in the Parks

Ghost Bus Tour for the Park & Rec department

Spring History Bus Tour of Lewisboro

Ongoing transcription of Chapman Miller's diaries [1901 – 1949]. Mr. Miller was the Cross River postmaster for almost 50 years until his death c. 1950.

Answering Genealogical research queries from persons near and far by telephone, e mail and in person

Resource for various media people, including newspapers, magazines, authors and public TV

Local TV ghost segment and quilt show interview with Evelyn Russell

Resource for and two-day appearance in Dr. Linda Burke's Environmental Science class at JJHS

Commenced outreach to local elementary schools to assist with local history curriculum

Maintaining collection of Lewisboro Ledgers from inception to present

Writing of occasional articles for Lewisboro Ledger

Taping of several oral histories – Evelyn Russell, Matilda Viotto Congdon [Deer Park Inn family]