

South of the Mountains

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TAPPAN ZEE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ROCKLAND COUNTY, NYACK, N.Y.

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Orange County, formed in 1683, consisted of a few Dutch families settled along the Hudson River shore. Thirty years later, the country west of the Ramapo Mountains began to attract pioneers, who equally with those living in Tappan, Nyack and Haverstraw were Orange County residents. Yet the barrier in the form of a mountain range was considered almost impassable. At this time the only routes for overland travel between the southern and northern sections of Orange County were the mountain trails that the Indians had always used.

The difficulty of communication tended to separate the two parts of the county. It led first to the holding of county courts alternately at Tappan and Goshen, then to the erection of courthouses and jails at both places. The Board of Supervisors met for many years in the southern part of the county. Eventually their sessions alternated between New City and Goshen. In this later period, Assemblyman John DeNoyelles introduced legislation in 1772 which would have permitted election of assemblymen independently from each side of the mountains. The measure was unsuccessful but it was the fore-runner of efforts in 1774 to divide Orange County. DeNoyelles died in 1775 before his mission had been accomplished.

The Revolutionary War, beginning the same year, drove all lesser subjects from men's minds. After the Revolution and prior to the start of the 19th century, New York's increasing population and the great changes in its distribution, forced the government to form 17 new counties in recently occupied areas of the state. These circumstances made it easier to form that district which had always been known as "Orange County south of the mountains" into one of these counties, as it aroused no opposition from the other areas in which changes were in progress. The act for dividing the County of Orange, whereby Rockland County was erected, was passed February 23, 1798.

PURPOSES OF THE SOCIETY AS EXPRESSED IN THE
CHARTER ISSUED BY THE BOARD OF REGENTS OF
THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK

1. To promote knowledge of and interest in local and national history.
2. To acquire by purchase, gift, devise or otherwise, the title or the custody and control of historic spots and places, and to preserve and protect buildings and spots of historic interest.
3. To collect, preserve and exhibit records, writings, pictures and other items connected with the history of Rockland County; and
4. To promote and encourage historical research.

We suggest as further specific objectives:

That one of the principal purposes of the Society should be to gather and disseminate accurate historical knowledge of the region, and

That as a Society, we should work to establish and maintain a county historical museum which will become a positive and living institution - an integral part of the community life and a source of pride for all our citizens.

We further believe:

That Rockland County has an unusually eventful background of history from the earliest days of our country which is a real basis of community pride and national patriotism;

That it is the experience and understanding of the past which helps us cope with the present and plan intelligently for the future; and

That, as Americans, we need to recognize history in all its aspects as a continuous process from which old and young alike have drawn and will continue to draw the faith by which we live.

THE TRUSTEES

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PERSONALITIES TO REMEMBER

JOHN DENOYELLES, a young Frenchman retired from British Army service, settled at Haverstraw Landing about 1759 and at 25 was engaged in business as a general storekeeper. In a few years he had become an extensive landowner in the section which is now Rockland County. He was one of the prime movers and perhaps the chief advocate of the organization of a new county - south of the mountains. Elected as a representative from Orange County in the General Assembly of the Province of New York, he took his seat April 4, 1769, remaining as an active member until his death in 1775.

GEORGE H. BUDKE, who died in 1948 at the age of 80, did much in assembling historical material about Rockland County. Many of his records are now stored in the Manuscript Division of the New York Public Library, and provide an accurate source for information about the earlier days of the county. We are indebted to his painstaking studies for the historical data included in this letter.

PROJECTS

LIBRARY: Preliminary work in cataloging historical books and pamphlets contributed by our members is proceeding. Temporarily the collection will be housed in the Fowler Library in Haverstraw. Miss Charlotte Pegg and Miss Margaret Keen are in charge.

COLORED SLIDES: Francis Campbell and Walter Beardsley are preparing slides of the historic spots in the county. When completed, the slides will be loaned to schools for instruction or to other groups desiring to use them.

SCHOOL EXHIBITS: Exhibits of early American materials are being maintained in the Haverstraw School and the Liberty St. School in Nyack. Mrs. Stuart K. Atha and Mrs. Gilbert H. Crawford are responsible.

J. Perry Olcott is handling the preparation and mailing of the 1957 dues statement. Dues will again be \$1.00 per person through December 1957. The trustees hope that other members of your family will join at this time if, as is the case occasionally, only one member is presently enrolled.

The nominating committee for the coming year is composed of George L. Brain of Tompkins Cove, chairman, Mrs. Samuel D. Dodge of Suffern and J. Sherwood Smith of West Nyack.

The trustees regret to announce the death of Miss Louise Sanntrock of Congers and John L. Swan of New York City, formerly of Sparkill. Both Miss Sanntrock and Mr. Swan had been members of the Society since 1954.

DATES TO REMEMBER

- JANUARY 21, 1957 Meeting at Evans Park School, Pearl River
Speaker: Dr. Theodore Kazimiroff
President, Bronx Historical Society
- FEBRUARY 11, 1957 Meeting at Upper Nyack School, Upper Nyack
Speaker: Dr. LeRoy E. Kimball
President, New York Historical Society
- MARCH 11, 1957 Meeting at Suffern High School, Suffern
Speaker: Mr. Guthrie McClintic
Theatrical Producer
- APRIL 2nd to 4th Annual Exhibit of the Society
Y.M.C.A., Nyack
- APRIL 8, 1957 Annual Meeting & Election of Officers and Trustees
Rockland Light & Power Company auditorium, Nyack
Thirty minute color film about Old
Sturbridge, Mass. entitled "Dear Nancy".
- JUNE 1, 1957 Spring pilgrimage to Stony Point and West Point
with Westchester Historical Society.

If your name or address has been incorrectly shown, please notify Robert Demarest. Applications for new members may be forwarded with \$1.00 dues directly to Mr. Demarest, treasurer, c/o Nyack Bank and Trust Company, Nyack, N.Y.

ROCKLAND COUNTY BANKERS ASSOCIATION

MEMBERS

HAVERSTRAW	National Bank of Haverstraw and Trust Co. The Peoples Bank of Haverstraw
MONSEY	Rockland National Bank (Branch)
NANUET	Nanuet National Bank
NEW CITY	The Peoples Bank of Haverstraw (Branch)
NYACK	Nyack Bank and Trust Company Tappan Zee National Bank of Nyack
PEARL RIVER	State Bank of Pearl River Rockland National Bank (Branch)
SPARKILL	First National Bank of Sparkill
SPRING VALLEY	First National Bank of Spring Valley Rockland National Bank (Branch)
SUFFERN	Lafayette Bank and Trust Company Rockland National Bank
WEST NYACK	Nanuet National Bank (Branch)