

# Colchester History Connections Newsletter

October 1, 2013 Colchester Historical Society, Box 112, Downsville, New York 13755

Volume 3, Issue 3 Preserving the history of Downsville, Corbett, Shinhopple,  
Gregorytown, Horton and Cooks Falls

Website: [www.colchesterhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.colchesterhistoricalsociety.org)

Historical Society Room, 72 Tannery Road, Downsville is open the third Saturday  
of each month 11 A.M.-3 P.M. and by appointment, please call  
Kay Parisi-Hampel, Town Historian at 607-363-7303.

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## Displays

**Quilts, Textiles and Lace** will be on display in the Colchester Town Hall from October through December. This display features quilts from the Society collection and local families. Two signature presentation quilts will be highlighted; the 1939 Methodist Reverend James Moffatt Friendship Album Signature quilt with 288 names from the villages of Colchester and the 1930 Smith family Signature quilt from 1930 showing 59 embroidered signatures. We invite you to look at the quilt lists to see if you can find your family's names.

Quilts carrying multiple signatures or names inked, stamped, or embroidered are important primary historical documents. Signature quilts are sometimes the only material evidence that documents the names of individuals who have a relationship to each other or that lived in a specific place and time period.

This form of quilting became popular in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and was used as fundraisers for churches and other civic organizations. These Signature quilts carried the names of people who had given money to the cause being championed by the group making the quilt. Other popular quilt making traditions incorporated multiple names on a quilt included Friendship Quilts, Album quilts (often made for a family or community member who was moving away), and Presentation Quilts (made to honor a special person in the community). All forms of these quilt making traditions that incorporate multiple names are traditions that continue into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

We will also be exhibiting textiles that include stunning examples of lace that is knitted, crocheted, made from spools and old fashioned hairpin lace. Don't miss this chance to see the work that was created by the talented women of Colchester and local photographs of residents of Colchester wearing those period fashions.



1939 Moffatt Signature Quilt



Lace Examples



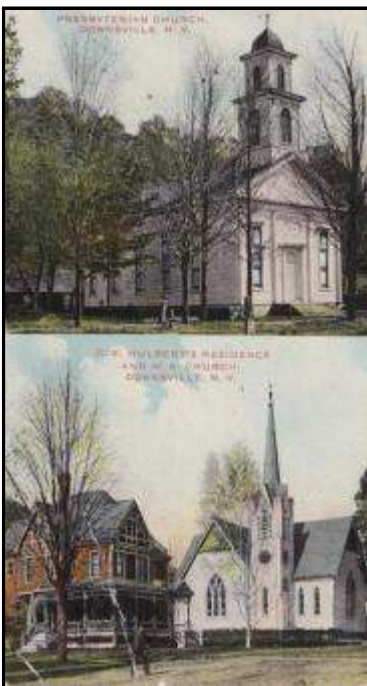
Victorian Christening Gown  
with Lace Cape Collar

## Maple Leaf Festival – October 12, 2013

Please visit us in our tent on Main Street in front of the Colchester Community Church on Saturday, October 12, 2013 from 9 AM to 4 PM. We will be displaying the examples of the **Historic Interpretive Sign Project** and a special display of the **Colchester Methodist Church history**.



The photo on the left shows the first M.E. Church: Built in the fall of 1850 on land donated by George W. Downs. (Property now owned by the Flannery family). It stands on the corner of Main and Union Streets. Behind the church were rows of sheds where people of the parish could leave their horses and carriages and shelter them from the weather.



Early 1900's double postcard images of the Downsville Presbyterian Church and the M.E. Church with the C.E. Hulbert house.



Photo above on the right--1890's Choir--Presbyterian Church. Behind the choir was a Marsden Mural with faux marble columns, painted draperies between the columns and a faux stained glass window with additional stained glass windows lining the walls on each side of the church. William Marsden Jr., a talented itinerant mural painter from Newburgh, New York, painted the mural in 1890 and the work remained until the church secured memorial monies in 1920 and actual stained glass windows were installed in the sanctuary. The stained glass windows were designed by the Chapman Stained Glass Studio in Albany and this studio is still in existence today.



Chapman Stained Glass Studio, Inc. has been creating and installing ecclesiastical and secular leaded glass for over a century. Chapman has been in operation since 1898, specializing in the repair and restoration of antique and historical stained glass.



**Copy of the Chapman business card from 1920**

The present Colchester Community Church was built on land purchased from Mr. & Mr. George Basset, Mr. & Mrs. William Holmes and Maria Bassett for \$200. In 1868 the 42 foot wide by 82 foot long wood frame church was built in the New England Greek Revival style with a 40 foot spire. The church was planned to allow for six hundred worshipers and had a long hall that extended across the front of the church which lead to two large doors which opened into the sanctuary. The church was heated by two wood burning stoves on each side of the sanctuary. The stone steps were quarried bluestone from the Bates Farm located at the fork of Telford and Gregory Hollow. This farm is now owned by Richard Houck. At the end of the 20 foot bluestone walkway two large bluestone stepping blocks enabled parishioner’s easy access from their horse carriages. A road encircled the church leading to stable sheds that housed the horses and carriages during services.



1920's

### **Fundraisers**

Thank you to all of our supporters that have purchased our 2014 calendars. Sales have been brisk and we have a few calendars left that will be on sale at our Maple Leaf tent. Calendars are \$15 and they would make excellent holiday gifts or souvenirs. We will also be selling our historical interpretive signs booklets and this will be your last opportunity to take a chance on the crocheted afghan created by Betty Vernold. The afghan drawing will be November 25, 2013.

## History Mysteries

### Stone Chambers and Cairns

Stone cairns located just past the Cable Lake Trail on New York State land on Campbell Mountain:

**Robert Rode visiting from Kemmerer, Wyoming; by large cairn on Campbell Mountain in Colchester.**



We receive many questions on the origin of these stone structures that dot the landscape in the town of Colchester and many theories have been put forth about of who built them and what their purpose might have served. We do know that farmers helped to define property lines, divide fields, woodlots and pastures and shape animal pens with the abundant quantities of stones found on their properties. Coincidentally, the walls may match cardinal compass points or celestial occurrences such as the equinoxes, but these are thought to be more for practical purposes rather than sacred. It was also common to construct cold cellars and pile surplus rocks within pastures for later use or sale. Archaeological experts dispute the theories that these structures were built by Native American peoples or other ancient explorers. Whatever your belief, exploring these stone structures can be a fun activity for a beautiful fall day.

### Tiffany Hollow/Bull Run One Room School

We have received several requests for information on the **Tiffany Hollow** one-room school house. In the Superintendent of Common Schools book we have the resolution showing the formation of the joint district which consisted of part of District No. 16 in Colchester and District No. 8 in Hamden, forming a new **District No. 22** in May of 1855. The District started with 27 students and records show that number growing to 41 students in 1861. We have records from the New York State Education department showing the school operating until 1920 but by the 1925 school census District No. 22 is no longer listed. If you attended this school, know the closing date of the school or have any other information on District No. 22, we would love to hear from you.

**Please come and celebrate Colchester's history by joining us at our meetings:**

**Colchester Historical Society, basement level-Colchester Town Hall,  
72 Tannery Road, Downsville, New York**

**Meeting Dates:**

**November 26, 2013 at 10 A.M.**

**December 17, 2013 at 10 A.M.**