

Spring/Summer 2015

The Story Teller

MONTEZUMA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

**MONTEZUMA
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY**

PO Box 476
Montezuma, NY 13117



An evening with the Peppermint King

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It is so nice to finally be enjoying the warmer temperatures after the long cold winter. In this issue you'll find an update on what has been going on so far this year and what we look forward to for the rest of 2015.

On May 20th we joined with Port Byron Lock 52 Historical Society for a program at the Senior Center in Port Byron. This is an effort to pool our resources to bring programs of interest to our joint communities that include a common heritage around Erie Canal history. Our guest speaker for the evening was Jim Brady who portrayed Hiram G. Hotchkiss, from Lyons, NY. Hotchkiss became known as the Peppermint King of the World having built a thriving business along the Erie Canal. We took a step back time to learn about the "world's oldest medicine and the mix of extraordinary merchandise that would have been for sale from tooth brushes made with pig hair, wooden toys, Ivory soap and how its formula was discovered as well as chamber pots, and the paper money that would that was used instead of coins during the 1800's.

Anita Messina, Eunice Rooker and I visited the Peppermint Museum which is owned by the Lyons

Heritage Society, for a fascinating tour led by Patricia Alena, the Society's President. If you get a chance to visit, you'll see first hand original furniture and equipment set up as it was used to produce the peppermint oil. Anita picked up some treats for our program and brochures to share with our guests for the evening. The wonderful refreshments served for the program including several different peppermint treats, punch, and favors made by Anita and Hellen Davies. It was a pleasure to work with Anita, Hellen and Tina Ryan-Morrissey to plan the program.



Early Pioneers
&
Revolutionary
War Soldier
honored at
historic
roadside
marker
dedication



Montezuma AMVETS Color
Guide give salute to
Revolutionary War soldier,
Richard Damewood
on Memorial Day,
2015

Memorial Day this year was a special occasion in Montezuma to honor those who gave their lives for our country and our freedom. A special service was held at the VFW Post 8137 in Montezuma. On the day prior the AMVETS sponsored a memorial ceremony at the Throop cemetery to honor the memory of SP4 Robert F. Stryker, Congressional Medal of Honor Soldier.

Following the ceremony on Monday in Montezuma the historical society dedicated the newest Town historical roadside marker in honor of the Old Cemetery as the burial place of the Town's earliest settlers. The marker also honors Captain Richard Damewood buried in the cemetery who was a Revolutionary War Veteran. Attending the services were descendants of the Damewood family, including Joanne Damewood Butler who helped with researching the family history for the nomination. The marker is one of four that has been funded by the William G. Pomeroy Foundation for the Town of Montezuma.



Richard Damewood's military service started with enlisting in 1781 at the height of the Revolutionary War and ended up that year at the Yorktown, Virginia in a battle which took British General Cornwallis by surprise and led to eventually ending the

war. Just as Richard had entered the service, a detachment of Continental forces was authorized by Congress to Virginia. General George Washington assigned Major Marquis Lafayette from France to lead the forces. As a result of his leadership efforts in helping America win the war, Lafayette became an American hero.

After the Revolutionary War, Damewood was located at Sacket's Harbor during the War of 1812. There he was involved in boat building for the war efforts. He eventually settled in Montezuma along the Erie Canal. Lafayette was invited to return to the US to be recognized for his contribution to the new country. Over forty years later in 1825, Capt. Damewood was given the honor of leading a procession of soldiers from Montezuma to the Cayuga Bridge to greet General Lafayette while touring the country. We can only imagine his high regard for Lafayette and what an honor it was must have been to greet him. Following his arrival in Cayuga the procession marched on to Auburn for a gathering of speeches and an evening ball reception.

Damewood died on August 13, 1850 at the age of 91 in Montezuma. He was honored by the community with a procession to the cemetery followed by his horse carrying the remnants of his earlier military days on its back.

The AMVET Color Guard gave a 21 Gun Salute to the former soldier that had been laid to rest in the Route 90 Cemetery. His wife, Rebecca is buried beside him. Del Jenner, VFW Chaplain, gave a dedication reading and closing prayer. The VFW Womens' Auxiliary did a wonderful job of preparing and serving food following the services. We are grateful to work with the veterans organizations that continue to honor our serviceman.

Montezuma Historical Society
Annual Meeting and
Election of Officers

Saturday, June 20, 2015

5 PM

First United Methodist Church
South Street, Port Byron

Volunteers are need to help
prepare for future.

The community needs to
continue to preserve our
historic and natural
resources, and to develop
plans in our area that will
provide a unique visitor
experience to understand
and enjoy the special
values of our Erie Canal
heritage.

On Saturday, June 20th, at 5 PM
the Montezuma Historical
Society will hold its' Annual
Meeting at the First United
Methodist Church in Port Byron
on South Street.

The church is having a
Strawberry Social including Hot
Dogs, Mac Salad, Beans, Chips,
and strawberry shortcake,
sundaes or hot fudge sundaes. We
will attend the Social and hold a
short meeting for the election of
officers following our meal. All
members are invited to attend.
The election will be decided by
the enclosed ballot. Please return
before June 20th.

MHS is thankful to Barbara
Black, our out-going treasurer for
the work she has done over the
years. She has done a wonderful
job of keeping us up-to-date with
our bookkeeping records. Barbara
is stepping down from this
position, and is on the ballot up
for election as Vice President.

Kathy Decker is stepping down
as Vice President to be on the
ballot to replace Barbara's
position as treasurer. Kathy is
taking this job, because we need
to establish an updated
computerized bookkeeping
system, and we have been unable
to fill the position by anyone else.
We will be looking to fill this
position once Kathy has us up
and running on our new
QuickBooks accounting system.
Many thanks to Kathy for her
willingness to help us out.

We also could use the assistance
of anyone with an accounting
background that might initially
work with us get our new system
of accounts up and running
efficiently as we transition over
to the new system.

This is our ninth year since the
Historical Society was started.
We have had very dedicated
people who have continued to

serve on the board. We would
like to encourage some new
members to join our board. If we
are to continue to grow, we need
to bring in new people that would
like to make a difference in the
community. We believe we are
making an important contribution
by preserving Montezuma's
history, and helping to promote
its historic and natural resources
as a destination for visitors, a
place for residents to enjoy
healthy recreation, and bring
economic opportunity to the area.

It's important to future
generations that we preserve our
heritage as a legacy for future
generations. The tourism and
cultural sectors have emerged
worldwide as leaders in the
revitalization of abandoned
buildings and open spaces for
contemporary purposes,
providing opportunities for
sustaining traditional and
contemporary cultural values.

Some exciting new opportunities
are growing in the area,
especially around Erie Canal
heritage. We need to be prepared
to serve the needs of the visitors
that will be coming to
destinations as part of the across
state Erie Canal Trailway, and the
neighboring Port Byron Heritage
complex to share our history.

If we ignore the opportunities
that exist now and risk of
physical decay or redevelopment,
we are inviting a loss of
opportunity to revitalize
structures that would contribute
to the identity of our community
and its social traditions. This
takes the efforts of an organized,
caring group willing to provide
leadership for the future.

Please let us know if you are
interested in joining. It's
rewarding work to be part of
what will make a difference for
the future of our community!

Upcoming Programs

On **July 15, 2015** we look forward to once again greeting the **Cycle the Erie Canal Bike Tour** for a stop along Route 31 in Montezuma on their trip from Buffalo to Albany.

The tour is from July 12 - 19, and we expect to see almost 500 cyclists bright and early as they come from Seneca Falls. Information about the tour can be found on Parks and Trails, New York website at:

<http://www.ptny.org/canaltour/>

The event is a fully-supported, 8-day, 400-mile bike tour with riders of all ages and abilities from across the country and around the world.

Other upcoming events this year include:

Saturday, August 8, 2015 - 9 am
Canal Splash Historic Walking Tour
in Montezuma Heritage Park



This popular guided walking tour lead by

Mike Riley, Canal Historian will highlight the park's historic sites, canal history of the town and new developments made to the park over the last year.

September 16 - 7 pm
Spanning the Bridge Over Legends in Time —
History of Howland's Island
Location TBA

The Port Byron Lock 52 monthly program will feature a talk given by Cheryl Longyear, Montezuma Town Historian on the history of Howland's Island, a part of the Town of Conquest along the Seneca River with connections to the Towns of Montezuma, Mentz and Savannah as well. The long, and fascinating history will reveal the many varied and surprising uses for the Island. Look for further announcement of location on our website and Facebook.

October 10, 2015 - 10 am
Aqueduct 5K Run/Walk and Kids' Fun Run
Montezuma Heritage Park

The third annual 5K Run/Walk will be held once again this year to raise funds for development of the park.

The planning committee has been active asking local business sponsors to partner with us to offer this as a family-fun event that provides healthy outdoor activity, recreation and promotes our area for its beautiful natural and Erie Canal historic resources.

To date we have major sponsors returning to participate as Canallers and Lock Tenders including the Savannah Bank, Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor and Canal Corporation, Montezuma Winery, and Barton and Loguidice, D.P.C.

Port Byron student scholarships will be given to Katherine Sumner and Kaitlyn Seville who are earning their scholarship by working with the planning committee. Their contribution includes planning and overseeing the Kids' Fun Race, games and recruiting student volunteers to help on the day of the race. The Kids' Race will follow the 5K at approximately 11 am.

Our returning MC for the day is Bryan Rubenau with entertaining music by Da Jay Voo. They will entertain with classic hits from the '70s and '80s, singer-songwriter ballads. They're even known to rock out a bit from time to time, too.

And what's a walk or run on the former towpath of the old Erie Canal without Sal the Mule to cheer the runners to the finish line. Sal (Joshua) is looking forward to coming back this year, too! Montezuma Winery will have a wine tasting booth, Rose Borza will give sports massage for those tired aching muscles, and the VFW is sponsoring a chicken BBQ.

Register to run or walk or cheer a participant on to the finish line while enjoying the entertainment. There's something for everyone to enjoy!

www. montezumarun.com



If you are member and have not paid your dues for 2015, please use this form to renew today!

If you have not yet joined, please consider supporting our efforts to preserve and protect the heritage of our community.

Thank you for your support!

The Montezuma Historical Society engages the community through heritage programs and events to promote and proudly connect to its Erie Canal Heritage.

Election of Officers will be held at the Annual Meeting Saturday, June 20, 2015 at the Strawberry Social - 5 pm Election to follow held at the First United Methodist Church, South Street Port Byron

2015 MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name (s): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Our mailing and printing costs keep increasing. Newsletters can now be received via email and posted on our website. We would appreciate adding \$2 to your dues if you would like a copy mailed. ___ Yes, please mail the newsletter.

General Membership Categories:

- \$10 Individual \$25 Business Basic
- \$15 Family \$50 Business Supporter
- \$50 Supporter Other Donation

Yes, I'm interested in Volunteer Opportunities with MHS; please contact me!

Make check payable and mail to:

**Montezuma Historical Society
PO Box 476
Montezuma, NY 13117**

The Montezuma Historical Society is a Private 501(c)(3) organization, and your donations and contributions are tax deductible. Thank you for your support!

**Montezuma Historical Society
2015-16 Election of Officers
Ballot - Return by 5 PM on June 20, 2015**

Officers Cast 1 vote for each office:

Cast 8 votes for trustees:

President:

- Mellony Carner
- Other _____

Trustees:

- Paul Baker
- Roberta Baker
- James Decker
- Shirley Gillmore
- Cynthia Laraway
- Edward Laraway
- Stanley Longyear
- Robert Melvin
- Other: _____

Vice President:

- Barbara Black
- Other: _____

Treasurer:

- Kathleen Decker
- Other: _____

Secretary:

- Cheryl Longyear
- Other: _____

Meetings:

Programs are offered seasonally between May and October at the Historic Mentz Church in Montezuma, NY.

Monthly board meetings are held on the second Thursday of each month at 1:30 PM at the Historic Mentz Church (May-October) and the Montezuma Town Hall (November-April). All members are invited to attend.

Board Members

Mellony Carner, Pres.
Kathleen Decker, V. Pres
Barbara Black, Treasurer
Jim Decker
Shirley Gillmore
Cynthia Laraway
Edward Laraway
Stanley Longyear
Robert Melvin



Visit us at:

<http://montezumahistoricalsociety.org>

Please Join Today!

Montezuma Historical Society is committed to supporting and serving our community and families to preserve, promote and protect its historic resources and family stories. We are committed to making an impact on the community with our group of dedicated volunteers. We need to preserve our heritage and your help is needed through membership and volunteer support. You can be a part of helping our community grow and protect our greatest asset — People and History.

What better legacy can we pass on!

The Story Teller

MONTEZUMA

HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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FIND US ON THE WEB AT:

[www.
montezumahistoricalsociety.org](http://www.montezumahistoricalsociety.org)