

HISTORICAL SOCIETY ANNUAL REPORT - June 2004

The Hastings Historical Society has enjoyed another stellar year. Our many events, the *Historian* and the ongoing work of our faithful volunteers have brought pleasure and a sense of accomplishment to all involved. We have much to be proud of.

Beginning in September we continued our liaison with the Hastings schools as David McCullough took new teachers on a historical Hastings bus tour. Later that month, with gratitude to Debbie Gaynes and Past President Nonnie Balcer for their superb efforts to mount the exhibit, we hosted the opening of the "Signs of Life" poster exhibit. October saw the reenactment of the Battle of Edgar's Lane right outside the Observatory Cottage in Draper Park. Supported financially and spiritually by the Historical Society, the occasion was a great success. The following Saturday afternoon the cottage was open to visitors from the Hastings High School class of 1953 celebrating their 50th reunion.

November brought a slide lecture in the Orr Room by Gray Williams with slides from his new book *PICTURING OUR PAST: National Register Sites in Westchester County*, which includes the Observatory Cottage and the original Draper house. A book signing and refreshments by our own Evelyn Drewes completed the afternoon. This was followed by a most successful Moonwatch on the night of an eclipse, with sincere thanks to the Westchester Amateur Astronomers as co-sponsors. Then our annual lunch for active volunteers helped to make the holiday season a memorable one.

The second half of our year found David McCullough at Andrus giving a talk on local historic sites to the appreciative residents there. In



A father helps his son find their home on an aerial map of Hastings during our annual Family Treasure Hunt.

February, together with the River-towns Arts Council and the Friends of the Library we were back at Andrus sponsoring the "Follow the Drinking Gourd" concert reflecting the history of the blues by Karen Patterson and her ensemble and also featuring the Hastings High School jazz quartet. We have Nonnie Balcer to thank again for that outstanding afternoon.

March featured the Mary Allison Memorial Lecture by our staunch supporter Roger Panetta at the Hudson River Museum. In April we sent invitations to our annual Family Treasure Hunt in the backpacks of second, third and fourth graders. Mary Ellen Fischer organized the event and was delighted by the response, for it is a splendid way to reach new residents.

Finally, as we write this we are anticipating another Moonwatch as well as our Annual Meeting where Julia Rust will portray the beloved high school teacher Jennie Pingrey and read her script accompanying the slide show she developed on the history of Hastings.

During the time when the above outreach activities were tak-

ing place the most exciting activity at the Historical Society was computerizing the records of the society's collection of documents and artifacts. Young, energetic Fatima Mahdi, thanks to the Mary L Allison Archives Fund, has almost completed putting information into the database for the approximately 1000 items in the collection related to the Draper family. The next phase will focus on our photograph collection. Thanks to Bruce Crandall's scanning abilities, we have already begun this undertaking with the Langmuir collection. In time researchers will be able to enter a subject and with the push of a button collect together information on all the related items, no matter where they are in the collection, and using information on the storage location, quickly find the information they are searching for.

The recipient of the 2003 Dan Rile Prize was Joseph Stern. This year requirements for the prize have been expanded. David McCullough, Muriel Olsson, Beth Smith and Barbara Thompson met with eighth-grade social studies teacher Brent Harrington to design

a program wherein students would gain experience in historical reports and oral history. Several students have signed on to do oral histories of prominent local seniors and one is researching three periods of waterfront history. Aside from the prize, Mr Harrington has promised exemption from the class final examination for those who complete the projects.

With thanks to our Past President Barbara McManus, who keeps her eye open for Draper items on eBay, we have acquired a Draper thermometer. The trustees authorized a bid, and when the sellers found out that the instrument was to be sent to the a historical society located in a former Draper house they made a contribution equal to the amount we had paid them. Many thanks to all concerned.

Meanwhile the weekly work of the Society goes on. Past presidents of the society form a strong backbone and source of support for all our endeavors and deserve our eternal gratitude. David W McCullough and Barbara McManus with the help of Trustee Jennifer Stern work hard to produce the *Hastings Historian*, and Jenni also keeps in touch with Lisa Perry so our website is up to date. Sue Smith oversees the cottage, reunions of Hastings High School classes and our upcoming project "Museum in the Streets."

Jean Glus uses her expertise as our treasurer, and Ed Krack keeps us on track regarding membership. Louise Brown plumbs the *Enterprise* and other publications for clippings relevant to our collections, and Evelyn Drewes enlists volunteers for the mailings and with the able help of Joan Kassebaum acknowledges new memberships and fills orders for merchandise. Gaby Speyer is in charge of acquisitions.

Archivist Muriel Olsson, our Draper Family authority and guru of

our entire collection, responds to e-mails (a recent one identified a Parisian masters degree candidate writing his thesis on Lewis Hine), and directs all of us. Mary Ellen Fischer, Barbara Thompson and Eileen Forbes-Watkins do whatever she suggests. Beth Smith is our authority on photographs, of which we have over 9,000.

Last but not least Jan Gustafson has organized and listed all the artifacts and art works in the building as well as given occasional computer help on memberships. Nancy Caruso comes monthly to take Board meeting minutes and Janet Murphy serves as our liaison to the

library and to Raphael Zaratian on matters concerning computers. A hearty thanks to all of them for their dedication and spirit.

Thanks are also due to the family of Alma Weisser for choosing us as the recipient of memorial donations, and to the generous donations of items from so many of you. In addition we are thrilled to announce a significant bequest from the estate of Jean Curry McNiece whose family has long been associated with Hastings and our society.

Respectfully submitted,
 Barbara Thompson
 Mary Ellen Fischer
Co-Presidents

HASTINGS HISTORICAL SOCIETY	
Statement of Income and Expenses and Fund Balance	
December 31, 2002 to December 31, 2003	
REVENUES	
Dues	\$25,277.00
Donations	3,007.00
Interest earned	3,145.00
Merchandise sold	3,595.00
Mary Allison Trust	20,584.81
TOTAL REVENUES	\$55,608.81
EXPENSES	
Cottage	\$10,480.00
Business expense, including insurance	11,226.85
Historian newsletter	16,246.47
Archival expense	4,789.00
Mary Allison Computerization Project	26,843.93
Miscellaneous, including Funds transfer	20,449.60
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$90,035.85
Total Funds Balance at 12/31/02	\$207,925.49
Total Funds Balance at 12/31/03	\$173,498.45
Endowment Accounts	\$122,716.41
General Funds	\$8,133.82
Landscape & Grounds	\$9,842.57
Mary Allison Trust	\$32,805.65
Total 12/31/03	\$173,498.45
<i>Respectfully submitted by Jean M. Glus, Treasurer</i>	