

Fort Klock Newsletter

April, 2017

Many changes were seen in 2016 at Fort Klock, most notably, Dave and Darla Klock decided to give up their posts as caretakers of the Fort in order to become foster parents in their home state of Michigan.

Dave and Darla have been active members of the Fort for many years, and their absence will certainly be felt. We wish them well in their new adventure and hope they visit often.

If you are interested in becoming a site interpreter, speak with one of the officers or board members or call 518-568-7779.

**Membership meetings are held
the second Wednesday each
month at 7 PM.
Come join us!**



2017 Calendar

May 20	Opening Day/Muster
June 10-11	Hammer-In
July 4	Strawberry Festival
July 28	Stone Soup Concert
August 1-3	Young Pioneers
September 9-10	Craft Fair
October 14	Fort closes
December 5	St. Nicholas Day

Fort Klock in the News

The 8th Annual Hammer-In: Blacksmithing at Fort Klock

by Michael Wren

ST. JOHNSVILLE, NY— There is no better way to spend a weekend than to get out of the house and try something new, and that is exactly what a number of people did in early June during the 8th Annual Hammer-In, which is a blacksmithing demonstration at Fort Klock.

The Fort is a fortified home- stead built in 1750 along the Mohawk River. The event was put on by the Fort Klock Historic Restoration Society and gave people a chance to see the historic signifi- cance of the Fort as well as try their hand at blacksmithing. Fort Klock has two working forges in their blacksmith house and member Steve Gurzler brought along a third in order to allow more people a chance to work. All three used only coal and air to heat the metal. While one had an electric blower to make things easier, the main attraction was the full-sized bellows that the learning blacksmith has to operate to create the airflow needed for the coal. It is a lot

of work compared to modern blacksmithing forges that can use propane and electric blowers.

Gurzler was in charge of the event and was always present, giving beginners a few pointers and tips to make working the metal easier. Jorden Mauro, a fellow blacksmith, was also there helping beginners with their projects. Both Steve and Jorden made blacksmithing look easy and elegant. However, as simple as the concept seems — heat up metal and hit it with a hammer — those willing to try it soon learned the skill and finesse it takes to turn a piece of metal into a useful tool or work of art.

There was a wide variety of participants including families who just wanted to see Fort Klock and watch blacksmiths at work, to weekend warriors who have always wanted to know more about and try their hand at blacksmithing, to seasoned blacksmiths that wanted to meet and share their knowledge and experience.

While traditional blacksmiths made everything from nails to horseshoes to tools, almost every novice who came in had grand dreams of building a knife or sword, as these are the most fabled items made at a blacksmith's hands. However, as Steve said, "A guy came in looking to make a knife so I told him I would show him how to make an S-hook. He said, "No, I want to make a knife," so I said, "What type of S-hook would you like to make?" The moral of the story is that before you jump into making knives and weaponry, you need a basic

understanding of how the tools work and how the metal moves. And so the main course of the day was how to make a simple S- hook. An S-hook is a thin piece metal pounded round at the tips and bent around to make an S shape, sometimes with a twist in the center for decoration. They are used mainly for hanging things on a bar such as pots and pans. As Steve showed how quick and easy it was to make one, once people began making them they soon realized that it is indeed an art and they should learn to crawl before they run.

The members of Fort Klock provided a free lunch. If you have an interest in blacksmithing and history, and would like to try your hand at mak- ing S-hooks and practicing to making larger and more difficult items, the members of Fort Klock often put on events based around the Fort and Blacksmith shop. For more information call (518) 568-7779. Fort Klock is open Tuesday though Sunday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Memorial Day through Columbus Day.



Fort Klock 2016 Independence Day and Strawberry Festival

by Elizabeth A. Tomlin
Silence ensued as the words of the Declaration of Independence, read by Michael McGinnis, reverberated through the air at Fort Klock, a fortified homestead, near St. Johnsville on July 4.

For the first time in many years, someone other than Gene Wagner read the document, and although Gene's presence was greatly missed, the Independence Day celebration was a huge success.

Visitors came from near and far to attend the event. Jason and Emily Denofrio from Ohio stopped in to enjoy strawberry ice cream and view the Fort, while they were visiting Daniel and Charlene Denofrio of Fort Plain.

"I had to stop by," said Jason, a native of Fort Plain. "I used to come here when I was a kid." Emily, a native of Wisconsin, was a newcomer to the Fort.

"It's beautiful here," she said. "I love the architecture and the people in period costumes!" Enderica, from Queens, was visiting his grandmother and grandfather, Susan and Sheldon Howard of Oppenheim, who had brought him to the historical event.

Nicholas was enthralled with the Second Tryon County Militia. "I like the soldiers!" he exclaimed. The group of Militia re-enactors was happy to pose with him for a photo while he enjoyed his strawberry ice cream.

Blaze Andrilla and Frank Arduini were in the barn dishing out delicious strawberry ice cream to scores of attendees, while down at the homestead Darla Klock was cooking up steaming bean soup and baking maple cornbread over the open fire. The fragrance filled the air, luring folks in to enjoy the treat and have a tour of the home-

stead led by an animated Dave Klock, a direct descendant of the original Klock family.

Sue and Chip Lorraine had stopped in from Utica to take part in the day's celebration.

"I haven't been here in 15 years," Sue said. "There has been quite a bit added on and there's more to see!" Sue recalled eating soup when she had visited previously.

Dave Klock showed visitors a Bible dated 1830, bearing an ancestor's name, the same as his. He

told visitors that in 1953, Willis (Skip) Barshied, at only 23-years-old, was the catalyst for the Tryon Militia and eventually for the restoration of Fort Klock to its original 1750's condition.

The Fort is open for summer tours and offers other programs. Call 518-568- 7779 for information.



Young Pioneer Program at Fort Klock teaches 'hands-on' colonial history

by Elizabeth A. Tomlin

Dressed in period garb, youngsters from around the area learned about Mohawk Valley Indian history, frontier life and colonial lifestyles during the recent Young Pioneer Days held at historic Fort Klock near St. Johnsville. Eleven-year-old Elizabeth Handy of St. Johnsville was one of the 20 nine to 13-year-olds who participated in the annual event.

Handy said that churning butter for lunch was one of her favorite activities at the event, while learning how to load a musket, learning about Indian culture during a demonstration and lecture put on by re-enactor Glen Bentz, dressing up in costume and meeting new friends, all made the experience a memorable one.

Bentz's demonstration and lecture on Indian life in colonial times was a hit with most of the youngsters. "Let me tell you about my people," Bentz said. He described the growing of "the three sisters", corn, beans and squash and how the pattern of the garden benefitted the produce. He explained how bones of different animals were used to make tools, like hoes, and how platforms were built overlooking the gardens and children had the responsibility of watching and guarding the crops against crows and other birds and animals. "It was an important job to keep the crow out," said Bentz. "The food that was grown all summer long lasted all winter."

He explained about longhouses and how and why they were designed the way they were. "The longest longhouse in New York State was over 200 yards in length." Bentz also told about how important the role of being a mother was to the tribes and said that the tribes took on the mother's name, not the father's. Women were highly respected and they were the ones who chose the chief of the tribe. "The women were the ones who watched the children grow. They knew who would make a good chief and they appointed him." He talked about traditions, legends and treaties, and Indian politics and how the Europeans adopted many of the Indian's values.

Tinker (Alan) Cross, who makes pewter items sold at Fort Klock and other forts and museums, told the youngsters about money used in the colonial days and how folks bartered for things needed. He demonstrated how coins were made and also spoke about how important religion was to people. "Tinker Cross has been part of this program for a good 15 years," said Dave Klock.

Other re-enactors and leaders who took part in the popular program included Terry and Frank Arduini, Dave and Darla Klock, Skip Barshied, Christine and John Ozinski, Mike, Willow and Griffin McGinnis, Bob Metzger, Tom and Mary Brewster, Lisa Emden, Michael Wren and Bear Claw (Les) Stewart. Colonial cooking inside and outside, gardening, wheat threshing, colonial games, colonial school house, black smith work and metal work were all included in the hands-on activities. "Our young pioneer kids that were previously in the program have been assistants or apprentices this year," remarked Darla Klock. "There was a really good turnout — a great response." Klock said they have a cut off of 20 youngsters and there was a long waiting list for others who wanted to attend.

Alexiss Klock-Oliver, 15, travels from Michigan to be part of the program. She has been attending the Young Pioneer Program for four years and is now a 'group leader' and assistant to the re-enactors. "It's fun!" said Alexiss. "I meet a lot of new people!" Dave Klock is a direct descendant of the original Klock family. "It's always nice to have young people here to learn about history," Klock said.



Fort Klock Giant Craft Fair ~ still going strong!

by Elizabeth A. Tomlin

Fort Klock's Giant Craft Fair is well known to be one of the highest quality craft fairs in the whole Northeast, with over 100 crafters and artisans offering everything from elaborate hand crafted clocks and elegant jewelry to fine furniture and children's toys. Paintings, photography, jams and jellies, hand made clothing — even specialty sauerkraut and more than you can imagine fills tents and booths and the barn at the Fort.

Phyllis Sarkin-D'Addario of Piece by Piece Stained Glass Designs, Syracuse, says she has been selling her pieces at the Giant Craft Fair for six years. "The volunteers that work at the show are extremely helpful to the crafters," said Sarkin-D'Addario. "I have developed repeat customers from the show and always get orders for items to be made."

Dolly and Rodney Fikes have been attending the event as vendors for over 30 years. "It's always so nice to be here," said Dolly. "The people who run the place are great!" Fikes' sell hand-painted roofing slate

pieces and have some pieces of slate they have painted that came from the roof of the Nellis Tavern and the cheese house. "The history we're surrounded by here is wonderful!" said Dolly. "And the customers are great!" This year there was a new Chair of Fort Klock's Giant Craft Fair committee. Joan Kark-Wren stepped up to fill the position. "It was a little hectic at first," Kark-Wren said. "But it turned out fantastic!"

Kark-Wren said that "despite a few hiccups, courtesy of Mother Nature, the craft fair went very smoothly — and we had a lot of positive feedback from both crafters and guests."

Many guests at the event were buying gifts to store away for Christmas.

Maria Whalen of Fort Plain says she comes every year to shop at the event. "I am always pleased with the different vendors," said Whalen. "There is always such a nice variety and I like to see the returning vendors that come year after year, I look forward to seeing them."

Whalen says she gets herbs every year from the Northeast Corner Herb Farm vendor.

Penny Sandora of the Northeast Corner Herb Farm of Fort Anne, says she and her husband have attended the event for close to 20 years. "We've been doing Fort Klock forever! It's a big festival!" said Sandora. "Everybody is very friendly and the customers are all pleasant and nice."

Kark-Wren credits both the crafters and the volunteers for making the show so successful. "Without the support of the crafters and the members of Fort Klock, it wouldn't happen. Everyone does such a great job." Kark-Wren remarked. "We look forward to the 45th annual craft fair being even better!"



"Interrupted Harvest" weekend encampment and raid at Fort Klock highlights 18th century life

by Elizabeth A. Tomlin

18th century life was re-enacted at Fort Klock during an encampment over the weekend of Oct. 1-2, where folks came from as far away as Toronto, Canada and surrounding areas to participate.

Trisha DaCunha, of Toronto, traveling with her husband, their 3-year-old son and infant daughter, said they have traveled as far away as Virginia to take part in re-enactments, representing the "Kings Royal Regiment of NY." Also traveling with their group of about 100, was Marti MacFarlane of Prescott, Ontario, Lauren MacNeil of Brampton, Ontario, and Sargent Shaun Finnegan who had won an award of "the Great Cup" for his performance as "an outstanding soldier."

Local re-enactor Sara Evenson, says she has been volunteering at Fort Klock "since she was a kid," and all through high school and college. "I even went to grad school for history!" "The weekend was a wonderful

time- the beautiful weather and opportunity to be at such a historic site made it amazing," said Evensen. "It was delightful to see a variety of perspectives and interpretations of Mohawk Valley and Revolutionary War history presented. It was clear that everyone who attended felt very passionately about what they were doing!"

Although both Saturday and Sunday featured a re-enactment of a raid on the fort, daily life in the 18th-century was a huge component of the weekend.

"Our program was about more than battles," commented John Osinski. "It highlighted 18th-century activities such as cooking, baking, brewing, dyeing, etc. Canadian revolutionary war historian Gavan Watt spoke to an overflow crowd in the Dutch Barn on Saturday evening about 1781 raids into the Mohawk."

An "overflow crowd" also attended the "Great necessity calls out great virtue" program, which took place on Saturday afternoon.

Bernadette Weaver, Judy Leggett, Lisa Emden, Marti MacFarlane, Mary Alexander, Joanna Case and Diane Acevedo each related stories about women who had displayed tremendous courage and strength in the face of adversity, which included "Gertrude Zimmer Mattice from Middlefort in Schoharie county, killing Indians with her flat iron." "We do have Loyalist and Patriot- or rebel, depending on your viewpoint- ladies seated at the same table quite peacefully," remarked Bernadette Weaver in her introduction to the story telling. "But this is not so unfathomable as one might think. In a time when your survival in harsh territories and unfavorable weather conditions depended upon your neighbors- who could be few and far between- politics took a back seat to basic human needs." Programs and demonstrations provided an excellent opportunity for families and re-enactors to socialize and learn more about the history of the Mohawk Valley.



by Michael Wren

ST JOHNSVILLE, NY— On Dec. 4 Fort Klock invited the public to their annual St. Nicholas Day event. Here friends and families alike celebrated the St. Nicholas Day festivities in a traditional early American manner. This is a holiday celebration that has roots dating back to the 4th century.

St. Nicholas Day was brought to America by early Palatine German and Dutch settlers and would have been a common occurrence in early American homes. Children were given presents during the St. Nicholas Celebration instead of on Christmas day as Dec.

25 was saved for religious observation. While good children would receive gifts of small toys and candies, bad children would get a stick. One custom associated the United States is children leaving their shoes in the foyer on Saint Nicholas Eve in hope that Saint Nicholas will place some coins on the soles for them to awaken to.

Many people came to Fort Klock throughout the day to witness

Fort Klock's Annual St. Nicholas Day

friends and members of the Fort dressed in period clothing and sharing the historical traditions with the public. Attendees were free to explore the Fort and get a glimpse into the past.

As visitors made their way around the Fort they could enjoy homemade cookies and drink warm mulled cider or hot cocoa all while listening to a band playing traditional music on traditional instruments.

There was also a blacksmith demonstration for those who prefer a hands-on approach to history.

All children were also given a handmade wooden ornament to hang on their own Christmas trees.

St. Nicholas Day is held the first Sunday of December each year at the Fort. This is truly a great place for friends and families to gather and get in the holiday spirit.

For more information about the St. Nicholas Day celebration and future events please visit the Fort Klock Historical Restoration website at www.fortklockrestoration.org or find them on Facebook at

<https://www.facebook.com/fortklockhistoricalrestoration.org>



Fort Klock members walk in the footsteps of Moses Quimby

It is quite possible that most readers do not know who Moses Quimby was. A recent happening at Fort Klock brought his name back to the forefront despite of the fact that he died a short distance west of Fort Klock on May 27, 1875. You may ask what this has to do with Fort Klock. During routine repairs on the fort property the siding on the west side of the cheese house needed to be replaced. The job was to be done under the direction of contractor Todd Bradt. Fort Klock members and Todd's workmen were aware that there was a large colony of honey bees within the wall which in light of the recent decline of honey bees we did not want to destroy. If the situation had existed within the lifetime of Moses Quimby he would have removed the bees for he was the area's most famous bee keeper. His extensive apiary was on the hillside just east of St. Johnsville Village. Moses was born of Quaker parents on April 16, 1810 in Westchester County. By 1853 he had relocated to St. Johnsville. In that year he authored one of the first American books about honey bee keeping. The title was "Mysteries of Bee Keeping Explained." His extensive orchard of fruit trees and vineyards provided nectar for approximately 1,000 hives of honey bees. The Fort Klock farm so close to the Fort probably augmented his own holdings. In addition to his 1853 book and an updated edition published in 1865 his contribution to the bee industry was great. In Quimby's fruitful days the bees were killed by brimstone fumes to harvest the honey. He invented hives which preserved the bees while still being able to take off the honey

in excess of that which the bees needed to sustain themselves until another spring.

Among his many contributions to the industry was making one of the first honey extractors invention of a bee smoker for subduing bees and devising the first practical knife for removing cappings from honey combs. Today's bee keepers without doubt still benefit because Moses Quimby was a pioneer area bee keeper long ago. You ask what happened to the Fort Klock bees. They were carefully removed by neighborhood bee keeper Jim Humphrey and doubtless they go about their nature provided task just as Moses Quimby did in the mid 1800s.

Skip Barshied
Stone Arabia
June 2007



Members of the Fort Klock Restoration Society were dressed in period to greet the tour participants during the 2nd Annual Conference on the American Revolution in the Mohawk Valley.

Photo by Michael Wren

**Interested in becoming a
member or volunteering at
Fort Klock? Call 518-568-7779.**

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