

# Marshall Historical Society

*Looking to the past to inspire our future*

Newsletter

March 2010

Marshall Historical Society  
P O Box 232  
Deansboro, NY 13328

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

**Next Meeting**  
**7:30 pm on**  
**Thursday**  
**March 18**  
**Town Hall,**  
**Deansboro**

**Join!**  
Provide your name  
and address to the  
secretary and pay  
the membership fee:  
individual: \$ 10.00  
family: \$ 15.00

**Donate!**  
Your donations to  
the Marshall  
Historical Society are  
tax deductible.

Well, have you had enough snow and winter yet? I have, but today's sunshine is encouraging even though the wind is cold. Our thoughts and prayers go out to the families in Chile for their terrible earthquake. My, there has been some devastating weather around the world!

Amy Buchholz spoke to us encouraging support for the Marshall Comprehensive Plan. She left applications for anyone who wished to help with Historical Preservation. For more information about the Plan visit <http://townofmarshallny.org/content/Generic/View/5>

The Town of Marshall is setting up a web site <http://townofmarshallny.org> with a grant. Carolyn Williams from the Oneida County Cooperative Extension is setting it up to interconnect with the Marshall Historical Society.

The February 18<sup>th</sup> meeting was well attended in spite of the winter storm. Daniel Stoltzfus gave us the "History of the Mennonites" plus their religious beliefs to follow the Bible. The Mennonites came from Lancaster, PA in the spring of 1990 to set up a new church. Today there are 25 families in this area.

## Upcoming events

Joan McNamara will be our presenter on March 18, 2010 at 7:30 PM, when she will relate stories about "The Hinman Family". Many of you should remember the roadside stands they had along State Rte 12B in the fall selling produce. The sons were: Leo, Grove, Claude, Harold, Stanley, Stuart and Donald. The daughters were: Maude, Viola and Eva. I am certain Joan will have a very interesting program. Come join us that night. Mary Ann Ford has volunteered to bring refreshments.

April 15, 2010 we shall have Polly Blunk's power point program on her "Paintings Through The Years" She let us use some for the Marshall Barns and Farms" book.

David Staley sent a book "*Cultural Resources Site Examination Report*" of the Deansboro Creamery Co. Site (NYSM12220) explaining all their findings from the "dig" of 2009

Remember March 18<sup>th</sup> meeting! Hope to see you there. All are invited.

Dorothy McConnell, President

**Romance Wyatt, One Brothertown Indian**  
**Utica Press. December 5, 1905**

*Remains near the old home - He is Romance Wyatt, now an aged man - His career is as interesting as it is creditable - The people who know him all respect him - A brief sketch of his honorable life.*

Midway between the villages of Deansboro and Oriskany Falls in a little wood colored hut lives one of the last and probably oldest of the Brothertown Indians. The hut is a few rods south of a school house and is located on a knoll from which one gets a good view of the Oriskany Creek, singing its perpetual song below, while just beyond is a somber wood from which rise the steeple tops of the balsams. Here there has lived for more than a generation, Romance Wyatt, an American citizen from birth and one who has not subjected like other Americans to the humiliation of being known as one of the wards of the nation. He fought for the perpetuation of the union through the civil war, and so by birth and service he is doubly entitled to the designation of citizen. It is customary in dime novels to speak of Indians as savage or red skin but the designation would not fit Mr. Wyatt.

The Brothertown tribe was composed of the remnants of various tribes who had resided in New Jersey, upon Long Island and the northern shore of Long Island sound. The Oneidas induced them to come and settle upon their territory, and the State government also aided in collecting them and settling them in their new home. The tribes which at different periods were thus consolidated to form the Brothertowns were the Nanticokes, Pequots, Narragansetts, Montauks, Mohegans, Nehantics, Connoys, Tutecoos, Saponeys, Shinecocks and others. They located on the Oriskany Creek in the Town of Marshall. Having no common language they adopted the English, and soon no other was spoken among them. They derived the name Brothertons from the fact of their union of so many tribes. By an act passed February 25,

1789, the Legislature ratified and confirmed the grant made by the Oneidas to the Brothertowns directing that the grant should be called Brother Town and that said lands should remain for the cultivation, improvement and use of the said, New England Indians without the power of alienation or right of leasing for any longer term than ten years. These Indians removed with others to Wisconsin where they had purchased lands of the Winnebagoes and others in 1821. They were declared citizens of the United States many years ago, by an act of Congress. In the capacity of citizens they appear advantageously, and many of them have filled town and country offices with credit and respectability. So says the report of an Indian agent in 1849.

Mr. Wyatt has the bronzed complexion and the high cheek bones of the North American Indian, but beyond that the resemblance ends. He never cared for hunting and fishing, and most of the time he has lived the life of the American Farmer. He has a fine sense of humor, enjoys a good joke and laughs as heartily as any of his white brethren. The ordinary blanket Indian may smile occasionally, but rarely laughs out loud. Centuries of civilization have doubtless done much for Mr. Wyatt and his ancestors. He was born in the Town of Marshall about a mile south of where he now lives, March 22, 1826, and practically all his life has been spent in the town. For three years he lived in Sherburne and during the war he was at the front, but his home has always been in the Town of Marshall. He has no recollection of his mother, and his father died when he was seven years old. From the time until he was thirteen years old, Romance was brought up by Cynthia Dick, who lived in Dicksville, a suburb of Deansboro and who had six sons. She had a hand loom on which she made linen and woolen homespun cloth, and together with the Yankee boys of the neighborhood, young Wyatt attended district school and received a fair education.

At the age of 13 he went out to work among farmers, first doing chores, and afterward regular farm work. Cynthia Dick went to Green Bay to join the Indian Colony and eventually died there. Mr. Wyatt went to the Green Bay reservation to visit when he was a young man, but did not remain very long. He returned to the Town of Marshall and obtained work on the Chenango Canal, which ran almost within a stone's throw of his house. He followed the occupation of steersman for thirty seasons, sailing between Binghamton and Utica on the Chenango and Buffalo and Troy on the Erie, going frequently to New York. He worked on boats carrying all kinds of freight, mostly coal, stone, lumber, etc. Others of the boatmen often passed the Winter on boats in New York harbor, being paid five dollars per month for each boat they took care of, but Mr. Wyatt always preferred to return to his native town to spend the winter, working for farmers when the opportunity offered. As a young man he was well developed and powerful and able to hold his own in the encounters which sometimes occurred between boatmen. Such was his skill and prowess, however, that he was never worsted, and rarely, if ever, received a black eye.

When the Civil War broke out Mr. Wyatt came to Utica and gained a residence in the fourth ward. From here he went to Deerfield and worked for some months for James Peake, a brickmaker. In 1862 he enlisted in this city and was sent with others to Alexandria, where he became a member of Co. K of the 26th Regiment. He was with this regiment about six months before it was mustered out, and during this time he took part in the battle of Chancellorsville. After the regiment was mustered out he re-enlisted in the 83d New York infantry and was part of the time in Co. K and later in Co. A. He served in the battle of Fredericksburg, and was also at Gettysburg, being at Little Round Top in the

latter. He remembers that Gen. Meade was killed in this battle. At Gettysburg Mr. Wyatt was shot in the right ankle. July 6, 1865, he was honorably discharged.

During his term of service he obtained a furlough and returned to vote in Utica for Abraham Lincoln, for whom he had much admiration. At the polling place he met a poll worker, who asked him to accompany him, which he did. He says the man took him through a long lane and finally turned on him with the question; "You know which side your bread is buttered on, don't you?" Mr Wyatt admitted that he did, and the stranger shoved a five dollar bill into his hand and left him. Later, another man, after propounding the same question, gave him a dollar. "The joke of it was," said Mr. Wyatt "that neither one asked how I intended to vote. I voted as I had intended to, the straight ticket. I have always known which side my bread was buttered on, but I never expected to be paid for possessing this knowledge."



After the war, Mr. Wyatt returned to Marshall and continued working on the Chenango Canal as steersman until the canal closed. After that he worked at farming for some time, but for years by reason of age and failing health, he has not been able to do any work. Since 1866 January

he has lived in the little hut which he now occupies. It is on the Randall farm and has a small garden attached. Mr. Wyatt worked on the erection of the Randall House and other houses in the vicinity. Another Brothertown Indian named Lewis Kindness lived with him for a year and a half and then went west. Mr. Wyatt had a letter from him two years ago, but since then has not heard from him.

*Find more information about Romance Wyatt on our website [www.marshallhistsoc.org](http://www.marshallhistsoc.org)*

In 1867 Mr. Wyatt married Eunice Ann, a Yankee woman, by whom he had one daughter, to whom both were strongly attached. The little girl died in 1883, in her fifteenth year. Her mother died in 1893 and since then Mr. Wyatt has lived alone. He is a good housekeeper as any man of his years. He is much attached to his home and has no desire to leave it. He has some indigestion and at times finds the pension he receives rather scanty to supply his needs. Sometimes his friends suggest that he should go to the Soldier's Home at Bath, but this he will not do, as he prefers to remain among his friends and acquaintances in Marshall. With other Indians, Mr. Wyatt is interested in a claim against the United States Government for land which was sold and the money for which is said to be on deposit in Washington. His expectations of receiving anything from this source, however, are not very great. While Mr. Wyatt has never joined any social or fraternal organization, he is nevertheless of a social disposition and a good conversationalist. He never used any language but English and speaks it fluently and correctly as most people.

Mr. Wyatt is a member of the Congregational Church and speaks interestingly of his

conversion. Many years ago he was deceived now and then by the white man's firewater. On one occasion while visiting in Oriskany Falls, some one invited him to go to the Congregational Church, where an evangelist was holding forth. "Just come in and hear a good talk," some one said to him. "Plenty of talk, no doubt," was his response, "but what sense is there in it?" He accepted the invitation, however; and, once inside the church, he proved a most attentive listener. He was so impressed by what he had heard that at the close of the service, he went on and had his last drink. Then he returned to the church, was converted and in due time was admitted to membership. He has faithfully kept his pledge through all the years since and everybody respect him for the strength of character he has shown. No man is better known through the Towns of Marshall and Augusta and everybody has a kindly greeting and a good word for the old veteran. The outlook from his home is one of the most picturesquely in the valley of the Oriskany. In politics he is Republican and he held the office of game constable for four years. He has also been the janitor of the Congregational Church in Oriskany Falls.