Trustees of the Historical Society

Alexandra Anderson, President
John Delikanakis, Secretary
John Carroll
Greg Pettyjohn, Treasurer
Bonnie Eyre, Emerita *
Alvin Knoll *
Henry H. Livingston, III *
Nora Tuttle
Sharon Rae
Alex Van Alen

Staff

Lisa Weilbacker, Executive Director
Kristy King, Executive Assistant
Jim Benton, Senior Library Researcher
Katherine Hilliard, Senior Docent Administrator
Carrie Rodgers, New Collections Coordinator
Jessica Gavitt, Editorial Director

Museum & Library
Part-time Staff

Connelly Holmes
Nicholas Nasser
Reagan Schwepppe
Cheyenne Dunham
PRESIDENT’S LETTER

Dear Members and Friends,

It’s no exaggeration to say 2022 has proved a dynamic year for the Columbia County Historical Society. In February, we enthusiastically welcomed Lisa Weilbacker as our new executive director. Formerly our curator of collections and properties, Lisa’s outstanding career includes service as executive director of Historic Hudson and curator of New York City’s invaluable Park Avenue Armory Collections. Lisa, we are so fortunate to have you!

In late spring, in-person events resumed successfully after more than two years. To introduce Lisa to the community and mark the reopening of our “Federal Style” exhibition, we welcomed a great crowd to the James Vanderpoel House. Our annual First Columbians celebration migrated from June to September, this year dedicated to raising funds for essential landscape remediation needed at the Luykas Van Alen House. Huge thanks to honorary chairs Katrina and Stephen Lang and our hardworking event committee for making this one of the most successful parties in CCHS history.

As trustees, I stress here that our major job is to raise money to run the Society and thus constantly support our mission of preserving, exploring and communicating our rich county history. To that end, I am pleased to report that CCHS membership is enthusiastically growing. Board membership has increased as well, and we have recently established a new Advisory Board.

Finally, I and the trustees want to recognize our wonderful CCHS staff, volunteers and members, who continued their service and support while our properties and exhibitions were shuttered. Our grateful thanks for your dedication to CCHS.

Alexandra Anderson
President, Board of Trustees

EXHIBITIONS & COLLECTIONS NEWS

Coming in 2023, the Henry & Susan Livingston Gallery will debut as a new exhibition space located on the second floor of the CCHS museum dedicated to displaying collections to further and fulfill the mission of CCHS. We are truly thankful for Henry and Susan’s steadfast support and we look forward to using the space to present the cultural heritage of Columbia County.

Susan Senecah & Van Calhoun

We are thrilled to announce our collection has grown this year thanks to a sizable donation of historic objects from Van Calhoun and Susan Senecah of Chatham. The extraordinary collection spans multiple generations of the Birge family beginning with Hosea Birge, who migrated to Chatham from Connecticut in the late 18th century and served as one of General Washington’s Life Guards during the Revolutionary War. Mr. Calhoun is a direct descendant of Hosea Birge. The farmhouse that Birge built in 1842 still stands in Chatham, and CCHS has sponsored the application for a historical marker to commemorate Birge’s legacy.

In addition to the historical objects, Mr. Calhoun and Mrs. Senecah have also generously donated a gift to support a part-time curator to manage and interpret the collection. Our deepest gratitude to the family for bestowing this important piece of Columbia County history!
2021 CCHS SUPPORTERS

$25,000 and Above

Henry & Susan Livingston, III

$10,000 to $24,999

Hudson River Bank & Trust Foundation
Sam Pratt

$3,000 to $9,999

Alexandra Anderson
Donna & Alvin Knoll
Henry H. Livingston
Jack Shainman
John S. Knott
Joseph & Angela Schmidt
Madeleine Vanderpool Findlay
Peter Davidson
Robert Peduzzi & Diane Smook
Scott Shallo
Stephen and Kristina Lang

$500 to $999

Barry M. Herbold
Bruce Shostak
Charles Hewett & Charles Olbricht
Colin Stair
Deborah Shakotko
Francis Greenburger
Fred Schroeder
Glenda Ruby
Glenn & Cheryl Schnackenberg
Heidi S. Fiske
James Guiderra & Ed Parran
Joan C. Kelly
John Gross
Maynard & Kay Toll
Phil and Birgitta Sherman
Philip & Betsy Eisenberg
Pooky Amsterdam & Tony Jones
Rima Bostick
Robert Colannino
Thomas & Marlene Murdock
Tom & Olga Moreland

$1,500 to $2,999

Albert & Carol Knoll
Ben Che & Donna Moylan
F. James & Nora Tuttle
Katherine Sharp Borgen
Kristin Gamble
Paul Cassidy & Vernon Evenson
Peter Kindler
Randi J. Tryon
Richard S. Ryan
Sheldon Evans & Martha McMaster
Todd Ottman

$100 to $499

Aimee Strunk-Reinoehl
Albert & Mary Santini
Alexander Lunney
Alexander Muresanu
Amy Barr
Andrew Gates
Barbara L. de Mare
Beth Bergin
Beth Van Alstyne Ellis
Carolyn Lassiter
Casey Powers
Charles & Adelia Geiger
Christine S. Pomeranz
Christopher Atkins & Lauren Letellier
Cristabel Gough
Damon & Mary Ellen Hern
Daniel Bauman
Daryl Lee & Chris Warnasch
David Marden
David Sokosh
David E. Tripp
David and Julia Pickett
Deborah E. Lans
Denise & John Dunne
Donald Dubac
Doris J. Gearing
Edward Sullivan & Clayton Kirking
Edwin M. Truman
Edwin and Barbara Simonsen
Elizabeth G. Winthrop
Elizabeth & Richard Livingston
Elliot Spitzer
Fern & Andrew Pellettieri
Frederick Reif
Gary & Dale Bernstein
George H. Vollmuth
Gert Doriot
Gia Albergo Delmar
Gilbert Raab & Carol Calvin
Harvey J. McCagg
Heather Lloyd
Helen & Henry Freedman
Herbert D. Simons
Hermes Mallea & Carey Maloney
J. Thomas Allison
J. Pierre Gontier
James Joseph
James P. Mandaville
James & Bonnie Dunham
Jamie Callan
Jane Alexander & Ron Bayer
Janet Wynn
Jay Finkel
Jean & Daniel MacKay
Jeff Bailey & John Lillis
Joanne Dunne Murphy
John Kinnear
John C. McCreight
John M. Schobel
Judith Ackley Whitbeck
Julia Jayne Joseph
Karen & Roy Carney
Kathleen E. Johnson
Kathy & Andrew Berkman
Kenneth Kramer
Kevin Albert
Larry Peltz
Larry & Carol Biernacki
Lauree & Gregory Hickok
Laurie & James Gambee
Lawrence Divney
Leah B. Lenney
Leah & James Lieber
Lee F. Jamison
Lynn & Marjorie Van Buren
Margaret Davidson & John Stein
Margie Laurie
Mary Keegan
Max Friedman & Thomas Romich
Michael O’Hara
Michael & Monica Hampton
Dianne Young
Neal A. Baillargeon
Nicole Vanderpool
Norma Shirley
North Chatham Free Library
Norwich & Michelle DeBye-Saxinger
Page Roe Barroll
Paul M. Barrett
Paul Trautman M D
Paula E. Pugliese
Peter Jung
Peter Reed
Peter & Abby Coffin
Phil & Joanna Giltner
R.O. Blechman
Randall M. Correll
Renate Reiss
Richard J. Dorsey
Richard Rubinstein & Katherine Kolbert
Richard & JoAnne Bilotti
Rita & Wolf Jakubowski
Robert C. Ollman
Rosalie W. Hemingway
S. Donald Zaentz
Sally J. Laing
Sally Sanderlin
Sara & Barry McWilliams
Sean Decresconzo & Lally Stephanie
Silda Wall Spitzer
Sophie Pullan
Stanley Gotlin & Barry Waldorf
Sue Kelly & Carol Sloan
Susan Goodfellow
Susan & Pavel Hillel
Suzanne & James Aisenberg
Suzanne & Robert Carroll
Terence & Cathy Farrell
Tricia Healy & David Mitchell
Wendy & David DellGrottagliia
Wenona & Lester Rochester

Friends

Aaron McDonald
Alan & Roselle Chartock
Alfred & Joanne Bartolotta
Alvin W. Sheffer
Andrea Rutherford
Ann M. Scharoun
Annie & Leon Hoffman
Anne Van Dyck & Nauman
Benjamin Feldman
Bertha J.S. Petith
Carol Hogg  
Catherine Mikic  
Christine Garner  
Claudia Krisniski  
Columbia Greene Community  
College Library  
Cynthia Martin  
David Laurence DuBois  
David McGhee  
David Scott Petersen  
David & Valerie Itkin  
David & Wendy Fuller  
Diane C. Bliss  
Don & Carol Downey  
Donald & Ann W Eberle  
Elaine Kline  
Elizabeth T. Burdick  
Elizabeth Chapman  
Elizabeth Martin & family  
Elizabeth Y. Harrison  
Elizabeth B. Leckie  
Erika B. Tipple  
Faruk Ortabas  
Florence E. Tharman  
Frances Ingraham Heins  
Frederic & Darlene Lee  
Gail Rheingold  
Gary Leveille  
George J. Prokopiak  
Georgette Turner  
Gilbert V. Gott  
Huntley F. Gill  
Irene Stone  
James E. Benziger  
James M. Gaughan  
James Hannon  
James & Nancy Scherer  
Jameson Baughman  
Jane E. Deane  
Jane Herzhauser  
Jane Prusso  
Janet R. Malouin  
Janice Abate & Jim Nadel  
Jim Hoon  
John Craggs  
John E. Harder  
John & Mary Bradley  
Johanna & William Camp  
Joseph E. Browdy  
Judy Ferris Walker  
Julia Forrest  
Karen Lemes  
Laurence A. Klein  
Lewis & Gretchen Rubenstein  
Linda Frick  
Lucinda Christman  
Lucinda Hastings  
Maria Ausherman  
Mark M. Orton  
Mark Katz  
Marny Janson  
Martha Bliss Ehlers  
Martin A. Epstein & Ellen Jouret-Epstein  
Mary Lust  
Mary Ann & Richard McLoughlin  
Mary Louise Perkins  
Mary Louise Kalin & Louis Asekoff  
Max Cane  
Melissa Davis  
Merrill K. Johnson  
Nancy J. Lang  
Nancy H. Somers  
Nicholas Hudson  
Olaf & Johanne Andersen  
Patricia DeMar Hauver  
Paul Bailey-Gates  
Peter A. McGrath  
Peter McKenna & Karen McGraw  
Philip & Karen Ivory  
Phyllis Nichols  
Public Library Chatham  
Raymond & Evelyn Shortsleeve  
Richard Ellis Hand  
Richard K. Wallace  
Richard L. Williams  
Robert F. Bisson  
Robert Gelles  
Robert D. Gross  
Robert & Patricia Altman  
Robert & Patti Norris  
Robert & Rae Gilson  
Roberta Dunlaief  
Roberta J. Jacobson  
Roberta Brandes Gratz  
Rosemary Peduzzi  
Ruth Piwonka  
Sara Cashen & Tony Muoser  
Sharon Almstead  
Stephanie H. Bernheim  
Stephen D. Gardner  
Sue Delp  
Susan L. Campbell  
Susan Gladstone  
Tamara Rusoff-Hoen  
Terence Law & Llewellyn Young  
Thomas & Geraldine Mabley  
Valerie & Fred Knecht  
Vangie R. LeFever  
Walter E Boright  
Warren Applegate & Kathleen Long  
William A Meier  
William & Suzanne Nieman  
William Roos & Scott Olsen  
Wingate Jackson  

Two additional narrative panels installed in our Cultural Heritage of Columbia County exhibit at the CCHS Rural Properties.  
The exhibit is free and open to the public 365 days per year from dawn to dusk.
**Shannon Ragone**

I interned at CCHS in the summer of 2018. CCHS taught me great curatorial practices with hands-on experiences, from collections to exhibition planning, and inspired me to pursue a master’s degree in Museum Studies at the Cooperstown Graduate Program. I was welcomed back to CCHS as Associate Curator upon graduating in 2022. I’m now specializing in Interaction Design, and hope to apply my new digital skills to build immersive exhibition experiences in museums.

**Jessica Gavitt**

CCHS showed me how my education and experience could be applied to different career paths, and helped me figure out which of those paths I’d like to take. I’ve continued working part-time for CCHS, primarily as editorial director for Columbia County History & Heritage magazine, and I’ve also been working as records manager at the Albany County Hall of Records.

**Connelly Holmes**

I began as an intern at CCHS in the summer of 2021 for my master's in Library and Information Science program. I was immediately met with a welcoming atmosphere that helped me grow and develop. I had incredible training in collection development, curatorial skills and the framework of a historical society museum.

**Nicholas Nasser**

I began interning at CCHS in 2020. As a senior majoring in history at UC Santa Cruz, CCHS has given me the experience and path to pursue my career back home in New York. The amazing people and availability of resources here has allowed me to explore a variety of roles throughout the past two years. I couldn’t have asked for a better or more interesting experience.

**Reagan Schweppe**

I interned with CCHS during the summer of 2022 and had an amazing time. Lisa Weilbacker taught me so much about collections management, historical research and everything else that goes into running a historical society. I’m now a senior at Columbia University majoring in history. I hope to work in a museum someday, ideally in an educational role.

It’s been a very exciting year at CCHS for many reasons, and we’re particularly excited about the new direction for the award-winning Columbia County History & Heritage magazine. We recently launched our first digital issue, a new tradition that will help us expand readership and establish more sustainable practices. It’s our hope to publish one digital issue each year, in addition to our annual print issue, so that we can share with our members even more content on Columbia County’s rich cultural heritage.

We were honored to dedicate our inaugural digital issue to the late Ruth Piwonka and Roderic Blackburn, highly esteemed historians and beloved friends to all who knew them. Readers will find a compendium of the many articles that Ruth and Rod contributed to History & Heritage since its inception, and we hope you all enjoy them as much as we do. And stay tuned for our upcoming print issue, to be released during spring 2023. A consistent CCHS intention during this past year has been to strengthen our relationships with all of Columbia County’s town historians, so it seemed only right to dedicate this upcoming issue to the historians. We will be inviting each of them to share with our readers their favorite stories or histories — an homage to all of the unique towns and villages that together make up our wonderful community.
2022 UPDATE
FINANCIAL POSITION

The physical assets of the Columbia County Historical Society include its collections of more than 15,000 works of art and other historical objects and furnishings; 60 acres of land in Columbia County; and four historic properties: Luykas Van Alen House, Ichabod Crane Schoolhouse, James Vanderpoel ‘House of History’ and the CCHS Museum & Library building.

At year end 2021 the Historical Society’s current liquid assets, consisting of restricted and unrestricted cash funds, totaled $76,447, and liabilities totaled $49,235.
2022 CCHS PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

ZOOM LECTURE SERIES

January 29
Challenges and Obstacles to Researching African American History in the Hudson Valley
Victoria Jimpson Fludd, Lisa Fludd-Smith, Peter H. Smith

February 19
Life Along the Hudson
The Livingstons in Columbia County
Pieter Estersohn

March 19
19th Century Photography in Columbia County
A conversation with Photographer David Sokosh & CCHS Executive Director Lisa Weilbacker

April 2 & April 9
Part I & Part II ~
Uniquely American-The Hudson River School
Gayle Skluzacek

April 23
Gotham goes Global:
New York City from 1825 to 1925
Gary H. Darden, Ph.D.

May 21
Spaces of Enslavement and Resistance in Dutch New York
Andrea Mosterman, Ph.D.

2022 FIRST COLUMBIANS CELEBRATION

JUNE COCKTAIL PARTY
WELCOMED NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LISA WEILBACKER

The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation's Environmental Protection Fund grant program awarded CCHS a $75,500 matching grant to remedy the conservation issues at the Van Alen site which include stabilizing the south wall of the house, restoring the front stoops and returning the front landscape to a sustainable environment. CCHS is actively fundraising to match this EPF grant in order to begin work on the “Moisture Mitigation and Architectural Stabilization Project.”
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

FILMING BY MUSICIANS OF MA’ALWYCK AT THE VAN ALEN & VANDERPOEL HOUSES

EASTER EGG HUNT ON THE VANDERPOEL LAWN

FARMERS MARKET

SCHOOL TOURS ARE BACK

CCHS welcomed the 4th graders from Genet Elementary School of East Greenbush, NY. Volunteer docents Ann Scharoun and Bonnie Dunham conducted tours of the 1737 Luykas Van Alen House where students learned about everyday life in this historical 18th century Hudson Valley Dutch house and experienced what it was like to attend a one-room schoolhouse in the c. 1850 Ichabod Crane Schoolhouse.

ANNUAL MEETING

On October 15, CCHS held their Annual Meeting to a gathering of members at the Vanderpoel House in an effort to pay tribute to the works of Ruth Piwonka and Roderic Blackburn. David Smith spoke of his fond memories of his neighbor Rod who was known for his expertise of Hudson Valley Dutch culture, while Ally Anderson recounted Ruth’s many accomplishments as Kinderhook Village Historian and former Executive Director of CCHS.

Also at the meeting, the Board presented the addition of two new Trustees, Sharon Rae and Alex Van Alen and the newly created Advisory Committee comprising Nicholas Haylett, Tim Husband, Peter Jung, John Knott, Bob Peduzzi, David Pickett, Brenda Shufelt and Lisa Fludd Smith.

Columbia County Historical Society a 501(c)(3) cultural education organization founded in 1916 and chartered by the Board of Regents of NYS Department of Education to collect, preserve, interpret and present the history, heritage and culture of Columbia County, New York. In addition to a research library and museum with permanent collections of more than 15,000 objects, CCHS owns and maintains the 1737 Luykas Van Alen House, c.1820 James Vanderpoel ‘House of History’ and c.1850 Ichabod Crane Schoolhouse.