

---

---

# Spindle City Historic Society

---

---

Volume 13 Issue 1

Spring 2010

---

---

## HISTORIAN'S NOTEBOOK

### The Mastens of Cohoes

James H. Masten had a great influence on the history of Cohoes, and his son Arthur H. Masten was a noted chronicler of the city's history. We briefly sketch both of their biographies in this column.

James H. Masten was born in Owego, New York on May 13, 1828. He learned the printers' trade and worked for Joel Munsell of Albany. In 1851 he accepted a position with the *Albany Evening Journal*, managed by Thurlow Weed, whose support for Abraham Lincoln helped secure Lincoln's nomination by the newly formed Republican Party. Masten became a wealthy publisher with strong political ties in New York State, and considerable influence in Cohoes. During his lifetime he published the *Cohoes Cataract*, *The Cohoes Daily News* and *The Weekly News*. He purchased the *Cohoes Cataract* from Horace Silliman and Chauncey Miller in 1849 and was publisher until its sale on July 15, 1871 to William Bean.

In 1854 James married Almeda Arthur, daughter of Rev. William Arthur of Newtonville and sister of Chester A. Arthur. The future president visited Cohoes over the years, and attended performances at his brother-in-law's theater. (Masten, with business partner William Acheson, built the "Central Hall Block" in 1874, which housed the Cohoes Music Hall on its upper floors.) James Masten lived with his family at 46 Remsen St. and became the 6<sup>th</sup> postmaster of Cohoes in June, 1865. After his confirmation he moved the post office to his building. He served two terms as postmaster, and was responsible for direct mail service to Troy, which enabled a reply the very same day. He would be reappointed postmaster in February 1877 by President Grant, with his tenure continuing until 1886, when a Democratic administration was elected in Washington. Among his many ventures, Masten was also a land speculator, buying several lots at the southeastern border of the city.

Masten was engaged in service in the community, acting as a trustee in the First Baptist Church beginning in 1855, and as superintendent of the Sunday school during 1855-56, 1863-65, and 1877-81. He became an usher in the church in 1869 and was deacon from 1877-1881. He was active in the YMCA and served on a committee to draft its Constitution in 1858 and was elected treasurer in 1865. In 1860 he became School Commissioner of Cohoes and was elected Chairman of the Board of Education in 1862. In 1861, he was secretary for a fund raising group collecting money to support the families of Civil War volunteers. He became Water Commissioner of Cohoes in 1866 and was elected 4<sup>th</sup> Ward inspector of elections in 1872 through 1874.

In July 1879, Masten purchased Samuel Gault's interest in

(continued on p.7)

## DID YOU KNOW

.... that the Cohoes Railway Company was chartered on July 29, 1894 as the Cohoes City Railway (CCR)? A traffic agreement with the United Traction Company (UTC) was made in December 1899. UTC car no. 52 was built by J.M. Jones' Sons for the Cohoes City Railway; it was later renumbered to 32. In December 1902 a massive fire destroyed the carbarn and most of the equipment of the CCR, which resulted in an agreement for the UTC to run its cars on the CCR. The lines of the UTC began to be abandoned in the 1920s, and were replaced by buses. In a 10-year experiment, trolley buses were used on the Cohoes line, receiving power from a series of four overhead wires. Firemen from the Cohoes Fire Department complained that these overhead wires made it difficult to fight fires, and the buses were removed from service and replaced by diesel buses.

....that on September 7, 1895 a contract was awarded for building a stone arch across Eagle's Nest ravine? Eagle's Nest was once a street that ran perpendicular to James Street, behind what is now Lansing Park.

....that in 1894-1895, William Beattie had an establishment of Patent Loopers and Points at the foot of Oneida Street? This was machinery used in the knit goods industry. In 1897 the Beattie Machine Works was located on Amity St.

....that George Holt Slater (one of the subjects of a recent SCHS exhibit at the Cohoes Visitor's Center) served as president of the Troy Musical Union, and was a member of the Oriental Temple Band of Troy, the Maskis Band, the Troy Cadet Band and Troy City Band, Noller's Band, and Doring's Band?

....that Charles J. Gelaise, a widely-known singer with radio station WGY in Schenectady and Radio City Music Hall in Manhattan, was from Cohoes?

....that Montgomery Ward opened a store in Cohoes on March 24, 1934?

....that in 1935 the E.J. Stanton Funeral Chapel was located at 87 Vliet Street?

.... that in the 1940s Coneau's Bakery and Wentworth Bakery were located on Remsen Street?

....that the building located on the corner of Remsen and Ontario Streets that most recently housed the Salvation Army was Cox Stationery Store in 1969?

....the G. Upton Peltier house on Congress St., built for a prominent Cohoes doctor who served the French-Canadian community in the city, was added to the State Register of Historic Places last spring?

### WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

The Spindle City Historic Society welcomes new members *John Breton, Virginia Charbonneau, Judy Patterson, William Reu, and Haley Wulfman.*

## Cohoes and the Civil War

by Anne Marie Nadeau

The year 2010 marks the 145<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the Civil War. While using Masten's *History of Cohoes* during research for another article, I found a necrology (a list of deaths) in that volume from 1843-1876. I checked the Civil War years and found 52 Cohoesiers who had died fighting during "the rebellion" and several others who had died after the war as a result of disease contracted during their service or long-delayed effects from wounds.

How much do you remember from your high school American History class dealing with our Civil War? We are familiar with the names Bull Run (Manassas to Southerners), Antietam, Gettysburg, Shiloh and the Wilderness. But did you ever hear of the Battle of Bermuda Hundred - a series of battles fought outside Richmond, Virginia in May 1864? How about Fair Oaks or Seven Pines, Virginia, under the leadership of Gen. George McClellan between May 31 and June 1, 1862? General Winfield Hancock was in charge of the Battle of Ream's Station in August 1864. Hancock and Philip Sheridan lost to the Confederates in the Battle of Deep Bottom, which was a colloquial name for an area of the James River southeast of Richmond. The Union Army won the Battle of Petersburg, which at the time of the Civil War was the second largest city in Virginia. All these "small" battles were leading up to the battle of Richmond, the capital of the Confederacy.

Personally, I never knew of Florida's role in the Civil War, let alone the Battle of Olustee, February 20, 1864, 50 miles west of Jacksonville. The casualty percentage was among the highest of the war when comparing casualties to the number of men involved. And did you know about the Battle of Port Hudson, Louisiana and in the swamps of Bonnet Carre in that same state? These actions saw some of the bloodiest fighting of the Civil War. The Union side suffered 5,000 killed and wounded, and 5,000 more died from disease.

One day I had occasion to go to the Cohoes Common Council Chambers on the second floor of City Hall. In that room there was a huge frame with many photos of Cohoes men who served in the Civil War, with names identifying them. The glue was already so dried out that some pictures had already disappeared. I wonder where they went?

There are undoubtedly some errors in dates in the following obituaries but I can only go by what I read in Masten's book. I have included comments (in parentheses) with several entries.

July 1861, Jesse D. Van Hagen, 22, killed at the Battle of Fair Oaks, Virginia.

May 31, 1862, James Galbraith, killed in battle at Seven Pines, near Richmond.

August 30, 1862, Leonard G. Fletcher, 22, engaged in the battle before Sharpsburg, Maryland, and from the fact that no tidings were subsequently heard of his fate, it is probable that he lost his life.

September 1862, Pvt. James Young, died in the hospital at Georgetown, D.C.

September 22, 1862, in hospital at Washington, D.C., William Long of bilious fever. (A term loosely applied to certain intestinal and malarial fevers. Could also be typhoid.)

September 29, 1862, in hospital at Washington, D.C., Lieut. Hiram Clute who was wounded in the foot at one of the battles before Manassas. He lay five days upon the battlefield and his limb was not operated upon until he had been in the hospital two days more.

May 8, 1863, George Van Vliet. He was about to enter Hamilton College to prepare for the ministry when he felt it to be his duty to enlist in the service of his country.

June 18, 1863, John McGaffin, 20, killed at the siege of Port Hudson (Louisiana). He was a member of the junior class in Rutgers College when he enlisted for nine months as a private.

June 16, 1862, Robert Taylor, age unknown. Wounded in the engagement before Port Hudson, from the effects of which he died in hospital at Baton Rouge.

July 2, 1863, killed at the Battle of Gettysburg, Lieut. Thomas Walters.

July 2, 1863, enlisted as a private and killed at the Battle of Gettysburg, William H. Cranston, 26.

July 2, 1863, Edward Greason, 31, born in Cheshire, England, and enlisted from Cohoes. Wounded at the Battle of Gettysburg, after which he was missing. It is supposed he died on the field and was buried by the enemy.

July 2, 1863, all the following were killed at Gettysburg:

John Wood, John Brierly, Louis Toronto, Hugh Loughry, Wesley Brodt, Wesley Tompkins, all ages unknown and members of the same regiment.

July 16, 1863, James Durham, 30.

August 4, 1863, Philip Keeler, from wounds received in the Battle of Gettysburg.

August 1863, from malaria in the swamps of Bonnet Carre, Louisiana, (15 miles upstream from New Orleans), Robert W. Frisby and John Flynn, ages unknown.

September 3, 1863, Jacob A. Taylor, 18, accompanied his regiment on its way home until he reached Rochester, N.Y., where he was taken sick and died.

September 1863, in Mount Pleasant Hospital, near Port Hudson, William H. Vandenberg, 28.

December 1863, James Harvey. He had served faithfully and honorably in most of the battles of the war, and in consequence of failing health was on his return home, where he hoped to give his mother and friends a pleasant surprise. He lived to enter the harbor of New York, where in sight of his native state, and within a few miles of his friends and home, he yielded up his life.

February 17, 1864, Capt. William Holley, 54.

February 20, 1864, James R. Wilson, 18, enlisted from Cohoes as a private and was killed by a shell from a rebel battery in the battle of Olustee, Florida. Lieut. Clark wrote of him, "The brave young soldier fired his own sixty rounds of ammunition and then sought a fresh supply from a dead companion's cartridge box. He loaded for the sixty-first time and was about firing when the shell exploded that cost him his life."

February 20, 1864, Oscar L. Ackley, killed at the Battle of Olustee, Florida.

April 22, 1864, in Fort Warren, Boston Harbor, (probably of disease), James McCarthy and Matthew Riley.

April 18, 1864, Herbert Hastings, 30, very suddenly in camp of heart disease. Prior to his enlistment he had been the leading dentist in Cohoes.

May 5, 1864, George Diehlo, killed in one of the Battles of the Wilderness.

May 10, 1864, killed while on picket duty, John McCarthy, 17. \*Picket duty...an advance guard for a large force was called a picket. Ordered to form a scattered line far in advance of the main army's encampment, but within supporting distance, a picket guard was made up of a lieutenant, two sergeants, four corporals and forty privates from each regiment. Picket duty constituted the most hazardous work of infantrymen in the field. Being the first to feel any major enemy movement, they were also the first liable to be killed, wounded or captured, and most likely the target of snipers. Picket duty, by regulation, was rotated regularly in a regiment.

June 2, 1864, killed in one of the battles of the Wilderness, Simon O'Dea and Thomas Eastham, ages unknown.

June 1864, James Cole, faithfully served in all the principal battles of the war, on the peninsula (Virginia), at Gettysburg and the Wilderness, fell in one of the later engagements.

June 10, 1864, Joseph Wickham 39, died from effects of wounds he received May 16, at the battle of Bermuda Hundred.

June 19, 1864, Henry Osterhout, 17. He was with the army at the siege of Port Hudson. He returned home with his regiment in September 1863, and died from sickness contracted in the service.

July 9, 1864, Daniel Tuthill, 47, Enlisted as a private and was afterward promoted to the rank of sergeant. He was wounded in the engagement at North Anna Bridge, Virginia, on May 30, 1864, and died in the hospital at Washington.

July 1864, Charles Westover, 20, died in hospital at Staten Island.

July 12, 1864, George Shipley, 43. Died on board the U.S. transport *Atlantic*, from disease contracted while in the service. His remains were interred in Cypress Hill Cemetery, Long Island, July 14.

July 22, 1864, Sergeant Major E. Raymond Fonda, 27. He was severely wounded May 7<sup>th</sup> in one of the battles near Petersburg, Virginia, from the effects of which he died in the Lady's Home Hospital, New York.

August 16, 1864, Abbott C. Musgrove, 19, killed at the Battle of Deep Bottom, Virginia.

August 16, 1864, James K. Himes, 18. He fell in the Battle of Deep Bottom, Virginia, while bearing the colors of the regiment. (During the American Civil War, the flags of a combat unit (its colors) held a special significance. They had a spiritual value; they embodied the very "soul" of the unit. Flags were often the only means of distinguishing the identity of the combatants. Situated in the center of the firing line, "guiding upon the colors" remained an important command. Where the colors went, the men followed, and where the colors went, men usually died, because the colors drew an inordinate share of enemy fire.)

September 18, 1864, Thomas Gooch, died in St. John's Hospital, Annapolis, Maryland, from the effects of wounds received in the battle at Ream's Station, Virginia.

October 1, 1864, Adam Turner, 41, born in Castlereagh, Ireland, March 12, 1823. He removed to this country in 1850. He enlisted from Cohoes as a private and died from disease contracted by exposure and fatigue with the army before Richmond.

October 1864, in Andersonville prison, John Greer and John Ebah. (Andersonville Civil War Prison was located in Sumter County, Georgia. It was in operation from February 1864 to April 1865. This "stockade" held a hospital, but no barracks were ever constructed for the prisoners. Prisoners suffered from overcrowding because the prison was originally meant for 10,000, but had 30,000. The men there died from hunger, disease, medical shortages and exposure. Within 13 months 13,700 men died there. )

November 6, 1864, James K. Stevens, 20. He died in the hospital at Annapolis, Maryland from sickness contracted in the Richmond prison.

November 28, 1864, in McClellan Hospital, Philadelphia, Pa., Robert Gormley.

November 26, 1864, in rebel prisons, John Welch and J. Mangham. Particulars unknown.

February 3, 1865, John C. Carroll, 23, killed near Lovellville, Virginia.

The Civil War ended in April 1865 when Lee surrendered to Grant at Appomattox Court House, Virginia. The following names are entries after the war:

July 6, 1865, Nicholas D. Lounsbury, 57. He was a member of the 30<sup>th</sup> Regiment New York Volunteers.  
 September 17, 1865, Wm. B. Jackson, 45, a member of the 91<sup>st</sup> Regiment, New York Volunteers.

(continued on p.6)



## Off the Top...

My first article for the SCHS newsletter dealt with the history of my 1890 house on Imperial Avenue and encouraged others to seek getting the important structures of Cohoes on the National Historic Register. Follow-up research led to the discovery of the life of famous vaudevillian, La Petite Adelaide (Mary Adelaide Dickey), the daughter of the builders of the house.

Recent research turned up information on that original builder of the house, William J. Dickey. The information had numerous ties to articles in previous SCHS newsletters. The boldface information below is sourced to *Landmarks of Albany County, New York*, edited by Amasa J. Parker, in 1892. The italicized inserts are snippets of articles that were published in earlier issues of the SCHS newsletter.

**Dickey, William J., superintendent of the Cascade Mills of Cohoes** (*The company, manufacturer of fine knit underwear, was relocated to 101 Heartt Ave., at the corner of River Street, on Van Schaick Island. This was later the site of the Mohawk Laundry. The Hose Company on the Island was called the Cascade Hose Company, and took its name from the mills.*), is a son of John Dickey, a contractor who came from the north of Ireland and settled here at a very early period of the history of Cohoes. His death occurred in 1878 at the age of sixty-seven, but his memory lives in the hearts of his fellowmen as one who left nothing undone that would advance the welfare of residents here.

**Mr. Dickey has spent a lifetime in the mills, having first began to work there at the age of thirteen years. He was first employed by Hon. C. H. Adams in his woolen mill** (*Charles Henry Adams (1824-1902), a US Congressional representative for New York State from 1875 -1877 and first Mayor of the city of Cohoes, moved to Cohoes in 1850. He was a banker and manufacturer of knit underwear in Cohoes. After retiring from the manufacturing business in 1870, he was elected the first Mayor of Cohoes, serving from 1870-72. After leaving Congress, he returned to being a banker in Cohoes until 1892.*) **and from the foot of the ladder has steadily reached its most responsible position. He was for nine years superintendent of the Egberts Woolen Mill, then operated by Mr. McDowell** (*G.H. McDowell was a bookkeeper in 1878 for the National Bank of Cohoes, located at 2 Egberts Hall. He later became proprietor of the Egbert Woolen Mill, located at 87 Ontario St. The mill, renamed G.H. McDowell & Co., remained there until 1883 when it moved to 301 Ontario St. In 1889, it became the Cascade Mills, still under the management of G.H. McDowell.*) **and when the latter erected the Cascade Mills, he was given the superintendency. Mr. Dickey has been connected with the fire department for twenty-five years, and was fire commissioner for four years, treasurer for nine years of the Hitchcock Hose Co., and captain for ten years of the same.**

As I have said before, do not give up on your research; you never know what you will uncover. Even if your discovery seems insignificant, it will likely have a number of connections to other pieces of information.

Paul D. Dunleavy  
President

## Profile of a Member of SCHS - Thomas J. Donnelly



In this issue, we profile SCHS trustee Tom Donnelly, who has been a member of SCHS since 2001. Before moving to Cohoes, he had a two-decade long career in journalism in the Chicago area. Tom can often be observed photographing SCHS events, and frequently staffs the SCHS table at the Cohoes farmers' market.

**What is your occupation and background?** During my pursuit of a degree in journalism from Northwestern University, I worked for the *Chicago Tribune* in a number of non-editorial jobs. In 1963 I took a position as a reporter with *Oak Leaves*, a weekly newspaper in Oak Park, Illinois. From 1963-1965 I did a stint in the U.S. Army at Fort Dix, N.J., and returned to Chicago and continued my work in journalism until 1986, when I taught English and writing for a semester at a private high school. I moved to Cohoes in 1987, and worked at Timpane's jewelry store until it closed. I am now retired.

**How did you learn about and become involved in SCHS?** After attending meetings starting in 2000, I wanted to be more involved in the group and became a trustee in 2005.

**What are your hobbies and other interests?** I have a cat named Sammy who is my loyal companion. I am a member of the E.T. Ruane Post of the American Legion, the AARP, the Humane Society, and was a communicant of St. Bernard's Parish. I enjoy photography, and have photographed many SCHS events and programs, and other happenings around the city.

**What aspects of Cohoes history most interest you?** The time in the 20<sup>th</sup> century during the mayoral administrations of James and Virginia McDonald, when the Cohoes Citizens Party formed and became active.

**What SCHS activities and events do you enjoy the most?** I really enjoy meeting people and sharing our city's history, so I have been a regular volunteer for the SCHS table at the Cohoes farmers' market. In the same vein, I also like representing SCHS at the Peebles Island open house, Van Schaick Island Festival and other community events.

**Please include any other information about yourself you would like to share.** I have recently begun to put my experience in journalism to good use by helping Jack Counterman with "Fact and Fancy," the monthly newsletter for residents of McDonald Towers.

## Mardi Gras in Cohoes

The celebration of Mardi Gras started early in Cohoes, beginning on the evening of February 12 when downtown businesses were open,



cultural venues hosted programs and events, and the AquaDucks trolley provided transport around town. The Spindle City Historic Society held a reception in the Cohoes Visitor's Center and invited visitors in for refreshments, Cajun music, viewing "A Day in the Life of Cohoes." Visitors also saw our exhibit on the Slater family's musical past and a newly-unveiled display of miniature horses collected by Grace Reavy, a prominent Cohoes businesswoman and pioneer among women in public service in New York State.

## Historic Water Powered Mills



The SCHS January meeting featured a special presentation on historic water-powered mills by Walter Hollein, a preservation architect and millwright, active in the restoration of historic water and wind powered mills.

He is a member of The International Molinological Society, The Society for the Preservation of Old Mills and is secretary of The Windmill Whispers International Windmill Study Unit and founder of The Millstone Research Center, whose mission is the preservation of milling history, mill equipment, the tools of the miller, the tools of the many sideline occupations of millers, and the tools of the millwright and mill-related archival materials. His wide-ranging talk included photos of the interiors and exteriors of historic mills (including Hanford Mills, shown here), descriptions of the equipment

and operation of various types of mills, the activities of millers and their important position in agricultural communities, and restoration and re-use of mill structures.



*Views inside Hanford Mills, a historic water-powered sawmill and gristmill in East Meredith, New York. In its heyday, the mill, originally built in 1846, made wooden lids for barrels. The mill is now open as a living museum, so visitors can see the workings of the mill and view historic equipment in use.*



## Canal Clean Sweep

Although there is still snow on the ground, spring and the start of SCHS cleanups around the sites of the historic Erie Canal in Cohoes are not far off. Our first cleanup of the year will be on Saturday, April 17, when SCHS joins with other organizations and communities around the state in participating in the annual Canal Clean Sweep, sponsored by Parks and Trails New York and the New York State Canal Corporation. More details are on page 8 of this issue. If you'd like to participate but can't attend on this date, SCHS members will be out picking up trash and cleaning up the city's canal towpaths and lock chambers at other times from spring through fall. Look for schedule updates on the SCHS website at [www.spindlecity.net](http://www.spindlecity.net) and in future issues of the newsletter.

*Cohoes and the Civil War (continued from p.3):*

January 14, 1866, John Rafferty. His death was occasioned by disease contracted while in the service.

June 1<sup>st</sup>, 1866, Lt. Francis Keating, 32, one of the first volunteers from Cohoes and served his country faithfully and honorably.

December 9, 1866, John Eastwood, Jr., 22. He served his country honorably during the war. He was wounded in one of the battles of Virginia and while in the service contracted the disease from which he died.

February 1<sup>st</sup>, 1869, Willard A. Bayard, 27, was a soldier in the Union Army where he contracted the disease which resulted in his death.

February 22, 1869, A.F. Safely, M.D. was born in Scotland and came with his parents to Waterford at an early age. He graduated from Albany Medical College in 1852. At the breaking out of the rebellion he enlisted in the 10<sup>th</sup> New York Volunteers, and served with it until he was honorably discharged in consequence of wounds received at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battle of Bull Run, from the effects of which he never fully recovered.

April 25, 1871, Lieut. William Buchanan, 45. Mr. Buchanan went out as a lieutenant in Capt. Trull's company 30<sup>th</sup> N.Y. Vols, in October 1862, and participated with it in the battles of Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville. On the return of that regiment he was transferred to another unit. After passing through the battle of Gettysburg and several engagements of lesser note, he was taken prisoner at one of the battles of the Wilderness and sent to Andersonville Prison where he remained nearly a year. While being removed with other prisoners to a more secure prison he escaped from the cars, and reaching our lines at Knoxville, Tennessee, was soon transferred to Washington and discharged. He was one of the first officers appointed under the capital police system and served as captain until he resigned to go into business.

October 21, 1874, Thomas J. Syms, 41. Mr. Syms had been a resident of Cohoes for 20 years. He served with the Union Army during the rebellion, was taken prisoner and confined seven months in Andersonville, where he suffered greatly from exposure and privation.

May 22, 1875, Daniel B. McClary, 29. Mr. McC. was a well-known printer in the city. He served honorably in the late war as a member of the 12<sup>th</sup> Regt. N.Y. Cavalry.

October 8, 1875, James Winterbottom, had been in the employ of the Harmony Co. nearly 17 years. He served in the army during the rebellion.

**The Troy Record, October 31, 1931.** On the eve of his 88<sup>th</sup> birthday, Jerome Ball, the last surviving member of the colorful old 76<sup>th</sup> N.Y. Volunteers which served during the Civil War is still vigorous and claims he will live to pass the century mark. He lives at 16 Van Ness St., Northside. He has vivid recollections of the war which almost severed the nation. He went through the war unscathed. It was during the battle of Gettysburg that the division suffered its greatest losses. According to the veteran, the Cohoesiers killed in that battle were George M. Adams, (seven others already mentioned earlier in this article) and a Corporal Thomas Dunn who was reported missing. His most thrilling adventure in the war occurred in the battle of Five Forks near Petersburg, Virginia. As one of the color guard, he was the only member of the squad to escape death and when the color sergeant fell, he carried the flag throughout the battle despite the hail of bullets. He is one of three surviving members of the General Sheridan Post, G.A.R., Waterford. He served for 35 years as janitor of the Northside public school and retired eight years ago when he fell and broke a hip.

**The Cohoes Republican, October 19, 1909.** George Davenport, Civil War Veteran Dies. Last honors for the deceased were held by his comrades of Post Lyon of the G.A.R. The remains were dressed in the new blue uniform of the Soldiers' Home, such as was worn in the army in the early 60's (1860s). The remains were borne to their final resting place in the G.A.R. plot in the Waterford Rural Cemetery. By an unusual coincidence, Comrade Davenport's funeral falls on the 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the battle of Cedar Creek in which famous engagement he participated as a soldier of the 77<sup>th</sup> N.Y. Volunteers.

There was a bill passed by the N.Y. State Legislature in April 1909 to authorize small pensions for all Civil War vets over 62 years old, who went to the front with New York regiments. The pension would be \$6.00 per month!

Memorial Day was instituted after the Civil War. I found this poem in *The Republican*, May 1909:

*In Memoriam*

They died to keep the nation one. For north, for south, their work was done.

And done so well that now we stand a great and undivided land

Whose strength is union and whose good is sealed in lasting brotherhood.

Taps! Lights out! Asleep! One flag, one country shall forever keep these dead as sacred.

And on the sod which covers them shall set a blossoming diadem.

- W.J.Lampton

Historian's Notebook (continued from p.1):

the Cohoes *Daily News* and published the newspaper *Weekly News* from April 1880 to 1881, when the paper ceased publication. In 1887 James Masten became paymaster of the Paris Mills. He next published *The Cohoes Daily News* until he sold the paper to Charles F. North. From 1892-1897, he worked as paymaster at the Victor Mills. Over these years, he resided at 114 Remsen Street. James Masten passed away in 1899 at his son Arthur's New York City residence.

James' son Arthur H. Masten attended Williams College, graduating in 1876. Upon his graduation, he returned to Cohoes and authored the *History of Cohoes from its beginning to 1876* at the request of David J. Johnston, Mayor of Cohoes (and Superintendent of the Harmony Mills). The impetus for the volume was a proclamation issued by President Grant following a resolution passed by the United States Congress on May 13, 1876 for communities to provide a historical sketch of the "First Centennial of their existence" in commemoration of the centennial of the United States. With the help of the newspaper files of the *Cohoes Cataract*, *Cohoes Daily News*, *Troy Times* and *Troy Press*, the publications of Joel Munsell, and the assistance of his father James H. Masten and numerous Cohoes officials and acquaintances, the task was completed by December 1876.

Arthur Masten went on to study law at Columbia College and was admitted to the bar in New York City in 1879. He entered the law department of New York City and worked there until 1886 as Assistant Corporation Counsel, where he was involved in the litigation and proceedings for the condemnation of lands taken for water supply purposes. In 1886 he formed a partnership with George L. Nichols under the firm name of Masten and Nichols. In 1888 he was appointed Standing Master in Chancery in the U.S. Circuit Court and was connected with several cases, including the Erie Railroad and U.S. Rolling Stock Company receivership and the receiverships of the Metropolitan Street Railway system. In 1907 he was Master in Chancery in the case of the Consolidated Gas Co. of New York against the city and state of New York and members of the defunct State Gas and Electric Commissions. This was the so-called "80 cent gas law case" which concerned regulation of utility rates by the recently-established New York State Public Service Commission. In 1896, Masten was a candidate for Justice of the Supreme Court, and in 1918 was a member of the district draft board hearing appeals from the draft boards in the Southern District in New York. In 1931, his firm merged with Murray, Aldrich and Webb, and would later continue under the name of Milbank, Tweed, Hope and Webb.

Masten was a member of the executive committee and vice president of the New York City Bar Association, and was chair of the executive committee of the New York State Bar Association. He also served as trustee and vice president of the New York Historical Society, and trustee of his alma mater Williams College. He died in December 1935 in New York City. Arthur Masten's detailed record of Cohoes was revived in 1969, when his *History of Cohoes* was reprinted, with a now-familiar light blue cover, for the Cohoes Historical and Cultural Society in honor of the centennial of the city of Cohoes.

June Cherniak/Walter Lipka

\*\*\*\*\*

### **Spindle City Historic Society Membership Application**

[www.spindlecitynet.net](http://www.spindlecitynet.net)

President - Paul Dunleavy

First Vice President - Daniele Cherniak      Second Vice President - Tor Shekerjian

Secretary - Linda C. Christopher      Treasurer - June Cherniak

<input type="checkbox"/> Individual Membership	\$10.00	<input type="checkbox"/> Institutional Membership	\$25.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Senior Citizen Membership	\$5.00	<input type="checkbox"/> Contributing Membership	\$35.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Student Membership	\$5.00	<input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining Membership	\$50.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Family Membership	\$15.00		

*We have great things planned in our home in the Cohoes Visitor's Center!*

*Please help if you can with an additional donation to support our upcoming programs:*

\$5.00     \$10.00     other

gift membership

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP CODE \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Mail completed form with membership fee, payable to Spindle City Historic Society, to:  
June Cherniak, Treasurer, 415 Vliet Boulevard, Cohoes, NY 12047

### **Wanted – Historic Postcards**

The Spindle City Historic Society is beginning work on its next book, a collection of historic postcards of Cohoes. If you have historic postcards you would like to share for the book, please contact us at [cohoes90@nycap.rr.com](mailto:cohoes90@nycap.rr.com) or at 518-237-5618. Postcards will be scanned and returned to their owners unless they wish to donate them to SCHS.

### **Electronic Option for Delivery of the SCHS Newsletter**

The Spindle City Historic Society is now offering its members electronic mailing of the newsletter. This assures that you will receive the newsletter more quickly. To sign up for electronic delivery, please e-mail us at [cherniak@nycap.rr.com](mailto:cherniak@nycap.rr.com) and provide the e-mail address where you would like your newsletter sent. Otherwise, you will continue to receive the newsletter through the regular mail.

### **UPCOMING EVENTS**

**Wednesday, March 31** - Spindle City Historic Society meeting. 7 p.m., Cohoes Visitor's Center.

**Saturday, April 17** - Cohoes Canal Cleanup. Clean up at Lock 15 and the towpath of the enlarged Erie Canal. Meet at 10 a.m. near the intersection of Vliet and Summit Sts. Be part of the annual Canal Clean Sweep, sponsored by Parks and Trails New York and the New York State Canal Corporation.

**Wednesday, April 28** - Spindle City Historic Society meeting. 7 p.m., Cohoes Visitor's Center.

**Wednesday, May 26** - Spindle City Historic Society meeting. 7 p.m., Cohoes Visitor's Center.

**Wednesday, June 30** - Spindle City Historic Society meeting. 7 p.m., Cohoes Visitor's Center.

**Wednesday, July 28** - Spindle City Historic Society meeting. 7 p.m., Cohoes Visitor's Center.

Photo credits this issue – Walter Cherniak

✧ SCHS Newsletter Staff ✧

Daniele Cherniak ~ June Cherniak ~ Linda Christopher ~ Anne Marie Nadeau ~ Dennis Rivage  
Editorial Assistance: Tor Shekerjian ~ Columnist: Paul Dunleavy

Spindle City Historic Society

P.O. Box 375

Cohoes, New York 12047