

SUMMER 2015

Rethinking a Historic Transit Debate

by Colleen Moriarty



Rail passengers dramatize fact that since they aren't fish, they can't swim the Hudson.

— UPI, NEW YORK TIMES, SEPTEMBER 5, 1958

The 1950s saw several protests of commuters wearing animal masks. Their protests revealed that animals had better means of commuting than they did. A 1955 protest in Tappan had commuters wearing pig masks. In 1958, commuters of the West Shore Railroad wore fish masks on their commute. The ferry service was about to be canceled, and so they protested that unlike fish they could not swim across. Despite their protests the ferry would still be discontinued.

Paul Melone's archival collection at the Orangetown Historical Museum and Archive is quite extensive; a small part of it is made up of items surrounding the controversy in the 1950s and 1960s over railroads. Paul Melone was a historian from Tappan. The collection includes maps, studies, newsclippings, and other items all discussing the topic of rubber (cars and buses) versus rails (the railroads). The collection reveals the strength of rubber over rails. Though rubber won the fight

against the rails, the war is hardly over.

The railroad came first, and before the 1950s railways existed all over Orangetown. The automobile disrupted the railroad's dominance. The flexibility of the automobile was very desirable outside of cities. Drivers were independent of schedules and could travel to locations the train would not reach. There was a price for this freedom. Driving was not only more expensive, but it led to large amounts of traffic congestion.

By the 1950s, it was apparent that New York City would never be able to handle massive amounts of automobile traffic. Many of the items in the Rubber v Rails collection argue that trains were the more sustainable option for commuters to New York City. Yet rather than endorse public transportation, government encouraged car travel by building more and more traffic lanes which did little to ease traffic conditions. Though the George Washington Bridge increased its capacity by seventy-five percent between the 1950s and the 1960s, there is a still ever-increasing congestion travelling to and from New York City.

Despite serving the same purpose, the railroads and automobiles are treated quite differently. Highways are paid for by taxpayer money, but railroads are paid for by the companies themselves and are then taxed on those railroads. Automobiles have unfair advantage in the fight since the government pays for the upkeep of roads while railroad companies must upkeep railways themselves.

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THE
ASSOCIATION
OF

Blaauvelt Descendants



On Friday, September 18th the association will be celebrating their 90th reunion as a genealogical group. This celebration will commemorate as well the leadership of the late George Blauvelt who inspired the museum's exhibit 'From Holland to Here.'

from Holland to Here

featuring the
George Way
Collection



Time is running out to see the museum's blockbuster exhibit – 'From Holland to Here'. We have had a fantastic reception from the public to this effort. Covered by the *New York Times* and local press, honored by the Association of Blauvelt Descendants and visited by a myriad of Dutch descendants, art aficionados and history buffs – there is one general question that all of our visitors leave with – **who is George Way?** This question will be answered for the general public on Sunday, November 8th for **SUNDAY IN THE MUSEUM WITH GEORGE**. George Way has infected the curiosity of all of our visitors. How could one individual have amassed such a stunning collection? What was his motivation and how was it done? Come to learn about the nuances of collecting 17th century Dutch art & artifacts from America's premier collector and enjoy a glass of champagne. *Moderated by curator Elizabeth Skrabonja.*



Sunday, November 8th at 1 pm at the DePew House
Admission \$5 Donation

Rethinking a Historic Transit Debate

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People argued for improvement in the mass transit system. The railroads were deemed uncooperative by commuters which hurt business. The falling star of the railroad is revealed in the destruction of Pennsylvania Station in 1963. The beautiful building lasted just fifty-three years. Since that demolition, train travelers have been forced underground. Many railroad lines were considered unnecessary especially with the existence of buses and ferries. All these systems overlapped each other and limited the amount of profit any of them could make. This led to the discontinuation of many railways in the area. With the removal of the railroads, transportation options have been limited to commuters but also those that want to travel between towns. No wonder rubber has been winning the fight for so long. The railroads can hardly compete when they no longer exist in many towns.

The Rubber v Rails collection reveals the dominance of cars over trains. This dominance certainly had and continues to have its critics. Though rubber may be the stronger of the two from the 1950s to today, there is the possibility of change. As society becomes more environmentally aware public transportation is more desirable and more affordable. There may yet be hope for a revival in the railroads. The new Tappan Zee Bridge will include bus rapid transit and light or commuter rails. With new mass transit options on the horizon, the story of the Rubber v Rails collection may evolve.



Thanks to all who joined us in celebrating the museum at the Friends of the Orangetown Museum Annual Dinner on June 7th at the '76 House. This year the dinner honored the Piermont Historical Society under the leadership of Richard & Lola Esnard as well as retiring museum volunteer, Marie Koestler. The Raffle prizes were spectacular – and raffle ticket sales help the museum in continuing its work in preserving local history. This year's winners were:

BARBARA SCHEULEN	\$500.00 (Barbara graciously donated \$250 of this back to the museum, and \$250 to the Piermont Historical Society – kudos!)
BETZY FRANCO FEENEY	Basket of Fine Wines
BARBARA SCHEULEN	Basket of Local Restaurant Gift Certificates
JANINE CLARK	Kelly & Michael Show Tickets
GEORGE SADDER	Wine & Dine Basket
MARY CARDENAS	winning auction bid for an original watercolor of 'The Piermont Marsh' by Edwin Dahlberg

Our heartfelt appreciation to all involved – see you next year!



Looking for something to do on Columbus Day with the kids?

Join the Orangetown Museum and the Orangeburg Library for a Dutch Treat! Games, stories – a little history and windmill cookies await for guests K-3 and their adult friends. Early Dutch settlers to Orangetown brought with them a love of hearth and home and delight in the magic of childhood. Find out how they had fun From Holland to Here.

Sign up is at the Orangeburg Library, Children's Room: registration is limited.

Monday, October 12th 1 pm, meet at the DePew House

Registration at the Orangeburg Library. Admission is free: Donations accepted

While at the Orangeburg Library – don't forget to visit Dutch Treat at the 'Top -of-the Stairs Art-Gallery' for the month of October featuring Dutch dolls, delft and a reminder to plant those tulip bulbs.



Springsteen Photos at the Pearl River Library

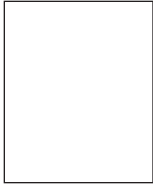
In case you missed the Orangetown Scrapbook exhibit you will have the opportunity to view the museum's spectacular renditions of several of George Springsteen's Victorian era photographs. On view for the month of October in the front lobby gallery will be a selection of this local photographer's images of residents of Pearl River – in a stylized large format context. The Pearl River personalities engage in a surprising nod to pop icon Andy Warhol's color plays while also recognizing the museum's Lillian Rose Perry lace collection.

On loan for the month of October at the Pearl River Library • Admission is free



196 Chief Bill Harris Way
Orangeburg, New York 10962

Tel. (845) 398-1302
www.orangetownmuseum.com



☛ at The DePew House
196 Chief Bill Harris Way
Orangeburg, New York
Office, Archives by Appointment
(845) 398-1302

Open now
**FROM HOLLAND
TO HERE**

*Featuring the Collection
of George Way*
Open Tuesdays 10 – 2,
Sundays 1 – 4,
or by appointment
Admission free;
donations accepted

☛ at The Salyer House
213 Blue Hill Road
Pearl River, New York
*A Spy in Our Midst,
Our Dutch Sandstone
Houses & At Home
in Orangetown*
Permanent Exhibit:
Hours by appointment
(845) 398-1302

THIS SUMMER & FALL:



FROM HOLLAND TO HERE – featuring the collection of George Way: A picture of Dutch culture in the 17th century within the context of their settlement in Orangetown. On loan will be the stunning collection of art & artifacts from the collection of George Way of Staten Island, featuring paintings, furniture and fabulous artifacts from the period, Ancestry.com and the film *Blauvelts – An American Journey*. Exhibit open through November 15th



On Friday, September 18th the museum will be hosting a **Gala 90th Reunion of the Association of Blauvelt Descendants**. This Dutch clan hearkens its earliest ancestry to Orangetown. The museum is only one of a number of celebratory stops on the Blauvelt reunion trail. If you are a Blauvelt descendant, please contact the museum for information. Special guest: Mr. George Way. At the DePew House



Antiques & Collectibles Sale: Saturday, October 3, 2015, 10 am – 4 pm
The museum will be open free of charge! Enjoy a beautiful Fall day with some fabulous Antiques, Fine Collectibles, Jewelry, Toys, Decorative Arts, Furniture, Fine Arts & Ephemera. Table Rental for Dealers is \$25.
At the **DePew House** 196 Chief Bill Harris Way, Orangeburg NY. Please call (845) 398-1302 for further information.



Dutch Treat! Children's Day at the Orangetown Museum. Monday October 12, 1 pm.
Games, stories, a little history and windmill cookies await for guests k-3 and their adult friends.
Registration at the Orangeburg Library, Children's Room.
Admission free, donations accepted. At the DePew House



Sunday in the Museum With George. Sunday November 8th, 1 pm.
Enjoy a guided tour by collector George Way of 'From Holland to Here' and discover how America's premier collection of Dutch 17th century art & artifacts was collected. Champagne.
Donation: \$5. At the Depew House

THE ORANGETOWN HISTORICAL MUSEUM & ARCHIVES
Mary Cardenas, MUSEUM DIRECTOR • Elizabeth Skrabonja, MUSEUM CURATOR
The Orangetown Historical Museum & Archives was founded in 1992 to acquire, preserve and exhibit objects which reflect primarily the history of the Town of Orangetown. The Museum's additional, but not lesser mission is to document, research, promote and publicize the town's rich, historical heritage of the town for the people of Orangetown.



Andrew Stewart, SUPERVISOR
Thomas Diviny, Tom Morr, Dennis Troy and Paul Valentine, COUNCILMEN

FRIENDS OF THE ORANGETOWN MUSEUM
Your membership in the Friends of the Orangetown Museum helps to collect and preserve the history of Orangetown. Members will receive notices of programs and events as well as free admission to the Museum's special exhibits and events. The Museum is a 501 (C) (3) organization and all donations are tax deductible.

STUDENT/SENIOR \$10 SINGLE \$15 FAMILY \$20
LIFE MEMBER \$100 CORPORATE \$250