

The

Orangetown Crier

News from the Orangetown Historical Museum and Archives

SUMMER 2011



A 5 year old Jack poses with his father, J. Fred Geist in 1925 by the Grand View home where he still resides.

OHMA

Jack Geist



Jack Geist at the museum accepting a photo of his father from 1908 as a member of Orangeburg Fire Co. No. 1 of Nyack. OHMA

An Unmatched Perspective

On June 28th 2011, the Orangetown Historical Museum & Archives was proud to present a framed copy of a 1908 photo of Orangetown Fire Company No. 1 of Nyack to Jack Geist. The photo was given to Geist, a longtime resident of Grand View and OHMA volunteer for his years of dedicated service to the museum. Jack's father, J. Fred Geist, can be found in the photograph as a member of Company No.1.

J. Fred Geist was one of three children born to Magnus and Anna Geist. He worked as the secretary and treasurer for the Gregory and Sherman Coal & Lumber Company at Cedar Avenue and Depot Place in Nyack until it closed in 1930 due to the Depression. After selling cement and roofing supplies he began working as a reporter/photographer with the Nyack Journal News in 1935, a position he held until his death in 1972.

J. Fred's son, Jack was also involved in the print business. Born at home on Cedar Hill Avenue, South Nyack in 1920, Jack was one of two children. His family later moved to the house on River Road in Grand View where Jack still lives today. A talented student, Jack skipped 12th grade and briefly attended the National Academy of Design. He returned to Nyack High School and graduated in 1940. Jack continued his studies at Pratt Institute, with an interruption to serve in the Army during World War II. It was during his time in the service that Jack met his future wife, Betty, who worked with Jack at Stewart Field. Following the war, he completed his studies at Pratt, and after some minor drafting and design jobs landed a position at *Life* magazine, which he held until the magazine folded in 1972. He worked for *Time* until his retirement in 1986. In the late 1960s and early '70s, Jack served two terms as Mayor of a post-Tappan Zee Bridge Grand View. His second term was a "bad mistake" he jokes, because Grand View's sewer system was being installed and complaints from disgruntled villagers were frequent.

Jack and Betty had two children, Carol and Bill. Carol worked for the Army in Alaska and Washington D.C. Bill worked as a teacher of industrial arts at Tappan Zee High School for over 30 years. Both are currently retired.

Jack has been volunteering at the OHMA since 2005, and is currently assisting the museum in fact checking our massive archival collection. He is *the* person to ask to identify historic Orangetown photos. Not only will Jack tell you who and what are in a photo, he'll also probably include a local anecdote. Imagine his surprise when he came across his father in the original 1908 photo of Orangetown No.1, as he had been unaware of his father's service in the fire department. With his knowledge of the area, Mr. Geist is himself a unique primary source on Orangetown and Grand View history, having seen both develop from sparsely populated settlements into the bustling suburbs they are today. We at the OHMA are eternally grateful for having Jack as one of our volunteers.

Joseph Barbieri

AN ALBUM QUILT was presented to Mrs. Elizabeth Griffiths by 65 of her friends in 1852. She was the great-grandmother of the American painter Edward Hopper and wife of the well known Pastor of the Middletown Baptist Church, Joseph W. Griffiths. This quilt has been on view as a centerpiece of the museum's current exhibit, *Orangetown – Edward Hopper's Backyard*. Circled with a red and green appliquéd garland bow design, the quilt is a true labor of love with individual floral and biblical motifs appliquéd and embellished with individual embroidered signatures. Accompanying the quilt is a descriptive poem by Mrs. Eliza Cooper describing in whimsical detail each entry. The quilt and various Griffiths artifacts came from the estate of Marion Hopper (1880-1965), Edward's sister. Upon her death, the collection went to the first Baptist Church in Nyack. Catherine Dodge, church historian, donated these items to the Orangetown Historical Museum & Archives when the church disbanded. It is only one of many fascinating artifacts that link Edward Hopper to our collective past. *EKS*

I now sit down with pen and ink
To write some words just as I think
Those words for you I do intend
And when they are done I will them send.

It is upon the quilt we gave
And which you in possession have;
The lines I know they will be many
But I will not charge you a penny.

The blocks you know are a great many
And I do not mean to pass by any,
Their number I think is sixty two
So please don't weary before you are through.

In it there are birds, and fruit, and flowers
That it would take me many hours,
To describe them all minute
And then perhaps, it might not suit.

First the hearts are joined together
And look as though they ne'er would sever,
And then it went from heart to lip
That we must show our warm friendship.

I shall commence with the center piece
Which my friend Martha made,
It is a wreath of beautiful green
And might very well to crown a queen.

Next to this are the babes in the wood
I think their uncle was not very good,
The little boy will not forsake her
This was made by Elizabeth Schoonmaker.
Row 6, Block 3

And then Miss Anna Elsworth
Made a hive with a vine growing by
There are two little bees coming forth
And look as though they fly.
Row 5, Block 6

It was the name of Mary Gurne
That made the Eagle of Liberty;
Since then she has changed her name
But may her principals be the same
Row 2, Block 8

Then there are two dear little birds
By Mary E. Cooper that have these words
We are so happy together
Sing on and may nothing sever.
Row 1, Block 8

Another with a box and a tree
Mrs. M. Blauvelt is the name you'll see,
I think it is meant for Jerusalem cherry
For it has a very pretty red berry.
Row 3, Block 4

Mrs. S. De Baun made the horn of plenty
It looks to me to be rather empty,
Perhaps the flowers did fade and fall
So I will on, and to the next call.
Row 5, Block 8

Then there is another horn of plenty
Though it too is looking rather empty,
It doth a few more flowers contain
Margaret Van Ostrand is the name.
Row 6 Block 2

Mrs. Mary Ann Haring did me send
Which represents our final end,
With the words "We all do fade as a flower"
May we think of the sentence every hour.
Row 5, Block 3

A cross, and a wreath around
Emblem of the joyful sound,
That our sins may there be laid
By Rebecca Demarest this piece was made.
Row 4, Block 3

You will find a lamb living innocently
By this Julia Cooper's name you will see
The moon is shining clear and bright
And stars the signal of a clear night.
Row 6, Block 1

Miss Christina De Baun you will find
I cannot to this make up my mind,
Whether it is a flower or a cup
At all events it stands right up.
Row 3, Block 8

You will find another with a large tree
Mrs. Eliza Blauvelt is the name you'll see,
It has a large rose looking fresh and fair
And a strawberry plant, it was made with care.
Row 4, Block 4

Then the one by Mrs. Sarah Haring
Has a flower like the rose of Sharon,
Also a pitcher, let up fill our glass
And let us have the Maine law come to pass.
Row 7, Block 6

Then there is Maggie of Patterson
She did not to her fill name come
But I do think if she had this done
Flowers and branch, there would have been
none.
Row 4, Block 7

A beautiful bunch of flowers blooming
That look very modest and unassuming;
Sarah Van Blarcum it was made by her
Since then she has changed to Turfler.
Row 2, Block 4

There is one a very pretty bird
That looks as if its wings were stirred,
It is sitting on a dark green tree
Maria Blauvelt is the name you'll see.
Row 1, Block 5

There is one resembles the cactus prime
That grows on the sands of a southern clime,
Or at least I have heard this said
Mrs. Margaret Griffiths has this made.
Row 6, Block 7

And then there is to this the mate
That matches in its place first rate;
Mrs. Slyfre sent this in time
I am very nearly through my rhyme.
Row 7, Block 9

There is one with a flower in a pot
The name thereof I know it not;
Melvina Desondolf's name is by it
So now I think you will espy it.
Row 4, Block 2

Little, Miss Mary Van Houten
Made a dog, would set you shouting,
He is going with his basket, quiet
I do not think, he means to try it.
Row 3, Block 9

And Mrs. Hope she done her best
But it is not as pretty as the rest,
Curtain calico broke the pledge
So you will find it by the edge.
Row 5, Block 9

A strawberry, and flower, and butterfly
Is the way you will another espy;
The name of Lucretia Blauvelt, then
But oh dear, I am weary with pen.
Row 1, Block 4

A pretty little bunch of flowers
Taken from some rosy bowers,
Mary Van Ostrand by this I presume
You will find its resting place very soon.
Row 6, Block 4

And now Miss Helen Maria Elsworth
I will bring her genius forth,
A basket of flowers, one a Morning glory
But I am not yet quite through my story.
Row 7, Block 2

A wreath of flowers, and one inside
I do not know what this will betide;
The name of Stoutenborough is in it too
Your daughter it was that sent it to you.
Row 1, Block 3

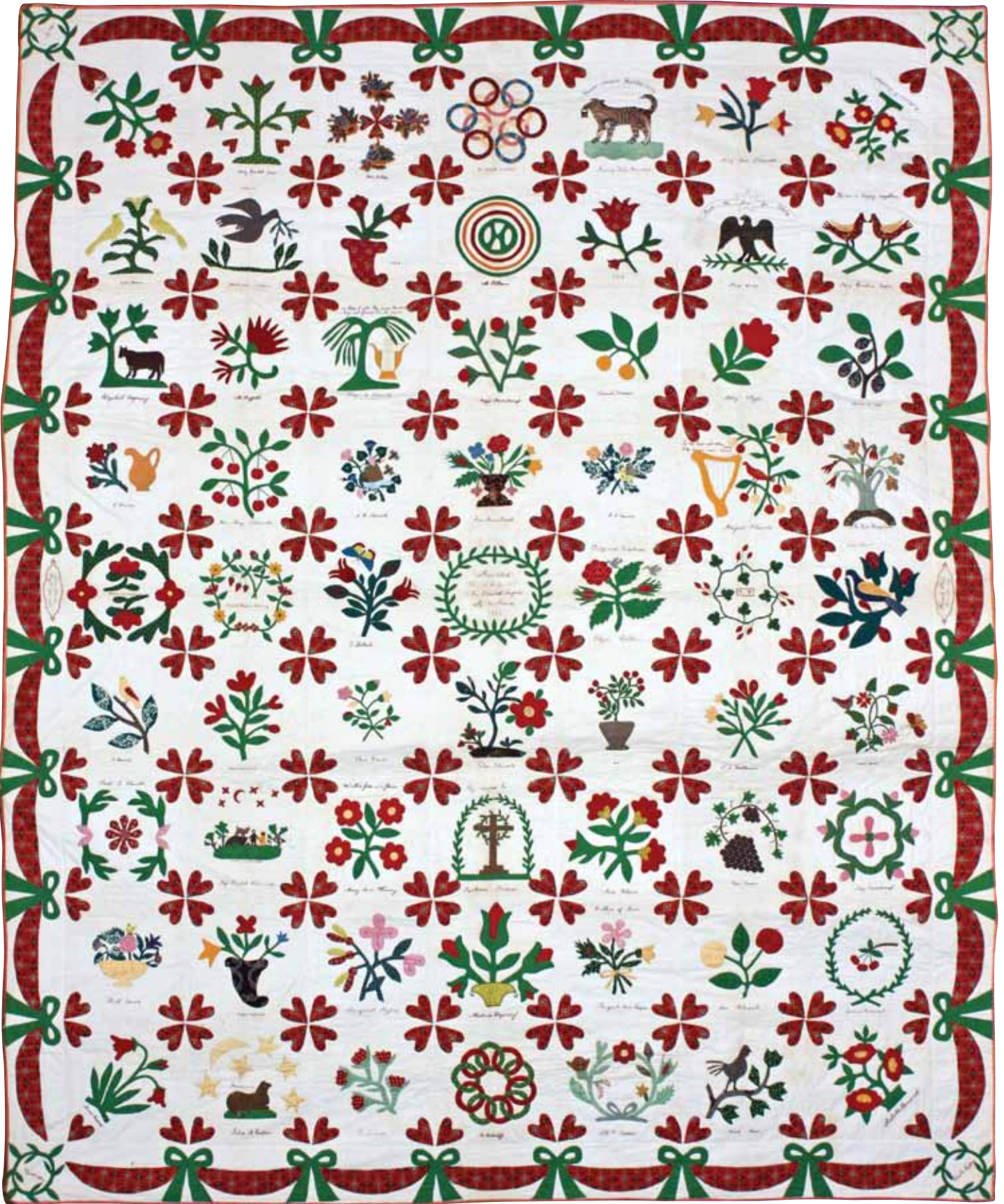
Then there is one with two buds and a rose
And this will the author's name disclose
If it does not yet into your mind move
The two little hummingbirds, will it prove.
Row 3, Block 5

The names of two persons, is in the border
I could not be done in better order;
Mary Darren, and Hannah Steel you will see
One is "forget me not," and one "remember me."

Then in every corner there's a wreath of green
And in each of these a name is seen,
Willson, Ackerman, Cooper and Cole
And now I believe, I have the whole.

A Friend 

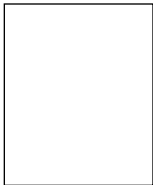
Composed by Mrs. Eliza Cooper 1854 • On the blocks in an Album Quilt • Presented to Mrs. Elisabeth Griffiths, The Pastor's wife of Middletown Baptist Church





196 Blaisdell Road
Orangeburg, New York 10962

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



☛ at The DePew House
196 Blaisdell Road, Orangeburg, New York
Office, Archives by Appointment
(845) 398-1302
Orangetown – Edward Hopper’s Backyard.
Inspired by the Year of Hopper Initiative,
this exhibit is designed to emphasize
Hopper’s earliest years and influences
through comparative photographs and
period artifacts.
Open May 14 – December 9, 2011

☛ 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

☛ *Special thanks to all who attended our Annual Dinner on July 10th, celebrating the achievements of The Orangetown Museum and honoring the Edward Hopper House for their 40 years of service!*

THIS SUMMER AND FALL:



Orangetown – Edward Hopper’s Backyard: Now open at the DePew House, 196 Blaisdell Road, Orangeburg, New York. A historic snapshot of the surrounding area formative to Edward Hopper’s early years, featuring objects, photographs and personalities of the late Victorian era in Orangetown. This multimedia presentation focuses on Hopper’s early influences and how they informed his mature work. Open through December 9th, 2011.



Antiques & Collectibles Sale: Saturday, October 1st, 10 am – 4 pm, Rain Date, Sunday, October 2nd
Presented by *The Friends of the Orangetown Museum*
Antiques • Fine Collectibles • Jewelry • Glass • Toys • Decorative Arts • Fine Arts • Furniture
At the **DePew House** 196 Blaisdell Road, Orangeburg, New York



Holiday Show: Four Fabulous Sundays – November 27th, December 4th, 11th, & 18th.
At the Historic Salyer House, 213 Blue Hill Road, Pearl River, New York, from 1 – 4 pm.
Save the dates to join us for a glass of mulled cider at our annual holiday celebration.
Caroling, beautiful decorations and a nostalgic welcome await you.

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.



Paul Whalen, SUPERVISOR • Nancy Low-Hogan, COUNCILWOMAN
Thomas Diviny, Michael Maturo and Dennis Troy, 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