

MEMBERS AND FRIENDS

MEMBERSHIP :

Museum membership for 2019 is \$15 individual and \$25 family. If you have not returned the membership / donation remittance envelope from our November mailing, we hope you can now take a moment to renew or become a member for 2019 as well as donate to either the Museum or Opendore Project. Membership and donation form is on last page of newsletter.

Our Annual meeting will be Sunday May 19 at 7:00 PM at Stone Store. The accomplishments of the past year will be reviewed, and election of three Trustee positions held. A program described below to follow.

Open houses for the public at both the Stone Store and Opendore are scheduled for Saturday, June 1st and Saturday September 28th, both 1:00 to 4:00 PM. We hope you and family/friends can join us!

PROGRAMS : (Marilyn Post)

The Howland Stone Store Museum is preparing for the 2019 program season. Our first event will be a showing of the film *American Creed* in cooperation with the Aurora Free Library at 4:00 pm on Sunday, April 28 at the Stone Store. Following the film, Michael Groth, Professor of American History at Wells College will facilitate a discussion on *Equality of Opportunity: What It Meant in the Past and What It Means Now*.

Suffragists like Susan B. Anthony liked to come to Sherwood for a little respite, conversation and discussion with Emily Howland, but all was not serious. They liked to celebrate birthdays. May 21st marks Isabel's 160th birthday. We will celebrate her and the progress restoring her home, *Opendore* on May 19th at 7:00 pm with our Annual Meeting at the Stone Store or possibly Opendore. Our guest speaker will be historian Anthony Gero. He is the author of *Black Soldiers of New York State: A Proud Legacy* and numerous articles on military history. He has also ventured into fiction with *Boots: A Novella of the Civil War* (2013) and *The Night Dancer Chronicles: Book One* (2014) and *Book Two* (2015).

Our Spring Open House is scheduled for June 1st from 1:00 -4:00 pm at both the Stone Store and Opendore. At Opendore we have been working on insulation all winter and are looking forward to the miracle of sheetrock. Much remains to be done and a few more good volunteers will come forward to help restore woodwork and floors. We will have plenty of pictures of work in progress, but we are also preparing exhibits. In our "theater room" a short video will introduce the museum and the suffrage posters.

Look for a change in our open days at the Stone Store. We have a new sandwich sign for the curb to invite passersby to drop in and take a longer look at the collection, a poster, ledger or letter. You may have an ancestor who visited the Cayuga County Equality Club regularly.

Education and Visitation : (Barbara Wiggans Taylor)

DOCENTS : Please note that our museum operation for the public depends on our volunteer docents. This year we have made a script that can be followed to make docenting easier. It follows the lives and activities of Slocum Howland, William, Hannah, Emily and Benjamin Howland, and Isabel Howland. We train our docents, and a new docent is always paired with someone experienced. Docenting can be fun, and an opportunity to meet folks from near and far. Please contact Barb Taylor at 607-592-5649 to get more information or volunteer.

WEBSITE : (Larry Bell)

HSSM is working on a rolling out anew website to be rolled out early 2019. The site will have a modern look and improved organization for visitors.

OPENDORE PROJECT : (Guy Garnsey)

Late last year MoonLite Fabrication of Genoa fabricated the handrails for the stairs and accessible ramp on the building west side. They will be shop painted and installed in the spring. During the winter our work has turned to inside projects. Thanks to the small but dedicated volunteer labor group, installation of mineral wool and rigid polyiso board insulation in the exterior walls and sloping roofs has been completed. We will in the near future be installing blown-in insulation in the attic, and installing storm windows on the historic double hung windows and French doors, completing the thermal envelope. We also have contracted for drywall installation to be done in the next two months, which will mark a major milestone completing the interior finishes! Flooring, painting and trim restoration will follow by volunteers this spring and summer.

Since the October 2016 start of volunteer construction on the West Wing and continuing thru exterior refurbishment and interior renovation, over 4,000 volunteer hours have been donated by a dedicated core of individuals. In December a pot-luck dinner was held to honor our volunteers and review our accomplishments since October 2016 start of volunteer construction. As always, we need help to accomplish this work. If you can help with this work, please contact Andy Simkin (206-390-4286).



Work Crew ; Larry Bell, Tom Butcher, Marilyn Post
Andy Simkin, Gus Littlejohn, Guy Garnsey



Archive Room Insulation

Collections Committee : (Ann Tobey)

COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT POLICY

The Board recently adopted an updated Collections Management Policy, better reflecting our current practices and procedures and complying with NYS requirements for museums. The policy is the result of many working meetings of the committee and is a major accomplishment.

ANOTHER SPECIAL EXHIBIT

The Cornell University Johnson Art Museum staff is planning a special exhibit on women's suffrage for the fall of 2020, and they have asked to borrow some of our posters and artifacts such as fans. Two of the Johnson staff visited the HSSM in January to look at our collection and make choices of what they would like to borrow.

It is always interesting and rewarding to have professional staff from a museum or gallery visit us to make selections for an exhibit. We do have an amazing collection, and we enjoy seeing the reaction of professionals to the collection. Our first outside exhibit was at the String Room Gallery at Wells College. The Cayuga Museum in Auburn, the New York State Museum in Albany, and now the Johnson Museum at Cornell have (or will have) borrowed posters and sometimes artifacts such as fans or suffrage and anti-suffrage materials.

Members of the Collections Committee have visited the exhibits where we are participating. Both staff visits to the HSSM and our visits to other museums are not only rewarding but also valuable as learning experiences for us. A striking example is the use of space in professional exhibits. The white space is almost as important as the exhibit items -- they make us anxious to be able to exhibit in the bigger space of Opendore instead of the incredibly crowded space at the Store.

We also learn by seeing our posters through the eyes of professionals. And we certainly see more about how to wrap posters for travel!

Note that the posters we loan are our originals. We loan them only to professional museums prepared to care for them. We do have many reproductions which can be loaned to places such as classrooms or offices. Most recently a selection of our reproductions was on exhibit for November at the Owasco Town Offices.

And you can visit the New York Equal Rights and Visitors Center in Auburn to see reproductions of Stone Store posters included in their very interesting exhibit.

OTHER ACTIVITIES WITH THE COLLECTION

We are receiving a large collection of women's history materials from Elsie Gutches and are working on various aspects of that project. Currently many of the items are being digitized in a cooperative venture led by Wells College.

We are updating various forms and policies essential for a museum. The Collections Management Policy was extensively revised with many hours of work and has been approved by the Board of Trustees.

And always there are behind-the-scenes activities that go on even when we are closed. We continue to document the inventory, for example, and follow up on donations offered to the Museum.

HSSM Calendars : (Carolyn Littlejohn)

Planning for the 2020 HSSM Woman's Rights Centennial Calendar is well under way. This calendar will replicate a historic week-by-week version from our collection. The calendars will be available this spring.

FUNDRAISING : (Steve Zabriskie and Linda VanBuskirk)

Fundraising continues to be a priority for Opendore as well as the Museum. To complete our Opendore capital project we estimate \$25,000 will need to be raised this year. Remember local contributions are matched thru or NYS Grants, so every \$1 become \$2 !!

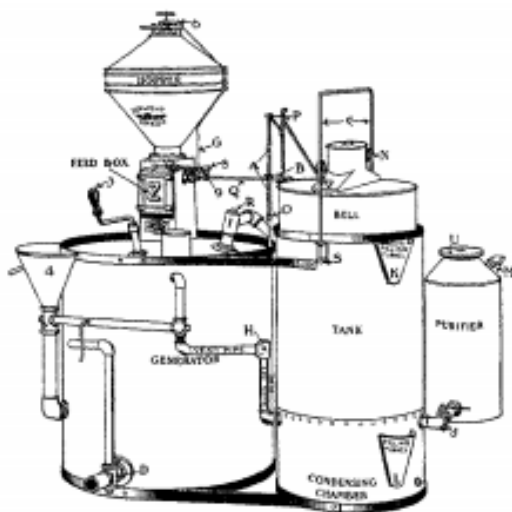
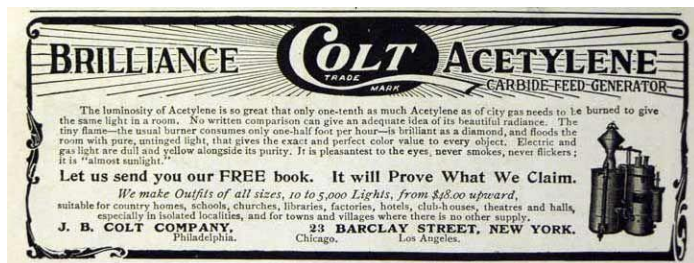
History Corner: Technology at Opendore

Larry B. Bell

One of the joys of restoring an old building is discovering items that illuminate the past. We often find ourselves asking: Why did they build it this way? What is this? How did it work?

We demolished the carriage house three years ago. It was built in 1888 according to the signature of the builder, Mr. Koon, on the back of a stairway. We initially had hopes of saving the structure, but wind and water made the decision for us, and it collapsed before we could secure it.

As we made our way through the rubble, a strange device appeared in the basement, pictured below. For a long time, we had no idea of its use. Then I remembered seeing something like it as a child at an old, decrepit Adirondack hotel. It was a gas generator. There were some intermediate steps between Abe Lincoln, reading books by candlelight, and modern day electricity.



Acetylene gas can be generated by mixing carbide with water. In the device pictured, there is a diamond shaped cone that served as a hopper for the carbide. A valve just below opened to let the carbide drop into the barrel of water. Acetylene gas was produced and collected in the upside down barrel to the right. The gas was then filtered through the small cylinder and piped to the house. It produced a bright flame, brighter than propane or kerosene. There was some danger of explosion, which may explain why the generator was installed in the carriage house. Carbide-acetylene lights were also used for bicycles, motorcycles, miner head lamps, signal lanterns and lighthouses.

Sometime later, according to Dave White, a Delco Light Plant was installed at Opendore. Delco began selling these units in 1916, six years after Isabel

Howland had made extensive renovations to the house she inherited from her parents.

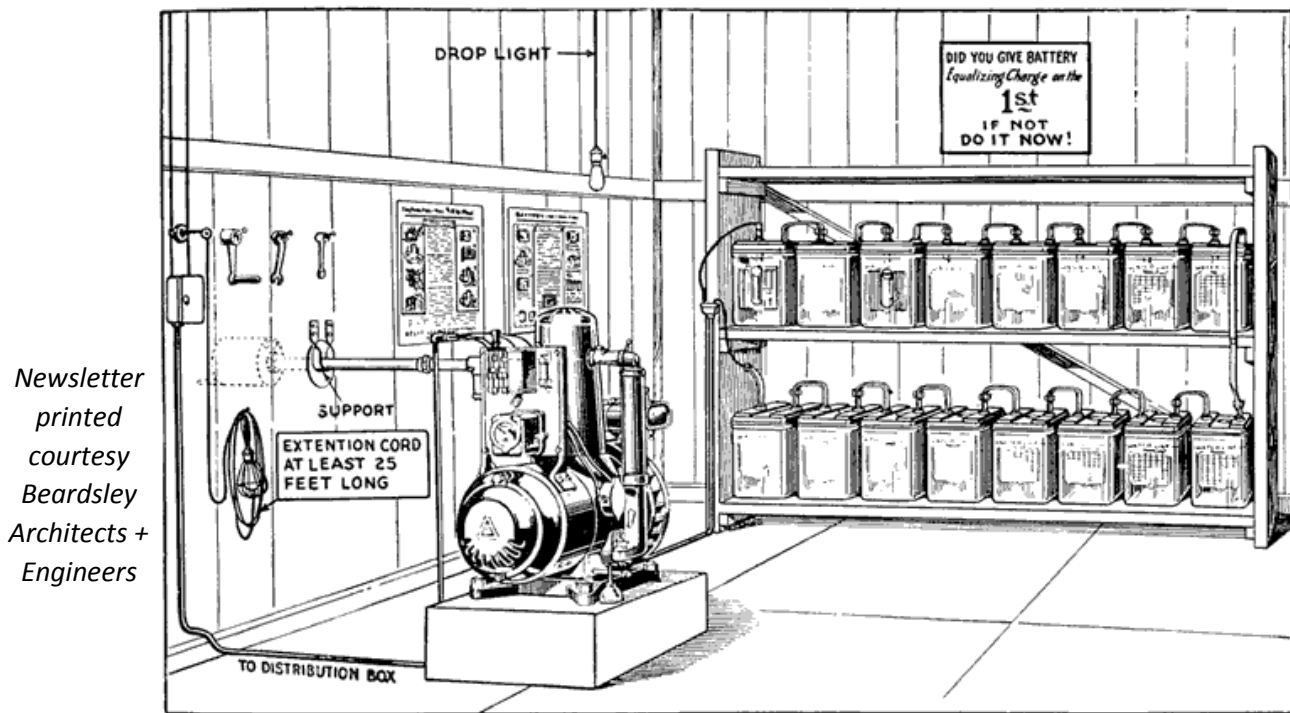
The Delco system was a 32 volt D.C. household system that provided power for lighting and other purposes. The generator was run by a motor, fueled by either gas or kerosene, with a bank of batteries to be charged by the generator. The generator started automatically when the charge in the batteries became low.

According to an ad, Model 625 supplied 600 watts to light house and barn, pump water, and run farm equipment. In advertising directed especially to women, Delco claimed that a unit could operate a washing machine, iron, refrigerator, vacuum cleaner—even a radio! By 1921, there were 135,000 “satisfied users,” with 25 styles and sizes selling from \$250 to \$1675. Model 625 sold for \$295 in 1921 (which is \$4,148 in today’s money).

Dave White said that Isabel supplied street lights for the village of Sherwood. We found a stack of light poles alongside the carriage house which may have been used for that purpose.

It wasn't just the wealthy who bought Delco systems. Area farmers also had them, according to Dave. It must have been an improvement over pumping water by hand and milking by kerosene lantern. Down in Poplar Ridge, I understand that Alfred Simkin, owner of Simkin hardware, had a generator in his basement that produced electricity for the neighbors, which was only available at certain hours of the day.

The Rural Electrification Act was passed in 1936 and a new model of electrical generation and transmission was put into place, raising protests among those who had invested in Delco systems. Under the new system, A.C. electricity is produced at huge generating stations and made widely available by high voltage transmission. It's convenient, yet tremendously wasteful, as a large percentage of power is lost in transmission. It's interesting that today, with solar and wind power, we are returning to point of use electrical generation.



Newsletter
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courtesy
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Architects +
Engineers

Fig. 299. Installation of a Delco-Light Plant, Showing Two-Tier Shelf Rack for Battery

MEMBERSHIP FORM - DUES (through Dec. 2019)

YES! I/We would like to support the ongoing restoration/preservation and educational programming of the Howland Stone Store Museum. (Since HSSM's total income is from donations and fund-raisers, your tax-deductible contribution is really appreciated.) THANK YOU!

Name: _____ \$15 individual
Address: _____ \$25 family
City/State _____ Additional donation
Phone: _____ Opendore donation
E-Mail _____ TOTAL enclosed

Make checks payable to **Howland Stone Store Museum, PO Box 124, Aurora, NY 13026**

Volunteer Opportunities—want to help?

_____ assist with programs or displays _____ assist with Grants/fund-raising
_____ greet visitors Thurs or Sat afternoons _____ assist with collection care
_____ volunteer to help work on Opendore Project as _____
(carpentry, painting, gardening, etc)