



**The Rensselaerville Falls**

## **THE EDMUND NILES HUYCK PRESERVE, INC.**

P.O. Box 77

RENSSELAERVILLE, NEW YORK 12147

# **NEWSLETTER**

(518) 797-3440

Winter

1982/1983

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## **A Message from the President of the Board of Directors:**

Dear Friends of The Preserve,

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I wish you all a Happy New Year, as well as an expression of appreciation for your ongoing interest in and support of the Preserve. The commitment of the Preserve as set down in the words of its founders was "to enhance the natural beauty and to protect the watershed"; it was done with the Rensselaerville community in mind, as well as the sum of its interested membership.

Since the beginning of this membership year at the annual meeting in August 1982, the officers and Board have made solid progress in an effort to streamline expenses and reduce overhead in these times of escalating costs. The Preserve office has been permanently relocated in the former kitchen wing at the rear of the Mill House. Located at the trail head to the falls, this will serve as both office and information center.

The front portion of the Mill House has been rented to Albany County Department of Employment and Training for its rural youth training center. The Preserve is glad to be able to play a part in the facilitation of this valuable youth program, which is being utilized by several of our own young people.

The Grevatt House has been leased as a year-round residence by the Richard Vincents of Albany, who are undertaking the interior rehabilitation of the house.

A young couple has rented the Ordway House for a year. In addition to the income received from these rentals, which can be applied to the cost of maintenance, the Preserve believes it is advantageous to have these community landmarks occupied by persons who appreciate this particular environment and enjoy sharing it.

We have gone out of the maple syrup business and have sold the Medusa sap house and property to Mr. and Mrs. Gary Hunt of Berne. We were glad to be of assistance to a local young couple involved in building a business and hope that our members will continue to purchase syrup from the Hunts at their Medusa building or through the Preserve, which will have it available for purchase in the office. The Hunts have lease rights to tap Preserve trees.

With the purchase of Bull Frog Camp, the initial construction work on Eldridge Lab., planned rehabilitation of Lincoln Pond Cottage, and increased Fellow activity, the area can be referred to as our "science center". As soon as weather permits, we shall begin the final stages of work to make the Eldridge Lab. operational. There will be a laboratory and small kitchen unit, as well as one or two sinks for the two research workrooms on the ground floor.

The Eldridge family has started a fund in memory of Lewis III. Friends of the family are welcome to make contributions to the fund in Lewis's memory. Contributions to the Eldridge



Memorial Fund may be sent to the Preserve office.

There has been some clear cutting of red pine stands along Grevatt Road and the corner of Pond Hill Road. The sections now closely resemble a plucked chicken. However, the cutting was necessary because of overplanting. In the course of time these densely packed trees grew tall, shed needles, and created a toxic condition on the ground below, which in addition to the lack of light, prevented any secondary green growth from coming up. This also eliminated the possibility of wildlife forage or refuge. In addition, the tall trees with green growth only at the top 8 to 10 feet had become a serious fire hazard. Many had in fact had died but could not fall. Upon being approached by a logger who offered to buy the trees for pulp, it was advantageous to proceed both from a financial as well as a conservation point of view. Within 3 to 4 years our native hardwood seedlings should take over the area.

Again our appreciation for your sustained interest.

Sincerely,  
Francis P. Coward, President

## A Brief History of The E. N. Huyck Preserve Trails

In my childhood, over seventy years ago, Lake Myosotis was then called The Pond. The Falls had no bridge at the top or bottom. One climbed to the top on the right hand side. If the trail became overgrown, my uncle, Mr. E. N. Huyck, would send a man in to do a bit of trimming. The path around the Pond was man-made by walking it. If walking one found a tree down, one moved it out of the way, and, if it was too large, one stepped over or around it. There was a spot on the far side of the Pond toward the upper end called the Sheeps Pen where farmers brought their sheep from the Hill behind to shear them and wash the wool.

When the land became part of the Preserve there was a Bridge put at the foot of the Falls and later at the top. The good footpath up was then on the left hand side. Once a year there was a "trail blaze;" the young people gathered with Winthrop Stevens as the leader and cleaned up the trails in the morning as they walked. When the work was done there was a picnic lunch and a beer party.

After Mrs. E. N. Huyck died, the trail was continued around Lincoln Pond. The trails were then kept up  
*continued...*

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## Preserve Staff

**Mrs. Deborah M. Gordon**, serves the Preserve in the newly created position of Business Manager. Mrs. Gordon, a resident of Medusa, comes to us with a B.S. in Agricultural Economics with an accounting minor. She has also completed some graduate studies in business, taxation, and personnel. Her major task has been to organize the Preserve's physical and financial house. Mrs. Gordon states, "The Preserve must be organized and efficient in order to be useful to the public, and to insure a vigorous ongoing program."

**Mr. Dennis Ryan**, Groundsman, is the Preserve's Jack-of-all-trades, and master of many. A life-time Hilltowns resident, Mr. Ryan offers mechanical experience, an understanding of motors and small engines, carpentry ability and chain saw operation. He is a self-starter and is quick to recognize what needs to be accomplished. "I enjoy working out-of-doors and like the varied responsibilities I have at the Preserve."

## Huyck Hikes

Lake Myosotis appeared to be full and flowing over the spillway as a group of enthusiastic hikers, led by field biologist, Charles Burt, enjoyed a winter Huyck Hike, on Feb. 6. The group identified deer browse areas, a stone fly emerging from a creek, white cedar, scats, tracks, and enjoyed many beautiful ice formations along the rock face at Hagaman's Falls.

Do join us for future HUYCK HIKES:

May 8, 1983, meet at Mill House, 9:00 AM, Spring Warblers, Guide: Charles Burt, field biologist.

June 5, 1983, meet at Mill House, 2:00 PM, Aquatic Insects and Small Fish, Guide: Art Newell, aquatic biologist.



# Welcome To New S.A.C. Members

The Board is very honored, indeed, to have the following distinguished experts to serve and guide the Preserve in its scientific research and educational pursuits:

Dr. Carl George, Dept. of Bio., Union College  
Dr. Edward Horn, Chief, Bureau of Env. Protection, D.E.C.  
Dr. William Keller, Educator  
Dr. Richard Monheimer, Dir., N.Y.S. Museum and Sci. Service  
Dr. Richard Park, Center for Ecological Modeling, R.P.I.  
Prof. Ronald Pulliam, Ecology, Dept. of Bio. Sci., S.U.N.Y. at Alb.  
Prof. Nancy Slack, Russell Sage College

Some important recommendations and goals from the committee are:

1. Improved involvement in activities that have high relevance to the scientific and host community, particularly that of watershed studies.
2. Increased cooperation with the Institute on Man and Science; and the endorsement of a survey of historical aspects of land use of the Preserve and environs.
3. An emphasis on a review of the last 50 years of the Preserve's activities.
4. A greater understanding of the impact of plants and animals of the region on the quality of water; understanding the quantity of water via modeling and other scientific studies.
5. Completion of a stronger research facility (at the Eldridge Lab.) and function (ie: better community use and understanding).

The members of this committee represent increased rapport with local academic institutions, increased use of the Preserve, and excellence in Preserve studies. Welcome and THANK YOU!

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by the late Ray Gifford and an occasional summer helper. Since they were done at regular intervals it did not take a great deal of time.

There have been times when the growth along the Falls has become so thick that it was necessary to cut it back so the Falls could be properly seen.

It seems to me the most important thing we can do to maintain the property so it can be enjoyed is to make every effort to educate the public to appreciate the wonder and beauty of nature in active participation.

Katharine Huyck Elmore

## Is It a Jackrabbit or a Cottontail?



Winter snow cover offers an opportunity for people to observe signs of many animals that inhabit the Preserve lands. In addition to the tracks of mice, deer, turkey, grouse, red and gray squirrel, weasel, muskrat, and other mammals, one may spot rabbit tracks.

Tracks of the well known cottontail are likely to be

found in fields and around brush, where it may find shelter and twigs to gnaw. You may distinguish their tooth marks from other rodents by size.

The snowshoe hare (jackrabbit) is well named due to the shape of its hind feet. You will find this larger rabbit (c. 8 lbs.) in forested areas.

Young John and Rebecca Rice were amused to spot a Giant Water Bug (c. 3") dancing beneath 2 inches of clear ice on Lake Myosotis on Jan. 1. Attracted to light, the bug swirled and walked overturned on the bottom of the ice. The bug feeds on insects and small tadpoles and fish.

The river otter, usually not commonly observed in the wild, left a carnival of tracks and slides around the top of the Rensselaerville Falls, as observed by John and Becky Rice, on Feb. 9. The mink may also leave telltale slides on a smaller scale, however, the sport has been perfected and enjoyed to the extreme by the otter.

Charles and Morgan Storms have enjoyed the beaver that have made their conspicuous dive and slap on top of the water, at the west end of Lake Myosotis. Now that the Lake is frozen over, where and how do the beaver winter?

Please report sightings to the Preserve office.



## YOUR PRESERVE MEMBERSHIP . . .

- Assures continued preservation of the flora and fauna of 1400 beautiful acres.
- Promotes continued scientific research of natural history.
- Fosters public conservation and ecological awareness.
- Entitles you to elect the Board of Directors.
- Receives the Newsletter and News Briefs.
- Offers "Huyck Hikes" to you.

### THE EDMUND NILES HUYCK PRESERVE, INC.

P.O. Box 77

Rensselaerville, New York 12147

Membership Dues: August 1982-August 1983:

Junior (17 yrs. or younger) . . . . .	\$5.00	\$ _____
Active . . . . .	\$10.00	\$ _____
Supporting . . . . .	\$25.00	\$ _____
Contributing . . . . .	\$50.00	\$ _____
Sustaining . . . . .	\$100.00	\$ _____
Patron . . . . .	\$1000.00	\$ _____

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please make all checks payable to The E.N. Huyck Preserve, Inc., and mail to the above address. Tax deductible: Annual report is on file and available through the N.Y.S. Department of State, Charities Registration section, or the Preserve.

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