

Friday, September 22, 7:30pm at the Starr Library, Eleanor Roosevelt with Anthony Musso

Eleanor Roosevelt became an admired and respected woman as she handled her role as first lady and later U.N. delegate with tenacity and commitment. But that was after facing numerous challenges as a child, being berated by her own mother and scorned by other family members. Her story and how she overcame self-doubt and withdrawal - from her birth through her death in 1962 - is the topic of author Anthony Musso's presentation "Eleanor Roosevelt: Challenges and Triumphs." Refreshments will be served.

President's Message Fall 2017

We ended our program season with two fabulous outside events. *The Stone Church* program in May included a history of St Peter's Lutheran Church, delivered inside the church, followed by an outside tour and narrative about the history of the cemetery and the schoolhouse. June's program, *A Tour of Rhinebeck Cemetery*, was much more than just a tour, with actors playing parts of some of Rhinebeck's former citizens telling about their lives. Both events were well attended, and can be viewed at RhinebeckHistoricalSociety.org by clicking on "Videos."

We have been very busy at the archives. Our volunteers continue to work on the massive and very rich Southlands Collection, on describing and scanning the earliest Rhinebeck Village minutes, on material from the Rhinebeck Garden Club—some of it on display at the Rhinebeck Post Office, and on photos and documents on loan from Bob Milroy's heirs. We have concluded the Astor Maps project and look forward to posting scans of that collection on our website.

A few months ago a descendant of the Schultz family stopped by on a visit from his home in Maryland with an two albums containing three centuries of family history that had been compiled by his great-grandfather. He allowed us to scan the 350 pages of the albums. The Schultz family included Revolutionary war soldiers, elders of the Dutch Reformed Church, and ferry boat captains. Schutzville and Schultz's landing on the Hudson are both a part of the family's history. The value of this collection to all of us here in Rhinebeck is that it demonstrates quite clearly the impact of the Schultz family on our community. I hope to have an article about this in the November newsletter and, perhaps, a talk next spring.

The summer is moving along and it is time to think about our fall programs. The last page of the newsletter lists the first three programs. I hope to see you at some of them and I hope that you have a great rest of the summer.

David Miller

The Miller-Starr Family and Rhinebeck By Jack Conklin

This is an article with two themes. One is the history of the Miller family, their wealth and contribution to Rhinebeck's culture, health and "way of life". The other is a story of an orphan girl, raised by a prominent historic Rhinebeck family, who married a member of that Miller family. When her husband dies, she returns to Rhinebeck and buys the old homestead, which has fallen on hard times, and restores it to its former grandeur. She will dispense vast sums to support her community, her church, and her special projects.

This may sound like a plot for a romantic Victorian novel, but it is actually the story of Mary Regina Morton Miller who married William Starr Miller. Rhinebeckians will recognize the "Starr" name appearing on two buildings in town, the Starr Institute building and the modern Starr Library.



Mary was the granddaughter of General Philip J Schuyler (1733-1804) of Albany. He and his wife Catherine Van Rensselaer (1734-1803) had 15 children. Their son Philip Jeremiah Schuyler (1768- 1835)

married Sarah Rutsen from Rhinebeck and took over the management of the Rutsen house, property, and mills on the Landsman Kill. Philip's sister, Elizabeth, married Alexander Hamilton, the famous patriot killed in the notorious duel with Arron Burr. Another of Philip's sisters, Cornelia (1776-1808) married George Washington Morton (1776-1810). Their daughter, Mary Regina (1806-1881) is orphaned at 2 years old when her mother dies, and raised by her Uncle Philip at "The Grove". This building is still standing on Miller Road identified by a Historical Marker naming it the home of Philip J Schuyler.



The Miller-Starr family is not as "historic" as the Schuylers but much wealthier. This family was founded by Reverend William Fowler Miller (1768-1818) and his wife Anna Starr (1773-1865). The succeeding generations of Millers kept the "Starr" name prominent through four generations. The Reverend, a Connecticut Yankee from Farmington, CT, and his Starr wife have eight children, four sons and four daughters. Their oldest son, William Starr Miller (1793-1854) will marry, on July 22 1841, Mary Regina Morton of Rhinebeck. William's brothers are Horatio Ray (1799-1860), George Norton (1805-1891), and Ephraim (1811-1888).

A quirk in the Miller genealogy has George Norton Miller (1805-1891) naming his three sons after himself and his two brothers. So we have William Starr Miller II, George Norton Miller II, and Horatio Miller II. To add to the confusion, George Norton Miller II (1857-1835) will name one of his three children, George Norton Miller 3rd. A researcher's nightmare!

The three Miller brothers were successful New Yorkers. William Starr (1793-1854), was born in Bloomfield, CT on 22 August 1793. He married Mary Regina Morton on July 22nd, 1841. It was the second marriage for Mary as she was previously married, in 1829, to John Sturgis. They were divorced in 1840. William Starr was active in politics in New York City. He was an Alderman and a Congressman of the 3rd District of NYC, from 1845 to 1847. He died in 1854 without issue, and was buried in the family plot in Green Wood Cemetery in Brooklyn. Two years after his death, on 6 February 1856, his widow, Mary R Miller purchases "The Grove" from five Schuyler descendants, all listed as living in NYC. The price was \$11,000 dollars. She will spend lavishly to restore the property.

Horatio Ray Miller (1799-1860), the second son, was a graduate of Yale, Class of 1819, educated as a lawyer, and was involved in "mercantile" pursuits according to his obituary. He resided in New York City. He died in April 12, 1860 and is buried in the family plot in Green Wood Cemetery.

The third brother, George Norton Miller (1805-1891) is listed in the New York city directory as a "merchant" living at 39 Fifth Avenue. He married Sarah Caroline Tucker Chase and the couple had three sons. It is this Miller who named his sons after his two brothers, so we have William Starr Miller II, Horatio Miller II, and George Norton Miller II. These three sons will all be involved with Rhinebeck. The 1880 census shows George Norton Miller (1805-1891), age 74, living at 39 5th Ave, with his three sons, sister-in-law Helen Chase and eight servants. His wife died in 1872. In his Will of 1891, he leaves \$100,000.00 to his sister-in-law, Helen F Chase, with interest to be paid during her life time, with the principal to revert to his estate upon her death. George died October 3, 1891 and was buried in the family plot in Green Wood Cemetery along with his brothers. His three sons are made very wealthy.

The three sons of George (1805-1891) – nephews of Mary Regina Morton Miller, are all connected to Rhinebeck's history. His oldest son, William Starr Miller II (1856-1935) was a graduate of Harvard and Columbia Law School Class of 1880. He married Edith Caroline Warren. The couple owned three prestigious properties in New York City, Newport, RI and Rhinebeck. In 1891 William S Miller purchases 104 acres from Lewis Fraleigh of Rhinebeck for \$3800 dollars. This Rhinebeck property is located near the junction of Primrose Hill Road and Ackert

Hook Road. On this property he will build a magnificent structure named “Castle Hill” along with a cottage for his brother Horatio Ray. The property was later called “Rock ledge”.



In 1921, the couple built a six story Louis XIII style town house at 1048 Fifth Avenue at 86th Street near Central Park. This property was later sold, in 1944, to Mrs Cornelius (Grace) Vanderbilt and is now the “Neue Galerie”, an art museum funded by Ronald Lauder and Serge Sabarsky.

Their third property, in Newport, RI, a French Norman style “cottage”, was named “High Tide” and was designed by the architect firm of Warren & Wetmore. Whitney Warren was a brother of William’s wife Edith Warren. Whitney Warren was also the architect for the Rhinecliff Rail Road Station. The Miller wealth allowed them to compete with the Vanderbilts!

When Mary Regina Morton Miller died in 1881 she left “The Grove” to Dr George Norton Miller II (1857-1935), her nephew. This George N Miller was a physician married to Katharine LeRoy Glover. The couple have three children, one son and two daughters; George Norton Miller 3rd, Helen LeRoy Miller, and Katharine Chase Miller.

Part of Mary’s estate goes to William and Horatio, her nephews and brothers of Dr George. Horatio, who was living in a cottage at “Rock Ledge”, was a generous supporter of his Aunt Mary’s projects. He never married and lived with his brother William most of his life. His name appears in support of the Starr Institute and the Church of the Messiah. He died on December 20th 1905.

During her lifetime, Mary was a generous contributor to many Rhinebeck projects. She started the Starr Institute which would become today's Starr Library. She supported the Episcopal Church’s missionary efforts to build the Church of the Ascension in Rhinecliff. She paid for the construction of the Minister’s parsonage, a Gothic Revival style house still standing and occupied on Grinnell Street. She also funded the Rectory for the Church of the Messiah. With Dr George N Miller and his family living in “The Grove”, Rhinebeck would continue to benefit from the Miller-Starr generosity.

In 1907, Dr George Miller formed the Rhinebeck Realty and Development Company with the stated purpose of preventing John Jacob Astor from buying more land around Rhinebeck. Astor had already acquired 2800 acres, owning property from the river to Mount Rutsen Road. The Rhinebeck Realty purchases included property that is now the location of the Northern Dutchess Hospital and the Dutchess County Fair Grounds. Their current use made possible through Dr Miller’s generosity.

Miller was a “mover and shaker” in the Rhinebeck business community. Here is a list of some of his activities.

Director of Dutchess Light, Heat & Power Company
Director of Central Hudson Gas & Electric Corporation
Founder and President of Northern Dutchess Health Service Center
President of the Starr Institute
Director of the Dutchess County Agriculture Society
Trustee of the Rhinecliff Memorial Library
Chairman of the Rhinebeck Republican Committee
Vestryman of the Episcopal Church of the Messiah
President of New York Post Graduate Medical School & Hospital.

Dr George N Miller died July 30th 1935, at Vassar Hospital, of injuries suffered in an automobile accident. He was 77 years old. The Miller- Starr families, spanning two generations, from orphan to philanthropists, made a large impact on Rhinebeck’s history, culture and “way of life.”

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The RHS is looking for volunteers to help in the local history room at the Starr Library. The room is open to the public on Thursdays from 10 am to 4 pm. Scholars and researchers come in looking for help with their work, and others send in research requests via email. Volunteers could either assist them directly or do so indirectly by working with the collections in our archives. No prior research skills are necessary. However, attention to detail, interest in history, delight in working with other people, and joy at solving puzzles are all most desirable. It is a great opportunity to learn about our town while helping others. For information call Mike Frazier at 845.876.7462 or e-mail michaelfrazier@earthlink.net.

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the lower level of the Starr Library in Rhinebeck

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THE RHINEBECK HISTORICAL SOCIETY - UPCOMING PROGRAMS

Friday, September 22, 7:30pm at the Starr Library, Eleanor Roosevelt with Anthony Musso

Eleanor Roosevelt became an admired and respected woman as she handled her role as first lady and later U.N. delegate with tenacity and commitment. But that was after facing numerous challenges as a child, being berated by her own mother and scorned by other family members. Her story and how she overcame self-doubt and withdrawal - from her birth through her death in 1962 - is the topic of author Anthony Musso's presentation "Eleanor Roosevelt: Challenges and Triumphs." Refreshments will be served.

Friday, October 27, 7:30pm at the Starr Library, Olin Dows' (1904-1981) Drawings, Photographs, and

Watercolors from WWII – Chip Holman, Director of the William Holman Gallery in NYC and Salt Point, presents Olin Dows' representations of the American army at war in Europe. As a participant in the Army Art Program, Olin Dows witnessed the invasion of Normandy with the 35th Division and endured the final days of the war in the Ruhr Valley in April 1945. Not only did the artist compose poignant and telling scenes of key moments on the battlefield, but he also was awarded a Bronze Star for capturing a group of German soldiers. This illustrated lecture offers another view of the artist who painted the murals in the Rhinebeck and Hyde Park Post Offices, and resided at Glenburn, adjacent to Southlands. Refreshments will be served.

Friday, November 17, 7:30pm at the Starr Library, Tales from the Dutchess County Ancient Documents: Crime and Society in Rhinebeck with Will Tatum

How did residents of eighteenth-century Rhinebeck react to suspicious deaths? In what ways did local slaves interact with the legal system? What were the consequences when a Lutheran minister horsewhipped his flock into the street? What fate awaited unwed mothers? Join Dutchess County Historian Will Tatum for a journey through the county's early court records, available online for the first time thanks to New York State Archives funding. These stories, drawn from the period 1721-1759, illuminate little-known episodes in the everyday life of early Rhinebeck. Refreshments will be served.

SAVE THESE DATES