

# FARMSTEAD NEWS

FALL 2010

## LET'S GO DEUTSCH

On Saturday, September 25th, Rhinebeck celebrated the 300th anniversary of the Palatines' arrival in the Hudson Valley by hosting the Let's Go Deutsch fundraiser and open house at the Palatine Farmstead. Some 75 visitors took advantage of the event to learn about this site, so important to early Rhinebeck and American history. Visitors were met at the entrance by a British soldier who provided security and kept a keen ear tuned for seditious behavior and rumors of tea party activity.

The house is dated circa 1727, since that is the year Frans Neher is recorded as beginning to pay taxes for property owned in Rhinebeck. Frans first appears on records in Rhinebeck as early as 1718, married Rebecca Kohl in Rhinebeck in 1724 and lived at the Palatine Farmstead site until 1762. The property transferred to Lodowick Elseffer, a Neher relative, and remained in the same family through eight generations until the year 2000. After the death of Mary Losee and the gift of the property by Rhinebeck Equine to the Quitman Resource Center, the Palatine Farmstead Committee has devoted enormous time and energy to restoring and preserving the site. As a result of very generous responses to our fund raising efforts over the past three years, our supporters have helped us match a \$35,000 grant to restore the circa 1770 barn. The event was not only an opportunity to celebrate these accomplishments and to share our progress on the house and barn with the public, but also to recreate through our exhibitors and volunteers what life was like in an earlier time.

Blacksmith Ron Rifenburg, his wife, Shirley and an enthusiastic 10 year old, Danielle Amidon, fired up the coals in the brazier to pound pieces of metal into shape. Danielle pounded 6 iron hooks and coat hangers. Trinity Weavers, Philip Nicholson and



**Ron Rifenburg and Danielle Amidon**

Hansheinrich Franzen demonstrated the art of weaving and displayed their beautiful creations.



**Trinity Weaver**

Diane Tso fried olie-koecken, an old German treat very like our doughnuts, to the great pleasure of those who were asked to taste them. The 18th Century Living History Encampment group had set up tents the night before the event, and added an aura of what life might have been like when the Palatine Farmstead was under construction.



#### 18th Century Living History Group

Archeologist Christopher Lindner and his Bard student, Eddie Aparicio showed where archeological testing was done along two sides of the house and talked about their discoveries. Tivoli artist Barbara Eichin shared some of her works that creatively incorporate fragments of discarded wallpaper that had once hung in the Farmstead. In the barn, Larry Thetford demonstrated the use of period farm tools. Musician Bob Lusk entertained us with a cittern and concertina, instruments we seldom hear today.



Musician, Bob Lusk

Elizabeth Joslyn and Kim Campbell demonstrated yarn making on their spinning wheels. Inside the house, butter churning and hearth cooking took place under the watchful eyes of Ellen Phelan, Erika Steubesand and Joanne Engle. Earlier in the day, Bob Hedges and Alvin Sheffer fired up the Dutch oven. Bob Hedges spent most of his time explaining work on the barn, but still found time to bake delicious bread to compliment the freshly churned butter. Visitors were delighted with the cider and the various stews, provided by Joanne Engle and Margy Hedges. Town Historian, Nancy Kelly in period costume shared her insights into the early history of the house. A continuously running powerpoint presentation featured interviews with twenty individuals sharing memories of the last residents of the Palatine Farmstead.

#### 1770 DUTCH BARN

The end is in sight for completing the barn. The Farmstead Committee thanks those who made the barn preservation and restoration possible; New York State, Bob Hedges, the many volunteers, and those who provided generous financial support to match the New York State Grant.

The side aisle has been completed with the stone foundation; beams, the walls and rafters in place. The beams and rafters were shaped with an axe and then fastened in place with wooden pegs. A metal roof will be installed for preservation.

The barn floor is finished. When Alvin Sheffer was seen pounding the wooden pegs into the floor with a heavy mallet, his arm was already sore. 186 of these pegs have been sold. It's not too late to buy more pegs. Future plans for the barn include participation in the 2011 Dutch Barn Tour.

