

INSIDE THIS ISSUE



THEY LIVED HERE

Benny Goodman



A POUND RIDGE LANDMARK

The Nathan Slauson House



MODERN IN POUND RIDGE

Highlights from our exhibition ending soon

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE POUND RIDGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

FALL 2017

VOLUME XXXVI No. 3

# “The Greatest Generation”

November 11 is Veterans’ Day. Originally, known as “Armistice Day” to recognize the end of World War I, it now commemorates service in all wars. In honor of the holiday, we asked noted **newsman, writer and Pound Ridge resident, Tom Brokaw**, if we could use passages from his book, “The Greatest Generation,” for no one else has written more eloquently about this period in our history. He writes of his life changing experience on the Normandy beaches when he covered the 40th anniversary of D-Day.

“As I walked the beaches with American veterans who had landed there and now returned for this anniversary, men in their sixties and seventies, (men that are now in their 80s and 90s) and listened to their stories in the cafes and inns, I was deeply moved and profoundly grateful for all they had done. I realized that they had been all around me as I was growing up and that I had failed to appreciate what they had been through and what they had accomplished. These men and woman came of age in the Great Depression, when economic despair hovered over the land like a plague...They had learned to accept a future that played out one day at a time. Then, just as there was a glimmer of economic recovery, war exploded

across Europe and Asia. When Pearl Harbor made it irrefutably clear that America was not a fortress, this generation was summoned to the parade ground and told to train for war. They left their ranches in Sully County, South Dakota, their jobs on the main street of Americus, Georgia, they gave up their place on the assembly lines in Detroit and the ranks of Wall Street, they quit school or went from cap and gown directly into uniform...

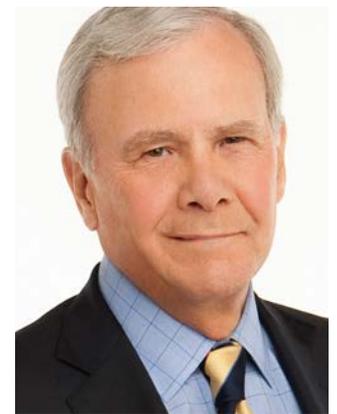
“They faced great odds and a late start, but they did not protest. At a time in their lives when their days and nights should have been filled with innocent adventure, love, and the lessons of the workaday world, they were fighting, often hand to hand, in the most

primitive conditions possible, across the bloodied landscape of France, Belgium, Italy, Austria. They fought their way up a necklace of South Pacific islands few had ever heard of before and made them a fixed part of American history... They were in the air every day, in skies filled with terror, and they went to sea on hostile waters far removed from the shores of their homeland...

“When the war was over, the men and women who had been involved, in uniform and in civilian capacities, joined in joyous and short lived celebrations, then immediately began the task of rebuilding their lives and the world they wanted. They were mature beyond their years, tempered by what they had been through,

disciplined by their military training and sacrifices...They stayed true to their values of personal responsibility, duty, honor and faith...

“They helped convert a wartime economy into the most powerful peacetime economy in history...When they couldn’t erase the war from memory they simply confined it there,



refusing to talk about it unless questioned and then only reluctantly. This is why I think it's so important for us to hear these stories now, to know what an exceptional time that was for so many and how much they sacrificed to give us the world we have today.”

*(continued on page 4)*

EVENTS

**Modern In Pound Ridge: 20th Century Architecture + Lifestyle will be closing on November 19.**

Don't miss seeing this ground breaking exhibition. Never before have we celebrated this aspect of

our history. If you haven't already, stop at the Pound Ridge Museum, Saturdays and Sundays from 2-4pm,

or request a special appointment by calling 764-4333. (Please provide ample notice.)

ENDS 11/19

EVENTS

# “Modern In Pound Ridge”

Here are a few highlights from this year’s exhibition, “Modern In Pound Ridge: 20th Century Architecture + Lifestyle” – which runs through November 19 at the Pound Ridge Museum.

*Pictured (left-to-right, top-to-bottom): Jennifer Stahlkrantz (Exhibition Chair) welcoming all to the exhibition opening; Carol Kurth (Exhibition sponsor); furniture loaned by Paula and Ira Resnick and Carol Kurth; David Hutchinson (lectures on “The Origins of Color in Modernist Architecture,” at Lionheart Gallery); visitors from Australia, admiring the furniture loaned to us by Elizabeth Miller and Alan Melting; Joan Goldberg (shared mid-century memories in our video); Deborah Golden (of Golden Hands Moving, generously transported our precious mid-century pieces); Tom Andersen and Gina Federico (Exhibition curators); Carol Cioppa (Landmarks Chair) and friends at the preview party; Randall Parker (daughter of Jack Faxon, a designer-builder, responsible for many modern homes in town).*



EVENTS

**Lecture by Chuck Griffith**  
**“Before There Was Mid (20th) Century Modern, There Was Mid (19th) Century Modern”**  
 Pound Ridge Library  
**November 9**  
**7:30pm**

Chuck Griffith will present an extensive talk on the Shakers, their history and lifestyle and their timeless designs.



Chuck started making furniture in 1968 and became interested in the Shakers in the mid-1980s. He learned how to hand-cut dovetails and make Shaker oval boxes at Canterbury Shaker Village in New Hampshire. His work has appeared multiple times in *Fine Woodworking* magazine, and the magazine held a Shaker furniture competition in 2009, which Chuck won. He now makes furniture on commission. You can view his work at [www.shakertofit.com](http://www.shakertofit.com).

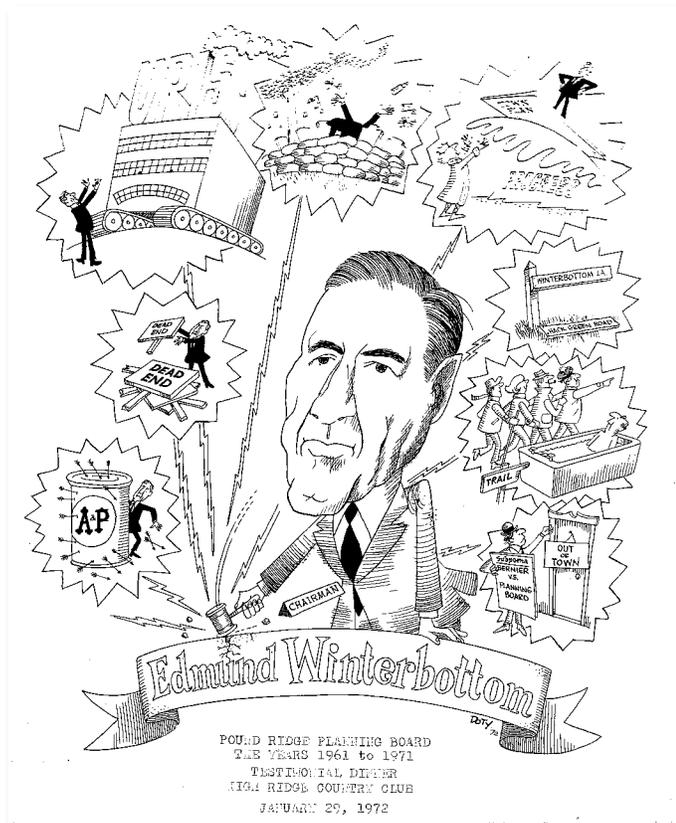


# What's in a Name? Winterbottom Lane

by Ed Condon, Pound Ridge Town Historian

Most road names in Pound Ridge have a genesis in our historic past. Some are named after famous or distinguished individuals or families such as Major Lockwood, Fancher Road and Scofield Road. Others for places, landmarks or past industries: Stone Hill Road, Old Mill River Road, Old Church Lane and Indian Hill.

Uniquely, Winterbottom Lane was named after Edmund Winterbottom, an Economist for a conglomerate in NYC who moved to Pound Ridge in 1957. Ed joined the Planning Board in 1961 and became its chairman in 1964 serving until 1971. During a time of major development in Pound Ridge, Ed, a strong advocate for the environment, used the limited powers of the Planning Board to preserve the character of the town. Open space planning, preservation of wetlands and completion of the town master plan were only a few of his challenges and accomplishments.



A drawing to honor Ed's long service to our town.

In no small way, Pound Ridge has remained the town we have today through the efforts of unpaid citizen volunteers like Ed Winterbottom. Although Ed favored historically based names for new roads, he was deemed an historic person and so, Winterbottom Lane became part of his legacy.

As we celebrate the "Modern" side of Pound Ridge, note that Winterbottom Lane is an enclave of 20th Century modern homes. ■

# They Lived Here

By Gail Keene, Trustee

Some were renters or guests; some were homeowners. Some lived here part time (summers or weekends), and some lived here year 'round. You know their names and you may have seen some of these faces in town. These are people who could have lived anywhere in the world, but they chose Pound Ridge to call home.

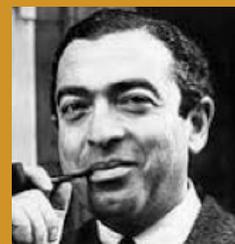
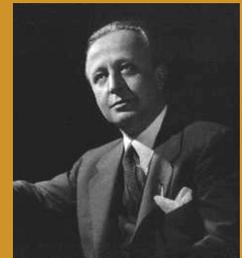
The following residents made the hills in Pound Ridge come "alive with the sound of music."



**BENNY GOODMAN** The incomparable jazz clarinetist, Benny Goodman, known as both the "King of Swing" and the "Rajah of Rhythm," was a longtime Pound Ridge resident. His January 16, 1938 concert at Carnegie Hall was touted as "the single most

important jazz or popular music concert in history: jazz's 'coming out' party to the world of 'respectable' music."

**HOWARD BARLOW** If you are old enough to remember "The Voice of Firestone" (1928-63) on radio and television, then the name of conductor Howard Barlow will ring a bell. What you may be surprised to learn is that he lived in our town for 30 years. Mr. Barlow was the recipient of the National Associations for American Composers and Conductors award as "the outstanding native interpreter of American music." In his words: "Music, good music, is the vitamin of the soul."



**JERRY BOCK** American musical theater composer, Jerry Bock, and lyricist, Sheldon Harnick, created some of Broadway's most beloved shows, such as "She Loves Me," "Fiorello," and the iconic "Fiddler on the Roof" – which garnered the duo a Tony for Best Composer and

Lyricist. You don't have to be a "rich man" to appreciate Bock's contributions to the musical scene.

**TOBIAS PICKER** "Toby" Picker attended Pound Ridge Elementary School, began composing at the age of eight, and received his first commission in his teens. Toby has not limited himself to any specific musical category. Performed by the world's leading orchestras and opera house, his compositions range from symphonic and chamber music, song cycles and concertos to opera. Experience his haunting "Old and Lost Rivers" on YouTube. ■



# Pound Ridge & “The Greatest Generation”

*Here in stories and photos are memories of our town’s “Greatest Generation.” 124 men fought in World War II. Today, only Bruce Heerdt and Dorin Seymour remain to share their memories.*

## *The Leopoldville Disaster: Christmas Eve 1944*

18 year old, Charles Francis Wood left Pound Ridge to join his brothers fighting in Europe. Roslyn, the oldest, had received a Purple Heart, Stewart had been fighting since day one of the war. As replacements in The Battle of The Bulge, Charlie and 2,235 other infantrymen of the 66th Panther Division boarded “SS Leopoldville,” a Belgian luxury liner turned troop ship. With its sister ship, “HMS Cheshire,” they departed Southampton at 9:15 am for the 9-hour crossing of the English Channel on December 24, 1944. The boarding had been chaotic — the Captain spoke little English and conducted no safety drills.

Built to carry 360 passengers but with cargo space converted for over 2,000 men — steep stairways, low ceilings,

crowded aisles, no ventilation — the Channel rough that night. To escape the stench of seasick men, Charlie and a friend made their way to the upper deck and fresh, cold air. Then, only five miles from Cherbourg, the German submarine, U-Boat 486, on its first mission fired its torpedoes. There was a huge blast. The Leopoldville shook violently and seemed to stop. Not realizing the plight of her sister ship, The Cheshire continued to the harbor. On The Leopoldville many of the men on deck didn’t understand what had happened and continued singing Christmas carols. But below decks, men were killed immediately — “steel beams and girders snapped like matchsticks” as compartments flooded. With the lights of France in the distance, on deck

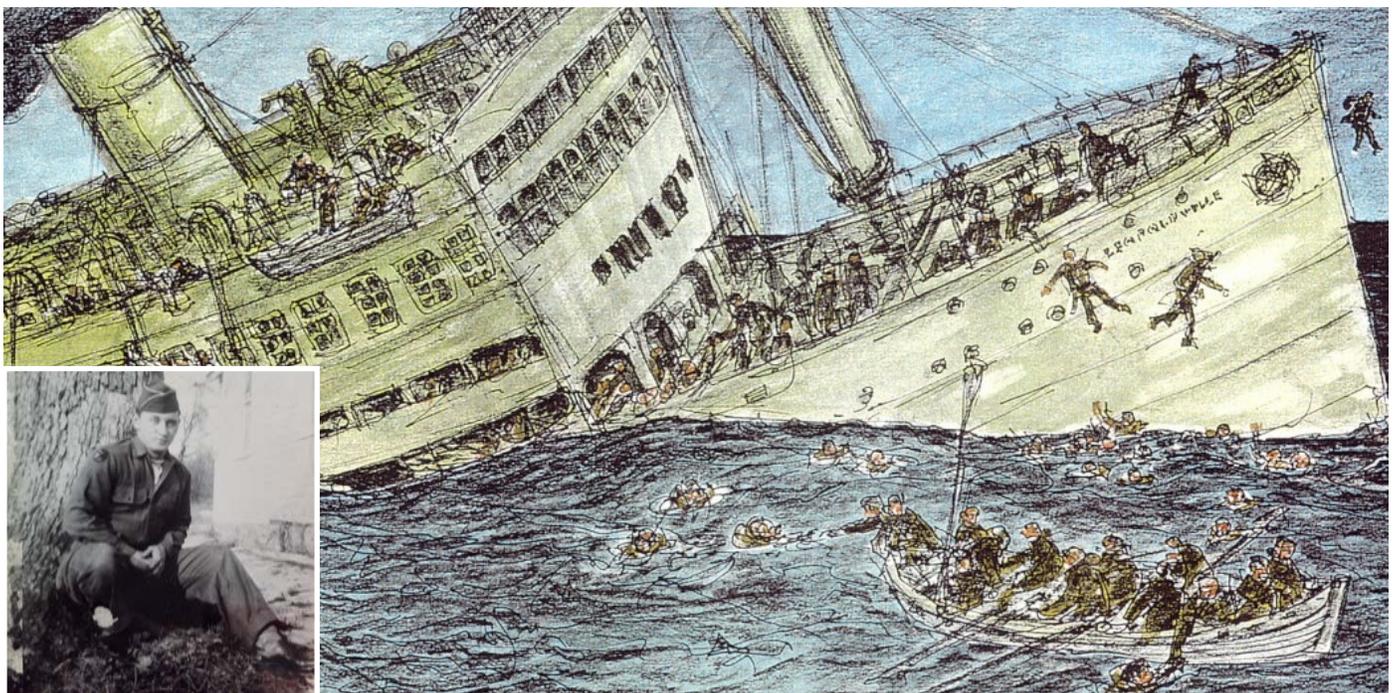
the officers assembled troops as best they could to await rescue. A British destroyer, “Brilliant,” came along side, and heaving wildly in the heavy seas, threw a line. As men made the leap for life The Brilliant, officers cried out, “jump lads, jump...jump you bloody fools, your ship is sinking!” The jumps had to be timed just right — some succeeded, others failed. Fully loaded, The Brilliant headed for Cherbourg. At 8:30 pm 1,000 troops still awaited rescue...another explosion...chaos...every man for himself, swimming to get away from the suction of the sinking ship...The Leopoldville standing on its stern...sank very fast...men still on board. After a few minutes, silence. The fortunate were rescued and taken to French hospitals and treated for shock and hypothermia.

819 men lost their lives that night. Fearing the Germans would make the disaster public, the allied command swore the survivors to secrecy for 50 years and official reports were classified. The telegrams, sent to the families of the men that died, stated at first, “Missing in Action” — months later, “Killed in Action in the European area.”

Charlie made it home to Pound Ridge and served as our Superintendent of Highways for many years.

At the end of the 50-year wall of silence, many U.S. Governors, including New York’s George Pataki, issued proclamations honoring the men of The Leopoldville.

*The preceding is based on Charlie Wood’s rare conversations with family, internet sources, the book, and numerous television documentaries.*



*A number of the following memories were gathered as part of an Historical Society exhibit, "I'll Be Seeing You: Remembrances of World War II," curated by Trustee Cornelius Kelly in 1991. As Mr. Kelly pointed out, "The war, in reality, was not so far away. It was as close as the dreaded telegrams from the War Department... It changed America, and it changed Pound Ridge."*

"All of us were involved in some form of War Effort Work. Some would roll bandages, others would man telephones for the air-raid warning service in the one room schoolhouse, which has now grown into the Hiram Halle (Pound Ridge) Library. We even slept there at night..."

*Robert Uhry*



"My husband, Carlton Waters, and I owned and operated the Scott's Corner Market during WWII...It was difficult to carry on business during war-time because of shortages — especially meat and gasoline. Everyone had ration books of stamps and was allowed only so many a month...I made a list of all our regular customers and saw-to-it that each one got at least some meat every week... we even tried horse meat, but no one liked it."

*Edith Waters*



"At this time we lived up on Trinity Pass, and we had a large "Train Bell" that we were to ring in that area in case of an alarm warning. All bits of white paper were to be picked up — namely cigarette stubs. Shades had to be drawn at night. Gas was rationed and we walked to places whenever possible."

*Beverly Bender*



"For folks in town, happiness came in various ways... like finding a Christmas wrapped bag of sugar under the tree!...or sharing one's red meat stamps for a needy person."

*Lillian B. Breuninger*



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**Pictured (opposite page):** A rendering of the "SS Leopoldville" disaster (inset: Charlie Wood); **(this page: top-to-bottom, left-to-right):** Beverly Bender; Francis "Bill" Marshall; Bob Uhry; The Pound Ridge Library as local Red Cross branch; Edith Waters' gasoline ration card; the dedication of WWII memorial in front of Conant Hall.

## A LANDMARK

# The Nathan Slauson House

Trinity Pass  
Pound Ridge NY  
Built Circa 1780  
Landmarked in 2013

By John Kelly, the current owner, based on research by Richard Major, former Town Historian and former President of The Pound Ridge Historical Society.

Nathan Slauson states in his application for a Revolutionary War pension that he moved to Pound Ridge in 1779 from New Canaan Ct. Though the construction of the house may have started at that time; the date of the construction is placed at the time of his marriage to Hannah Ferris in October, 1782.

The house is a traditional center chimney house with a fireplace on either side – now the dining and living rooms. The second floor was probably a half-story. There were alterations and additions over the years including another house joined to the original. Nathan purchased the property of 140 acres from the heirs of Gov. Thomas Fitch of the Connecticut Colony and Captain John Raymond of Norwalk. The land was north of the intersection of Old Mill River Road and Trinity Pass (now much of it is under Trinity Lake reservoir). Wheat grew



**Left:** Vintage photo of the rear of the Slauson home taken from the barn.

**Below:** Horses and Riders; photo taken near the corner of Trinity Pass by the Mill River Bridge; note the open fields – now treed.

from 1776 to 1779. His service areas included Norwalk, CT, Mamaroneck, White Plains and Peekskill,

“luxuriantly” and was a temptation to the deer that “infested” the area. Deer so abounded in that time in this area that bear hunting became a pastime since deer were prized by the settlers.

Nathan learned the art of tanning deer hide and he made a suit of deer skin in which he was proudly married to Hannah at the Congregational Church in New Canaan.

In 1825 he sold some of the land on the northern side and was left with 60 acres, valued at \$13 per acre, for a total assessment of \$780 according to the 1825 Pound Ridge tax



assessment rolls. Nathan was a patriot and did six hitches during the Revolutionary War as a volunteer and a draftee

NY. All this came out when he applied in 1833 for a Revolutionary War Veterans pension.

He died at age 92 in 1844. Hannah died at age 97 in 1857, and it is reported that she did get the war pension after his death.

Nathan, you did well. Hopefully, your spirit will continue in the house you built.

The Nathan Slauson house history is on file at the PRHS. ■

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** At the end of Winterbottom Lane, there was a large field, known to old-timer's as Slauson's Meadow.



*The Nathan Slauson house today.*

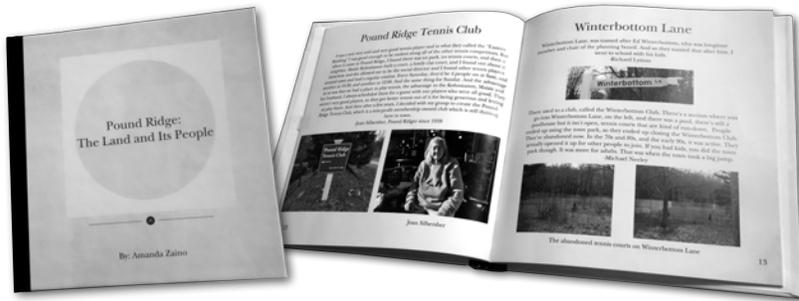
# Are you a student who's into history? Especially Pound Ridge history?

*Announcing the  
Third Annual  
Hiram Halle  
Prize Competition.*

We invite all Pound Ridge high school sophomores, juniors and seniors to compete for this \$2,000 scholarship award. Visit the Historical Society website for details. ■



*2017 Prize Winner, Amanda Zaino; below: Amanda's prize-winning project — "Pound Ridge: The Land and Its People."*



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## From the Archives

The Seymour brothers with their grandfather, Fred B. Scofield (a famous Pound Ridge basketmaker), as they left for the service (Frederick and Willard to the Navy, Houston to the Marines, and Dorin to the Army). ■

*The Seymour brothers, leaving for the war; taken in Scotts Corners.*



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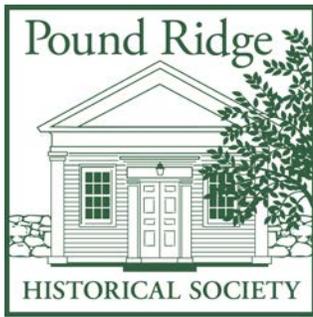
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# The Newsletter of the Pound Ridge Historical Society Fall 2017

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