

# THE ACCORDIAN

Volume XXXIII

A Publication of The Friends of Historic Rochester, Inc.

December 2022

## SINCE 1679 – DEEP ROOTS

Family of Jochiam Hendrickz Schoonmaker in the Town of Rochester

By Kathleen Gundberg

*From an interview with Jack Schoonmaker on August 7, 2022*

“My family came from Amsterdam, but we had to go to Hamburg, Germany to catch the boat in 1640. Hendrick Jochemz Schoonmaker, a Dutch immigrant (1624-1683), arrived in Albany known then as Fort Orange, and married Elsie Janse. Hendrick was an innkeeper and operated a tavern and was shunned from the Church because he would not close his establishment on Sundays. He moved his family to Wiltwyck (Kingston) where he became a prominent figure and officer in the local militia. His son, Jochem Hendrickz Schoonmaker (1655-1730), was captured by the Indians during the Wiltwyck Massacre in 1663 and was tortured and disfigured by them. In 1679 Jochem Hendrickz married Petronella Slecht and moved to the Town of Mombaccus (later to be named Rochester) and established a homestead there in 1680. The first house built by Jochem may have been just east of Garden Lane on the banks of the Rondout Creek. There is still a foundation there. Petronella died within ten years, having given birth to five children. Jochem married for a second time in 1689 to Antje Hussey (1670-1752) of Marblatown and together they begat 11 more children. Their tenth child was named Joachim (1710-1789) and he would later establish a farm north of his father’s farm on a broad and fertile flood plain with some of the best land in the world. The family continued to grow and settle in the valley. Many old maps show numerous Schoonmaker homesteads.



*Schoonmaker family photos*

View of farmhouse and remains of canal ditch

The site of the accident that killed the husband of “Widder Schoonmaker”

“In 1703, Queen Anne of England conveyed a huge tract of land located from Accord to Port Jervis, through the Shawangunks and Catskills, and appointed three trustees, Jochem Schoonmaker, Henry Beekman and Moses Depuy to be in charge of the Rochester Patent. The Trustees were responsible for monitoring the tract and deeding parcels to new settlers. The Town of Rochester was established with a population of 334. At this point, the Lenape or Esopus Indians were living here and friendly to the settlers. The Schoonmaker family members were instrumental in establishing the Rochester Reformed Church in 1703 on the Old Mine Road (now Route 209). In 1709, Joachim served as the first Town Supervisor (1709-1711) for Rochester.”

**Does your name hold any significance or are there particular family names that you carry?**

“There were generations of Jochem Henrickz or Henrick Jochem, with many spelling variations for Joachim: Joakim, Jochum, Jochemesz, etc. In the middle of the 1700s, the Schoonmaker family was involved in the fight to gain independence from England. Wheat was grown on the farm that was sent to feed George Washington’s troops and horses. Schoonmaker men served as Minutemen and as leaders, some having the rank of Captain. Sybil Ludington, a 16-year-old family member of the Schoonmakers, was put on horseback by her father, Captain Ludington. She rode courageously through Putnam County to warn the neighboring Minutemen that the British were coming. Some say she was more heroic than Paul Revere. My middle name is Ludington after her”.



On April 26, 1777, Sybil Ludington rode her horse, Star, 40 miles (64 km) through the night in Putnam County, New York to warn approximately 400 militiamen under her father's command that British troops were planning to attack Danbury, Connecticut, where the Continental Army had a supply depot.

Statue location: Carmel, New York

“In 1787 Joachim’s son, Jacobus, built a two-story brick-fronted stone house. It was completed two years before Joachim died. It had a full basement, 2 floors, 6 fireplaces, full attic and wide hardwood floors. Trusses in the attic are all numbered. Only a few other stone houses in the Rondout and Wallkill valleys were designed in this distinctive manner, in particular the Dewitt Hasbrouck (Gazlay) House at the intersection of Route 209 and Boice Mill Road, the Joseph Hasbrouck House in Guilford, which burned around 1850, and the Ezekiel Elting House on Huguenot Street in New Paltz. Aside from the smoke house, this is the oldest building on the farm”.



Homestead c. 1880.



Smokehouse

“Fortunate for the Schoonmaker family, in 1826 there was interest in building a canal from the coal fields in Pennsylvania to the village of Rondout on the Hudson River. Prior to 1826 there was an energy crisis in NYC because of a shortage of trees to cut down for firewood, and there was a need to get coal to the city. Within 20 feet from the house was the future route of the D&H Canal. The Wurts brothers got the idea (from the Erie Canal) to build a canal from Honesdale PA to Rondout. A company was formed, stock sold on the NY stock exchange, and was up and running in less than five seconds. There was a total of 103 miles of canal and 103 locks. This project took 3 years to build, and would financially help the Schoonmaker family. The canal was constructed 20 feet behind our house on its way from Port Jackson (now Accord) to Alligerville. The Canal gave the farm an opportunity to supply feed and housing for canawlers and mules. Soon after 1829, my great-grandma Louise Schoonmaker opened a store in the basement of our home. She sold our produce and family staples.” In those days, staples such as sugar flour, tea, etc. were shipped in 100-pound cloth bags; (one is framed in the family kitchen, on it says: # 138- Mrs. L Schoonmaker- P.Jackson. Her dock)

Around 1840, part of the original property was sold to Mr. Isaac Moule. “My family never mentioned why the sale, but it was suggested that perhaps there was a marriage between the families. Around 1915, Daniel Schoonmaker bought back the land from Charles Moule.”

In the winter of 1879, unfortunate tragedy struck the family. Jack’s great grandfather, Joachim, was driving a team when the horses got spooked and ran off, ending up in the frozen canal, Joachim drowned. His wife Louise was left to farm the land with her two young sons, Daniel (Jack’s grandfather) and Alton. “It could have been the end for us, but she kept it together. During this time, it was rare that a woman ran a household alone, let alone a farm and business, but she was all business. She would sit on the porch and watch the men working and know who put in an honest day’s work. This was a striving business time for the Schoonmakers. Louise was so well known and respected that, when she would enter a place of business, men would take their hats off and salute her. This was before woman’s suffrage. She was known as “Widder Schoonmaker.”

Farm life was a lot to handle for Louise, so she sold some land and the other house on the property to the Davenport family. This began a long friendship and business relationship with the Davenport and Schoonmaker families. Walt and Ira Davenport lived up the lane, and the two families agreed to never take a customer nor an employee from one another.



The business success of each relied on the other. The Schoonmaker and Davenport families raised vegetables on the 100-acre lowland behind their houses. “These acres were ploughed by horses, tilled by horses, planted in one-foot rows with a hand planter for seeds, a push hoe, and on your hands and knees for weeding. Produce was pulled, cut, washed, packed



and shipped to the Borscht Belt. I wouldn't be where I am today if it wasn't for Gordon Davenport; they would help with everything I needed," Jack said.

"The product line for the Schoonmakers included everything from asparagus to zucchini. Shipping produce out was a very productive time for the farm, as the tradition started in 1898. Daniel delivered farm produce daily to Mohonk Mountain House with a horse and wagon. He also made weekly deliveries to Kingston. He was 25 years old when the canal closed and the O & W Railroad opened from Wurtsboro to Kingston. This was a very important era for business in the Rondout Valley. Along with freight in and out, including agricultural products, passenger cars brought weekend and summer guests for the many boarding houses. For transportation of fresh agricultural produce, the railroad built special refrigerated cars cooled with ice. Cars were left for the Walt Davenport Farm, Ben Schoonmaker Farm and the Louise and Daniel Schoonmaker Farm. The cars were parked on sidings at the Accord station at 10 am and picked up by 2:00pm by the afternoon train. This gave the families time to load the cars with fresh products. Once those were loaded, Daniel was off to Wurtsboro and Parksville where a member of the family would stay the summer months to sell produce to local Jewish merchants".

"Louise passed on March 5, 1923 and at her final farewell the O & W Railroad added special trains from Ellenville and Kingston to Accord for folks wanting to pay their last respects to her. Son Alton moved to Arizona. Daniel stayed on the family farm and married Minnie Krom in 1898 who gave birth to a son, John Schoonmaker, in 1902 who would be Jack's father. Daniel and Minnie also had 2 girls, Marion (1904) Schoonmaker- Sahler and Anna (1908). Daniel served as Town Supervisor and Highway Superintendent for the Town from 1910-1915. He was a loyal supporter of the Ulster County Farm Bureau and was known as one of the most prosperous and energetic farmers of his time".

"Dan loved flowers. In the Fall of 1923 he built a greenhouse. He traveled to Ellenville to purchase a heating system. (The foundation is still visible today from the main house.) On the trip, Dan contracted Quinsy Sore throat. The treatment back then was to bleed a patient by a cut to the throat. Dr. Carter came from Accord by horse and buggy and performed the procedure. However, before Dr. Carter even returned to Accord, Dan passed away, on December 14, 1923".

"Dan's son, John, would go on to graduate from Cornell College and come home to farm the land with his mother, Minnie, and two sisters, Marion and Anna. By the 1930s, farming was moving towards the dairy industry. My Dad could look at a cow and know which ones to take home from an auction," Jack said. "He was one of the first prominent dairymen in the Rondout Valley. His was the first certified herd and to, maintain breeding standards, he organized the Rondout Bull Association."

John and Helen Jones (1905) were married in 1932 and together had John Jr., known to many as Jack, in 1933 and George in 1935.







***The Schoonmakers of old: left to right, Minnie Schoonmaker, daughter Anna, son John, daughter Marion and Minnie's husband Daniel. Minnie and Daniel are the grandparents of Jack Schoonmaker, who works the farm today.***

**Jack, tell us a little bit about your childhood? What was it like growing up in the Town of Rochester?**

“I was diagnosed with Polio at the age of 4 and was paralyzed from my hips to my toes. I spent a year in West Haverstraw rehab facility where Dr. Halloway (of Kerhonkson) would do hot towel therapy and massages, and I swam every day for exercise.”

Jack attended a one-room schoolhouse at Accord District 2 on Route 209 (the building next to A&M Hardware). “Each day there would be the Pledge, the Lord’s Prayer, Star Spangled Banner, and on Fridays we had to pick a buddy. I mainly hung out with the Countryman boys, especially Kenny, and Joe Honsee. I remember recess was at 10:30am and a wire fence separated the play yard from Route 209. I remember watching all the hobos walk up and down Route 209 with their stick and bindle pack. When the railroad came (1902), so did the hobos, sometimes just passing through to grab something to eat, or looking for work”.



“There were four of us boys on the farm, my brother George and me and cousins Frank and Jim Sahler (Aunt Marion’s boys). We’d walk 2 miles to and from school every day and worked while we did that. We would check traps, syrup and



sometimes would throw books at cars. Anything we did wrong, Jessie Decker would find out about it and phone our home. Our parents would know by the time we got there”.

“I remember when high school boys would come to work the farm. During breaks they would be sitting around and that’s where I learned how to swear, smoke and fight. Getting caught smoking led to my mom making us smoke the whole cigar until I was sick to my stomach. For the cursing we got FelzNaptha soap to wash our mouths out.”

**Any hobbies as a child/ teenager?**

“I began making maple syrup when I was 5 years old. I had a wheelbarrow and a milk can. During high school, my friend Brian Lawrence and I would tap about 500 trees and would make about 100 gallons of syrup. We would sell it locally as a hobby. It would keep us out of the bars. As a teenager, the roller rink on Main St. Accord (known today as the Accord Market) was the place to be in the ‘40s. We would play records and roller skate”.

**Did you always know you were going to be a farmer?**

“At one time I thought I would like to be a lineman for Central Hudson; it was an interest of mine.”

**Tell me a little about your mom would you say you are more like her or your father?**

“My mother was the youngest of 5; she was from Cottekill and never remembered her father. He died in an accident in NYC. My mother was all business, very serious all the time. My father would not have been as successful if it wasn’t for my mom.”

**When did sweet corn become the main crop of production for your family?**

“After WWII, sweetcorn was the main crop for the family. From 1945-47 there were 10,000 acres of sweetcorn in Ulster County and 98 % of production went to NYC. Local labor was hard to find. A lot of people didn’t come home after the war, so we had hired help mainly from the Jamaican, Bahamians, and Puerto Rican communities.



“In 1951 I graduated from Ellenville High School because there hadn’t been a high school established in town yet. I was accepted to Cornell University but needed a Regents diploma and I failed the English Regents. My mother wanted me to go to summer school but instead I worked the farm and had to decide between Oklahoma, Texas A&M and Michigan State. I chose Michigan because it was the closest. I came home at Thanksgiving and then hitch-hiked home that December. My brother George and I drove to Alfred State and interviewed and attended that fall. I became a social member with the ELKs, I led a fraternity. My second year at school I met Alice. (Daughter of Henry and Annie Clements who had a farm in Avon, NY.) The following December, Alice and I were married. I learned a lot from my father-in-law, Henry. He came from Ireland in 1924 and was a dairy farmer and had a heavy Irish accent, he called me Jeck. He didn’t say more than 3 or 4 words at a time but there was so much meaning behind it. The day we were married he said, “Jack she’s all yours”. Jack and Alice together had Daniel (1955) David (1957) and Diane (1958).



Jack on the Tractor



Internet Image

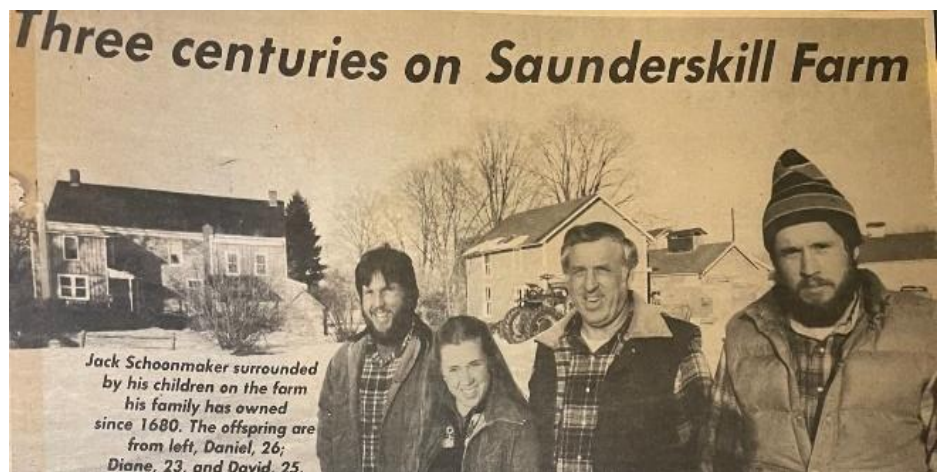
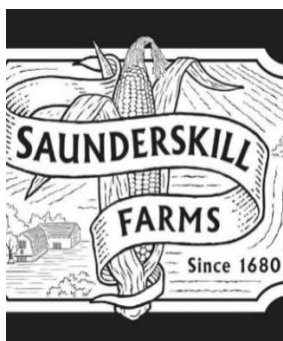
“In 1958 my father, brother and I invested in the purchase of 300-acre farm in New Paltz and moved the cows from our current farm to there where we milked 100 cows and operated for another 15 years. Financially things began to get tough. We began milking on this farm again and were in a financial nightmare. To this day, I thank Helen Brown from the bank; if it wasn’t for her, I don’t know where we would be. She gave us the loan we needed and when I asked why she said, “Because I believe in you”. We knew it was time to sell the cows and farm the land. Bob Davenport told me to put an ad in the NY Sunday Times for the farm in New Paltz. By 9am that Sunday morning I had a phone call from a gentleman wanting to see the farm. We sold the farm to Peter Bienstock. There was enough to pay off the debt and buy a Sap Evaporator and a Silo Loader.” Dairy farming for the Schoonmakers phased out in 1972.

**Where did you come up with the farm name of Saunderskill Farm?**

“After High School, Danny and David went on to complete 4 years of college at Delaware Valley College both majoring in Science and Agriculture. I wanted them to work the farm for one year and then we can talk about partnership, but the boys wanted us to be one third partners; every banker said it was stupid, but we did it and in forty plus years there has never been a business disagreement. When we were drawing up paperwork, the lawyer told us we had to come up with a name and Danny thought since the Saunderskill is the stream that comes off the mountain it seemed fitting. Both boys brought new science, education and fresh ideas to the farm life and things just took off from there. David worked the fields, Danny the barns and I worked the trucks and delivery.”

**I asked about the continued success of the farm.**

“There is so much responsibility that has led to our success, and the guy upstairs has a lot to do with it.”





**“We are a Tri Century Owned Farm.”**

“The Schoonmaker family farm is the oldest farm in New York State and believed to now be in the oldest in the United States. Jack stated that a family farm from Rhode Island had been the oldest at one time but believes that farm has since sold.” Because of this rare continuity, the farm was designated a Century Farm—meaning a farm in continuous family ownership for 300 years—by the New York Agricultural Society. “The success of the farm stems from adapting to changes over time. “This farm has seen 7 floods in its lifetime, the flood of 1955 almost put us out of business. The biggest changes have been in my lifetime on the farm, when I was growing up, we still did almost everything with horses just like in the early days. Now it’s tractors.” said Jack.

Son Danny and wife Cathy decided to build a Farmstand Market on Route 209 focusing on producing high quality flowers, fruits & vegetables. After two decades of success Dan and Cathy’s daughter Jennifer and husband Ryan have taken on ownership and management of the farm market.



Cathy Schoonmaker at Saunderskill Farms



Planting in the spring

Together on this family farm nestled back on Garden Lane, Jack and Alice raised 3 children, have 7 grandchildren and 12 great grandchildren. Their home is filled with three hundred years of family treasures, a collection of heirlooms and love. Could you imagine if these walls could talk?



(First Photo: Jack, Alice, Danny, David and Diane)



(Second Photo: Grandkids in the 1990s: Jessica, Scott, Randy, Ryan, Daryl, Renee, Jennifer)





Renee, David, Danny, Cathy, Jack, Alice,  
Jennifer (husband Ryan), Elouise



Jack and Alice

Alice passed away in September of 2020. She was incredibly proud of her family, its history and the history of the Town. She served as President to the Friends of Historic Rochester, member of the Historic Preservation Commission, Board member to the D&H Canal, President of the Ulster County Cornell Co-op Board, the Agricultural Labor Delegate to State Committee, New York Farm Bureau Women’s State Committee, Superintendent of Sunday School at the Rochester Reformed Church, Girl Scout Leader of the Accord Troop, member of the Rochester Reformed Church and sang with the church choir, and Town Historian for nearly forty years.

Jack still resides on the home farm. “There are seven houses within a stone’s throw. Most of the grandkids have built homes here.” Jack can still be found riding the fields with sons Danny and David, visiting the Saunderskill Farm Market, spending time with grandkids and great grandkids, and supporting his local community.



- Chain of Ownership of Joachim Schoonmaker Farmstead:**
1. Joachim & Lydia Schoonmaker, married 1730
  2. Jacobus & Annatje Schoonmaker, built existing stone house in 1787
  3. Joachim & Elizabeth Schoonmaker, inherited farm in 1820
  4. John D. & Martha Schoonmaker, head of household by 1840
  5. Joachim & Louise Schoonmaker, Louise proprietor after Joachim’s death
  6. Daniel E. & Minnie Schoonmaker, owned farm by 1920
  7. John L. & Helen Schoonmaker, owned farm by 1930
  8. John L., Jr. & Alice Schoonmaker,

*On August 7, 2022, Alice Cross and Kate Gundberg sat down to visit with Jack Schoonmaker, in the 1850s addition to the stone farmhouse built for Great Grandma Louise Schoonmaker. It was a rainy summer day. We sat having tea and cookies surrounded by generations of family photos and learned of the history of the Schoonmaker family. Much of the family lore came from Jack’s father (John), Grandmother Schoonmaker (Minnie) and Aunts Marian and Anna, and memories of his own. Some information gathered can also be found in the 2010 “Town of Rochester Historic Farmstead Survey”, Schoonmaker Family Library in New Paltz, NY, and February 21, 1982 article in the “Sunday Record.”*

# 2022 Historic Preservation Awards

Presented by the Town of Rochester Historic Preservation Commission.

The purpose of these awards is to encourage and reward historically sensitive renovations and restorations of historic structures in the Town of Rochester.



Wilton D., Nancy Purdum, Deb M.



Adam Bloom, Deb Medenbach, Bill Hoffstatter

**37 Upper Whitfield Road** – owner, Nancy Purdum; contractor, Roger Miller

**HPC rationale for the award:** Nancy removed unharmonious additions to the former Whitfield Schoolhouse and returned it to the original schoolhouse profile. She put deed restrictions to keep the exterior looking like a one-room schoolhouse into the future.

**Narrative:** A second story balcony was removed. New windows were installed that were similar in size and style to the originals.

**1078 Samsonville Road** – owner, Adam Bloom; general contractor and master carpenter, Bill Hoffstatter. HPC rationale for the award: Adam and Bill were able to bring back the exterior appearance of one of the last remaining. Located Ashokan Reservoir houses to its original front profile while updating the interior and replacing a later addition which was in poor condition.

**Owner narrative from Adam Bloom** – When you decide to acquire a home with historical value, it's important to understand the responsibility that comes along with the purchase. Bill and I agreed that this was to be a restoration rather than a renovation. We wanted to bring the beautiful but neglected home back to its original glory. (Look for the results in the March 2023 Accordion).

**Crested Hen Farm**, 607 County Route 6 – owners, Frank Macagnone and Keith Eddleman; architect, Robert J. Dupont; several contractors.

**HPC rationale for the award:** Frank and Keith put a great deal of time and effort into renovating and preserving the historic barn, as well as moving the lock-tender's cottage close to the barn so it would also be protected.

**Owner narrative from Frank Macagnone** – Our aims were to stabilize the structure that had been built in the early 1800s, while maintaining the original structure and charm. We changed our plan to to add large windows.

**Appledorn Farm Game House**, 4938 Route 209 – owners, Hank Heijink and Jolle Greenleaf.

**HPC rationale for the award:** Hank and Jolle carefully worked with their architect to align the addition with the original style of the game house, and incorporated some original features into the new construction.

**Owner narrative from Hank Heijink:** We love the existing house, so we worked with an architect who specializes in matching new construction to older existing structures. We used clapboard slats of the same width and color as the original, and copied the detailing on the side of the roof. We matched the placement and style of the original windows, and matched the interior doors and floors and fixtures to the original as best we could.

(See next page for images)



## Thank You Cards

Margaret Gold  
Gary Finger  
Linda Geiselhart  
Debra & Charles Berryann  
Linda Martin  
Peter Nelson & Sally Roy  
Rik Rydant  
Diane Schoonmaker & Patrick Williams

# ATTENTION

We are in need of help in research, writing,  
and producing *The Accordian*.

**Please contact:**

**Alice Cross: [n613a@aol.com](mailto:n613a@aol.com), 845-256-5587**

**Kate Gundberg: [friendsofrochester.org](http://friendsofrochester.org)**

### Friends of Historic Rochester, Inc.

P.O. Box 229, Accord, NY 12404

*The Accordian* is published four times a year. The subscription rate is \$25.  
A complete set back issues since 1987 is available for \$250.

Designed and Printed by: PDQ Printing  
Editor: Alice Cross

Copyright 2022 Friends of Historic Rochester, Inc.  
Photocopying or distributing of the newspaper in whole or in part by any  
means without permission is prohibited.

Please visit our website:

**[friendsofrochester.org](http://friendsofrochester.org)**

## Membership Information

Please check your address label to find the date for renewal of your membership. If it is time for you to renew, or if you know of anyone who would enjoy a new or gift membership, please complete the Membership Information Form below.

Basic Membership (Friends Circle) includes a subscription to *The Accordian*.

**Reminder: Basic Membership is now \$25.00.**

### MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION FORM:

Enclosed is my support for Friends of Historic Rochester.

- \$25 Friends Circle  
 \$26-49 Community Circle  
 \$50-99 Preservation Circle  
 \$100-249 Archival Circle  
 \$250-499 Cornerstone Circle  
 \$500+ Heritage Circle (Life Membership)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President – Kathleen Gundberg

Vice President – Betsy Tully

Secretary – Ashley Sweeney

Treasurer – Bethany Dennin

Membership – Ann Marie Moloney

Buildings and Grounds – Renee Ciardi

Editor, *The Accordian* – Alice Cross

Linda Martin, Lindsey Arnold, Jay Anania, Wilma DeJager

### ADVISORY BOARD

Robert Anderberg, Mike Baden, Barbara Mullins,  
Barbara Robertiello, Jack Schoonmaker, Beth Smith,  
Margaret Wright

Images in *The Accordian* are reprinted from the extensive collection of local history photographs at the Friends of Historic Rochester Museum, unless otherwise designated with names of individual donors.

---

FRIENDS OF HISTORIC ROCHESTER, INC.  
Post Office Box 229  
Accord, New York 12404

NONPROFIT  
ORGANIZATION  
US POSTAGE PAID  
NEWBURGH, NY 12550  
PERMIT NO. 8604

---

## **FHR Annual Meeting Program**

**“Navigating Segregation:  
African American Tourists in NY State and Beyond”**

***The Negro Motorist Green-Book (1940s)***

**Speaker: Dr. Gretchen Sorin, Cooperstown**

-----  
**Black Resorts in the Town of Rochester**

=====