

# News from the Farm

Spring 2021



## A Hallockville Founder, Estelle Evans, Dies at 102

When Estelle Evans died on December 21, one day short of her 103rd birthday, Hallockville lost a founding member, creator of the Museum Farm's woodstove cooking program and a long-time friend.

She was also the primary author of "Receipts and Reminiscences of the Hallock Family and Friends," a



heritage cookbook still sold in Hallockville's gift shop.

Born on her grandparents' farm on Sound Avenue in 1917, just down the road from the Hallock homestead,

Estelle was a font of knowledge about local history. She was not only a founder of Hallockville, she was also a grandniece of Emilie and Halsey Hallock, the last couple to raise a family in the Homestead.

As a young girl in the 1920s, she took piano lessons in the Homestead with Emilie and Halsey's daughter Bessie. She recalled waiting for her lesson in the sitting room with her Uncle Halsey, then in his 90s, who would tell young students how proud he was that his first vote for President was for Abraham Lincoln.

Estelle attended the four-room Northville School, walking a mile each way every day. "Boy, was it fun," she said. "We'd go through every deep puddle and all the highest snowbanks to see if we'd sink in. By the time we got to school, we were ready to sit down and pay attention."

On cold days, her parents would send her off with hot baked potatoes in her mittens. At noon time, the potatoes became her lunch.

After graduating from Riverhead High School, Estelle went to Cornell University, where she majored in what was then called Home Economics. She also took courses in plumbing, electrical wiring and even the sport of fencing. As a sister in Sigma Kappa sorority, she was enormously

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## From the Director's Desk

After a snowy and sometimes frigid winter, spring is upon us, with all of the promise it portends. Let's hope it includes both continued progress against COVID-19 as well as the return of some sense of normalcy to our lives.

Despite the pandemic's constraints, we've been busy at Hallockville. We had a great Country Parlor gift sale at the end of November. We also got through the winter with the help of several Coffee and a Good Book events, and we thank the Hampton Coffee Company for their support.

Our board member, Connie Klos, mastered the art of virtual Zoom gatherings and had us stitching our way through the coldest days. Her sewing classes will continue in the spring. You can sign up for them on our website, [hallockville.org](http://hallockville.org).

If you missed Beekeeping 101, watch your email inbox for the next series of virtual classes. Master Beekeeper Chris Kelly will help you master beekeeping in your own backyard.

The Hallockville Honeys, our bee sponsorship program on the grounds of Hallockville, had their first harvest in July, and the honey production was impressive. This year's sponsorships are forming now. Please call me at 631.398.5292 for more information and to secure your hive for 2021.

Our popular annual Spring Tea, either virtual or in person, will take place on Friday, June 11th. Our annual yard sale will be Saturday, June 26th, with a rain date of Sunday, June 27.

### Community Gardeners return

The Community Gardeners will be back by April 1st or earlier. If you are interested in your own plot for 2021, reach out to our program director, Herb Strobel, at [herb@hallockville.org](mailto:herb@hallockville.org).

Also, it's time for parents and grandparents to sign up their children for our summer day camp. Because of strict pandemic protocols, last year's camp was a great success and went off without incident, and we expect the same this summer.

Spring is the time for our Membership Drive and I would encourage you to continue your membership at Hallockville. Your support helps us daily. But equally important, it demonstrates to foundations and other grantors that we have the support of the community-at-large.

I have reached my first anniversary at Hallockville, and although we have had the craziest year anyone can remember, I've never been happier.

Getting to know all of you, understanding more about our collective life on the North Fork and learning more history than an AP high school class has all been just great!

Stay well and stop by to see us.

Roberta

# Estelle Evans

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proud that they had pledged an African-American student even though it meant decertification by Cornell.

A fellow student named Harold Evans, also the child of a potato farmer, worked as a waiter in the sorority house. He looked promising, and they were married at her parents' farm on April 22, 1941.

She and Harold helped operate and later owned the Sound Avenue farm while raising and educating four children. Both eventually also taught school. And when Harold's illness forced them to retire, Estelle brought in the



Estelle and her mother

last harvest herself, driving the truck while two longtime employees ran the potato combine.

She was also an active member of the Sound Avenue quilters, a group of women who got together regularly to hand-stitch heirloom quilts.

She spent much

of her extra time in the 1960s and 1970s organizing community opposition to various projects that would have totally altered her beloved Sound Avenue community, including a fuel desulphurization plant, a plan for widening Sound Avenue into a four lane highway, a huge harbor and industrial park that was really a sand mine in disguise and, finally, a proposal by the Long Island Lighting Company to place a series of nuclear power plants immediately behind what is now Hallockville.

When that project threatened a row of historic homes along Sound Avenue, Estelle became part of a group that in 1975 organized Hallockville, Inc. to save those homes and turn them into a living craft center. Several years later, Hallockville acquired the old Hallock Homestead.

Shortly thereafter, Estelle helped locate a working wood stove to replace the Hallock's broken old one. She then started the Museum Farm's wood stove cooking program that has become a favorite part of school programs.

Her remarkable heritage cookbook includes not only old recipes she collected from the community, but also quotes about the food from local diaries and journals and interviews with older community members.

Estelle called the book "Receipts and Reminiscences," purposefully using the word "receipts" in its archaic sense for "recipes." Typically modest, she refused to take credit for the book or put her name on the cover.

**For more about Estelle, including how to buy her cookbook and samples of its recipes, please go to [hallockville.org](http://hallockville.org).**

# Students to Help Tackle Farm Equipment Project

**Alfonso Martinez-Fonts, Hallockville's co-president, explains a new initiative and the part students at the Peconic Community School in Aquebogue will play.**

You have probably noticed old farm implements outside the the old barn and wondered why they sat there unheralded, unlabeled and unexplained.

A few months ago, Joe Dalimonte and Dale Moyer, co-chairs of our buildings and grounds committee, thought the same thing and decided it was time to make the story of this equipment available to people who visit Hallockville.

After all, they concluded, these machines were integral to a farm's success and their history ought to be told.

Each of these implements had an important role in a family farm's operation.

The one-bottom plow was used to prepare the ground for planting. There is a drop spreader and another type of spreader the Hallocks used to enrich their farmfields with animal manure.



There's also a sprayer, hay rake and binder-reaper.

But how old are these machines, who manufactured them and how were they specifically used? Lots of

questions and plenty to do, the sort of project that takes a team.

That's where Kai and Andy come in. Seventh grade students at the Peconic Community School in Aquebogue, they have been coming to Hallockville most Fridays as part of an internship program.

For the spring term, they were looking for a specific project that would both help Hallockville and combine elements of history, technology, math and presentation skills.

After meeting with me and our program director, Herb Strobel, Kai and Andy decided that a farm implement display project that Joe and Dale had in mind would be something they could sink their teeth into.

With assistance and direction from Joe, Dale and Herb, the students will help in researching the equipment, designing signage and assisting in constructing display stands.

They will also be creating on-line content for Hallockville's website to further improve the presentation of the equipment to the public.

Plans are to have the farm equipment displays ready by the time the warm weather returns,

**Photo: Horse-drawn manure spreader from the early 20th century.**

# Recent Clues Reveal Age of Homestead's Sitting Room



Halsey Hallock relaxes in the sitting room in 1939.

## Community Garden to Expand; A Member Lauds Experience

**Community gardener and new board member Susan Babkes extols her love of gardening and announces expansion of existing plots.**

For me, my garden has become my lifeline. I can get outside, get my hands in the dirt and know that I am growing delicious, healthy, and safe produce.

By all indications, organic home gardening has exploded, major seed companies have noted record sales and Hallockville's Community Garden has a waiting list for plots.

Happily, we are planning to add two to four plots to our existing community gardens. Equally fortunate, S&L Irrigation has agreed to provide a new line of irrigation necessary for our proposed expansion. Thanks, S&L!

Those wishing to sign up for one of the new plots may contact Herb Strobel at [herb@hallockville.org](mailto:herb@hallockville.org) or by phone at 631.298.5292.

## Yard Sale is June 26th; Please Bring Us Your Items

We will be holding our annual (socially distanced) yard sale on Saturday, June 26th, with a rain date the next day, Sunday, June 27th.

We'll accept gently used castaways at the Naugles Barn from 10 a.m. Saturday, June 19th, and Sunday, June 20th.

We're looking for kitchen goods, home décor items, small furniture, tools and equipment, antiques, collectibles, and arts and crafts supplies.

What we are *not* accepting are bedding, upholstered furniture, books (hard or soft cover) or children's toys. We're also looking for volunteers to help sort and set up.

For any questions or to volunteer, please contact Roberta Shoten at [Roberta@hallockville.org](mailto:Roberta@hallockville.org) or at 631.298.5292

**In this quarter's chapter on one of the Museum Farm's 18 historic buildings, historian and Hallockville board member Richard Wines writes about the Homestead's sitting room, including a discovery made by carpenters.**

When Bessie Hallock wrote an "Autobiography" of the family's Homestead, she thought that the sitting room was originally an 1830s addition on the west side of the 1765 main house and later moved to the rear.

However, in 2015, as Hallockville prepared to celebrate its 250th birthday, our "Tuesday crew" of volunteer carpenters pulled up the mismatched floorboards in the northeast corner of the sitting room and what they uncovered was evidence of a sharply different story.

The first clue was that the floor joists were notched for dust boards – small planks placed under the joints of the floorboards to keep the wind from blowing through, a technology that became obsolete after the Revolutionary War, when tongue-and-groove joints became common.

Another clue was a framing layout typical of half-houses common in the area in the 1700s. The front two-thirds of a half-house consisted of one room with a large fireplace on one end. The front door opened directly into the main room.

The back third was divided into two small rooms. This house was just eighteen feet on a side, 324 square feet in all – much smaller than today's average New York City studio apartment, but big enough for a large family back then.

### The real story

In other words, what looked to be an *addition* to the Homestead turned out to be the exact opposite -- an existing structure built earlier and the first section of what ultimately became the larger house that exists today.

We have no idea who built this smaller structure, but its origin seems to date to the early 1700s, when settlers were just beginning to move into the area.

All we know for sure is that the larger section of the Homestead was added to a smaller starter house, and both sections were there when Captain Zachariah Hallock bought the place in 1801 for his newly married son, Zachariah 2nd.

When Halsey Hallock married his first wife in 1860, the Hallocks moved this little wing to the rear of the Homestead to make way for a much larger new west wing.

Many modernizations followed. In the 1870s they raised the roof and added a Gothic dormer window. In the 1880s they covered the interior walls and ceiling with fancy woodwork then called ceiling board.

Similar woodwork, probably from Hallett Mill in Riverhead, appeared in many other dining rooms along Sound Avenue in the final decades of the 19th century. One final change came in the 1920s, when they replaced most of the windows.

Today, the only bit of the original tiny house still visible is one old window in the north gable end over the kitchen. Everything else has been changed.

The moral of the story? Old houses like the Homestead are seldom what they appear at first glance and often hide many layers of history inside. One must look for the clues!



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**Hallockville's Mission** To take Long Island back to its family farming roots and explore their relevance today.

**Our Vision** To create a vibrant, active and inclusive Hallockville community rooted in history and focused on the future.

#### Directors

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## Time to Sign Up For Summer Camp

Hallockville will again offer six weeks of farm camp, from July 5th to August 13th, including a *Juniors* program, ages five through seven, and a *Seniors* program, ages eight through 12.

We'll be building on the success of last year's camp season. Back then, the pandemic was wreaking havoc, and we were not certain that we would even be able to hold camp.

Fortunately, due to careful planning, strict safety protocols and the cooperation of everyone, including campers and their families, we were able to move ahead and finish the summer without incident.

Although progress has been made over the past year in addressing the pandemic, it is quite likely that most of the safety protocols in place last summer will again be followed in 2021, and we look forward to another safe and fun summer.

Detailed information, including camp program descriptions and tuition, can be found at [hallockville.org](http://hallockville.org). Multi-week and sibling discounts are available, and an early-bird discount will be applied to registrations made before March 31st. But don't wait too long to register. The camp is very popular and slots are limited.

**We want to make our camp accessible to a broad swath of the community's children. Accordingly, we are accepting donations to support tuition scholarships for deserving families. To learn how you can enrich a child's summer, please contact Herb Strobel at [herb@hallockville.org](mailto:herb@hallockville.org) or 631.298.5292**