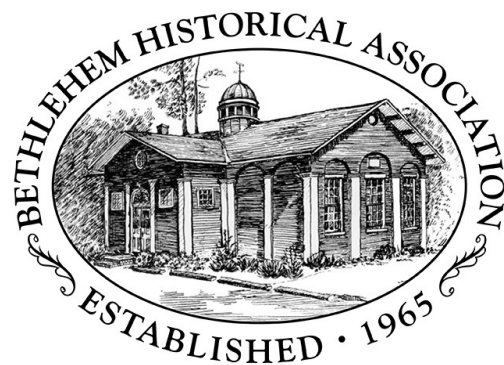


Bethlehem Historical Association

NEWSLETTER

Winter 2021



From Slingerlands to Chicago: A Drum Company is Born

By Bill Ketzner



The author with his Slingerland drum kit.

I bought my first set of vintage Slingerland drums in 2006, a modified “Modern Solo 2R” outfit made in a factory just north of Chicago, Illinois in late 1966. I didn’t mind that it had some incorrect hardware and the retaining rings had separated from the shells, or that the strainer on the snare was stripped. The serial numbers were close (meaning they likely came out of the factory as a set), and inclusion of the rare 14” floor tom and a wooden Artist snare drum meant it was probably a special order. Best of all, the kit was wrapped in green satin flame, which was used behind the teleporter deck in the original Star Trek series! Who created such incredible looking (and sounding) works of art?

In the 1960s, the soul of the Slingerland Drum Company was nurtured by a quiet, frugal, and strong-willed gentleman named Henry “Bud” Slingerland (1921-1980), whose family dominated the market in what is considered by many to be the golden era of

American-made drums. He was a “shrewd businessman and didn’t mind breaking a few rules” to

stay ahead of the game in production, sales and endorsees. I wasn’t too surprised, then, when a coffeehouse conversation with our esteemed town historian revealed that perhaps these character traits were handed down from his 6th great grandfather, Teunis Cornelisz Slingerland (1617-1684); Bethlehem’s own Dutch fur trader and founding father from Amsterdam!

Teunis came to America the early 1650s and managed a considerable amount of farmland near the Normanskill Creek, which is named after his Norwegian father-in-law, Albert Bradt. Like his 6th great-grandson Bud, he was a family man who was prodigiously business-oriented and “stayed out of court and out of the limelight,” traits he passed down to generations of Slingerlands remaining in the area who made their mark in local, state and national affairs. The name is so prevalent in town – with a hamlet and a historic district listed on the National Register of Historic Places running through it – that most residents never give it a second thought.

Our most famous is probably John I. Slingerland – abolitionist, Anti-Rent advocate, state assemblyman and U.S. congressman – who also worked to ensure the Albany & Susquehanna Railroad was laid through town (and it was, practically right past his doorstep). Then there is John’s brother William H., a civil engineer who also served in the assembly. He established the first post office in the hamlet of Slingerlands – formerly called Normans Kill but renamed in the family’s honor in 1860 – and brought a public water supply to residents with his Suburban Water Company, which was sold to the town in 1927.

But how do we get from our well-documented, centuries-old contributions to Bethlehem’s rich history to drum making in gritty, Mid-Century Chicago? Look no further than the American Revolution. As was the case with many families in that era, the war pitted siblings and cousins against each other – requiring either loyalty



Henry “Bud” Slingerland

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Slingerland Drums continued...

to the British Crown or the Continental Army declaring independence from it – and the Slingerlands were no exception.

Unlike his cousin Albert Teunis Slingerland (1732-1781) – from which our John I. and William H. descend – Teunis Anthony Slingerland (1723-1794) signed his great-grandfather's name to join the notorious Butler's Rangers, a provincial military unit led by Loyalist John Butler (sons Dirck and Garret



ABOVE: A soldier in Butler's Rangers wore a green wool coat, buff trousers, and a brass regimental plate on a round wool hat (Source: *Uniforms of the Armies in the War of the American Revolution, 1775-1783* by Lt. Charles M. Lefferts.) BELOW: A brass, sword belt plate.



joined as well). Historians detail the regiment's notoriously ruthless tactics in battle and hold them responsible for slaughtering hundreds of settlers during the Wyoming Valley and Cherry Valley massacres of 1778 by Iroquois forces. Muster roll records indicate a strong likelihood that our hometown boys participated in these attacks.

Butler and his men fought principally in Western New York and Pennsylvania but operated as far west as Ohio and Michigan. While Butler himself had a farm estate near here in Montgomery County, his militia's winter quarters were in Canada, at Niagara-on-the-Lake in Ontario. Teunis's family relocated there after the war and would remain for over a century, until Garret's enterprising young grandson

Samuel relocated to Manistee, Michigan around 1880, effectively trading Lake Ontario for Lake Michigan and returning to the United States in the process.

Samuel P. Slingerland (1840-1919) was a successful farmer with a keen business sense, and sources indicate he also supported his family with real estate dealings. Son Henry H. (1875-1946) inherited his sagacious character and owned a Great Lakes gambling boat. According to his daughter Marion he was a prodigious gambler, and this is likely why legend claims he won the Chicago Correspondence School of Music that would soon bear his name in a poker match, but records indicate he moved to the Windy City in the early 1900s after a fire destroyed his boat, working with his first wife as a music teacher at the school. Eventually he purchased the interest from the original owner's widow, and after a stint manufacturing ukuleles and banjos began making drums. By the time he died, Slingerland's Radio King drums were world-famous, preferred by legends like Gene Krupa, Buddy Rich, Lionel Hampton, Cozy Cole, Davey Tough, "Big Sid" Catlett and scores of others. His son Bud took the reins in the 1950s and ran the company until retiring in 1970, long enough to oversee the production of the kit I bought that fateful day in 2006, and the rest (as they say) is history.



I can't tell you how much money I've spent collecting and restoring the Chicago Slingerland family's handywork (I simply don't know), but I can respectfully suggest how you might spend yours to honor ours. The Slingerland Family Vault – final resting place of John I. and William H. – is currently under renovation thanks to tremendous community support and the dedication of a small group of volunteers. If you enjoyed this little tome, please consider donating to this worthy restoration effort at: <https://www.slingerlandvault.org/donate>.

Thank you!

Life in Elsmere: Mrs. Grant's 1891 Diary

When we drive down Salisbury Road to play some golf or have dinner at Normanside, we pass a 19th c. farmhouse on the right. It is all that remains of the Salisbury family farm.

What follows is an excerpt from a diary written by Margaret Jane Grant in 1891. Mrs. Grant (1840–1898), was widowed. She and her youngest son George had moved into the farmhouse to live with two of her daughters and their families. At that time the household included Libby, married to Francis Free Wright and Emma, married to William Salisbury. (Libby and Francis eventually move to the Wright family farm on North Street. That home also still stands.)

Mrs. Grant gives us a glimpse of everyday life in Elsmere 130 years ago: a slower, quieter time characterized by cooperation and hard work as the family worked together to complete the necessary repetitive chores day after day.



The Salisbury farm is seen here about 1900. The view looks towards Delaware Avenue and the dirt path on the right is about where modern day Salisbury Road is.

Monday, July 27, 1891

George churned this morning. Emma baked bread. I washed the dishes and swept. We went to sewing on Emma's new blue calico dress and some other things. I wrote Will and Alice a letter and sent it by Y. and E. Wright. They went to Albany to Walter Hanson's wife's funeral at three o'clock. They got back in time for tea. Emma went up to the other house after tea and got a mess of peas.

Thursday, July 30

Emma baked green apple pies. I ironed and helped get the dinner and washed the dinner dishes. I made a heavy striped shirt for Will and tended the babies. Emma peeled some apples to dry. The boys took three loads of hay to Albany and sold them. My new Doctor Book came today by express.

Saturday, August 1

The men drew in seven loads of hay. Emma peeled a lot of apples to dry. I done some cleaning and sewed some on my dress. Emma picked a mess of beans and the girls came down and brought a large dishpan full of peas. We are all very tired tonight.

Wednesday, August 5

Emma baked bread and cake and apple and lemon pies. I cleaned all through the house. Mrs. Arnold and Cora came over after dinner. Will cut the oats back of the house with the reaper. Emma ironed some. We are all tired tonight. Francis and his brother Edgar has gone to Albany tonight to get peaches to can.

Monday, August 10

I helped Emma peel the peaches this a.m. and she canned them. Then I picked string beans and cleaned them for dinner. We done up the dinner work then I sewed on my new dress. The baby is teething and feels very cross. It is very hot. Weather. Francis and Ed went to Albany today to a horse sale. Will and George worked at the oats. We churned today.

Saturday, August 15

This has been a very busy day. Emma baked 9 loaves of bread and apple pies and dried apple cake. I done a little of most everything and Alice helped around all day. We cleaned the front room all up and Matt helped Georgie dig potatoes. Ed and Francis went to Albany with loads of hay and E. took apples and potatoes.

Sunday, August 16

Will and Emma and baby and George, Matt and Alice and I went over to church in the market wagon. Frances staid home and got corn and potatoes ready for dinner. Its very warm this p. m. I went over to church in the evening with the Salisbury girls. W called for Mrs. Arnold. Cora Salisbury led the prayer meeting. She done remarkable well. We came home together.

Sunday, August 23

Francis, Georgie and I drove over to church. Lillie Secor rode home with us. Mr. Rowe and Mar. Vanderpoel drove over here from church and took dinner with us. Mr. Vanderpoel preached for Mr. Rowe today. I did not go over to church tonight – its raining. We had 13 to dinner.

Sunday, August 24

Libbie put up our lunch. We got up early this morning. Emma got breakfast and Martin and Alice, Georgie and me went on the excursion to Round Lake. We went to services at ten and half past two. Alice and Matt took the train and went up to Saratoga after we had our lunch. Got back in time for our train that started at five. Got back to Grosbeck's Crossing Depot about seven. Francis came after Alice and me with the carriage. Matt and George walked home. We all enjoyed the day very much.

Friday, Sept. 4

Will took Emma and her baby over to the depot after breakfast. She took the train for Miss Warks at Pine Hills above Albany. She expects to stay until next week and I am housekeeper. Francis took a load of apples to cider mill. I set sponge to make bread tomorrow. Well ploughing and sowing rye.

Continued next page...

Mrs. Grant's diary continued...

Friday, September 11

Libbie and I dried a good lot of corn today and made cucumber pickles and I finished the ironing. George done the churning after dinner. The butter came very nice and hard and a fine yellow color. Little brought some peas. We gave her some ripe tomatoes and melons. Bertie brought us some sweet corn and Libbie gave him some mush melons. I baked bread and elderberry pies. Libbie baked a chocolate layer cake. We make two pans of rusk. We dried a nice lot of sweet corn this week and apples and elderberries.

Thursday, September 24

I am getting ready to go down to New York to see my son Will. Emma baked four kinds of cake and Libbie baked a layer cake for me to take along. Emma packed a large trunk full of stuff for me to take along down and Libbie packed my satchel full of lunch. Francis took me to Albany to the boat. We landed about six in the morning in New York.

Saturday, October 3

Visit over. The boat arrived at Albany half past six in the morning. Took the train out to Delmar. Then walked home. Francis went after my baggage at night to the depot.

Saturday, October 29

Georgie has gone to David Clarkes this evening to a pie supper. It's made up to get money for the church. Alice has gathered some walnuts. She made a dried apple cake and a pumpkin johnnycake for supper. It was very good. Emma and I finished quilting her quilt this afternoon. I swept the garret chamber.

Tuesday, December 1

We sewed and mended all day. The men and killed and dressed six hogs for market tomorrow.

Wednesday, December 2

Wm. Salisbury and Francis Wright went to Albany today and took six pigs and some grain too market. They kept one pig for our own use to eat fresh. Mr. LaGrange came and took dinner here. Libbie and Emma bought a lot of dry goods of him. Will bought Emma white linen table sloth and George bought Libbie one for a Christmas present. He bought himself three red handkerchiefs. I have three for him for a Christmas present. We had fresh pork for supper and buckwheat pancakes.



In her diary, Mrs. Grant mentions her granddaughter, Belle. Belle, born in 1887 & pictured here at age 2, was the child of Francis and Libby Wright. In 1906, Belle married Howard Salisbury. We are fortunate to have portions of Belle's diary and look forward to acquainting you with Belle, through her own words, in our next newsletter.

Friday, December 4

Belle was taken a vomiting in the night and she has a very high fever and was flighty by spells. Francis went after Dr. Case. Francis paid him \$9 for his sickness. Libbie and I papered part of the kitchen today. It looks very nice. Francis and George husked corn in the barn tonight. Belle has the scarlet fever. We all have to stay right at home now. Alice was just down here and looked in the window. She did not dare to come in for she never had the scarlet fever. George and I done the washing today and I had 12 lines of clothes.

Friday, December 25

Christmas Day. Santa Claus came last night and brought us all something. Matt and Alice came over and took breakfast. Alice brought little Alice a doll and Walter a boy doll and Bell a bed and pillows and school bag. I got a new black veil from my Emma and a new apron and a new dress from my Libbie and Alice and George. We had a nice Christmas dinner. Matt and Alice staid all night. Matt brought the mail. I got a letter from my son, Will, at New York. He has a young daughter born December 18th 1891.



TOP: Several times, Mrs. Grant refers to taking the train, and once she refers to the Groesbeck Crossing Depot. This would have been what we know as Elsmere Station, pictured here. It used to be near the corner of modern day Elsmere Avenue and Poplar Drive, very near modern day Groesbeck Place. Indeed, this area goes back to the Groesbeck family. John Groesbeck purchased 130 acres here about 1831.

BOTTOM: Folks gather at the speaker's stand at a Round Lake Camp Meeting. The first Methodist revival meeting was held here in 1868. By the time Mrs. Grant made her the trip in 1891, more educational programming had been introduced, and the name changed to the Round Lake Association.



Translate

Bethlehem Forward Comprehensive Plan Updates

The Town of Bethlehem is updating its Comprehensive Plan to help guide the future of our community! Town officials and CPUC members hosted the first in a series of public forums on December 8th to share project updates, summarize feedback received to date, and solicit feedback about issues and opportunities. The meeting format included a brief presentation, followed by an interactive breakout session and a live Q&A session. This meeting can be viewed, along with summary documents, on the Bethlehem Forward website at www.bethlehemforward.com. You can also sign up for email and text updates.

The next CPUC meeting is scheduled for February 9, 2020 from 6-8 PM. Online meeting information can be found on the town webpage calendar. All are encouraged to attend. You can also follow Bethlehem Forward on Facebook and Instagram, where you can learn fun and interesting facts about our town as the committee efforts move into the community profiling, or Bethlehem Today, phase of the planning effort. There are significant historic preservation discussions to be had during this process so please make your voice heard as BHA members by participating in this process!

Wat is er?



Wat is er?

These are vintage kitchen utensils. The chopper and bowl are pretty obvious if you are a cook. But what about the item on the right? See back page for the answer.

News from the Nominating Committee

Our nominating committee has been meeting to come up with a slate of officers for the next year, terms of which begin June 1.

At this time, we welcome nominations from the membership, to be presented at the May annual meeting, for the office of president and two nominations for trustees. The deadline for nominations is April 1, 2021.

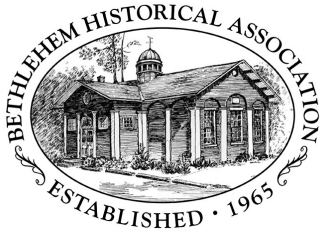
Please consider anyone who would well qualify for these important jobs including submitting your own names. Nominations can be sent to Vicki Folger, Vhf49@yahoo.com or P.O. Box 81, Slingerlands, NY 12159.

The nominating committee consists of Vicki Folger, chair, and Mary Kelle, Susan Leath and Sue Peters.

The president shall preside at General Membership and Executive committee meetings, designate chairs of committees, submit an annual report, serve on the Board of Trustees, serve on the Finance Committee and perform any other duties necessary to the office of President.

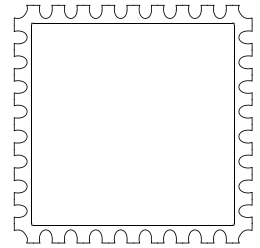
The Board of Trustees has responsibility for the general oversight of BHA. The trustees shall control the property of BHA, act on behalf of BHA in all contractual matters, and serve on the Finance Committee.

Paraphrased from BHA By-laws. A complete copy of the By-laws is found in our Annual Yearbook and on our website, BethlehemHistorical.org.



Bethlehem Historical Association

Cedar Hill Schoolhouse Museum
P.O. Box 263
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The Bethlehem Historical Association

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Karen Beck & Susan Leath

Bits and Pieces

If staying at home sparks some deep cleaning that leads to parting with items of historic interest, please keep BHA in mind. Email: Bethhist1965@gmail.com or call Linda Schacht, 518-767-2924



For now, the museum is still closed on Sunday afternoons, however you can make an appointment to visit by calling Dawn Pratt at 518-767-2285

Wat is er?

Why it is an egg beater of course, seen here in the 1902 Sears Roebuck catalog.

