

Columbia County HISTORY & HERITAGE

SUMMER 2004

\$4.00

Published by the Columbia County Historical Society

Volume 3 Number Two

CONSERVATION...
PRESERVATION...
RESTORATION...

Choices

What's Left? Will We Save It? Page 6

IN THIS ISSUE:

Historic Hudson Landmark
Building Threatened
PAGE 5

My Old Hudson Home
PAGE 9

PROFILE: Esther "Fairy" Tuttle
PAGE 11

Looking from the Past
to the Future
PAGE 13

The Art of Restoration
PAGE 16

Cement Plant Threatens
Scenic and Cultural Riches
PAGE 18

Save America's Treasures
PAGE 24

Conservation, Preservation, and
Restoration around the County
PAGE 28

Where Did the Goldfish Go?
PAGE 35

Collection Highlights
PAGE 39

The Shakers and the
Great Stone Barn
PAGE 40

Opportunities at Olana
PAGE 42

Columbia County
Historical Society
Events Calendar
PAGE 48



Columbia County HISTORY & HERITAGE

COLUMBIA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY BOARD OF DIRECTORS

John B. Carroll <i>President</i>	Lawrence P. Ashmead Arthur Baker Nancy Clark David Crawford Joan K. Davidson John R. Dunne Sheldon Evans Henry N. Eyre, Jr. Mimi Forer Peter Haemmerlein John Hannam Willis Hartshorn Timothy Husband Brian Kelly Dianne O'Neal Julia Philip Richard Ryan Samuel O.J. Spivy Colin Stair
Woodruff L. Tuttle <i>Treasurer</i>	
Russell Pomeranz <i>Assistant Treasurer</i>	
Susan Gerwe Tripp <i>Secretary</i>	
Dr. David William Voorhees <i>Assistant Secretary</i>	

STAFF

Sharon S. Palmer <i>Executive Director</i>
Helen M. McLallen <i>Curator</i>
Ruth Ellen Berninger <i>Educator</i>
Carla R. Lesh <i>Registrar/Assistant Educator</i>
Rita Laffety <i>Membership</i>
Juanita Knott <i>Administrative Assistant</i>

COLUMBIA COUNTY HISTORY & HERITAGE EDITORIAL BOARD

Editor

Henry N. "Jim" Eyre, Jr.
Assistant Editor

Dr. John C. Fout

Editorial Committee

Lawrence Ashmead, George N. Biggs, III, Albert S. Callan,
Joan K. Davidson, Mimi Forer, James P. Hamilton, Mary Howell
Dominick C. Lizzi, Julia Philip, Mary Faherty Sansaricq,
Dr. Will Swift, Dr. David William Voorhees

Design and Production

Ron Toelke and Barbara Kempler-Toelke
Ron Toelke Associates, Chatham, NY

Columbia County History & Heritage is published by the Columbia County Historical Society and is mailed to all members of record at the time of publication. Copies may be obtained, as available, at \$4.00 per copy from the Society offices at the Columbia County Museum, 5 Albany Avenue, Kinderhook, New York, 12106; 518-758-9265; www.cchsny.org

Hours: Monday, Wednesday, Friday 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.,
Saturday 10:00 – 4:00 p.m.

A Message from the President

WE WILL REMEMBER HIM WELL

Steve Mandel, our President, departed this life on Saturday, May 15, 2004. It is a sad, sad thing for his family and it is a sad thing for his many friends and admirers here at the society and throughout the county. The Board and the staff will particularly miss him because he believed in us and we believed in him. In the short time that he was our leader he introduced a new spirit and energy to the society's work. He was sincere in his belief that the county's history is a proud one — to be properly preserved and promoted. He established purposeful goals for the committees and encouraged their staffing with capable people from the board, the membership, and from outside the society. Even when seriously ill, hiding his personal pain, he presided over board meetings and attended every committee meeting possible offering sound and welcome advice. He insisted that we take a fresh look at our mission and embark on the creation of a new long range plan to meet our goals and vision for the future and this work is in process.

He made his work at the society a full time effort and in a very short time it paid off. The Society has taken on a new life and people in the county are looking at us in a new light. With his inspirational support this magazine was created to herald the county's history and a new bulletin is being published to circulate society news. Membership has dramatically increased. He reveled in the success of the expanding educational programs that the society was offering in the county's classrooms. New and exciting exhibits and society sponsored events are attracting attention and major attendance. New items have been added to our collection. Grants have been sought and won, enabling us to begin restoration work on both our Vanderpoel and Van Alen historic properties. So much is a result of Steve's doing. We still have a long way to go and we owe it to Steve to keep the ball rolling. He has set a shining example for all of us to follow.

Jim Eyre
Editor

Columbia County History & Heritage



Steve Mandel

Editor's Overview



CONSERVATION, PRESERVATION, AND RESTORATION as a theme for this issue was a unanimous choice on the part of the magazine's Editorial Committee. Columbia County holds second place to none other in our country's history. It has a proud and distinguished history to be preserved and passed on. It was the first area to be settled by the Dutch followed shortly by the English. It was the first area in which an outright rebellion took place against the English even before the Revolutionary War was contemplated. It was the first area in which farmers rebelled against the penurious domination of manorial systems. It was the county that provided a safe haven for those New England seamen whose whaling and mercantile trade had become beleaguered by the British fleet in the early days of the Revolutionary War. These adventurous men, the Proprietors they were called, created a port at Hudson that quickly became second only to New York City in importance — a harbor from which its ships would carry

New England's products to New York City and then across the seas and back again.

In its earlier days the county was known for its Mohican Indians, settlers, and hard working farmers. These hardy people were followed by sailors, ship-builders, traders, merchantmen, shopkeepers, river-men, innkeepers, candle-makers, chandlers, rope-makers, tavern-keepers, indentured men, and yes- slaves. One cannot omit the thieves, murderers, pirates, and whores and, of course, because of the area's prominence, the politicians. Then came the railroad builders, the ore miners, mill owners, and industrialists. There are detailed histories to be told about all of these interwoven with fabled and heroic as well as devious and deceitful tales. It is the ongoing choice and mission of this magazine to tell these stories — to preserve them for future generations.

The Native Americans cleared land in the county for their villages and to raise crops — always moving on when the area no longer was suitable for their use. They had no knowledge of land ownership. The farmers that followed cleared the land, almost all of it to grow crops, and the forests disappeared. Agriculture filled it all. Patroons first obtained title to Indian lands and then leased them to tenant farmers. Then the tenant farmer became landlord. However, one thing remained fairly constant. Large farms dedicated to the growing of grain crops, the farming of sheep, and the production of dairy products persisted. As populations grew, the farmland in counties near to most large cities gave way to residential lots for commuter families. But, by the early to mid 1900s, Hudson — once a major city — had been by-passed by railroads and highways and was no longer a vibrant business or industrial center. The large mills that polluted creeks, the ghostly remains of large cement plants that once spewed poisons and dust into our air and lungs, were gone

However, the farms remained and surviving with them was the treasure of open space. Today this treasure is threatened. A great demand for second home sites has sprung up from weekenders coming from New York City. At the same time the farmers are finding it hard to compete with huge central U.S. farming conglomerates. The farmers have become ready sellers, at a time of few and/or scanty zoning regulations in most of the county's towns.

To save the open beauty of our county there are choices to be made by our towns

Choices

By Jim Eyre, Editor

A definition:

Conservation is the process of planned management, the purpose of which is to prevent exploitation, destruction, and neglect; a process that enables and leads to preservation.

Restoration is the act of bringing back to their former condition those things that have been neglected, exploited, and/or partially destroyed.



People have the power to insist that town and city governments have strict restoration building requirements and designate historic districts with tough regulation.

and people before it is too late. It is time for concerned citizens to demand that their towns carefully review and institute new zoning regulations. Volunteer professionals such as the Land Conservancy have been organized and have made great strides in persuading landowners to donate large and small tracts of land so that they may be preserved in perpetuity. They have also worked with landholders on subdivision plans that guarantee the continued appearance of open space and still protect the owner's and his heir's ongoing interest in the property. Haphazard development can ruin the beauty of our county for those to come. Proper planning will protect and preserve the land for all our people both rich and poor. Another organization, Scenic Hudson, has made great strides toward preserving our environment and deserves thankful recognition. The Olana Partnership also deserves much credit for its persistent efforts to protect Olana's scenic view-shed.

Throughout the county can be found some of the most beautiful homes in the land. Some were built by prosperous farmers and some by early Dutch patroons. Some were built by the Proprietors and others by the wealthy mill-owners and industrialists. Many were designed by gifted itinerant architects, constructed by local builders, and embellished by the imaginative hand carving of local artisans. These buildings are in varying styles usually following the persuasion of

the owner — Dutch, English, Federal, Classical. Some are square with wings added, others octagonal, and some the classic rectangle. In many cases they are gems carefully restored. But one finds others abandoned with faded boards and darkened windows begging attention and new life. No matter their present condition, we are uniquely lucky to still have this fine heritage.

Many people are aware of the restoration projects of Savannah, Georgia and Stonington, Connecticut. People come from all parts of the country just to look and enjoy. In Hudson we have dozens of fine old houses of many periods and styles. We have the ability to create a showcase in that city and in our county that would attract a far greater number of tourists because of the architectural variety of our buildings and the historic importance of Hudson as a shipping, whaling and mercantile center. It could result in a major business boom and mecca for area shops, inns, and restaurants. Just think of touring a restored Warren Street/Allen Street and waterfront district in downtown Hudson coupled with visits to such historic sites as Olana, Clermont, the Van Alen Farm, Lindenwald, the Vanderpoel House, the Shaker Museum, the Mt. Lebanon Shaker Village, and many others nearby.

There are three historic districts in Hudson listed with the National register of Historic Places. They are The Plumb-Bronson House and outbuildings, Front

Street-Parade Hill-Lower Warren Historic District and the Rossman-Prospect Avenue Historic District. It is doubtful that there are restrictions that require adherence to historical restoration standards of any kind in these districts by the City of Hudson. Too bad! As long as local building codes are met developers are allowed to snap up architectural treasures and quickly and cheaply redesign them into office or apartment units — just for profit. There is a Historic Commission that is a token committee with no power but nevertheless with some influence. Hopefully, it can accomplish something of value in the future.

Again there is a choice. Historic Hudson and other groups and individuals are showing the way that proper restoration of buildings can be accomplished. People have the power to insist that town and city governments have strict restoration building requirements, and designate historic districts with tough regulations. Working together we might all one day enjoy a glorious Warren Street and a tourist bonanza in the county.

This issue will explore some of the treasures that have been allowed to disappear and others that have been restored. We will talk about the waterfront and fishing, furniture, nature walks, trolley trails, bicycle trails, buildings, and the art of Conservation, Preservation and Restoration. We hope you will take this trip with us. It is important for the choices are yours. ☒



HISTORIC HUDSON LANDMARK BUILDING ENDANGERED

By Byrne Fone

Editors Note: Byrne Fone, Emeritus Professor of English at the City University of New York is the author of several books, most recently Homophobia: A History, and of novels, short stories, and literary criticism. He lives in Hudson and is Vice-President of Historic Hudson and serves on the board of Time and Space Limited.

For 46 years this building has been known as Hudson's Library. The building has stood in its present location for 185 years. Built in 1818 as an almshouse, it has also served as home to the Hudson Asylum for the Insane, the Hudson Female Academy, and as a residence for George Power, twice mayor of Hudson and owner of the New York and Hudson Steamboat Company. In 1881 the building was returned to the people of Hudson as the Hudson Orphan Asylum. In 1959 the building was given to the Hudson City School District by the Children's Foundation, successors to the orphanage, with the stipulation that the building would become a library for the people of Hudson. The Hudson Area Association Library was born.

For 140 years it was preserved with care, love and pride by successive owners. For the past 45 years, while in the uninterested hands of the school district, the building has been allowed to enter into a grim

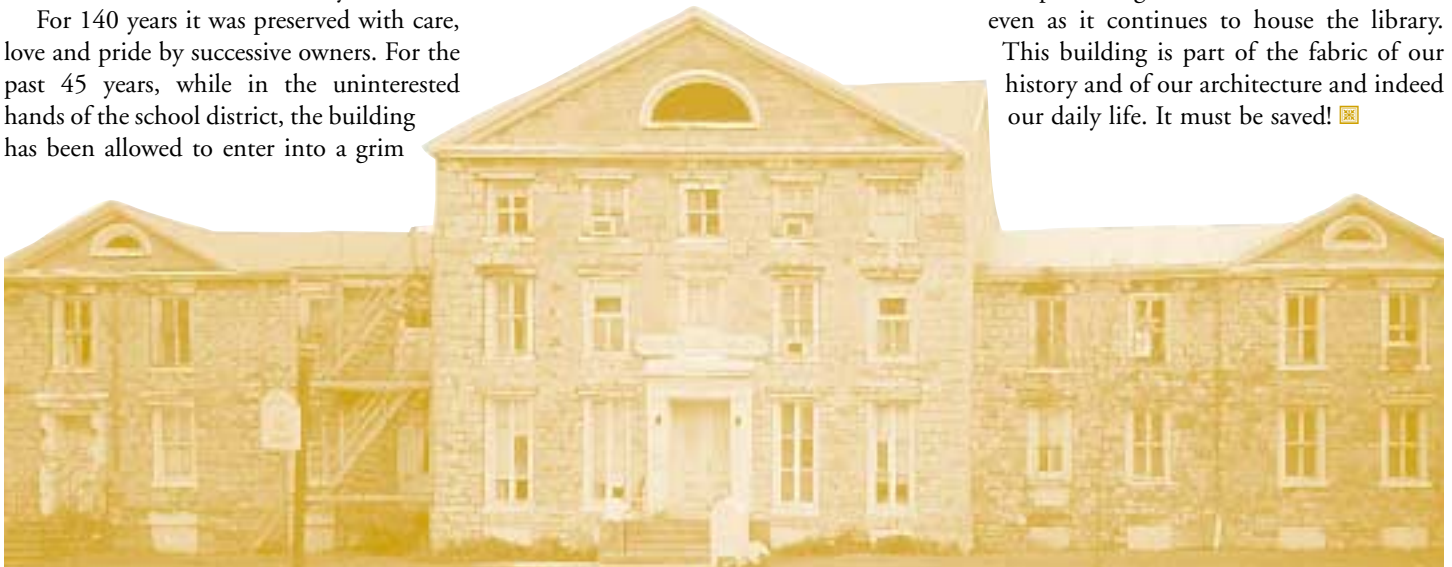
This building is part
of the fabric of our
history and of our
architecture and
indeed our daily life.
It must be saved!

old age of reprehensible, though not irreversible, decay. The land that accompanied the building was put to use by the school district to construct a school which has fared better with attention. Thus, both the building's life and the library location have reached a crisis point, and the future is, to say the least, uncertain.

Recently, the Hudson Area Library Board, after initially bowing to pressure from the school district, who wants the library to move, has reversed itself and taken a strong and principled stand voicing its determination to stay and do what must be done to save the building.

That the building needs work after years of neglect by the district is obvious. That it will cost money to rehabilitate no one denies. For this to happen it must be transferred to more responsive stewardship, ideally from the school district that does not want it, to the library that truly needs it. To do this the library could join with other advocates so that the 400 State Street building becomes the property of a not-for-profit community group or a coalition of groups who would be interested in sharing space and preserving it as a Hudson landmark, even as it continues to house the library.

This building is part of the fabric of our history and of our architecture and indeed our daily life. It must be saved! ☐



WHAT'S LEFT?

By Roderic H. Blackburn

Editor's Note: Mr. Blackburn is an architectural historian and real estate broker who has published widely on regional history, art, and architecture. He lives in Kinderhook, New York.

As a recent Historic Preservation Commission meeting dragged on past the 9 pm witching hour, when the impulse to adjourn becomes as urgent as a much delayed “short call,” one new member leaned over to the chairman and, *sotto voce*, observed “preservationists have to be a depressed lot, everything they care about is either going, going, or gone.” He had a point there. A surprising number of the buildings of the past have been either “creatively” restored, modernized, or leveled. What remains and what has been rebuilt in replacement, you see, deceives us by their presence, hides from our eye, and from our mind, the fact that Columbia County was once a very different, much more active place.

were able to hit the high points through images but, looking over Peter Stott’s manuscript, I realize with regret how much was only hinted at because it is gone from the visible world. On the brighter side, however (preservationists ought, first of all, to be optimists), 10,000 homes exist in the county and a large majority speak to the evolution of domestic life-ways in the county over 300 years. Why have so many houses survived while our industrial legacy nearly disappeared?

Families evolve but businesses revolutionize — it’s that simple. We live primarily the same way we have for eons, as singles, couples, families, and, occasionally, extended families. Australian aborigines would have little trouble understanding our domestic arrangements. They would be bewildered by the industrial revolution, however, if it were before us to examine, which it is not. One rare exception is the complex of large brick and stone mills still intact and in industrial use today at Stuyvesant Falls. Where once hundreds of workers printed the most elegant glazed cotton cloth for fashionable salons, a low-key enterprise today makes a chemical for cleaning air in

...10,000 homes exist in the county and a large majority speak to the evolution of domestic life-ways in the county over 300 years. Why have so many houses survived while our industrial legacy nearly disappeared?

For example, Peter H. Stott has written a forthcoming and eye-opening book on the industrial past of Columbia County *Looking For Work: Industrial Archeology in Columbia County, New York*. Hardly a soul has a clue as to how industrial Columbia County was in the nineteenth century. Push aside the over- and undergrowth along our major creeks (and at Hudson) and you will find dozens of foundations of mills and countless mill-worker houses. The county made a bewildering range of products, some exported to the world: woolen, cotton, and linen cloth, grain flour, lumber, plaster, printed cotton cloth, paper, etc. The number is mind numbing to recent generations who assume the county is, was, and will forever be a refuge for cows, crops, and commuters.

When Ruth Piwonka and I sat down in 1974 to write *A Visible Heritage, Columbia County, New York — A History in Art and Architecture* (1976, our contribution to the Bicentennial), we chose to tell the history of the county through its visual evidence: existing architecture and art (some recalled only from old photographs). We

atomic submarines. Almost all the other mills in the county have been demolished, closed, abandoned, or leveled — outmoded by Edison and Westinghouse inventions and cheap labor in the South (now overseas).

Cities are, in this way, a lot like industries — they change more by revolution than evolution, the result being wholesale loss of earlier structures. The elevator revolutionized urban development by making cities grow up more than out. Large American cities would look very different today without the elevator. Columbia County has been spared this “elevating” of urbanity because the city of Hudson’s economy has not expanded. The one exception is Bliss Towers, our one high-rise which is, as elsewhere, conceded to be a domestic flop.

Anyone perusing the many photographs which Frank Forshever took of the streetscapes of Hudson after the Civil War will realize how much survives today thanks to a stable, often diminishing, economy. He must have had a sporadic call for portraits to spend so much free time with his stereo camera capturing our streets and rooftops,

Will We Save It?

as if he feared progress was at hand to replace the past. He was right for a while; post Civil War prosperity accounts for most of the Italianate flat-roof commercial structures on Warren Street.

His partner in later years was a Mr. Rowles, whose son Sam succeeded to the business at 441 Warren Street where I applied for passport photos in 1968. He sat me down under Forshew's ancient glass skylight roof for my available-light images. He then showed me stacks of dusty stereopticon glass negatives taken by Forshew of the city and outlying region. Still a creature of a pre-inflation past, he printed up eight by tens for me at one dollar each, identifying each by location. At that moment I saw what I now call "Lost Columbia," a county with a remarkably complete catalog of every kind of architectural style extending over a longer period than likely survives in any New York county, either in fact or in photo. Now there is an idea for a book.

One photo brought back a memory, the fight to save the General Worth Hotel (built in 1838 on Warren Street). This was a case where historic preservation succeeds in its rear guard action, if it does at all, by fits and starts. In a community some structure becomes the sacrificial lamb which, in its loss, so alarms the visual conscience of the neighbors that they band together to "Remember the Alamo." That American expression is certainly the battle cry of those "visualists" who battle at the barricades to save a favorite historic site from a host of "functionalists" who, following the momentum of the industrial revolution, seek to improve society by improving its past with the new, the efficient, the safer, the straighter, the stronger, or the cheaper — in short, what works better.

Remember the campaign to save Grand Central



STOCKPORT BRIDGE, COLUMBIA, CO. N. Y.
SPAN 343 FEET

Stockport Bridge, Columbiaville. The lost mill (one foundation corner remains) was built by James Wild in 1824 for cotton cloth manufacturing. Like other buildings of the industrial revolution, mills became outmoded by inventions, destined for recycling, not preservation, at least in rural counties where alternative uses are scarce. Date and photographer unidentified. Bridge removed in 1928.

Non-farmers love farms for their bucolic effect but, unlike mother and apple pie, the trends are against farms.



Warren Street looking west between 4th and 3rd. C. 1868 by Frank Forshew. Except for far-sighted photographers like Frank Forshew we would be bereft of much of our visual past.

Station? It galvanized New York's preservationist movement. Go to any zoning meeting, there or here, and you will see how the cultural divide of America is played out in local politics and passions. Cried Elizabeth Aldrich: "The General Worth is an important prototype hotel in urban America, it must be saved." Retorted the mayor, "It is abandoned, in poor condition, and no new use has been found." It came down, like the slaughtered lamb, but thereafter Hudson has been slowly building a consciousness for preservation it might not otherwise have begun. Today Hudson's politics of power sways on a fulcrum of preservation as a flood of visualist urbanites

find refuge in a small town still replete with many early homes — enough new visualists that they may prevail in the next election.

County villages are addressing preservation too. Kinderhook has had historic preservation zoning for 30 years. Just this year it updated its code with more specific criteria and guidelines to insure that this — perhaps the loveliest early village in the Hudson River Valley — will hold onto its past more carefully. Valatie is experimenting with main street improvements reflecting its architectural heritage. Hudson has a new Historic Preservation Commission which seeks to influence how changes are made to older buildings. The General Worth may rise again, figuratively, in advocacy and preservation zoning.

In each community where planning meetings are held you can be front row witnesses to the most grass roots of American political process — the sorting out of feelings, attachments, and interests, over the issue of visual preservation vs. functional progress. It is enlightening to see how friends and neighbors combine and split over each issue as they work out what matters the most to them: what will keep my neighborhood appealing, what will put cash in my pocket, what will impact my taxes?

In the countryside, change has

also been fast paced as mills and farms rapidly disappear, priced out by imported products and richer and cheaper farmland elsewhere. Wheat farming was the mainstay of the county's rural economy in the eighteenth century, milling and diverse farming in the nineteenth century, dairy and fruit farming in the twentieth. Whither goes our new century? Mother, apple pie, and the family farm are wrapped up in the flag like nothing else. Non-farmers love farms for their bucolic effect but, unlike mother and apple pie, the trends are against farms. Preservationists

are concerned with saving farming as family farms, as any kind of farming, or as a last resort, preserved open space.

It is well they are active now. Before the Civil War Columbia and Dutchess County had 50,000 people each, today Dutchess County — more directly in the path of urban expansion, has over 250,000. Columbia County, surprisingly, has only 63,000 in the 2000 census. As the pressure for second homes continues to expand (and more recently spurred by desire for a “safe refuge”), Columbia County would be well advised to step up its preservation effort if it wants to retain its rural aspect. Fast trains, work-from-home, and another terrorist experience in the Big Apple will put even more intense pressure on the county than it is already experiencing.

Real estate value trends are indicative of where we are going with open space and historic preservation. As a real estate broker I am “sitting in the catbird seat” as to what is happening to the county. In the last seven years the average selling price of a home has gone from \$130,000 to \$ 315,000. This is nice for older home owners but hard on home buyers, especially local buyers. The effect on preservation of older homes is mixed. The more assets a buyer has the more likely he will renovate an older house more thoroughly, often altering or removing original features. More money may preserve a house, too much money may destroy its historical integrity through excessive remodeling — poverty is a better preserver than wealth. Real estate booms — and we have had them in the 1920s, 1980s, and 2000s — have actually been worse for preservation than better.

Whither we go? When *A Visible Heritage* came up for its



Phoenix House, Hudson. If past is prologue, the gents of Hudson today would be delighted to trade places when Forshew captured this afternoon c. 1868.

focus in the country, although not in Columbia County, distant as it was from large cities.

What did change, however, was the sons of families tied to the land could now move anywhere. This included the sons of house builders and carpenters who could now move to find employment in other trades. The result was a break in the continuity of knowledge of how to build traditional houses. Knowledge to build those nineteenth century revival style houses had been passed on from father to son for generations but was now broken. The advent of manufactured house parts and the abdication of architecture schools from teaching traditional domestic architecture added to the break in traditional building. Houses were now built by those alienated from traditional styles, who combined mismatched manufactured house parts (now more obvious than ever before), and house-book designs imported from around the country which are alien to the house traditions of our region.

Except for a few architect-designed houses of recent years, most homes built have been functionally progressive but visually inarticulate, that is, lacking the symmetry, balance, proportion, and appropriate detailing which we value in the historical architectural traditions of the prior three centuries. The preservation challenge today should be to keep the functionalist approach from so altering our historic structures that, by slow accretion, our older houses lose more and more of their original qualities — qualities we preservationists can only hope will again inspire a new generation to visual excellence as they once had. ☒



The Peter Van Schaack House, Kinderhook. A 1780s Georgian house converted in the 1870s into a French Second Empire style house. With an understanding of the elements of historic styles such conversions were more successful in that century than in the twentieth. Despite more education and more books, aesthetic knowledge is not cumulative in the population at large. We are behind prior centuries and other countries in our local building design abilities. Note the high quality of ornamental plantings, not uncommon at that time. See Ellis' History of Columbia County, 1878.

By Dr. David William Voorhees

Like Pompeii and Herculaneum, the City of Hudson has a wealth of architectural treasures encased under layers of neglect and, in the case of the house that I purchased four years ago on lower Union Street, literally cement. To be honest, when shown my house it was not love at first sight. Covered in drab gray siding and reeking from years of neglect, the house repulsed me. But it was the intuition of my partner, Joe Connelly, and advice of my dear friend, Ruth Piwonka, and of Jeremiah Rusconi who persuaded me that there was historic potential underneath falling drop ceilings and cheap plywood paneling. Indeed, as we stripped away layers of paint and grime the subtly elegant lines of an eighteenth-century Nantucket house began to be revealed. My house, it turned out, was a surviving architectural gem from the age when a handful of New Englanders ventured into the Hudson Valley Dutch heartland to found the bustling City of Hudson.

Each day's work brought exciting discoveries. Nearly thirty layers of wallpaper were stripped from the walls, with as many samples saved and labeled as possible. The removal of plaster exposed fine, hand-split accordion lath, as well as the original bake oven, a back staircase, and, most surprising, an upstairs fireplace with its crane still intact. Released from their imprisonment inside the

walls were centuries of accumulated objects — an ancient child's shoe with wooden sole, perhaps placed according to superstition to keep away evil spirits, whalebone stays from a woman's corset, wooden spools, pottery shards (some dated back to the 1760s), broken clay tobacco pipes, a tin horse from a child's toy, ancient clay marbles, pages from an 1832 *Albany Temperance Recorder*, and the society page from an 1892 *New York World* — are a smattering of the objects that soon filled innumerable boxes. Not so entertaining was the discovery that the previous upstairs inhabitants had found loose boards under which they stuffed their garbage from meals et. al.

Yet, what truly brought the house alive was the uncovering of those who had inhabited it. Documentary research revealed that the house, a one-over-one side-hall Nantucket with a large kitchen and garret extension, was built sometime between 1794 and 1808. In 1783 Thomas Jenkins purchased the tract on which the house stands from the heirs of Jan Franse Van Hoesen and in 1784 divided it into 50 x 120 foot lots. My house straddles the westerly half of Lot No. 3 and 4.9 feet of the easterly half of Lot No. 23. Charles H. Coffin acquired the westerly twenty-five foot half of Lot No. 3 and the easterly twenty-five foot half of Lot No. 23 about 1808, by which date the house was standing. Just west of the house stood a small structure, possibly the summer

kitchen, as well as a barn on the alley. That the house sits slightly over a foot closer to the street than any other on the block suggests a construction date of about 1797, in which year a law was passed that all buildings be a uniform distance from the road. After 1808 Coffin with his wife, Lydia, and their children, Deborah, William, Sarah, Alexander, and Charles, Jr., inhabited the house. In 1823 Coffin purchased the easterly twenty-five foot half of Lot No. 3 from Keziah Jenkins with a small one room building that Coffin possibly used as an office.

In October 1828, at the age of forty-two, Coffin died of a fall. His widow remained in the house until her death of "bilious" fever in 1845 at age fifty-five. In 1835, to help pay for her children's education, she sold the easterly half of Lot No. 3 to John Chard, who enlarged the small dependency into the residence seen today. In 1846 her son William, who had moved to New Orleans, and his younger brothers, Alexander and Charles, sold their rights to the property to Richard F. Clark, husband of their sister Sarah, and Edward H. Macy, husband of sister Deborah. Deborah and Sarah purchased the westerly half of Lot 23 in 1858. Charles C. Clark and Edward M. Clark subsequently inherited the shares of Richard Clark.

Nonetheless, with the death of Lydia Coffin, the house became a rental. In 1850 John H. Wagener, a boatman from Rhode Island, rented the house with his wife,

...what truly brought the house alive was the uncovering of those who had inhabited it.



Clementia, and their children, Francis, Cornelia, Mary, Stephen, and Valentine. Ten years later John Bagley, a conductor on the Hudson and Berkshire Railroad, was renting the house. Bagley had apparently married Wagener's widow, for the names of his wife and children in the 1860 census are the same as those as Wagener's. In 1870 another railroad conductor, Homer McCord, was living in the house with his wife Cornelia and ten-year-old daughter, Mary. The house's ownership, meanwhile, became consolidated. The barn was sold in 1869. In 1873 Edward Clark and Richard Clark sold their shares to Ellen Faulder Clark, widow of Charles C. Clark. In 1876 Ellen sold her share to Deborah Macy, the surviving daughter of Charles Coffin. In 1877 and 1878 Charles C. Macy, son of Deborah and Edward Macy, purchased the rights of all the heirs. When Charles Macy died intestate in 1921, the history of the house took a new turn.

By the 1920s the house reflected the changing ethnic face of the City of Hudson as new immigrants arrived to work in the city's factories. In 1923 — a date confirmed by a date on the plasterboard in the back upstairs — Charles Macy's heir, Richard C. Macy, sold the house to Jacob and Katie Diercks, who in turn sold it the following year to Joseph and Mary Rosenburg. The Rosenburgs raised the roof of the back garret, converted the house into two apartments, and sold the building to Italian immigrant Dominico Delisio. The apartments now became part of the extended and warm Italian family networks that shaped lower Union Street for the next two generations. Dominico Delisio died in 1944 and his widow, Filomena, married Vincenzo "James" Curcio. In 1947 Curcio and Frank and Carmela Maturi agreed to divide the premises equally. In 1956 the executors of Curcio's estate conveyed the property to Antonio Gaudio, with a stipulation that gave a life tenancy to Curcio's widow, Filomena. It was during this period that a small upstairs apartment, or "wart," was added above and beyond the back of the house. Filomena Curcio died in 1970, followed by Antonio Gaudio in 1979.

With the death of Antonia Gaudio, the house underwent another change, reflecting the declining fortunes of late twentieth-century Hudson. The building, eventually falling into the hands of absentee landlords, rapidly deteriorated as a warehouse for a parade of dysfunctional human beings. Increasing their misery were unscrupulous landlords who, squeezing every cent out of their hapless tenants and from misguided government programs, left the roof to rot, replaced wiring with extension cords, and allowed raw sewage to seep underneath the house, leaving three cats and two possums to die excruciating deaths from asphyxiation. Further structural damage was caused by pouring cement around the house in an attempt to keep it from being condemned. Tenants smashed doors, windows, and stair rails.

Such was the sad condition of the little house that repulsed me. Nonetheless, with a knowledge of home restoration solely shaped by watching television's Bob Villa, who miraculously turns a wreck into a showplace within an hour, and the encouragement of my partner, we bravely moved in. Obviously I was not prepared for the work, let alone expense, that lay ahead of us. Yet, as we labored on the house I began to understand its true value. Conceived in the enlightened age of the eighteenth century as the latest in middle-class innovations and built in the post-Revolutionary period of optimism, the house witnessed the rise of the industrial age, weathered economic depressions, housed immigrants seeking a new world, sustained the hopes of childbirth, the laughter of children, the weaknesses of old age, and the sorrow of death, and suffered the heartache of

addiction and domestic violence. But my house represents more than just the history of a single building, or of a city or a nation. It represents the story of every one of us. Like any old timer who survives life's gauntlet, it deserves respect, honor, and cherishment. I have come fully to love my old Hudson home. ☒



Dining room door from entry hall with original glass transom and handsplit lathing.



Original kitchen fireplace with bake oven at upper left.

Profile: Esther “Faiy” Tuttle

By Jim Eyre

Many of us know her as Kinderhook’s “Faiy” Tuttle living in the “Merwin Farm House where Ichabod Crane Lived.” She’s not a fictional character. She is a legend. She was born Ester Leeming in New Canaan, Connecticut on July 1, 1911 (That’s right. She’s 93 now.) to parents of affluence and intelligence. Her early days were spent between homes in New Canaan and Brooklyn Heights, New York. She lived a pampered life but met adversity early in life when at eight she lost her father. Then just four years later her very loving but overly extravagant mother died leaving her and her siblings orphans in a somewhat impoverished state.

However, her inheritance of intelligence, humor, perseverance, faith in herself, belief in a righteous God, and the good in those she met were to be the tools with which she would forge a wondrous life — always looking forward — and except for fond memories, — never looking back.

School days were over after high school and her ambition was to become an actress. College was not an affordable option. But in the 1930s acting jobs were extremely scarce. Working in shops for a living and standing in audition lines became the norm until Faiy realized that she had to use some tricks of her own her own (and they weren’t parlor tricks) to win roles. Her big moment came when she was given part in *The Petrified Forest* starring Leslie Howard and Humphrey Bogart.

It was lucky for Faiy that she had a rich and brilliant Uncle Ely whose second, much younger wife, Belinda, though not of the intelligentsia, had a knack of collecting friends among the intellectual elite and loved to travel the world. She took Faiy along as friend and companion. Faiy was inquisitive and attractive and she naturally drew admirers to her from all walks of life. In fact her many friends (most of them life-long) could well fill a page or two in “Who’s Who.” She has never lost her love of travel. She pursued it during her marriage, after it, and is still eager for new adventures.

Faiy was pursued by several attentive young swains but none met the measure of Ben Tuttle. It was after their marriage in 1940 that they bought the farm at Kinderhook. They summered there with their three children until Ben’s retirement when it became a full time residence. It was a busy time bringing up three children in New York City (later Brooklyn) winter-times and in Kinderhook summer-times. As usual Faiy flourished and found extra time for exercise, sports, farm work, the Old Chatham Hunt Club’s ride to the hounds and, of course, to corral a score of new friends. She even learned the art of carriage driving and became the President of the Columbia County Coaching Society.

No longer needing the money it was time to mix outside pursuits with those of rearing a family. In Chatham she became a member of the Shaker Museum Board. In New York City she joined the Girl

Scouts as a troop leader and soon was asked to join the Board of the Girl Scouts Council of Greater New York. She was a natural leader and always a hard worker. She kept up her interest in the theater and continued volunteering for roles and reading plays. After they moved to Brooklyn she became interested in the Brooklyn Botanic Garden (BBG), becoming a member and then later President of their Women’s Auxiliary in 1961. From 1970 to 1977 she served as President of their Board of Trustees.

It was a most happy family. When Ben retired, all of their children had married and had moved on to their own pursuits. The Tuttles, again took to the road — traveling sometimes by car, sometimes first class and sometimes by freighter — seeking points unknown to them. Life was not always idyllic. First her daughter was taken by cancer in 1983 and her life was again shattered by Ben’s four year illness and death in 1987.

One of Faiy’s beliefs, however, always has been that “when one door closes, another often opens.” It was time to move on and move on she did.

She was invited and joined the Colonial Dames of America. First she was a volunteer docent at their then named Abigail Adams Smith Museum and Garden at 421 East 61st Street and later she became Chairman of their garden committee. Soon she was Corresponding Secretary on their Board of Managers and for a while National Vice President. She took an apartment in New York City on East 66th Street to be nearer to her growing list of activities — among them — a new profession as a “Granny” model.

At 93, she still uses ingenuity and acting skills to secure a job posing for an ad or a role in a TV commercial. You may have seen her picture on the rear of one of New York City’s buses. However, her greatest love, far above travel, volunteering or modeling, is the wealth of time she has with her grandchildren and thirteen great-grandchildren. How lucky they are.

This is a mere outline of a few of the episodes and accomplishments in her busy life. To discover the full tale and the fascinating details one must read her book — just published by iUniverse, Inc. — *No Rocking Chair For Me*. It is available at the Columbia County Historical Society Museum in Kinderhook and at bookstores throughout the county.

H. W. Longfellow must have been thinking of the Faitys of the world when he wrote in his *Psalm of Life*:

*We can make our lives sublime,
And departing leave behind us
Footprints in the sands of time;
Footprints, that perhaps another,
Sailing o’er life’s solemn main,
A forlorn and shipwrecked brother
Seeing shall take heart again.*



She’s not a fictional character. She is a legend.

Past, Present and Future



Berkshire Telephone Corporation



DAVID J. CAVAGNARO

BOX 931 • NORTH CHATHAM, N.Y. 12132-0931 • (518) 766-4762



Classic and Hand-dipped
Chocolates, Bulk Candy
and other Delectables!

Retail and wholesale

chocolatemoosetreats.com

Chatham, NY

518-392-Treat(8732)



APPLIANCE GUYS, INC.

SERVICE • PARTS • SALES
3339 RT. 9H VALATIE, N.Y. 12184-5418

(518) 758-1248

JIM BRIGNULL
PRESIDENT



MERLE OIL COMPANY

P.O. BOX 444 • UNION TURNPIKE
HUDSON, NEW YORK 12534



Our
Newest
Assortment
of fine fabrics
is in!
Reupholstered
& Custom made
Furniture
Draperies & Window treatments
Bedcovers and much more
Visit Our
NEW LOCATION

at



518-828-0500
743 Columbia St., Hudson, NY 12534

By Michael Polemis

Editor's Note: Mr. Polemis was one of the founders of the Columbia Land Conservancy in 1986 and now serves as its board chair. He owns a home in Chatham and has been dividing his time between Columbia County and New York City since 1980.

The portrait of Sherman and Lydia Griswold hanging on the wall in the Columbia County Historical Society's Museum shows a prosperous couple, gazing confidently off into the distance, their farm in the background, happy sheep feeding from a basket held by Mr. Griswold. The painting also shows a landscape that is ordered, quite open, and heavily cultivated. It is a scene that accurately reflects the state of the countryside in 1837, not only in Columbia County, but throughout the Northeast.

The year 1837 happens to be the midpoint between the initial European settlement of the continent in the seventeenth century and the first decade of the twenty-first century. Had you been on that hilltop in the mid-seventeenth century you would have had to climb a tree to take in a view that would have been part of the endless forest primeval that covered most of the eastern half of the continent. Today if you were to drive up to the point on Beale Road in Spencertown, where Mr. and Mrs. Griswold were posed, you would be presented with a view that is somewhere between the forests of the seventeenth century and the open fields of 1837. The changing view from the top of Beale Road reflects the changing landscape of the Northeast.

Open space conservation is a relatively new concept in this country. For the first two hundred and fifty years of our history, the land was something that needed to be tamed, to be "civilized." The initial model was based on the English countryside



The Griswolds in the painting Salting Sheep, from the collection of the Columbia County Historical Society.

of small villages separated by farmland. The Griswold portrait could just as easily have been a view of a sheep farm in Yorkshire, England. What America had that did not exist in Europe was a seemingly endless Western frontier. If you needed more land, go west. If you needed better land, go west. If you did not like your neighbors, go west. While this may have created the image of the American as rugged individual, it also created a sense that open land was an infinite and disposable resource and therefore there was no need to protect it, let alone conserve it. Unproductive land simply

became waste land. In Columbia County, as industry faded and farming struggled much of the county went into a kind of hibernation.

By the end of the second quarter of the nineteenth century the Industrial Revolution was in full bloom and the Hudson Valley landscape depicted by Frederic Church and Thomas Cole was already fast disappearing. By the end of the century much of the landscape of the eastern United States had been devastated by industry, mining, and logging. The creation of the Adirondack Park in New York State marked a turning point.

For the first time, a huge tract of land that was being ravaged by exploitation was set aside for protection and for the enjoyment of future generations. This was

LOOKING FROM THE PAST to THE FUTURE

different than designating vast areas of Western wilderness as national parks as was done a decade earlier in Yellowstone. After all, relatively few lived out there and there was plenty of land. This was protecting land for the benefit of people who actually lived close enough to use it.

Since the 1870s and 1880s when Yellowstone Park and the Adirondack Park were created, much of the open space that we now enjoy was created by federal, state, and local governments in the form of strictly delineated parks and wilderness areas. For much of the twentieth century, land protection and conservation was viewed in the context of specific places that were either threatened or that contained spectacular natural features. In urban areas open space meant public parks carefully designed and manicured.

Today, while governments continue to acquire and protect land for public use, land conservation and open space protection strategies have changed significantly. Increasingly, communities are recognizing that open space is more than an aesthetic issue. Urban, suburban, and now exurban sprawl, are creating tremendous pressures on infrastructure. Water resources cannot be adequately secured unless development is controlled. Americans are coming to terms with the fact that although they live in an immense country, land resources are far from infinite. While they continue to demand the services and benefits of modern society, they are also placing greater and greater importance on the more intangible qualities of life.

Emerging from the environmental movement of the late 1960s and aided by beneficial tax laws enacted in the early eighties, today there are over 1,200 land trusts across the country. They range from statewide organizations to the protection of a single property. They all share a grass roots ethic and are committed to the notion that while it is important to think globally it is often more effective and productive to act locally. While land trusts use many strategies for protecting land, one of the principal tools remains a conservation easement. An easement is a legal agreement, written in the form of a deed, which allows landowners to permanently protect their land. Through the conservation easement, a landowner donates the majority — or entirety — of the property's development rights to a qualified non-profit land trust or governmental entity. While remaining on the tax rolls, the land becomes protected within the terms of the easement in perpetuity.

The most successful land trusts share an understanding of and a respect for the communities that they serve. There is no such thing as a "one size fits all" land protection

strategy. Columbia County is fortunate to have one of the most successful land trusts in the country, in the Columbia Land Conservancy. I am proud to say that I have been on the board of CLC since its inception in 1986 and now serve as Board Chair. Using CLC as a model, I will briefly describe how a modern land trust functions.

For its first six years CLC was exclusively engaged in taking conservation easements from willing donors. As we matured it became increasingly clear to us that we needed to expand our services in order to achieve our mission. Agriculture, long the mainstay of Columbia County's economy was under siege. While there was plenty of open space in the county, only 3% of the county was available to the public. Local school budgets were increasingly stressed and there was little or no money available for environmental education. CLC decided to engage in an ambitious expansion of staff and its scope of work in order to attempt to take on these issues.

Over the last twelve years we have grown from a staff of four to twelve. We continue to take easements and now hold over 130 comprising over 15,000 acres. We have been able


to protect over 3,400 acres of working farmland, leveraging state funds and the generous donations of individuals. We have also received support from regional organizations such as Open Space Institute and Scenic Hudson. Working with communities and other not for profits we have opened six-public conservation areas and will open four new areas to the public over the next twelve months. We hired a full time environmental educator and in 2003 we offered over 100 programs attended by over 2,500 children and adults. This is the face of land conservation in 2004.

In some ways, the Griswolds would not find today's Columbia County so different than in 1837. While they would be shocked to see how much of the land that had been painstakingly cleared over many generations had reverted to woodland, the county still is quite open and still relatively unpopulated. As communities continue to understand the importance of preserving and protecting open space, it is not unreasonable to hope that 170 years from now, the Griswolds would still recognize the view. ☞



R. H. BLACKBURN & ASSOCIATES, Inc.
 rblackburn@berk.com www.b6.com/re
Everything for the Country House
R. H. Blackburn & Associates—Real Estate
 Agents for buyers and sellers of period houses and distinctive landscapes in Columbia County.
 Main office 354 Allen Street, Hudson, 828-3220
Period design for houses, gardens, and landscapes
 17 Broad Street, Kinderhook 758-1788

The Van Schaack House



John V. Hannam
Proprietor

Phone: (518) 758-6118
 Fax: (518) 758-2850
 jhannam@vanschaackhouse.com
 www.vanschaackhouse.com
 20 Broad St. Kinderhook, NY 12106

A Bed and Breakfast in Columbia County, NY

We're  Smokin'

THE RURAL GOURMET
BBQ

Applewood smoked barbecue is a Hudson Valley tradition and we have it everyday.

6 miles South of Hudson on Route 9
 518.851.3000 www.sunsetmeadows.com

Saturday nights (6pm - till)
 and Sunday afternoons (until 4pm),
 on our outdoor patio,
 served with beer, wine and sangria.
 Brunch Sunday 11am - 3pm.

Proud to be part of the community.



- Checking • Savings
- Internet Banking
- Mortgages • IRAs
- Private Client Banking
- Commercial Services
- Brokerage • Insurance
- Consumer Loans
- Trust Services

Chatham — Coleman Street, 392-9222 Greenport — Towne Center, 822-0951
 Copake — Church Street, 329-1122 Hillsdale — Route 23, 325-8100
 Germantown — Route 9G, 537-7730 Hudson — State & Green, 828-4331
 Greenport — Fairview Plaza, 828-4327 Valatie — 2938 Route 9, 758-6911



Hudson River Bank & Trust Co.
Your Local Bank — Your Local Choice



Hudson River Bank and Trust Company FOUNDATION

LEADING THE WAY.

Visit us online at www.hudsonriverbank.com




Insurance for Your Lifestyle, Your Assets.

Property & casualty insurance, employee benefits, bonding, home, auto & life — Peace of Mind.
 Toll free: 877.902.2121 Bostwickgroup.com



Offices in: Albany, Ballston Lake, Chatham, East Greenbush, Greenport, Hillsdale, Hudson, Latham.

AUBERGINE

FINE FOOD & LODGING

Chef/Owner David Lawson welcomes you to enjoy a seasonally changing French-inspired menu drawing largely on fresh, artisanal ingredients from surrounding farms, local purveyors and our own gardens.



Offering guest accommodations in four lovely rooms, as well as cooking classes, seasonal wine dinners and uniquely private party facilities. AAA 4 Diamonds, Zagat Guide Certificate of Distinction.

Visit us at www.aubergine.com

Intersection Routes 22 & 23 ♦ Hillsdale, New York, 12529 ♦ 518-325-3412

A Columbia County tradition since 1961

Arthur Lee of Red Rock, Inc.

215 COUNTY ROUTE 24
 EAST CHATHAM NY 12060
 TEL: (518) 392-9144 • FAX: 392-9155

www.arthurlee.com

Specializing in historic properties

PETER JUNG

FINE ART

AMERICAN PAINTINGS • 1850-1950

512 Warren Street • Hudson, NY 12534
 Gallery (518) 828-2698
www.peterjungfineart.com

THE ART OF RESTORATION

Background pattern: "Philadelphia Stripe" printed on vinyl (DuPont). Photo courtesy Brunswick & Fils, Inc.

By Murray B. Douglas

Editor's Note: Mrs. Douglas is Vice Chairman of Brunswick & Fils known internationally for its fine decorative fabrics, wallpapers, and furnishings. She is third generation in this distinguished family-owned firm and she is the company's spokesperson lecturing throughout the world on design topics. She is their creative director and is a renowned authority in the field of documentary fabrics and wallpapers. Mrs. Douglas is a Design Associate of the American Society of Interior Designers and a past President of the Decorators Club. The recipient of many awards, she was named a Giant of Design in 2003 at the prestigious annual House Beautiful Chrysler Awards Presentation in New York City.

When speaking of restorations, I immediately think of my first trip at 7 or 8 years of age to Colonial Williamsburg. I was "taken" by the evocation of colonial lifestyle in all aspects — the plan of the village, the modes of travel, the dress of the inhabitants, the candle-lit interiors, the canopy beds and wash stands, and the myriad of details of life more than two hundred years ago. It was an eye opener to the past and an introduction to history. Even today I am constantly reminded of the extensive research and painstaking attention to detail it must have taken to make Colonial Williamsburg so real.

Since that time I have prowled around a great many restorations, museums, historic houses, and archives in the search for good designs from the past which can be recreated for today's lifestyles. Many of our fabrics and papers at Brunswick & Fils are carefully

patterned from the works of history's artists and artisans.

An example of this can be taken from our work many years ago at Winterthur. Mr. H.F. du Pont, the founder, was a collector of antique "everything," and he wished to display some of his recent acquisitions which included early American textiles. As part of a planned exhibit he wanted to show the original paper and fabric color designs. For fear of fading and other possible damage the curator forbade their display but suggested that the designs be copied and printed on DuPont vinyl and attached to boards to be used as backdrops for the exhibition. Brunswick & Fils was selected for the task.

But it was not so simple. First, the appropriate designs had to be chosen. Of special note was one that had been printed in Philadelphia in 1776 by Walters & Bedwell, one of the first printers of goods in America. The design we call Philadelphia Stripe was originally block printed on linen in two shades of madder — a rose color and medium sepia. Our screen engraver (since we were printing with silk screens on vinyl instead of

with wood blocks on linen) prepared the screens from photographs of the design and, after struggling with vinyl inks (the first he had ever used) to match the colored original, produced what is called a strike-off or trial.

Mr. Du Pont approved the trial for color and accuracy of reproduction and the display was successfully opened in the south wing in 1964. Later, as a source of income and in anticipation of the 1976 bicentennial, the Winterthur Board of Directors made the decision to allow the reproduction of fabrics, wallpapers, and furnishings which could then be offered for sale. Brunswick & Fils was again selected.

Restoration involves far more than choosing fabrics and furniture appropriate to the interiors involved. The key word is original — finishes, color, design, carving — all must be as close as possible to the original period of the building being restored. Therefore, vast amounts of study and research need to be done. Consultation with experts in every aspect is of primary importance.

When restoring a whole house it is vital to first decide what period, era, or date should be targeted. Possibly it would be the original date of construction or perhaps it could be a time when the house was occupied by a famous person. Often this choice will depend on the available furnishings, written accounts at hand, or a combination of all of these and other criteria.

One of my favorite restorations is Mt. Vernon. The first Mt. Vernon that I visited with my parents in the 1930s was a testament to the Colonial Revival Style in America. Attendants were authentically costumed and one was



The restored downstairs bedroom at Mt. Vernon; the replicated chinoiserie-style red and white fabric is used to "dress" the bed. Photo courtesy Mt. Vernon Ladies Assn.

impressed by the white walls with painted woodwork, oriental rugs, and fairly bare rooms with simple furniture. The aura of Washington seemed to be everywhere — especially in his spare white bedroom. Though I did not know it at the time the building had been restored to a style and not to the time of its building.

Forty years later the mood had changed — from white walls to rich deep painted woodwork and walls and a much less “colonial” look. Paint analysis had been painstakingly undertaken and the interiors were restored to the original colors — which were strong and startling bright. I was not alone in being taken aback. The tour guides told of surprise from most visitors. I respect the science of paint analysis to have determined the correct color. However, my theory is that the paints of the eighteenth century were fugitive — that is, subject to rapid fading — so the painters of the time compensated by making colors extra bright to allow for fading. The lower layers of the original paint revealed by scraping would not have experienced the then normal fading of the surface paint. This may not have been considered when the lowest layers of paint were matched in the twentieth century. Today’s pigments do not fade as readily and the colors will remain overly bright.

Before the paint restoration Bruntschwig had been invited to

reproduce a late eighteenth-century Chinoiserie-style red on white toile which dressed a bed in a first floor bedroom and was used for curtains and slipcovers. The original textile had faded badly and when the wall paint in the room was “color corrected” it looked even paler. Carefully replicating the design, screens were made of a color suggesting the original before fading to be printed on cotton. A trial was ordered and sent to a specialist to construct the bed furnishing. We were delighted to hear

that when completed, the bed, window curtains, and accessories were most successful. But then the “axe” fell. We were asked to destroy the screens as Mt. Vernon did not wish us to market their designs.

Eventually in 1995, a good ten years later, we were contacted by Mt. Vernon who asked us to consider doing a collection of reproduction and adaptation textiles under license for them — which would include the toile, now named *Chinoiserie a l’Americaine*. Of course, we were overjoyed at the opportunity and up to the present have produced five printed and

woven textiles and two wallpapers.

It has been a true learning process to be engaged in the work of restoration and we have realized that the whole field of restoration is indeed an art, of which we at Bruntschwig & Fils are proud to be a part. ☒



A detail of the reproduction chinoiserie-style red and white toile fabric. Photo courtesy Bruntschwig & Fils, Inc.

A Tradition of Trust
Since 1853

NATIONAL UNION BANK
 OF KINDERHOOK
www.nubk.com

TOELKE Associates

Graphic design; publication, packaging, and book design; institutional development materials; integrated promotional strategies. Working with local, regional, and national clients since 1982.

Voice: 518 392-3040
Fax: 518 392-3121
 9 Daley Road, P.O. Box 253,
 Chatham, NY 12037

www.toelkeassociates.com
ron@toelkeassociates.com
barbara@toelkeassociates.com

We produce publications for many non-profit clients.
 How can we help your organization?

CEMENT PLANT THREATENS SCENIC AND CULTURAL RICHES

By **Alix Gerosa**

Director of Environmental Quality, Scenic Hudson, Inc.

Editor's Note: Since 2001 Ms. Gerosa, as Director of Scenic Hudson's Environmental Quality Program, has managed the organization's positions on a variety of air and water quality issues. She has also represented them in many coalitions promoting a comprehensive, safe, and environmentally sensitive state energy plan that includes renewable energy sources and conservation measures. In her article Ms. Gerosa has made a bold and forceful statement on the impact the construction of the proposed St. Lawrence Cement plant may have on the county and its heritage. The opinions that she has expressed may not necessarily represent those of the Society. In an earlier article this editor wrote about "choices." Readers should form their own opinions dependent upon the vision that they perceive is best for our county.

A renowned and treasured region

The Hudson River has been referred to as "America's River" and is celebrated in our nation's history. Recognizing the definitive role this region plays in our cultural, political, economic, and artistic history the federal government in 1996 named the Hudson Valley a National Heritage Area and in 1998 recognized the Hudson itself an American Heritage River.

In 2000, the National Trust for Historic Preservation listed the Hudson River Valley as one of the most endangered historic places in America due to sprawl and inappropriate industrial development. The Preservation League of New York State included Frederic Church's Olana and the City of Hudson on statewide lists, citing specific threats from massive industrial proposals.

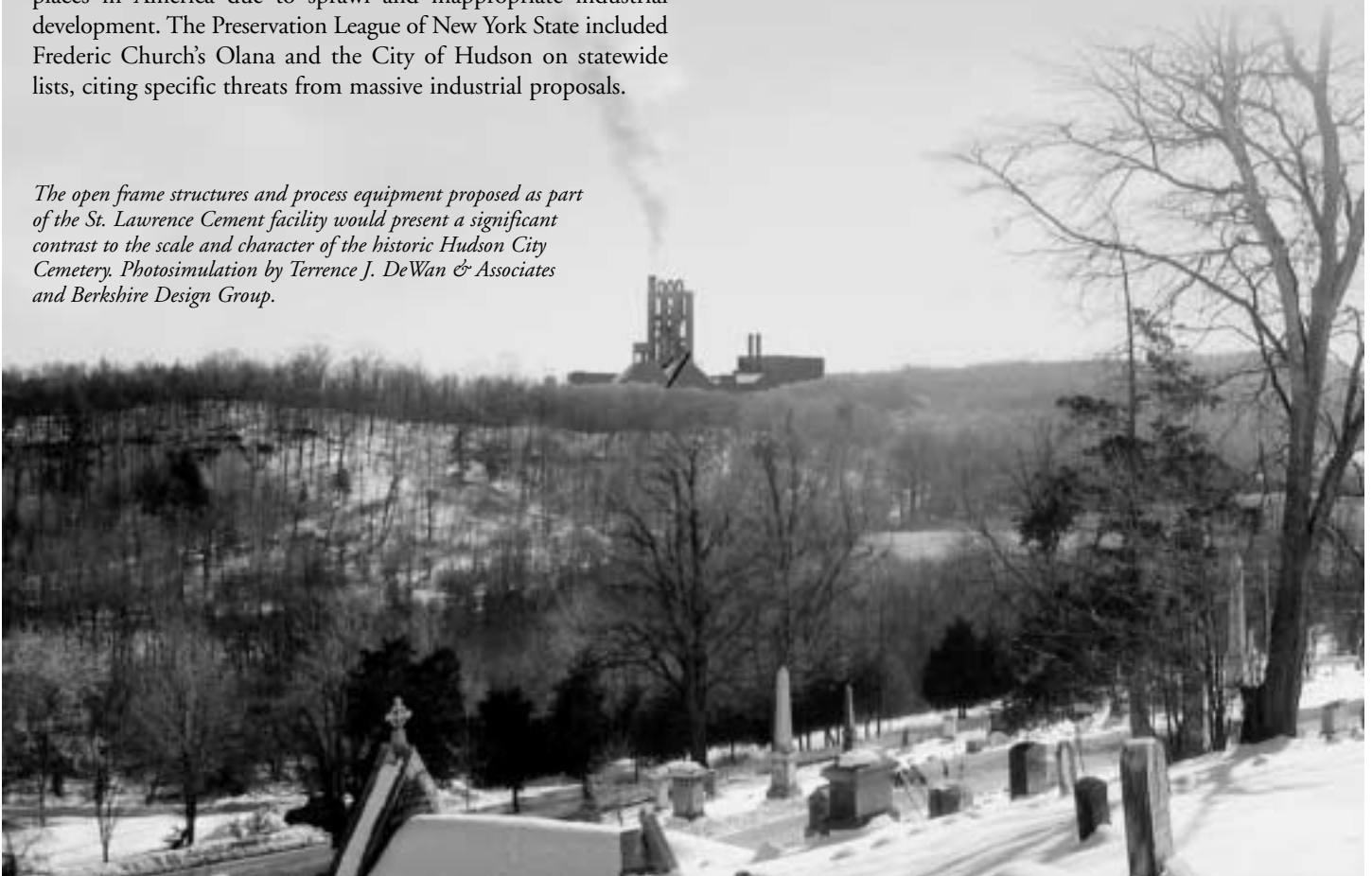
The open frame structures and process equipment proposed as part of the St. Lawrence Cement facility would present a significant contrast to the scale and character of the historic Hudson City Cemetery. Photosimulation by Terrence J. DeWan & Associates and Berkshire Design Group.

Between the City of Poughkeepsie and Hudson alone there are 22 National Historic Landmarks, a designation reserved only for sites of the greatest national significance.

Our history and future hang in the balance

The Hudson River Valley is world-famous for its scenery. For over a century, New York State has acted to preserve its most dramatic scenic resources such as the Palisades, the Highlands and views of the distant Catskill Mountains. Many vistas immortalized by Hudson River painters remain essentially unchanged today but unfortunately are not protected from future changes that could alter or destroy them. Also there are too few places where the public can see and appreciate this river scenery. In addition, cities, towns, and villages are losing their sense of place and community character.

Hudson, founded as a whaling port in the nineteenth century, was transformed by the industrial revolution, which left behind a legacy of economic stagnation. Only in the late twentieth century did Hudson begin to emerge from post-industrial decline. Heritage tourism, the second-home market, a burgeoning arts community, and the nationally recognized antiques trade in Hudson all have contributed to steady economic development. Hudson has become a "smart growth" model of a community that builds upon and supports its existing resources and character.



Twenty-one local, regional, and national environmental, historic preservation and business groups have joined to oppose the SLC plant by forming the Hudson Valley Preservation Coalition (HVPC).

A new industrial city

This bright future now is threatened by a return to dirty skies, industrial din, and blighted landscapes. St. Lawrence Cement (SLC) is attempting to build one of the country's largest coal-fired cement plants on the Hudson river's east bank. If SLC receives its permits, this massive development would be an outrageous monolith by any standard, an industrial city featuring:

- an 1,800-acre site, larger than the City of Hudson, with a 1,200-acre pit mine and 40 acres of buildings
- 20 facilities over 20 stories high — the size of skyscrapers
- a kiln stack and bulky preheater standing taller than 40 stories high, which would be the tallest structure between Manhattan and Albany
- a stack plume often reaching over six miles in length
- a two-mile conveyor belt linking production facilities with a major waterfront dock and storage area.

This plant, to be located 300 feet above the Hudson river, would become the dominant and discordant feature in one of our country's most famous viewsheds — the landscape surrounding Olana.

Industrial blight

If permitted, the effects of this reindustrialization would be far-reaching. Materials such as fly ash and potentially hazardous fuels would come to the region via barge and truck, while cement and its heavy-metal byproducts would be shipped out. The resulting traffic would overwhelm surrounding historic hamlets. SLC's cement plant would create a momentous surge in industrial sprawl, undercutting the Hudson Valley's quality of life for generations. Similar industrial facilities would likely follow, plugging into the SLC plant's infrastructure.

Health impacts

Hazardous air pollutants from the cement plant pose a real, measurable health threat for citizens throughout the Hudson Valley and the northeastern United States. The air emissions that the SLC operations would produce are known to cause a wide range of cancers as well as various respiratory and cardiovascular ailments.

Existing chronic pollution from cars, industry, and power plants led the federal government in 1990 to designate the northeastern United States a special "ozone transport region" requiring cutting-edge regulatory controls for new large-scale pollution sources. Yet the safe threshold for ground-level ozone continues to be exceeded throughout the region. In fact, the proposed site is sandwiched between two counties that do not meet federal air quality standards. In April 2004, the EPA declared that Dutchess County to the south and Albany County to the north do not meet safe levels of ozone. The SLC facility, if approved, would:

- emit 20 million pounds of air pollutants per year
- spew forth nitrogen oxide emissions (ozone forming)

comparable to coal-fired power plants adversely affecting air and water quality in areas up to 500 miles away.

Stack emissions, diesel fumes, and dust from cement production activities contain unacceptably high concentrations of PM2.5 — particulate matter under 2.5 microns in diameter. PM2.5 absorbs other toxins while airborne and, since it is below the human body's filtering threshold (like asbestos), transports these poisons into the respiratory and cardiovascular systems. Inhaling PM2.5 can cause lung cancer and heart attacks and exacerbate asthma. The Environmental Protection Agency and New York State Department of Conservation (DEC) have deemed PM2.5 a serious human health hazard. They are drafting new regulatory parameters to better protect the public from these threats.

Particularly vulnerable are children and the elderly. Within two miles of the proposed SLC plant are numerous daycare centers, the only hospital in Columbia County, a large nursing home, five schools, and Hudson's secondary drinking supply.

The specter of hazardous waste

Most of SLC's North American plants burn or have applied to burn hazardous waste, tires and medical waste, which create highly toxic pollutants. SLC has refused to rule out this practice at the proposed Hudson/Greenport facility — further increasing both air pollution and local transportation of hazardous materials.

According to EPA's toxic release inventory, burning hazardous waste and tires in cement kilns produces a number of toxic air emissions such as mercury, sulfuric acid, lead, barium, manganese, chromium, toluene, styrene, and dioxin (to name a few). These chemicals have been linked to cancer, brain damage, endocrine disorders, anemia, endometriosis, depressed immune system, asthma, and diabetes.

Track record

The SLC has a horrific environmental track record in the communities that host their manufacturing plants. Camden, New Jersey has been plagued with dangerous air quality due to frequent permit violations and monitoring equipment failures. Midlothian, Texas, which is home to a Holcim cement plant (SLC's parent company), could not achieve permit levels and have applied for permit modifications to double nitrogen oxide emissions.

A grassroots coalition

Twenty-one local, regional, and national environmental, historic preservation, and business groups have joined to oppose the SLC plant by forming the Hudson Valley Preservation Coalition (HVPC). They are: American Lung Association, Citizens' Environmental Coalition, Citizens for a Healthy Environment, Citizens for the Hudson Valley, Clover Reach, Concerned Women of Claverack, Environmental Advocates, Environmental Defense, Friends of Clermont, Germantown Neighbors Association, Historic Hudson,

Inc., Hudson Antiques Dealers Association, Hudson River Heritage, Hudson River Sloop Clearwater, Natural Resources Defense Council, New York League of Conservation Voters, Riverkeeper, Scenic America, Scenic Hudson, Inc., and Sierra Club, Atlantic Chapter.

HVPC, which is led by Scenic Hudson; The Olana Partnership; and Friends of Hudson all have full party status in New York State's review of St. Lawrence Cement's permit applications. These leading environmental groups of the Hudson Valley and numerous organizations from nearby Connecticut and Massachusetts are battling together to defeat this proposed project. The National Trust for Historic Preservation and the Preservation League of New York State have *amici curiae* status (friend of the court) in these administrative proceedings.

In granting party status to the HVPC, Friends of Hudson and the Olana Partnership, the DEC judges acknowledged that this is a massive project with impacts not adequately addressed in SLC's draft environmental impact statement and mandated a public vetting of these issues in court.

Plant opposition growing

As the prospect of this inappropriate development looms, citizens throughout the Northeast are mobilizing against the plant. Leading newspapers from the *New York Times*, *Boston Globe*, *Hartford Courant*, *New Haven Register*, *Poughkeepsie Journal*, and *Portland Press Herald* have voiced their opposition to the plant. Connecticut Attorney General Richard Blumenthal publicly opposes the plant and is forming a multi-state coalition to pressure New York and Governor Pataki to stop the plant.

The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection and the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection have sent letters to New York voicing concern for the air quality control technology proposed by the SLC. The governor and attorney general of Maine are all actively educating residents about the plant.

The fight ahead and the need for support

As of 2004, SLC has received none of the 17 permits necessary to build and operate its proposed project. To prevent this region-wide catastrophe, we ask you to stand beside us in preserving the Hudson Valley's air and water quality, cultural vibrancy, visual richness, and economic stability by joining in the chorus of voices saying:

STOP THE PLANT!

For more information, please contact Scenic Hudson, Director of Environmental Quality Alix Gerosa, at (845) 473-4440, ext. 226, or e-mail agerosa@scenichudson.org ☒



A Call for the Conservation of Nutten Hook

By *Mary Faherty-Sansaricq*

Mary Faherty-Sansaricq whose column "Recalling Columbia County" appears in the Columbia County Shopper has been a full time resident of Ghent for twelve years. Mary is the Business Administrator of Hawthorne Valley School, the largest independent school in Columbia County. As the mother of four children, one of whom is autistic, Mary is an active educational advocate for people with disabilities. Mary is currently working on two books: One is a joint effort with her son entitled Seeing My Voice: A Language of Autism and the other is an illustrated compilation of her articles "Recalling Columbia County."

The conservation and preservation of the site of the R&W Scott Ice Company at Nutten Hook in the town of Stuyvesant, now on the National Register of Historic Places, should be a top priority for Columbia County. The upper Hudson valley was the center of the ice industry during the last half of the nineteenth century and, this site, with portions of the foundations and the powerhouse chimney remaining, is the most accessible and interpretable ruin associated with the ice industry on the Hudson River.

In the nineteenth century approximately 135 major ice houses lined the shoreline of the Hudson River between Albany and New York City. Now, virtually all of the Hudson River ice houses are gone. The internal workings and machinery were sold for salvage. The products and byproducts of the ice industry cannot be found in the archeological record because literally they have melted away.

Nutten Hook was the site of the (c. 1885) R&W Scott Ice Company, one of the largest independently owned ice houses on the Hudson River. The ice house was large; estimates put it at 350 feet by 270 feet. The large building was divided into smaller rooms with vertical doors that would permit the loading and unloading of the ice. The ice house was probably built

Ice elevator at the ice house.





Remains of the Brick Power House.



North west view of interior of the Power House.

of double thick walls of spruce or hemlock because of durability. It was painted bright white to reduce the melting of the ice inside. The house was equipped with elevators and conveyers to load ice blocks from the river into storage rooms where the large cakes were layered with sawdust and hay for insulation and preservation.

The ice blocks would stay in the ice house until the river reopened to navigation. The blocks would be shipped south in the spring and summer on specially constructed barges and sold on the streets by the pound. Some ships carried the ice as far away as South America and the West Indies.

The Nutten Hook powerhouse was constructed of brick, which reduced the danger of fire caused by the boiler/firebox system. The system powered the movement of the ice from the river into the house. The brick construction has enabled the Nutten Hook remains to be extant, since most of the other ice houses have been destroyed by fire.

Throughout the 1800s, during the deepest and coldest winter time, usually at mid January, the Hudson River would freeze over solid and ice skaters, racing sleighs, and ice yachts would glide across the river as if it were a crystal byway between the mountains and the valleys. In the days before the advent of "ice breakers," the river was closed to navigation once the temperature became cold enough for the water to freeze. When the ice reached a thickness of ten inches or more the ice harvest would begin.

Men and boys from all over Columbia County, farmers, brickyards, bark peelers, and any other people whose work stopped in the winter, would come to the river with teams of horses, plows, and ice saws to cut the river ice to sell. Wooden planks were laid over the tidal edge to permit the men and horses and equipment out on the ice. Horses were shod with cleats to keep them from slipping.

The men wore hobnailed boots and heavy fur coats. Fires were set in barrels to warm the cold and wet hands of the workers and torches were lit to keep the work going through the night. Since the weather was unpredictable, the work was intense.

First, the ice surface was plowed of any snow that had fallen. Then a channel or canal would be cut to create a waterway in which to float and guide the ice blocks to the ice house. The horses dragged a cutter to mark off the cakes, which were cut by the men from the edges of the canals and pushed and poled along into the wider channels that led to the conveyers. The blocks were fed in pairs onto the moving belts that took the blocks up into the ice house. During the night, boats rowed back and forth through the channels to keep them from icing over.

River pollution and the advent of refrigeration changed this aspect of life in Columbia County. Very few people are alive today who remember when the River was a main source of ice for the people of New York City.

The Nutten Hook site beckons conservation and preservation because it also has been identified as archaeologically significant for Native American habitation. Evidence of hand-sized flint blades, perhaps used for the butchering of large fish have been found near pits believed to be prehistoric cemeteries.

In addition, Nutten Hook, which is a bedrock outcropping, is part of the five mile Stockport Flats section of the Hudson River Reserve. It is an area rich in native flora and fauna and has provided a sanctuary for bald eagles and osprey.

What remains at the Nutten Hook site is well worth preserving. It not only presents a rich resource for further study in environmental management and archeology, it also, most importantly, contains one of the last relics from an industry of historical significance that helped define the Hudson River's past. ☒



East view of the interior of the Nutten Hook Power House with window facing Ice House.

RESTORATION OF AN AMERICAN CHERRY CORNER CUPBOARD

By Nigel Thomas

Editor's note: Stair Restoration is an international group of highly skilled conservators and restorers who combine centuries old processes with state of the art technology to care for some of the finest furniture collections in the world. Formerly Sotheby's Restoration, Stair Galleries & Restoration was established by specialist Colin Stair — the fourth generation of his English family to work with fine antiques. The restoration department is headed by Nigel Thomas, a West Dean College graduate. Over the years, Nigel has set a benchmark for conservation and restoration excellence.

As collectors and decorators all know too well, the acquisition of objects is only the first step toward their incorporation into a collection. Kept indoors in irregular climates, wooden furniture, because of its organic nature, can suffer from dimension changes, frequently resulting in warping, splitting, and delami-

nating of veneer. At Stair Restoration we work with a range of conservation issues, from general wear to fire and flood damage.

When looking at a piece of furniture it is important to understand its past in order to assess and understand its condition. Was it stored in a hot attic or in a damp basement? Was it subjected to extreme temperature changes. Answers to such questions lead to an understanding of the true condition of a piece and factor into its proper treatment by Stair craftsmen. This handsome cupboard was extensively damaged from the waist up in a devastating fire. Once wood is badly burned, it turns into charcoal and there is not much to do except replace the damaged area. Fortunately, the interior surfaces were fairly well preserved.

Many conservation and restoration workshops would write this piece off as a total loss. At best, they might build a new top section. In order to preserve as much of the original cupboard as possible, we took a different approach. Carefully selected new sections of wood were laminated to the carcass and doors. New inlay was cut and laid into the paneled doors. Unfortunately, the swan neck molding and finial at the cornice could not be saved and were replaced by new wood that was chemically treated, distressed and stained to blend in with the original patina. Finally the cupboard was returned to its former glory by hand-waxing and French polish.

Helpful tips to remember to protect your prized possessions:

- ☞ Keep them out of direct sunlight. Surfaces, like skin, are easily damaged by ultra-violet rays.
- ☞ Try to maintain a consistent temperature. Do not turn the thermostat down to 50 degrees when you're away and zoom it up to 72 degrees when you return. A

constant level of 65 degrees is ideal.

☞ Maintain a constant humidity level — 50% is ideal. A change of more than 20% can be devastating to furniture.

☞ Traditional resin-based wood finishes such as shellac and varnish can be used and enjoyed by taking minimal precautions: Use coasters and mats. Consider putting glass tops on tables but make sure there are felt washers between wood and glass. For protection, wax the surfaces every year or so with a good paste wax.

☞ Do not use over-the-counter spray wax! It leaves a layer of silicone behind with each application and the resulting build-up is extremely damaging and difficult to remove.

☞ Finally, consult a reputable professional conservator/restorer before doing any repair or restoration to your furniture. There are countless horror stories about amateur concoctions used with disastrous results. Bear in mind that less is always the best. ☞



Editor's Note: There may be some in the county who still remember the Stuyvesant Lighthouse on the Hudson River but there are probably very few who know its history. We have Harriet H. K. Van Alstyne to thank for this record of her findings which were first published in a Columbia County Historical Society Bulletin of April of 1939. The reader will note that the information from her sources does not match in all respects. Nonetheless, it paints a vivid picture of the power of the river waters and ice, as well as the dangers to those people who would live on or near the river.

In her words:

These startling words met my eye as I stood shivering one bleak November day in the Butler Cemetery at Stuyvesant-on-Hudson copying the inscriptions on the headstones. They ran:

MARIA HYATT, DAU. OF JUSTUS & MARGARET VAN HOESEN, MARCH 18, 1832, AE 12, BY THE DESTRUCTION OF THE LIGHTHOUSE, AND ALSO A LITTLE BROTHER, MARSDEN, AE 2 -, WHO WAS NOT FOUND.*

ELIZABETH, DAU. OF VOLKERT & CHRISTINA WHITBECK, MARCH 18, 1832, AE 11, BY THE DESTRUCTION OF THE LIGHTHOUSE.

HARRIET E. DAU. OF VOLKERT & CHRISTINA WHITBECK, MARCH 18, 1832 AE 13 -, BY THE DESTRUCTION OF THE LIGHTHOUSE.

What a tragedy for this little town, over a hundred years ago, and who do you suppose knows about it now? Following up this question I sought out the oldest inhabitants

Stuyvesant Lighthouse, drawing by Stuyvesant Falls artist Roy Shannon.



THE STUYVESANT LIGHTHOUSE

Destruction by Ice and High Water

and the county histories. One or two persons remembered hearing grand-mother tell about it — but what did she tell? Evert's History of Columbia County gives this: "Two miles north from the landing on the east or Stuyvesant side of the river is a United States lighthouse. It was built in 1829, and refitted in 1854. It is constructed of stone and brick painted white. The height of the tower is 32 feet from its base, and thirty-eight feet from the water. It contains a No. 6 lens which affords a fixed light visible

at a distance of ten nautical miles."

A letter to the Lighthouse Service Department of Commerce on Staten Island (New York) brought this reply: "This office has no history of Stuyvesant Light, and has no record of the destruction of the Light in 1832. The Light was originally built in 1829. It was rebuilt in 1868, it being constructed of brick. The Light was discontinued on this structure in 1933, and re-established close by on a structural steel tower with an automatic acetylene light. Brick structure demolished in 1936."

Finally, through Mrs. Samuel Ellison, wife of the Station Agent at Stuyvesant, N. Y., I wrote to Cobleskill, N. Y., to the former Mrs. Edward McAllister, and received the following:

Editor's Note: Mrs. Edward McAllister was most likely the wife of the son of Henry McAllister who succeeded his father as Lighthouse Keeper.

"The first lighthouse was built in 1828-9, a wooden building in a lot. It was very high water, and the building was on the ground. There were six

Lighthouse continued on page 44

News of the Columbia County Historical Society

Save America's Treasures Grant Supports Preservation Efforts

By Sharon S. Palmer, Columbia County Historical Society
Executive Director

The 1737 Luykas Van Alen House will be undergoing major restoration efforts through the fall of 2005. The site, Route 9H, Kinderhook, New York, is open for tours this summer (Thursdays, Fridays & Saturdays 10-4, Sundays 12-4) while the furnishings from the house are on display at the Columbia County Museum, 5 Albany Ave., Kinderhook, New York (Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays 10-4).

Saving America's treasures is vital to preserving our American heritage for future generations. The prestigious Save America's Treasures grant program represents a national effort to protect America's threatened cultural treasures, including historic structures, collections, works of art, maps and journals that document the history and culture of the United States. Established by Executive Order in 1998, Save America's Treasures was originally founded as the centerpiece of the White House Millennium Commemoration and as a public/private partnership that included the White House, the National Park Service, and the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Save America's Treasures works to recognize and rescue the enduring symbols and traditions that define us as a nation. Honorary First Lady Laura Bush leads this effort along with co-chairs Richard Moe, President of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and Susan Eisenhower, noted author and granddaughter of former President Dwight D. Eisenhower. Mrs. Bush succeeds former First Lady Hillary

Save America's Treasures works to recognize and rescue the enduring symbols and traditions that define us as a nation.

Rodham Clinton who continues to support the program as its Founding Chair. The Committee to Save America's Treasures, established to support this historic effort, includes individuals from business, academia, and philanthropy, as well as experts in the fields of architecture, historic preservation, art, science, and conservation.

As the public partner in this effort, the National Park Service is responsible for managing the Federal Save America's Treasures Historic Preservation Grant Fund recommended each year by the



The 1737 Luykas Van Alen House in Kinderhook, New York.



18th century Dutch kas on display in the current exhibit, Under a New Roof: The Furnishings of the 1737 Luykas Van Alen House, at the Columbia County Museum.

President, approved by Congress, and administered through the National Park Service. This competitive grant application process is designed to provide matching grants for preservation projects of national significance, including the restoration and conservation of buildings, objects, and artifacts that document America's collective memory.

Imagine the excitement when the Society received this prestigious award in recognition of the urgent preservation needs at the 1737 Luykas Van Alen House on Route 9H, Kinderhook, New York. Since

the early 1960s, when Mr. William Van Alen donated the Van Alen House to the Columbia County Historical Society, preservation has been the focus of the Society's efforts to save this important structure. It was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1968 and has undergone several restoration projects over the years. This landmark status qualifies the house for many grant opportunities, one of which is the Save America's Treasures grant program.


To qualify for federal funding the Society had to address the educational, interpretive, and historical value of this site, long considered a "local treasure," and to prove its exceptional historical significance. The Van Alen House is a valuable resource in the study of a particular period and theme in American history and culture. The Society also had to document the restoration efforts at the site over the past 40 years. The crumbling façade and interior of the structure were restored and the house has been maintained as a historic house museum open to the public in the summer months.

The Society has reevaluated the restoration techniques used in the 1960s and 1970s and found that they are not necessarily appropriate today. Epoxy consolidation attempts were found to be failing and the supplementary rafters installed in the 1980s as a temporary measure were the only source of support for the roof. With Save America's Treasures funding the roofing system will be repaired and failing wood elements and the roof shingles will be replaced, the brick walls will be repointed with the parapet gable ends rebuilt, and the

News of the Columbia County Historical Society

grounds will be re-graded to prevent further moisture damage in the basement. This threat to the structure demonstrated the urgent need for continued conservation efforts at the site. The original rafters and other wood elements will be rescued whenever the deterioration is not too severe. It is the Society's goal to save as much of the historic fabric of the building as possible. The total cost of the project is over \$350,000.

The Society is extremely proud to be a part of the Save America's Treasures grant program, increasing public awareness of preservation projects locally, regionally, and nationally. In commenting on this national effort, the program's Honorary Chair Laura Bush said, "Save America's Treasures celebrates the rich American traditions found in our historic sites, structures and collections. With over 800 projects, it leads the way in preserving our nation's legacy of pride, strength and resilience."

The Van Alen House is in very good company! 



18th century pottebank (cupboard), earthenware jar and oak chest on display at the Columbia County Museum through mid November 2004.

❧ APOLOGIA ❧

In our SPRING 2004 issue we published two wonderful stories: "A Mutiny That Forged the United States Naval Academy" and "Bare Knuckles in Boston Corners" and gave credit to the Chatham Courier as the source. However, unintentionally we did not give credit to their author Mr. A. S. Callan whose new book we reviewed in our FALL 2003 issue entitled The Best of "The Man in the Black Hat." We highly recommend that you read this book.

Also our apologies to Nick Biggs, who is the author of "Summer Stock in Malden Bridge" which appeared in the same issue — his name was not included in the byline.

Our Mission

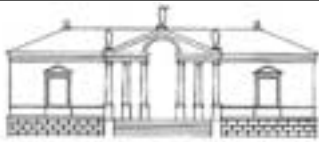
The Columbia County Historical Society is a private, not-for-profit organization dedicated to the preservation and interpretation of the history and culture of Columbia County for its residents and visitors.

It is the Society's goal to encourage understanding, knowledge, and preservation of the county's heritage through the acquisition and conservation of historic lands, buildings, objects and documents, and the sponsorship of research, publications, exhibitions, and educational programming. To help achieve its mission, the Society owns, maintains, and interprets to the public, buildings and collections of historical significance and operates a museum that includes exhibition galleries and an extensive research library.

CEMETERY WORKSHOP DRAWS ENTHUSIASTIC RESPONSE



Participants help New York State Historical Association conservator C. R. Jones (right center) reset a gravestone at a cemetery preservation workshop cosponsored by the Columbia County Historical Society at the Churchtown Cemetery, July 8. Sponsored by the Columbia County Historical Society, the Hudson Valley Documentary Heritage Program, and the Lower Hudson Conference, the workshop was hosted by St. Thomas Lutheran Church and the Churchtown Cemetery Association, and was supported by a grant from the Fund for Columbia County of the Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation. Speakers included Documentary Heritage Program archivists Dianne Macpherson and Erica Blumenfeld, Virginia Martin of Stuyvesant, Ginger Castle from Cedar Park Cemetery in Hudson, Florence Merrifield from St. Thomas Lutheran Church, and Helen McLallen, Columbia County Historical Society curator. Information about cemetery preservation, documentation, and gravestone repair is available at the Society's library. There are numerous cemeteries in the county which still need to be recorded and documented. Anyone who might be interested in helping with these projects is encouraged to contact the Columbia County Historical Society. Contact curator Helen McLallen for further information at 758-9265.



R. H. BLACKBURN & ASSOCIATES, Inc.
blackburn@berk.com www.b6.com

Visit our two galleries for American art & antiques,
antiquarian books, oriental rugs, and custom paintings.

The Pavilion Gallery

17 Broad St. Kinderhook, 758-1788. Appt. or chance

Hudson Antiques Associates

428 Warren St. Hudson 751-2014. Fri-Mon 12-5

Everything for the country house

Real Estate Appraisers — Property Tax Consultants
Serving Government, Business, Industry and Private Individuals

ESAC

EMPIRE STATE APPRAISAL CONSULTANTS

BARRY M. HERBOLD, ASA
NYS Certified
General Real Estate Appraiser

SIXTEEN HUDSON STREET
KINDERHOOK, NEW YORK 12106
518/758-7594 FAX/758-1993



Columbia County's Favorite...

★ GOURMET MARKET ★

★ BUTCHER SHOP ★

★ FULL SERVICE CATERER ★

215 MAIN STREET - GERMANTOWN, NY 12526 - 518.537.6261



**NEW HOMES • RESTORATIONS
RENOVATIONS**

Cav-Ark Builders

PO Box CA, Niverville, New York 12130

518-784-2386, 518-392-6150



Turning Needs into Deeds

Associate Brokers

Karen Risenthal, Robert O'Brien and Paul Kisselback

203 Warren Street, Hudson, NY 12534

518-828-7098 • 800-860-1899

www.tommeaton.com

COLUMBIA COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

*The Board of Directors,
Columbia County
Historical Society*

John B. Carroll
President
Woodruff L. Tuttle
Treasurer
Russell Pomeranz
Assistant Treasurer
Susan Gerwe Tripp
Secretary
Dr. David William Voorhees
Assistant Secretary
Lawrence P. Ashmead
Arthur Baker
Nancy Clark
David Crawford
Joan K. Davidson
John R. Dunne
Sheldon Evans
Henry N. Eyre, Jr.
Mimi Forer
Peter Haemmerlein
John Hannam
Willis Hartshorn
Timothy Husband
Brian Kelly
Dianne O'Neal
Julia Philip
Richard Ryan
Samuel O.J. Spivy
Colin Stair

An Open Letter Regarding the Hudson Area Association Library to:

Dr. James B. Clarke, Jr., Superintendent of Schools
and

The Board of Education, Hudson City School District

The Board of Trustees of the Columbia County Historical Society wishes to express its concern about the future of the building located at 400 State Street in the City of Hudson. We urge the Board of Education to transfer ownership of this historic structure to the Hudson Area Association Library which it presently houses and by doing so conserve for our community an architectural treasure which has embodied the highest aspirations and hopes of the people of Columbia County for nearly two centuries. The library board is prepared, with the overwhelming support of the people of Hudson and the preservation community, to undertake the task of renovating and restoring the building.

Fourth Street in Hudson provides an axis which incorporates the civic ambitions and pride of our ancestors. At one end, the court house serves as the symbol of our cherished government by democracy and equal justice for all; at the other, a building which has served as a poor house, an asylum for the mentally disabled, an orphanage, a school, and a library. At each phase of its long life it has served as the means by which the conscience of our community has met the needs of the disadvantaged, the ill, its young, and those hoping to improve their lives through learning. The preservation of this building as the library would not only serve as a monument to the wisdom and compassion of our ancestors but it would also serve the very practical needs of the present and future citizens of the city and county for library and cultural purposes.

At a time when we are all beginning to appreciate the role of historic preservation and tourism in the county's economic development, it would be absurd to lose a priceless and irreplaceable part of our architectural heritage. Preservation is not the idle nostalgia of a few. The conservation and restoration of our historic buildings provides jobs for artisans and craftsmen and an opportunity to train our youth in the building trades. Hudson is increasingly a destination for those wishing to enjoy the historic character of our neighborhoods while patronizing our businesses. The preservation of the historic architecture of Hudson has more to do with its economic future than with its past and saving the library building for future generations would contribute to the continuing revitalization of our county seat

The content and the advertisement of this message were unanimously approved by the Board of Directors of the Columbia County Historical Society at a meeting on June 18, 2004.

John B. Carroll
President

THE COLUMBIA COUNTY MUSEUM c1916

Luykas Van Alen House 1737 • James Vanderpoel House c1820 • Ichabod Crane Schoolhouse c1850-1920
5 Albany Avenue, P.O. Box 311, Kinderhook, New York 12106 518-758-9265 Fax: 518-758-2499

Conservation, Preservation, and Restoration around the County

AROUND

CLERMONT

THE
COUNTY**THE CLARKSON CHAPEL***By Mary Howell, Columbia County Historian*

In 1997, Columbia County acquired the 230 acre Clermont Horse Farms for back taxes and proceeded to sell all but an acre of land with its historic little church on Route 9G for future generations to use and enjoy. Called the Clarkson Chapel, it, along with the horse farm, was originally part of Southwood, an estate owned by Edward Philip Livingston. His daughter, Mary, married Livinus Clarkson of Potsdam, New York and inherited the estate. The Clarksons attended St. Paul's Church in Tivoli for many years but left that church after a disagreement over a parish school.

Rather than join another congregation, in 1860, Mr. Clarkson had a local carpenter build a modest but charming one-story Gothic revival wood framed chapel with board and batten siding on the grounds of the estate. Unusual projecting scrolled brackets protect the original doors and windows. A pinnacle and a pendant are located at each

end of a steeply gabled roof and a bell cote is located east of the chapel. The original bell disappeared but was replaced with the present bell in the 1960s. In the early years services were held only during the warmer months for there was no heat except for a small stove which still stands in one corner. Another remaining feature is the original pump organ.

In the mid 1960s the Fried family from New York City purchased that part of Southwood lands on which the chapel stood between Woods Road and Route 9G to form their Clermont Horse Farms. For many years the chapel had stood unused and was in a bad state of deterioration. The Frieds completely refurbished the interior, painted the outside, and refurbished the roof. It was probably the Frieds who supplied the new bell and installed electric heating beneath the pews. Once again services were held when a minister could be located.

In the 1980s the farm was sold to an absentee landlord living in Germany. Under poor management both buildings and property again suffered from neglect. Taxes were not paid and finally the County stepped in to take over. By saving the chapel while selling the remainder of the property, the Board of Supervisors has made a significant contribution to the preservation of part of our county's history. The chapel has a new slate roof, repairs have been made to the ceiling, and the outside painted. It is now open for most house tours in the area and has hosted several weddings. Eventually, the county may use it for a tourist information center.



Clarkson Chapel on Route 9G in Clermont.

AROUND

KINDERHOOK

THE
COUNTY**KEEPING UP WITH THE VAN ALENS***By Patricia West, Curator,
Martin Van Buren National Historic Site*

The Van Alen House and its famous neighbor, Lindenwald, will both be undergoing major construction projects this summer. We are happy to report that work in preparation for the upcoming mechanical upgrade to President Van Buren's home is proceeding smoothly.

Planning and design on Lindenwald renovations had been underway for over a year when the first actual work in the house started this past January. Implementation of the program began with consultation, research, training, field trips to other sites where similar projects were done, and purchasing of materials and supplies.

Packing and protecting the Lindenwald museum collection started on January 23, 2004 and finished March 17, 2004. In all 166 boxes were packed containing 660 items. 152 pieces of large house furnishings, including chairs and sleigh beds, were delicately covered with a special "blue cloth" — 145 were pieces of furniture and 7 textiles.

For this stage two teams were established. One team was made up of the park's curatorial staff plus two additional temporary curators in training and a volunteer curator-in-training (interns from SUNY Albany and Marist College). Their main task was to carefully pack, inventory, and store the entire contents of Lindenwald, a daunting task considering the national significance of the collection as well as its fragility. The second team was made up of staff from the National Park Service Architectural Preservation Division (APD) and the Lindenwald maintenance staff. Their primary goal was to install protective coverings on all vulnerable walls, floors, and interior architectural features, without placing a single nail into house

Conservation, Preservation, and Restoration around the County



Lindenwald in Winter.

material. This was accomplished by a variety of cleverly engineered pressure techniques that hold protective structures and coverings in place, using 6300 square feet of protective floor covering, 6240 square feet of plywood, 4800 square feet of plastic sheeting, 1400 feet of ethafoam, 3550 feet of various tapes, and 620 feet of 2x4 boards.

For this phase of the project to be successful it was necessary for the teams to work both independently and in close cooperation, facing many extraordinary challenges. Within and between the teams, there was a consistent positive rhythm and communication that resulted in efficient and effective work production. The outcome was the careful and professional protection of all of Lindenwald's furnishings and interior surfaces.

Much work remains to be done. The curatorial staff will continue to provide assistance and to monitor the collection. We are anticipating that in June the contracted mechanical upgrade will begin, which will install fire detection and HVAC systems and mitigate a longstanding drainage problem. The house will be closed for tours during the weekdays this visitor season to allow construction to go forward without delay, but we hope to allow visitors in on some weekends and holidays when the house can be made safe. Tours and events will focus on Lindenwald's cultural landscape.

Once this work is completed, park staff will have to return the museum artifacts to their original locations. When asked about this task, Museum Technician Karen Leffingwell remarked "I can't wait for the other end of this project. It's going to be like Christmas — unwrapping hundreds of gifts, each a unique treasure!"

AROUND
COLUMBIAVILLE

THE
COUNTY

COLUMBIAVILLE'S OCTAGON HOUSE

By Jim Eyre

The octagon house was the inspiration of Orson S. Fowler from Fishkill, New York, a phrenologist, who in the mid-1800s decided that the eight-sided shaped dwelling provided the ideal form for the function of healthy and spiritual living. It eliminated corners, provided more space than other shapes, allowed for more sunlight, as well as better opportunities for ventilation and communication between rooms. It was also less expensive to build.

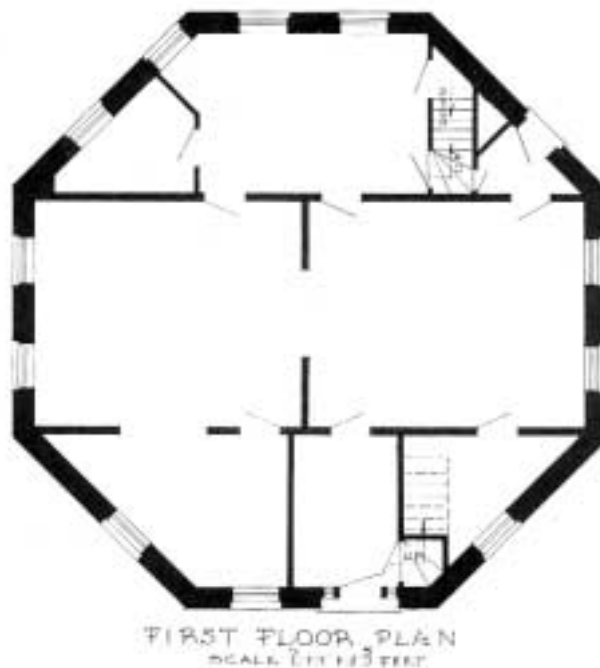
A phrenologist is one who endeavors to analyze character by studying the shapes and bumps of the head. Mr. Fowler was a well known and popular speaker and the author of the highly respected *American Phrenological Journal and Miscellany* and a plethora of health, sex and "how-to" manuals inclusive of garden and orchard. Eccentric, "Yes," but beyond that, as is true of so many eccentrics, — amusing, clever and innovative. His ideas were modern and he was well ahead of Frank Lloyd Wright in arguing that form follows function.

He firmly believed that one did not have to be an architect or a builder to conceive a better house in which to live. And conceive he did with his octagon house. He introduced the controversial indoor toilet, speaking tubes for communication between rooms, central

*Original first floor plan of
the Smith-Haynes House,
from The Octagon Fad
by Carl F. Schmidt.*

heating, running water, and even a "so-claimed" indestructible and impermeable building material comprised of coarse sand and gravel. It was an adventuresome age and his ideas caught fire. He also built himself an octagon house of some 60 rooms in Fishkill — often on the scaffold himself — using his magic grout as an exterior material. Others, a bit skeptical and fearing that the new material might eventually crumble used conventional brick, stone, or wood for siding on their octagon structures. Those built of the more conventional materials, for the most part, are still standing while Fowler's has long since been taken down for fear that the decaying walls would collapse.

Many of these unusually shaped homes were built throughout New England and many of them are still extant — three of them in Columbia County. Stockport's Octagonal house was built in 1860 by John Smith a successful farmer and orchardist, and not by his decorated Civil War hero brother, Isaac Smith, as is widely believed. Isaac lived in a house nearby. At that time the family industry extended beyond fruit orchards to phosphate fertilizer and fruit preserving factories whose produce was exported to New York City from private Hudson River piers at the foot of Alvord Dock Road. The Smith properties and residences covered many hundreds of acres in an area which was then aptly called Smithville.



Conservation, Preservation, and Restoration around the County

As was true of most of the early octagonal houses Smith's was simple in aspect with plain wood sides — eighteen feet long. It has ten large rooms and eight large corner wedged areas that serve as closets or storage areas. John Smith could easily walk from room to room in order to peer out of his large 6 foot by 38 1/2 inch windows to oversee the ongoing work in his orchards. On a clear day he would climb to his large rooftop cupola where he could enjoy a 360 degree view for miles in each direction.

The family lived in the house for two generations. One of the last Smiths to live there was a colorful lady often referred to fondly by her peers as "Aunt Rachel." Beyond a capacity to tell wonderful stories, she held séances and was said to have supernatural powers. Subsequent owners claim that she haunts the house and has subjected them to varied pranks — among them yanking pillows from under sleepers' heads.

The house was abandoned several years ago — some say as a result of a dispute over ownership. In its idle state it was heavily vandalized and thoroughly ransacked. Most of the windows were smashed, doors stolen, and even important architectural details removed. Water and weather invaded causing rapid rot and destruction. In fact one northeast exterior wall was in partial collapse and others seemed soon to follow. It was about to be sold to a new owner who had plans to raze it and use the property for other

purposes when Jonathan Hallam stepped in and bought it outright and "as is" in April of 2002.

Mr. Hallam is a dealer in antiques and also a realtor. He had passed the house many times and had long admired it. As is the case in many real estate transactions a yearning became an obsession leading to his purchase of the house. In addition to having in-depth knowledge of things "Olde," Mr. Hallam has the intelligence to know that proper restoration requires careful study. Yes, adaptation is necessary for modern living ie: such things as bathrooms and kitchens, and heating systems, and wiring. But, old features — bones, basics and details should be copied, matched, and employed wherever possible.

Mr. Hallam has now completed the major part of his task. Fallen walls are up again. Windows and doors have been restored or replaced. The floor plan was happily never modernized and remains much the same as the original. Each found piece of wood was meticulously reused or duplicated for repairs.

The house stands today majestic in its simplicity for all to see and admire. All of it is due to Mr. Hallam's research and patient planning as well as the careful restoration work by Gary Garafolo and Todd Hoyt of Taconic Homes. It must be a happy house again as Mr. Hallam has yet to lose his pillow to "Aunt Rachel."



Front view of Johnathan Hallam's restored home with rooftop cupola from which majestic views may again be enjoyed.



The abandoned house was badly treated by vandals and weather. Here the northeast wall is shown in partial collapse before restoration began.

AROUND

STUYVESANT

THE COUNTY

THE STUYVESANT RAILROAD STATION

By Jim Eyre

In May of 1880 there was a huge fire in the port town of Stuyvesant. Like many other similar towns up and down the river large wooden buildings were clustered near the docks to handle the busy movement of goods by ship to New York City or other port cities and towns. Historically, shipping was first by sail, later by steamers, and then by rail.

Of course the rail station — built by the Hudson River Rail Road — would be located in a busy place near the docks where merchants traded and many of them had lived for so many years. In a roaring blaze it was gone, as were the lumberyard, stove factory, flour mill, stores, saloons, hotel, offices, homes, and many newer buildings which were built to handle the town's increasing commerce. A barren landing was left behind. Only six days after the fire, almost before the smoke had cleared, the Hudson Evening Register heralded plans for a new railroad depot signifying the importance of rail transportation to the revival of the town's prosperity.

The new building would enjoy a similar 20' by 50' footprint but it would be bold and permanent looking — as if to emulate the power of the heavy and powerful iron steam engines that stopped there and to demonstrate the reliability of the railroad to deliver passengers and goods from one point to another in less time and on time.

Similar to other depots of the day it was Italianate in architectural style, heavily ornamented with arches over windows and doors, and a hipped roof. A lower slanted roof around the perimeter gave cover to passengers, freight, and baggage. A platform provided dry footage from the dusty and often times muddy surrounding dirt surfaces.

Conservation, Preservation, and Restoration around the County



Stuyvesant Station, c. 1904. Photo courtesy Town of Stuyvesant.

The building saw heavy use until after World War II. Subsequently, with the advent of air transport as well as better roads and larger trucks, the use of railroads declined. In 1958 the New York Central stopped its service at Stuyvesant and the station was closed. Sometimes used as a warehouse but otherwise abandoned and without maintenance it fell further and further into disrepair.

By 1996 the importance of the building to the town's history was fully realized and the building was acquired by the town. An active group of concerned volunteer citizens formed the Stuyvesant Railroad Station Restoration Committee initially chaired by Kristina Kwacz and later co-chaired by Virginia Martin. Careful study went into plans for restoration with the intent to reuse whatever materials possible and to closely duplicate those items and features lost or destroyed.

With over \$200,000 obtained from an Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act grant, a \$95,075 Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century Grant, a \$29,500 NYS Clean Air/Clean Water Bond Act Grant, \$20,000 from local contributions, and other monies from sources such as the Hudson River Valley Greenway, eight years of patient hard work, and the help of professional restoration contractors, the project is now nearly complete.

Future plans for the restored building include a space for interpretive materials highlighting railroad and riverfront transportation. Plans are as yet indefinite but it may also serve as a stopping off point for river users, as well as boaters, and hikers on the Greenway trail that will pass nearby. The remaining area will be leased for business use with the income employed to help the town maintain the building for the study, use, and enjoyment of future generations.



THE PACHAQUACK PRESERVE Valatie's Treasure in Conservation

By Dominick Lizzi, Valatie Village Historian

Until several years ago it was just a hillside along the South side of Kinderhook Creek opposite Valatie's Main Street. On a quiet day when the noise of traffic is stilled, the only sounds that can be heard from that hillside are those of the birds, the rustle of flowing water and sometimes the beautiful chimes from the church across the creek. The cleared hillside and the woods around it have always been there for all to see from the day the village was founded and most likely long before that. It will always be that way. Maps from 1686 show the land. Then and ever since it was farmed and maintained by different families. And in the future, it will never be ruined with commercial clutter or become a site for rusted autos and abandoned equipment. Nor will it be developed into little home-sites or boast someone's grand idea of a mansion.

In 1996 Mayor Patrick Grattan obtained the land for the Village of Valatie and more

recently Mayor Jason Natske, with the help of the New York National Guard, developed the property for passive recreation. On July 24, 2001 Governor George Pataki made the dedication of the land as the Pachaquack Preserve for all to enjoy. Pachaquack means "cleared meadow — meeting place" in Mohican.

In the Spring of 2002 the Friends of Pachaquack Preserve, in a program organized by Claire Renn, sponsored its first nature walk on the 43 acre site. Frank Knight, lifelong naturalist and botanist led the group. Mr. Knight is the noted "botanist guy" for the radio station WAMC in Albany. Assisting was the Columbia Land Conservancy's guide, Fran Martino.

The group of 30 persons — many naturalists among them — were impressed with the wealth of plant life along the four miles of trail including wild sarsaparilla, evening primrose, rock crest, violets — both yellow and blue Jack in the Pulpits and such invasives as garlic mustard, honeysuckle, knap weed, and a variety of bushes. The trails were not difficult to negotiate, well marked and fairly easy to follow as they passed under canopies formed by sugar maples, quaking aspen, and birches. The hikers caught glimpses of the Kinderhook Creek as they passed through groves of hemlocks.

Various animal life indigenous to the region are in the preserve such as deer, turtles, chipmunks, snakes, and muskrats. Sometimes fox cubs can be spotted playing in the open fields and over the winter the famed albino doe of Valatie was sighted along the trails. As the group neared the



A view along one of the trails in the Pachaquack Preserve.

Conservation, Preservation, and Restoration around the County

Kinderhook Creek, Fran Martino pointed out that it was flowing clean, clear, and rapidly and enjoyed an excellent “ph factor” ideal for aquatic vegetation and fish life. The caddis insect was spotted; it only survives on the surface of pure water. Fish such as trout, bass, and pickerel are found in the creek, and as if to add final magic to a glorious day, a large osprey sprang into flight with a fish in its beak. Other birds noted that day were the king bird, Baltimore orioles, and yellow warblers.

At the bend of the Kinderhook Creek, just opposite the Valatie Kill’s mouth, there are several picnic tables and there are benches for resting along the trails. No alcoholic beverages are allowed in the preserve and people must remove their own trash as there are no waste or garbage pails. There is ample parking and a gazebo at the entrance just off Chatham Street (Route 203) within walking distance of Main Street. There is no fee for the use of the trails. Anyone interested in helping the Friends of Pachaquack may call the Valatie village office (518) 758-9806. All are welcome to a treasure in an open space.



THE CONYN/RENSELAER HOUSE

By Peter Sinclair

Editor’s Note: Mr. Sinclair, an architect from West Hurley, New York., is the Editor and Past President of Hudson Valley Vernacular Architecture, a not-for-profit corporation formed to study and preserve vernacular architecture and material culture. Mr. Sinclair and other competent professionals are assisting Mrs. Nancy Ginsberg, owner of the The Conyn/Rensselaer House, in her research prior to restoration. Important and historic architectural features are being discovered, uncovered, and studied for their importance and possible re-use in the proper reconstruction of the house. We applaud Mrs. Ginsberg and her team for their care, patience, and attention to historic values.

The Conyn/Rensselaer house in Claverack, at the north end of Spook Rock Road, is a two story center-hall brick house with a gambrel roof. It is known to some as the “yellow brick house” because of the present bright color of its yellow paint. The house is dated 1766 on a tile in the south gable. Like most old houses it has undergone alterations and additions over the generations as the latest style and new conveniences moved the owners to make changes. Its Victorian entrance and heavy roof brackets hide some of its eighteenth-century look but the inside preserves many pieces of evidence and parts of its original Dutch interior that the new owner, Nancy Ginsberg, is hoping to restore.

There are a number of eighteenth-century, two-story brick houses with gambrel roofs in the Hudson Valley, most built in the 1760s and later. They were the homes of well-to-do families.

Houses in the Hudson Valley, in contrast with New England and Pennsylvania, were generally story-and-a-half in the eighteenth-century. The two-story house was slow to be adopted in this region. A two-story house in 1766 and, especially with a gambrel roof, was an expression of a new look. Some writers have suggested it was borrowed from New England.

There is a similar two-story gambrel-roofed brick house in nearby Upper Red Hook, Dutchess County, called The Lyle

Habitat Eileen Fisher

Flax
Drapery
Heavy Linen
Sigid Chino
Puddledon

Orchard Dress Shop

Sportswear & Dresses
Daytime and Special Occasion

Route 9 1 mile north of Hudson New York
Tues-Sat 10-5pm
518-828-3518
Sigid Chino Tallacids

Art Nouveau

R.H. VANALSTYNE

fine jewelry & gifts

store hours
wed-sat 10am-5pm

42 Main Street Chatham N.Y. 12037 518-392-7718

DAVID & BONNIE

MONTGOMERY

Antiques and Decorative Accessories

711 Warren Street
Hudson, N.Y. 12534
Shop: 518-822-0267

Conservation, Preservation, and Restoration around the County



The loft of the Conyn/Van Rensselaer House Claverack, Columbia County, Photo by John Stevens, June 1999.

House, that looks like the Conyn/Van Rensselaer House. I have not examined it but I did examine a house across the road. An historic marker calls it the Thomas House and headquarters of General Putnam in 1777. From its outside appearance it looks like a Victorian house but in its interior there are hints of its eighteenth-century beginnings.

On first examining the Thomas House with Todd Scheff, a restoration carpenter from Germantown, New York, I took it for a Federal house with plastered ceilings and jambed fireplaces. The roof construction was odd and obviously re-built, but why? It was

not until a second more careful examination was made that we discovered in the loft that its king posts were actually re-used queen posts with very English tie joints that originally were part of an English gambrel roof system.

In Victorian times the owners who were up-dating the house took the trouble to change the gambrel to the more fashionable gable style roof. When was the house originally built? Could it pre date the Conyn/Van Rensselaer house? This is the first evidence of an English style flared-post frame that I know of in the Hudson Valley.

While from the exterior the Thomas,

Lyle, and Conyn Houses must have looked very alike in the eighteenth century, on the inside they were very different, expressing Dutch and English cultural styles. One of the differences would have been the plastered ceilings of the Thomas House and the exposed beams in the Conyn/Van Rensselaer House. Another was the type of fireplace.

Nancy Ginsberg has owned the Conyn/Van Rensselaer house for two years and has been slowly taking away later layers and partitions to expose the origins of the house. In the 1840s many Greek Revival changes were made on the interior. Doors and moldings were updated and the ceilings plastered.

Since the three internal beams of a Dutch room are not equal in depth, it seemed necessary then, in order to gain height, to hack the bottom of the beams off and level them for plaster lath. This had disastrous results for the beams in the north room of the Conyn/Van Rensselaer house. The reduced timbers are cracking and sagging and can no longer support the room above.

Nancy wants to restore this room to its original state with a Dutch jambless fireplace. With the architect, Dave Minch from Saugerties, New York, it was decided that it would be best to replace the three internal beams. The hood beam, like the original, will be 13 inches x 7 inches x 25 feet long, planed smooth with no bead. It with its trimmer beams will support a brick smoke hood with an opening 8 feet wide. the fireplace will be finished with a wooden hood and a complex crown molding on which to display the family delft and china. Below there will be a decorative cloth valance. Fortunately, Nancy has found the original front molding of the crown in the unaltered loft of the house.

The loft of the Conyn/Van Rensselaer House is one of its best features. It displays a Dutch gambrel roof system that is often found in this area of the Hudson valley and is probably the innovation of local carpenters with Dutch timber framing background. It is very effective, allowing for a wide uninterrupted floor. It is very different from the English gambrel framing of the Thomas House. The structures of historic houses are often more revealing than their appearance.



The Conyn/Van Rensselaer House Claverack, Columbia County, NY. Photo by John Stevens, June 1999.

Conservation, Preservation, and Restoration around the County

AROUND

VALATIE

THE
COUNTY

“BRING BACK MAGIC” AT THE VALATIE COMMUNITY THEATER

By Dominic Lizzi

Valatie Town Historiian

For thirty four years the doors to the Valatie Theater on Main Street have been closed. Built in 1926 in Art Deco design with 250 seats, it became the social and entertainment center of the Town of Kinderhook and much of Northern Columbia County. Not only were movies shown — silent at first — but live presentations were also an attraction. At times, it was used as a public hall for meetings. Still much in use in 1946, the walls were recovered and a projection booth with two 35mm projectors and a new sound system were installed. Then in 1970 it closed.

But the people missed their theater. Five years ago, the Village purchased the property

with the assistance of a \$125,000 matching grant from the Hudson River Valley Greenway. This has been supplemented by a grant from Congressman John Sweeney.

Under the direction of Mayor Gary Strevell, the theater is being restored. Architect Dave Sadowsky has been retained to design and manage the project. Fortunately, the original seats and the projection booth have remained untouched.

The first phase of the restoration has focused on the entryway to the theater with a new block wall, second floor, and roof. A new ticket booth and concession stand will be located in this entryway. Phase 2 will involve a new stage, a new marquee, and a complete restoration of the interior in the

original Art Deco design

Phase 1 is now mostly complete and on May 23, 2004 the theater opened its doors for the curious to inspect the progress. The goal is to reopen in the fall of this year as the Valatie Community Theater. The total vision is to have a community center that shows independent films, live plays, live music events, and becomes a home to community meetings. This is a noble effort. Too many town theaters have disappeared for good. Contributions are welcomed and can be sent to the Valatie Community Fund, c/o the Village of Valatie, Valatie, New York. ☒

Plan view of the Valatie Community Theater.



AROUND

GERMANTOWN

THE
COUNTY



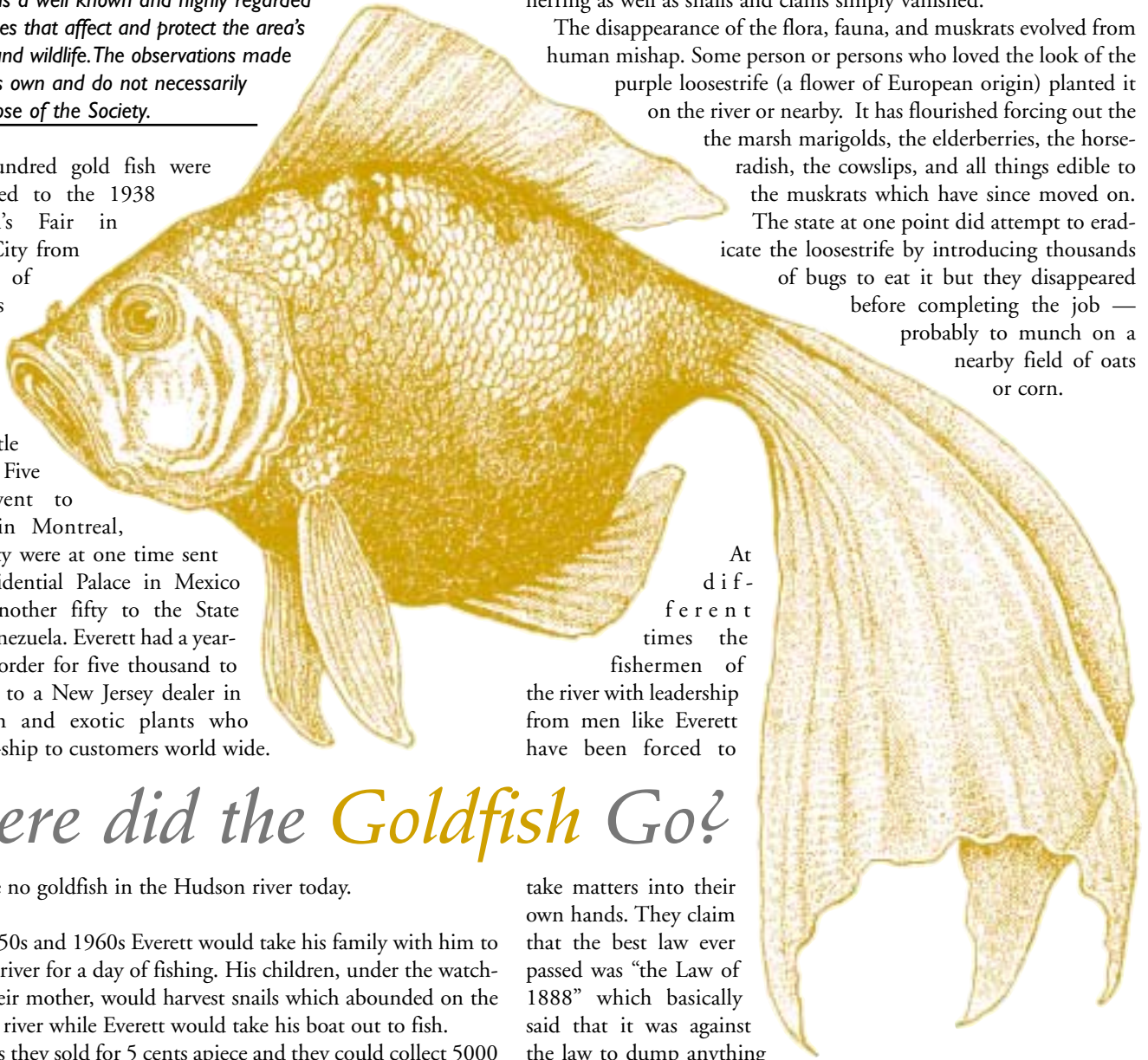
Above: An early 1800s three bay drive through English plan barn with early square-rule timber-frame and Dutch features owned by Rose Fisher Pancheri. Professionals deemed it an important example of the region's architecture and worthy of preservation. A grant to restore the barn before its collapse this past winter was applied for but refused.



Left: In the barn was an early hay bailing machine which prepared the hay for shipping to New York City and other points. Surrounding timbers were covered with black graffiti, nineteenth century dates (1860 being the earliest), names of local people, tallies of weight and occasional caricatures. The barn is now beyond repair but Mrs. Pancheri has plans to save the hay bailer and the graffiti covered beams.

By Jim Eyre, taken from a taped conversation with Everett Nack of Claverack, a lifetime fisherman on the Hudson river. He is a member of the Fishermen's Association and has served on their Estuary Committee formed to guide the State on river matters. He is a well known and highly regarded critic of policies that affect and protect the area's flora, fauna, and wildlife. The observations made below are his own and do not necessarily represent those of the Society.

Five hundred gold fish were supplied to the 1938 World's Fair in New York City from the City of Hudson's riverfront. Three hundred were sent to the Seattle World's Fair. Five hundred went to Expo '64 in Montreal, Canada. Fifty were at one time sent to the Presidential Palace in Mexico City and another fifty to the State House in Venezuela. Everett had a yearly standing order for five thousand to be delivered to a New Jersey dealer in tropical fish and exotic plants who would trans-ship to customers world wide.



Federal government's Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) had warned that 3 parts per billion of chlorine would effectively stop reproduction and this was far in excess of that. Everett's shad catch went from 65 tons per year to 3 tons and the goldfish, the bass, the herring as well as snails and clams simply vanished.

The disappearance of the flora, fauna, and muskrats evolved from human mishap. Some person or persons who loved the look of the purple loosestrife (a flower of European origin) planted it on the river or nearby. It has flourished forcing out the the marsh marigolds, the elderberries, the horse-radish, the cowslips, and all things edible to the muskrats which have since moved on. The state at one point did attempt to eradicate the loosestrife by introducing thousands of bugs to eat it but they disappeared before completing the job — probably to munch on a nearby field of oats or corn.

At different times the fishermen of the river with leadership from men like Everett have been forced to

Where did the Goldfish Go?

There are no goldfish in the Hudson river today.

In the 1950s and 1960s Everett would take his family with him to the Hudson river for a day of fishing. His children, under the watchful eye of their mother, would harvest snails which abounded on the banks of the river while Everett would take his boat out to fish.

The snails they sold for 5 cents apiece and they could collect 5000 per outing easily. Each basket was filled with 100 snails with a stone placed on top to signify the count. Out on the river fish boxes were quickly filled with striped bass, shad, herring, and other species of fish for, depending upon the season, there were many. Soon these too would be gone — some never to return.

On other days when Everett cruised the river to check his lines and nets, he would see clusters of yellow marsh marigolds, blood-roots with their white flowers, and wild horseradish — most of which have vanished along with other flora too. Muskrats heavily populated the river marshes but there are no more.

Everett claims that there were several reasons for this sudden disappearance of river treasures. The first — that dealing with the fish — came in 1979 at a time when the sewer plants in a clean-up program were required to prevent visible sewage from entering the river. But this was not enough. The state decided to disinfect the river as well. Tons of chlorine were at once dumped into the river. The

take matters into their own hands. They claim that the best law ever passed was "the Law of 1888" which basically said that it was against the law to dump anything into the river. If anyone was seen doing it, one could take the case to court and, if successful, could earn one half the fine imposed. The Fisherman's Association, an organization formed by most of the river fishermen and to which most of them belong, has done just that.

In the 1970s a river company was taken to court by the association over a plan that would remove one third of the river flow from their shorefront at Storm King Mountain during hours of low electrical consumption to be pumped up the mountain pipes to a reservoir where it would be held. When additional electricity was needed the water would be released through the pipes to create the electricity and then dumped back into the river. The company intended to install the pumps and the reservoir by excavation and blasting and proceeded without a permit. The fishermen realized the harm that such a massive disturbance could cause to fishing and took action. The Association won and were awarded \$11,000,000 as their share of the fine. With this and other fine monies, the Association founded the

Hudson River Foundation which in turn finances the River Keeper, an office responsible for policing the river and seeking out violators.

At the same time that chlorine was being dispersed into the Hudson river it was also being poured into the Chesapeake Bay. The result was the same — almost a complete loss of fish, crustaceans, and shellfish reproduction. However, this was not acceptable to the State of Virginia and they took action by eliminating the use of chlorine as a disinfectant and switching to ultrasonic methods. It took three years for the chlorine to dissipate but the bay area has now returned to high levels of production. The State of Virginia published a report on the problem and their success in curing it.

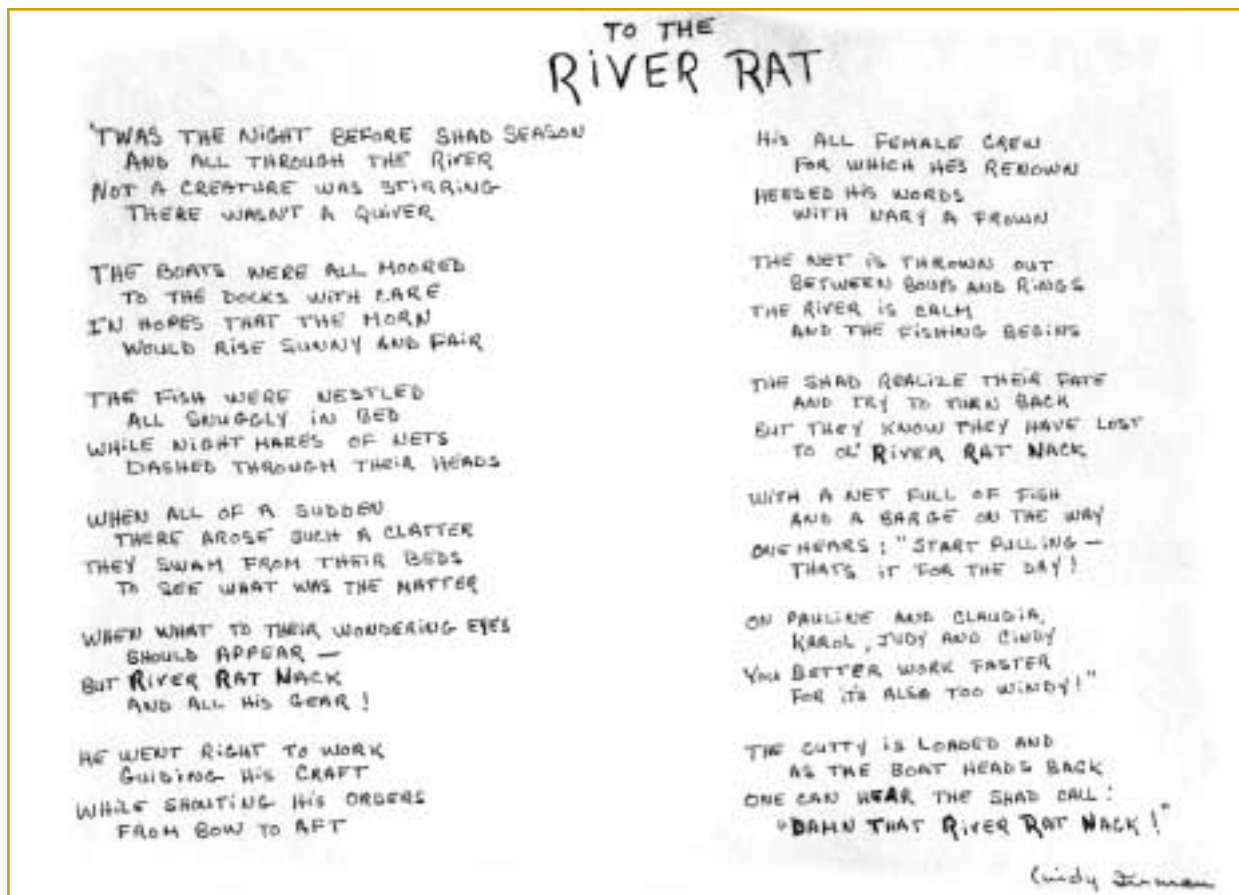
The report was brought to the attention of New York State authorities in 1990 and new regulations were introduced to lower the chlorine content by 75%. But it was not until 1998 that the sewage plants received instructions to cut the chlorine down. In one year the fish were reproducing and now shad and black stripers are being caught again. However, it is too late for many of the other species.

According to Everett there are two more serious problems facing the health of the river — that of PCBs already in the river and that of mercury contamination that well may be introduced by the operation of the new plant that St. Lawrence Cement is planning.

The PCBs in the river came from a fire retardant that General Electric used in their electrical equipment, the excess of which was dumped into the river at Hudson Falls. The state had issued a permit under which GE did this for many years until it was told to stop. However, they did not cease when told and continued to dump for many more years. When finally stopped, GE was ordered to clean up the mess but has been delaying action. In fact, they claim that the river is cleaning itself. That may be so at Hudson Falls but Everett

claims that the largest concentration of the PCBs has now moved downstream with the flow to a point some 25 miles south in Stillwater. Once it moves past the Stillwater Thompson Pool Dam and then Troy and infests the estuaries, Everett feels that the PCBs will be spread too thin to be effectively removed. This could affect the water supplies of five cities that take their drinking water from the Hudson river — Ft. Hughes, Rensselaer, Rhinecliff, Poughkeepsie, and New York City

The mercury problem Everett thinks may be even more critical. St. Lawrence says that the mercury released into the air from the rock when run through the kilns will be minimal and within safety guidelines. However, an expert on emissions brought in from Michigan to attend an information forum put together by St. Lawrence and the federal Environmental Protection agency has stated that if they burn the amounts of low mercury coal that they anticipate then 265 lbs. of mercury will be released into the air from the stacks each year. This is way above state minimums. It is true that one plant can buy credits from another plant for what the other plant has not released. That means that each plant does not have to stand on its own merits. Even so, it's Everett's contention that 1 gram of mercury will pollute a 20 acre pond. If only 200 lbs. had to be accounted for and were released from that one plant — 1 gram equals .002 lbs. and that amounts to 100,000 grams of mercury or 100,000 20 acre ponds — and that's year in and year out. At that rate every body of water within a 200 mile radius could be adversely affected with the heaviest density of pollution expected to fall within ten miles of the plant. What are the ramifications of that? ☒



*"The River Rat,"
a poem in honor
of Everett Nack,
with apologies to
presumed author
Clement Clark
Moore.*



Just what we need!

NEW & USED BOOKS

- Mysteries • Classics • Art/Music
- Kid's Books • Cook Books • Magazines
- Greeting Cards • Paperbacks
- Hardcovers • And More

ORDERING SERVICE

Fairview Plaza, Hudson, NY
518-828-7714



Lynn M. Strunk Realty, Inc.
1 Broad Street
Kinderhook, New York 12106
Business 518-758-1921 / Res. 518-758-6118
www.c21lynnstrunk.com / Fax 518-758-2850
E-Mail

John V. Hannam
Licensed Salesperson

Each Office is Independently Owned and Operated



Patricia A. Hinkein
Realty LLC.

19 Church Avenue

Germantown, NY 12526

518-537-4888

hinkein@valstar.net



851-9629

Thomas Holmes
Terri Holmes

Holmquest Farms

Freshest Home Grown Vegetables Available
Best Corn in the County

516 Spook Rock Road, Hudson, NY 12534
— or —
Fairview Avenue, Greenport

Law offices of
**Connor, Curran
& Schram, P.C.**
Since 1959



441 East Allen Street, Hudson, NY 12534

(518) 828-1521

Fleet Bank Building, Chatham, NY 12037

(518) 392-3641

A Full Service Practice Emphasizing...

Wills • Real estate • Trustes and Estates • Land Use Planning

Civil Trial Practice • Business • Corporations • Medicaid • Title Insurance
Real Estate • Trusts and Estates • Land Use Planning

Theodore Gutterman II, Nelson R. Alford, Jr., Andrew B. Howard, Paul M. Freeman, Virginia D. Smith, Danielle McIntosh

Book Review:

HUDSON'S MERCHANTS AND WHALERS

The Rise and Fall of a River Port: 1783–1850

By Margaret B. Schram

Reviewed by Jim Eyre

It is difficult to write an objective review about a book that one has so thoroughly enjoyed. Margaret Schram tells the history of Hudson's early days of glory in a fascinating manner that keeps your attention riveted to the page. She paints a vivid picture of a courageous — sometimes industrious and sober — but more often hurly burly time when the Proprietors and their followers were ready to take advantage of opportunity and take huge risks to achieve their goals. She fails to numb the senses with un-needed detail and instead weaves into her Hudson tapestry tales of adventure, enterprise, and derring-do.

One finds scenes of Hudson in its early days of the late 1700s.

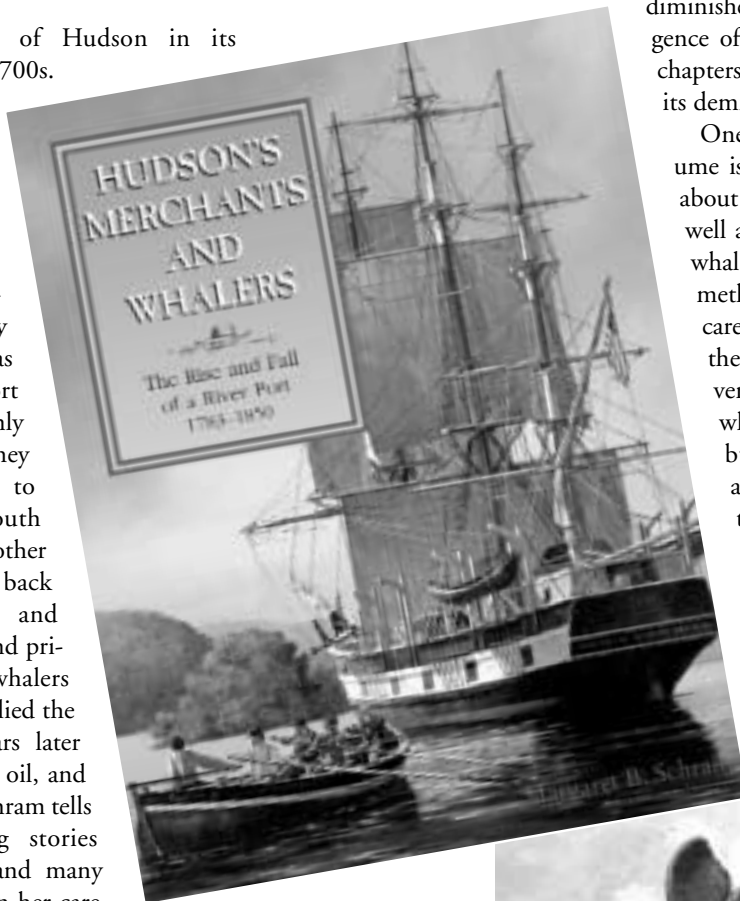
It tells about the Nantucket Quakers who chose the deep waters off Claverack Landing for a safe harbor from enemy marauders. As iron-willed Proprietors they founded a city that was quickly to become a port second in commerce only to New York City. They were traders sailing to the West Indies, South America, Europe, and other far destinations and back again playing “cat and mouse” with corsairs and privateers. They were whalers and seal hunters who plied the seas and returned years later with spermaceti, whale oil, and precious skins. Mrs. Schram tells startling and moving stories about these perilous and many times heroic voyages. In her careful research she has uncovered heretofore unknown documentation which will make this book an important inclusion at any maritime library.

As Hudson grew, the bustling city became home to factors and consortiums, ship builders, rope makers, sail makers, candle makers, taverns, and bawdy houses. Hudson became the gateway — back and forth — between New York City and New England and with prosperity came turnpikes, beautiful homes, good living, rent wars, and politics. If one is the least bit upset about today's politics, let Mrs.

Schram tell you about the face-off between Thomas Jefferson's Democratic Republicans and the Federalists in which Jefferson was charged with paying a newspaper editor to call “Washington a traitor, a robber and a perjurer” and to call Adams “a hoary-headed incendiary.” Foreign wars and influences put severe pressures on the important shipping and whaling center but the resilient Hudsonians persevered with success for almost 40 years.

By 1830 the steamboat had successfully challenged the sailboat in trade and travel between Hudson and New York. The boom in trains and rail travel soon ensued and the importance of the Hudson harbor as a gate to New England and its markets quickly diminished. As well as she has chronicled the emergence of Hudson's industry and strengths in earlier chapters, she now unravels the weaknesses that cause its demise from prominence.

One of the most intriguing portions of the volume is the Appendix which enlightens the reader about the Quakers and the “Hudson Meeting” as well as delivering a clear description of the art of whaling and seal hunting inclusive of tools and methods used. These sections are followed by carefully made and easily read notes that attest to the depth of Mrs. Schram's research and the veracity of her findings. This is not only a book whose good looks will decorate a coffee table but it is a book to be thoroughly read and enjoyed. It is available for purchase at the Columbia County Historical Society Museum in Kinderhook, and in bookstores throughout the surrounding tri-state area. I strongly recommend that every bookstore in the county lay in a good supply. The book is published by Black Dome Press Corp., Hensonville, New York in 2004, www.blackdome.com ☐



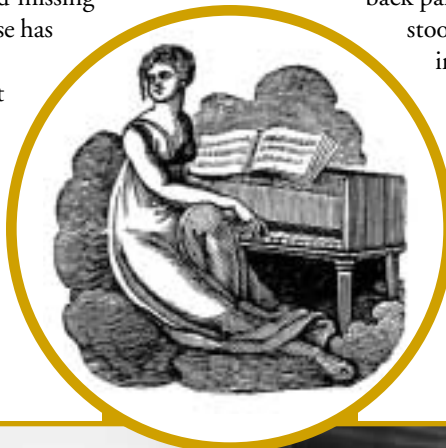
Highlights from the Society's Collections • Conserving Our Collection

The Vanderpoel House Parlor Piano*By Helen McLallen, Curator, the Columbia County Historical Society*

Museums use both preventive conservation and conservation treatment of specific objects in caring for their collections. Preventive conservation, as the name suggests, involves creating conditions which forestall and minimize damage to collections, through careful handling and display, creating and maintaining appropriate environmental conditions, and the use of archival storage enclosures, boxes, and shelving. The Society's recent NEH grants for updating its general collections assessment and its environmental monitoring and pest management programs are one part of its commitment to preventive conservation. We have also had a number of objects, including paintings, furniture, the bark barrels at the Van Alen house, and the Penfield map, treated by conservators in recent years. Most of these projects have been undertaken as a result of successful grant applications. Additional objects have been prioritized for conservation, based on conservators' detailed condition surveys of portions of the collection and curatorial assessment. They will be treated as funding is available.

One of these priority artifacts is the piano in the Vanderpoel house's parlor. Along with the rest of the Vanderpoel house's furniture, the piano was surveyed and a condition report with treatment recommendations prepared in 1993 by furniture conservator Deborah Bigelow. While the piano is largely in original condition, it has loose joints, warped and cracked wood, veneer losses, discolored and light-damaged finish, and broken, detached, and missing sections of its decorative ormolu mounts. The case has distorted under the tension of the strings.

The piano is one of the few furnishings at either the Vanderpoel or the Van Alen houses that has a documented history of belonging to a Columbia County family. It was donated to the Society by Sarah Wilson Mynderse. According to family history, the piano was brought to Clermont from Philadelphia by Mrs. Mynderse's grandmother, Anne Hulme (1799-1881), when she married William Henry Wilson (1791-1884) in 1829.



William H. Wilson's father, William Wilson, was a Scottish physician who immigrated to the United States in 1783. It is likely that he was already acquainted with the Livingston family, for he came directly to Clermont. In addition to his medical practice, he managed property for the Livingstons, became deputy postmaster or Clermont, county judge, a founding member of the Medical Society of Dutchess and Columbia Counties, a farmer, and was vice president of the Agricultural Society of Dutchess and Columbia Counties.

Like his father, William Henry Wilson became a physician and, after serving as a surgeon's mate during the War of 1812, he returned to Clermont. In 1825 he succeeded his father as deputy postmaster. He and Anne Hulme had two children, including Harold (1836-1919), Sarah Wilson Mynderse's father. A large collection of Wilson family papers, primarily correspondence and accounts relating to William Wilson and his children and which contain a wealth of local history information, is in the William L. Clements Library of the University of Michigan.

The piano was made by John Broadwood and Sons of London and dates from the 1810s or 1820s. It is a square piano, made of mahogany and mahogany veneer with ebonized string inlays and ormolu trim. The Broadwood firm, begun in 1728 by John Broadwood's father-in-law, Burkat Shudi, is still in business today.

Although no inventory of the Vanderpoel's Kinderhook house exists, an inventory was taken in 1843 of their house in Albany following James Vanderpoel's death. One of the items in the back parlor of that Elk Street home was a piano forte and stool. Its comparatively modest value of \$40 may indicate that it was somewhat old fashioned in 1843 and perhaps had been brought with them from Kinderhook. Anne Hulme Wilson's piano therefore is a most appropriate element in our Vanderpoel house's furnishings. We welcome inquiries from anyone who would be interested in helping to support its conservation or other collections care projects. Please contact the curator at 758-9265 to discuss these projects. ☒



The Broadwood piano at the Vanderpoel House, one of the few furnishings at the house known to have belonged to a Columbia County family.

THE SHAKERS and the GREAT STONE BARN

By *Dr. Will Swift*

In the hills above New Lebanon, five clusters of exquisite nineteenth-century homes and buildings stand in an idyllic setting overlooking the Berkshires. Some of the dwellings, stretching out over a mile-and-a-half, now serve as dormitories for the Darrow School. In the nineteenth-century, eight distinct Shaker family groups lived on this site. They later consolidated into the five clusters (the North, Center, Church, Second and South families) that remain today.

The Shakers (otherwise known as The United Society of Believers) were preeminent among many communitarian groups in mid-century America. Just prior to the Civil War, the Shakers were at the height of their popularity and their influence on United States culture. The Shakers originated in Manchester, England in 1772, under the influence of founder Ann Lee. Facing persecution for their radical belief in communion with the spirits of the dead, and for their unusual, impassioned shaking behavior at their worship services, Ann Lee left England with a small group in 1774 and settled initially in upstate New York. In 1787 the Shakers gathered their first communal family together at Mount Lebanon, New York.

At Mount Lebanon, 600 Shakers lived in the eight communal families in more than 100 buildings spread out over 6,000 acres. Mount Lebanon became the center of the Shaker world and, as such, was a popular tourist destination. Charles Dickens visited and wrote about the Mount Lebanon Shakers, and the nineteenth-century author and illustrator Benson Lossing's views of Mount Lebanon were published in *Harper's New Monthly* magazine. From Mount Lebanon, the group organized into a national body, which spread into twenty communities throughout New England, Ohio,

Kentucky, and as far south as Georgia and Florida.

Outsiders would come to observe their Sunday morning meetings. They were fascinated by the Shaker philosophy, which emphasized celibacy and simplicity in everyday life as the cornerstone for building a selfless, spiritual community. These Shakers reinforced the importance of God over the individual by stressing simple dress, plain food, and basic living arrangements. Women wore plain-cut clothes and kept their hair covered by bonnets. All their labor, from building furniture to writing hymns, was a part of their belief in work as a means of worship.

At the zenith of the Mount Lebanon Shaker community's agricultural endeavors in 1859, they built an enormous 50,000 square foot stone and timber frame structure, the North Family's Great Stone Barn, which was the largest stone barn in America. The Shakers demonstrated remarkable ingenuity in creating a site with its own technological advancements: a monitor-roof that allowed fresh air and light in, a rail system for managing refuse, and a water pump to provide warm drinking water for the cattle — especially efficient in the winter months.

After the Civil War Shakerism declined for two major reasons: they were unable to recruit new believers and industrialization

**At Mount Lebanon,
600 Shakers lived in
the eight communal
families in more
than 100 buildings
spread out over
6,000 acres.**

North Family with the Barn's first roofline in the background and Shaker brothers working crops in the foreground.



made Shaker crafts obsolete. In 1947, after the Mount Lebanon Shaker community had dwindled to seven residents, the North Family site was sold. In 1972 a fire, of suspicious origins, burned down the Great Stone Barn, leaving only the remains of the masonry walls. For thirty-one years the Stone Barn ruin sat exposed to inclement conditions. In 1973 the First Dwelling House, a massive fifty-room, five-story structure was torn down for fear that it might catch fire and burn down the rest of the extant village. The remaining ten buildings at the North Family complex, some of which have intact, Shaker exterior features and interiors with historic details, are in various conditions of disrepair.

The World Monuments Fund, the leading non-profit organization committed to preserving the historic, artistic, and architectural heritage of mankind, placed the North Family Shaker site on their "2004 World Monuments Watch List of 100 Most Endangered Sites." This Shaker complex is listed with other world historic sites including Sir Horace Walpole's eighteenth-century house, Strawberry Hill, in England; Frank Lloyd Wright's Ennis Brown House in California; The Mayan cities of Yaxchilan and Perdras Negras, settled in the early years of the first millennium C.E.; the ancient Nimrud and Nineveh Palaces in Iraq; and explorer Sir Ernest Shackleton's hut, built in 1908 in Antarctica.

The Shaker Museum and Library was founded in 1950 by John S. Williams and operated at his farm in Old Chatham, New York. It is currently located at a non-Shaker site in Old Chatham. The Museum houses the nation's premier collection of over 38,000 Shaker objects and artifacts, eighty percent of which came from the Mount Lebanon site.

In 2001 the Shaker Museum and Library retained the architectural firm of Cooper, Robertson & Partners to do a feasibility study and develop a Master Plan to preserve

the eleven remaining Shaker Buildings and adapt the Great Stone Barn as the centerpiece and new home of the Shaker Museum and Library. The plan was funded partially by a Save America's Treasures grant allowing the architects to create more than 140 measured drawings, make field notes, photographs, and analysis of materials to document the site. There was also support from the New York State Council on the Arts, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Preservation League of the State of New York, the State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, and the Institute of Museum and Library Services, as well as a number of private foundations.

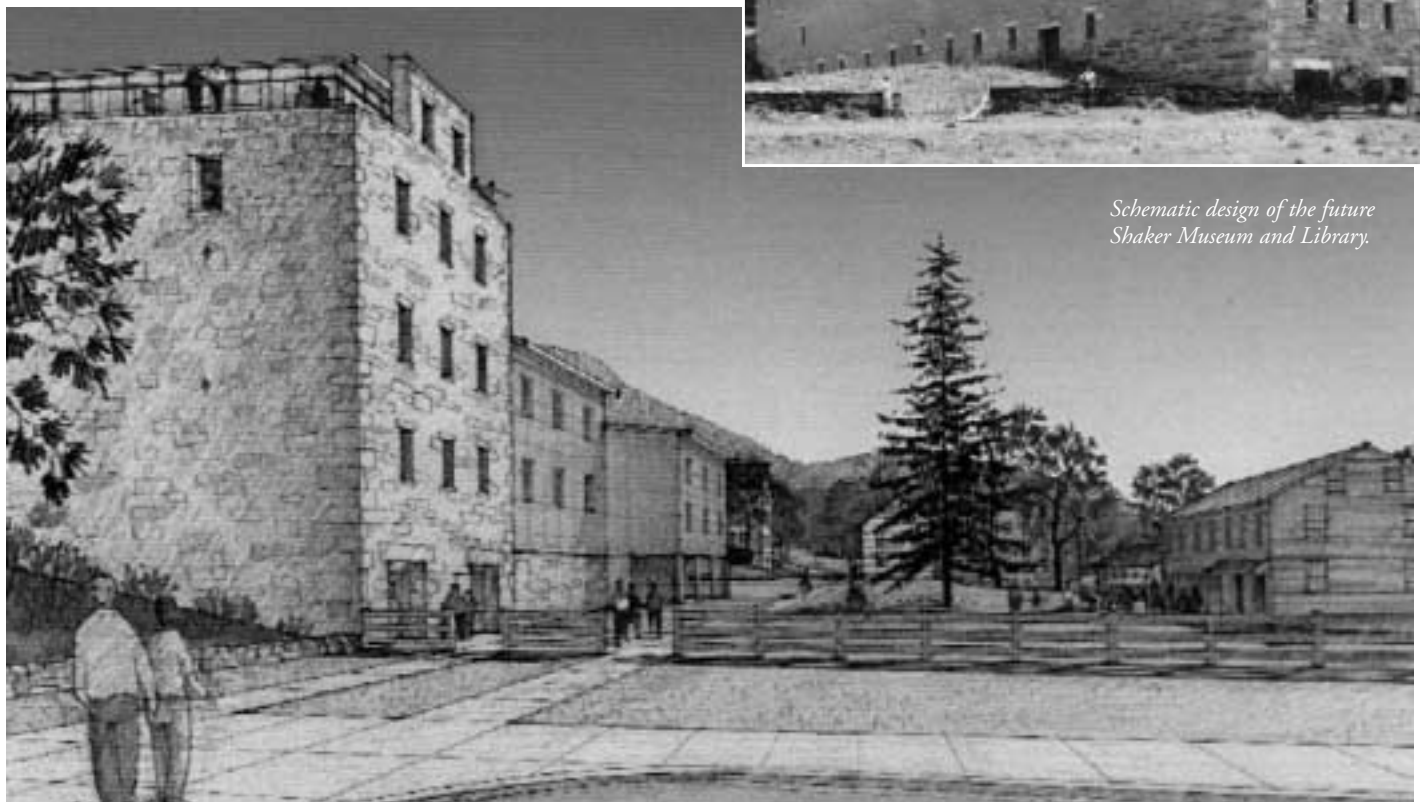
The Master Plan outlines emergency stabilization work beginning in 2004 to prevent the complete loss of the most threatened historic buildings. The next phase will include construction of an entirely new 50,000 square foot museum and library facility within the 196 feet long stabilized masonry walls of the Great Stone Barn and on the footprints of the three original wings. The museum entrance, reached by approaching the towering west end with four stories reaching up to 50 feet high, will be situated in a double-height lobby. An open air stair and an elevator will lead to an orientation gallery on the second level. The permanent collection galleries, reflecting the themes of Spirituality, Work, Community, and Design will be on the second and third floors. The fourth floor will house a temporary exhibition gallery and a "gathering room" for lectures and events. This room will open out onto a mezzanine with views over the rest of the North Family site and of the vistas of the New Lebanon Valley and the Berkshires.

In the footprints of the Stone Barn's original timber wings, extending from the south elevation, will be a phased addition of three wings to house an indoor and outdoor café, museum shop, and administrative and storage areas. The additions will carefully respect the scale of the original structures and will make a clear distinction between historic fabric and new construction.

Great Stone Barn continued on page 44



Above: Eric Sloane drawing of Barn. Below: North View of Great Stone Barn.



Schematic design of the future Shaker Museum and Library.

Opportunities at *Olana*

By Juliana Johnson Merton, Board Chair, the Olana Partnership

In the spring of 1861 Frederic Church, one of the most famous landscape painters of his age, and his new bride Isabel moved from New York City to a charming cottage on a hillside just south of Hudson. Designed by Richard Morris Hunt, Cosy Cottage is located almost directly across the Hudson from Cedar Grove, the home of Church's inspiring and beloved teacher, Thomas Cole. Church picked the spot for Cosy Cottage because it was adjacent to Red Hill, a summit where Cole and Church once stood together sketching dramatic views of the Hudson River and the Catskill Mountains. Church would eventually purchase that nearby hill and build there his Persian style castle, Olana, in the early 1870s.

As the Church's first dwelling on the site, Cosy Cottage is today thought to be the essential cornerstone of his idyllic farm. In the spring of 2005 Cosy Cottage will be fully restored, nearly one hundred and forty-three years after Church moved in. Returning the cottage to its original state is a particularly meaningful restoration project for Olana. Once again, Cosy Cottage will serve as the cornerstone, this time reviving the farm complex and implementing the Olana

Comprehensive Plan, which will transform the two hundred and fifty acres designed by Church to his original conception. The Olana Partnership (TOP) has already raised \$480,000 of the \$600,000 needed to complete the Cosy Cottage project. The return of Cosy Cottage occurs at an ideal time for TOP, because the main house will be partially closed next spring for extensive interior renovation.

Recently, Olana received a grant for \$650,000 from The National Endowment for the Humanities, which will be more than matched by the NYS

Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) to ensure the installation of urgently needed HVAC, fire suppression, and security systems in the main house. As part of this project, a portion of the second and third story rooms now used as staff offices by the Olana Partnership will need to be vacated. However, Cosy Cottage will come in handy as a temporary staff location, before it becomes an interpretive and educational addition to the Olana experience.

The work being done on the house actually provides some

exciting opportunities. Since Olana was saved from the auction block and purchased by the state in 1966, OPRHP and TOP staff members have worked together to make the house an authentic view into the life of Frederic Church. There are plans to restore the second floor bedrooms of Frederic and Isabel and the four surviving Church children. TOP and OPRHP also look forward to using this period to promote a two-year traveling exhibit of various Church paintings, which will visit museums around the country including The Fenimore Art Museum (Cooperstown, NY), The Portland Museum of Art (Portland, ME), and the Society of The Four Arts (Palm Beach, FL). Metropolitan Museum of Art curator, Kevin Avery, will oversee the exhibit and write the essay for the accompanying catalogue.

Meanwhile, much is happening at Olana. The TOP and OPRHP have jointly raised almost \$5 million toward restoring the main house, the collections, and the landscape. Brick facades are being repointed, multi-colored oriental cornices repainted, carriage roads restored, wires put underground, Persian carpets replicated, and the old barns are being brought back to life to house Olana's educational programs. Even the leaky studio tower that Church architecturally designed himself will finally be rebuilt this sum-



Cosy Cottage, first dwelling on the Olana site, will be fully restored in the spring of 2005.

As the Church's first dwelling on the site, Cosy Cottage is today thought to be the essential cornerstone of his idyllic farm.

mer. Church may not have been a world-class architect but he was certainly a true visionary.

Frederic Church and Thomas Cole understood at an early time in America's history the importance of appreciating and preserving the landscape. Church in particular worshipped the American northeast through his sublime depictions of its scenery and it was Thomas Cole who spoke passionately about the landscape in his "Essay on American Scenery." Thomas Cole tells us that whether an American "beholds the Hudson mingling waters with the Atlantic — explores the central wilds of this vast continent, or stands on the margin of the distant Oregon, he is still in the midst of American scenery." The landscape belongs to its admirer, Cole suggests, "and how undeserving of such a birthright, if he can turn towards it an unobserving eye, an unaffected heart." (*The American Magazine*, 1836)

While Olana has become a permanent feature of our American scenery, it nonetheless faces real threats. Along with Friends of Hudson and the Historic Valley Preservation Coalition, TOP battles to prevent the construction of the massive St. Lawrence Cement plant just three miles north of the Olana. The plant's proposed six hundred-foot smokestack and six-mile plume would be a colossally unnatural detriment to Olana's viewshed and the surrounding environment. Today, the view from Olana is still wonderful and wild. If you find yourself standing on Frederic Church's hilltop, gazing out at the wide waters of the Hudson and the smooth peaks of the Catskills, you are proud to find yourself "in the midst of American scenery" and you are surrounded by a valley of historic treasures. The immutable elements of a time past remind us all daily of the opportunity to preserve our history, our natural America. ☒



The view from Cosy Cottage with the proposed cement plant inserted into the picture to demonstrate the effect the plant would have on the viewshed.



Fairview
Wines & Spirits

Wines of historic importance to enjoy now.

TASTINGS SATURDAYS 12-5 • FAIRVIEW PLAZA • ROUTE 9 • HUDSON NY
518.528.0934 • 888.579.0934 • WWW.FAIRVIEW-WINES.COM



**MetzWood Harder &
Insurance**

Personal & Business Insurance

Email: metzwood@metzwood.com
Off-hour emergency: 518-392-5900

800-635-7170

"On the Circle" in Chatham 392-5161
"On the Green" in Kinderhook 758-7272

Stuyvesant Lighthouse continued from page 23

in the family. Some men went there in a boat to take them off. The woman would not go until she had her ironing done, but the house was gone before she had done. They saved the man and the woman and a negro woman. The three little ones were washed down under the ridge. They were all dead.

They then put up a big stone building and appointed Mr. Henry M. Allister (U. S. Lighthouse Keeper), as keeper. He was keeper 16 years, then they built the Lighthouse which I was in for 38 years and 8 month. My husband and I passed through man hours of trouble with high water and ice, many times the water was two feet in my room.

The lighthouse was partly destroyed, the year I cannot tell, for the ice and very high water destroyed the books. The ice was 3 feet thick in the river; it rained Friday all day and night; Saturday all day and night. The fog was so thick we could not see the hill from the lighthouse. Water was coming up very fast. At two o'clock Sunday morning my husband called me up to dress as he was going to take me out. He had a row boat in the kitchen. Water was in all the rooms. He had on high boots. We went over to the little house under the hill. Sunday morning we heard a great noise. He took the boat and a man and went to the lighthouse — what remained of it. The ice took half the lighthouse with it. He went in the rooms with a boat, where the parlor formerly was, it was gone. My piano was on the stairs, shoved there by the ice, water three feet deep in all the rooms. The old stone lighthouse, barn, hen house and bridge were gone. Water was up to upper floor. It took the bedroom and reached the roof on our side — we lost \$1000 worth of furnishings but the Government had no money to cover our personal loss. They sent up eight men to rebuild, and I had to board them from March to November. When I came back I had to walk on a ladder with two men helping me to get into the house.”

Signed:

Josephine (Soutworth) McAllister Mereness
 (“niece of Mr. Clapp who kept the Stuyvesant Hotel”)
 Cobleskill, N. Y. September, October 1938

Edward (Nard) Whitbeck, the aged river guide, whose fine-featured face is worthy of a sculptor’s chisel, told me that the wooden lighthouse was replaced by a stone structure, and finally one of brick which was the landmark familiar to all of us, and it was torn down in 1936. Both the stone and the brick foundations, side by side remain and are on view from the New York Central trains north from the village on the first point above the long water break.

HARRIET H. K. VAN ALSTYNE ☒



* Harriet Van Alstynne may have been mistaken. The headstone in the Butler Cemetery shown above reads:

“In Memory of Miles Hyatt, Son Of Justus & Margaret van Hoesen, March 18, 1832, ae 12 yrs & 23 days, by the destruction of the lighthouse, and also a little brother, ae 2 yrs 9 mos & 19 days, who was not found.”

No stone was found for the two Whitbeck children.

Great Stone Barn continued from page 41

The Master Plan calls for various approaches of adaptive reuse for the ten remaining buildings including the Second Meetinghouse with its signature vaulted roof. Subsequent phases may highlight the unique waterworks system and related agricultural and industrial features set amid the thirty remaining acres.

The vision of the Master Plan is to develop the North Family site as a primary resource for the Shaker legacy and its relevance to contemporary life. The entire project is designed to create a major heritage tourism, education, and recreation destination where exhibitions and programs will highlight the lasting Shaker influence on art, architecture, and design for the public.

In 1947 as the last Shakers left the Mount Lebanon site, Sister Jennie Wells told *The New Yorker* that “Shakerism can’t be told: it must be lived. Still you can learn a lot about it from that [Stone] Barn.” When completed, the Mount Lebanon site will allow twenty-first century Americans to experience what it was like to live in a creative and spiritual Shaker community, which lasted from 1787 until 1947. ☒

STAIR GALLERIES

Fine Antiques, Art and Furnishings at Auction

QUALITY CONSIGNMENTS WELCOME FOR FUTURE SALES
 Visit our website for information and sale dates.

Colin Stair, Proprietor
 Rebecca Hoffmann, Principal Auctioneer

PO. Box 418, Claverack, NY 12513
 Tel: 518-851-2544 Fax: 518-851-2558

WWW.STAIRGALLERIES.COM

**Crawford & Associates
Engineering, P.C.**



- Civil & Sanitary Engineering
- Site Planning
- Structural Analysis & Design
- Mechanical Design
- Environmental Consulting

551 Warren Street, Hudson, NY 12534
 (518) 828-2700
www.crawfordandassociates.com



Tivoli, NY
 845.757.4100

**absolutely fresh
 authentic mexican food**
www.santafetivoli.com



Dinner
 Wed-Sat 5pm-10pm
 Sunday 5pm-9pm
 Sunday Brunch 11am-3pm

BAR • RESTAURANT

321 Warren St, Hudson, NY 518 828 3657

We will work hard to get your property sold!



Call us for all your real estate needs.

2 Park Row, Chatham
 Tel: (518) 392-8040
 3038 Main Street, Valatie
 Tel: (518) 758-8100

www.thekinderhookgroup.com



Philip Orchards

**PICK-YOUR-OWN
 APPLES, PEARS AND PLUMS**

Bartlett, Beure Bosc, Seckel,
 Harrow Sweet Pears, Jonamac, McIntosh,
 Cortland, Empire, Macoun, Spartan,
 Idared, Greening, Red Delicious,
 Jonagold, Golden Delicious, Rome,
 Northern Spy, Mutsu, Stanley,
 Bluefre Plums

Heritage Tomatoes • Fall Raspberries
 Apple Firewood

SEPTEMBER THROUGH OCTOBER

Route 9H, one mile north of Claverack, NY

518-851-6351

**From castles to cottages we'll fulfill
 all your real estate needs.**

Get caught up in our web: www.sflrealty.com
 Continuing the tradition since 1960



PO Box 371, Central Square,
 Chatham, NY 12037

518-392-7701 Fax: 518-392-7878

www.sflrealty.com

email: info@sflrealty.com

A part of Columbia County's history since 1974

Specializing in Country Properties

Homes - Farms

Acreage

Country Estates



Old Ghent Realty

*In the Bartlett House
Route 66, Ghent, NY 12073*

518-392-2480

*broker@oldghent.com
www.oldghent.com*

LIBERTY DESIGN
CONSULTANTS
CARL BLACK

HISTORIC AND CONTEMPORARY INTERIORS
RARE PERIOD WALLPAPER AND MURALS
IMPORTED FABRICS AND TRIMMINGS
ARCHITECTURAL PAINT AND COLOR WORK
FULL PRESERVATION SERVICE

969 COLUMBIA STREET
HUDSON, NY 12534

518-628-4060

KRW Auto Service
Auto service you can count on.
Serving Kinderhook for
over twenty three years.



Rte 9 H Kinderhook 758 - 7653

Open Tuesday through Saturday 8 am till 5 pm.

D U N N

BUILDERS SUPPLY

*"Serving Our Customers With
Quality Products & Services Since 1946"*

We have it all for the "Do It Yourself" and "Professional Contractor"

Custom Design Services for Kitchens & Baths

We manufacture custom kitchen & bath countertops!!!

Corian • Hi Max • Sopastone • Laminate

"Columbia County's Only Drive-thru Lumberyard"



THE KLEEBER AGENCY, INC.


2880 Route 9. Valatie, New York 12184


Phone: (518) 758-7123

For all your Personal and Commercial Insurance Needs

Since 1851

celebrating
fifteen
years of
award-
winning
hospitality



the **Inn** 
at
**Green
River**


BED & BREAKFAST

518-325-7248
InnAtGreenRiver.com

ACKERMAN'S
"The name you can trust in appliances"
APPLIANCE

752 Warren Street, Hudson, NY
518/828/7339 • Fax: 518/828/2498
Parts - 1/800/379/0522

**JACK ACKERMAN
BRETT ACKERMAN**



*Featuring distinctive wines
at affordable prices.*



IN-STORE WINES TASTINGS FRIDAY &
SATURDAY FROM 12:30-6:30

CHATHAM WINE & LIQUOR

55 MAIN STREET, CHATHAM NY 12037 MON - SAT 9-9
518.392.2841 PROPRIETOR: KAREN KACZMAR

Pat & Larry Phone (518) 766-3008
Fax (518) 766-9818

CAVAGNARO
CONSTRUCTION Co., Inc.

4228 Route 203 Post Office Box 219
North Chatham, NY 12132

Blackwood & Brouwer Booksellers Ltd
7 Hudson Street - Kinderhook
(518) 758-1232
www.kinderhookconnection.com/bbbltd/
Books • Cards • Gifts • Coffee • Book-on-Tape Rental
Signed Books by Local Authors & Illustrators
Open Tues Sat 10 5, Sun 12 4, Closed Mondays

JOHN CAIOLA & CO.

**REMODELING, RENOVATION & REPAIR SERVICES
FOR HOME AND BUSINESS**

30 year's experience, B.S. Construction Management
VOICE/FAX 518-794-9158
East Chatham, NY 12060 • References upon request



An Historic Columbia County Luncheonette
Now making History One Dinner at a Time
FCI-trained Bert Goldfinger cooks American favorites with French flair
Thursday 5-9pm • Friday & Saturday 12 noon • 10pm Sunday 12 noon-9pm
47 OLD POST ROAD • GHENT, NY • 518 828 6677

■ Columbia County Historical Society Calendar of Events ■

Please note in your calendars the following events and dates. For additional information please call the Society's office at (518) 758-9265 or visit our website at www.cchsny.org.

August 21st

Monthie Slide Presentation at the Hudson Opera House; 1:00 pm.

September 5th

Pandemonia Concert at 6:00 p.m. at the Van Alen House.

September 11th

Sponsor's Cocktail Reception

- Walking Tour of Kinderhook with Rod Blackburn and Ruth Piwonka

September 18th

Walking Tour of Hudson with Don Christensen.

October 16th

Annual Meeting and Members Reception

- Second Century Circle Gala Dinner.

December 4th to December 12th

Gallery of Wreaths and Holiday Craft Boutique at the Columbia County Museum. Display of handcrafted wreaths by individuals, businesses, organizations and florists. Wreaths are up for silent auction. Holiday crafts are for sale.

December 10th

Candlelight Night and Home for the Holidays Tour in the Village of Kinderhook and the Greens Show at the Vanderpoel House.

December 10th to 12th

Greens Show at the James Vanderpoel House, Kinderhook.

Columbia County History & Heritage is interested in hearing from you — if you have articles, pictures, or other items about Columbia County history and cultural heritage suitable for publication, please let us know. The Editorial Board will review all submissions. All submissions considered for publication are subject to editing. We regret that we cannot guarantee publication.

Want to advertise your business in **Columbia County History & Heritage**? Call 518-758-9265 for more information.

COLUMBIA COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

5 Albany Ave., Kinderhook, NY 12106

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Albany, NY
Permit #370

Columbia County
HISTORY & HERITAGE