

THE HOMESTEAD CHRONICLE

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P.O. Box 174
Wappingers Falls
NY 12590
845-632-1281

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President's Message

Happy New Year to all!

As I reflect on the past year I am filled with pride.

This has been a great year and a huge thank you to all our members and volunteers who have made 2019 such a success.

We welcomed Christina Unger as an Administrative Assistant. Her help and expertise has been invaluable.

We had over 450 visitors tour the Mesier Homestead - a record! We welcomed 22 new members and we won 'Best of the Hudson Valley' Historical Society Award for a second year. We launched our new website, hosted a series of well-attended talks, and we introduced new events such as our Sinterklaas Day and our participation in the Holiday tours of Village of Wappingers Victorian Homes. We also continued to preserve and do conservation work on the Historic Mesier Homestead. Please be sure to check us out at www.wappingershistoricalsociety.org, like us on FaceBook and follow us on our Instagram and Twitter social media pages.

If you are interested in helping us with research, archiving, being a docent or just want to come sit, chat and offer new ideas, we welcome you.

We have many exciting and fun events planned for 2020 and hope you will join us in making 2020 a great year.

Beth Devine

Village Historic Homes Holiday Candlelight Tour

The holiday season got off to a festive start with the Village of Wappingers Falls Historic Homes Holiday Candlelight tour. On Saturday evening, December 7th, six historic homes in the village, along with the Mesier Homestead, opened their doors to the public to share the beauty of their homes, each fully decorated for the holidays. Visitors came from as far away as Albany, NY, and all participants were filled with holiday cheer! Ticket sales for this event benefitted the Wappingers Historical Society, and we are extremely grateful to



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all the homeowners for generously participating in this very successful event. Special thanks to our sponsors for this event: Clean Choice Energy and Hudson Valley Insurance.



New members!

The following people joined the Wappingers Historical Society in 2019. Many of our new members have “jumped right in” and have been volunteering for a variety of activities. Thanks to all, and again welcome!

Sara Brower (Lifetime Member)

MaryJane & Cliff Chapin

Eileen Cooke

Susan Davis

Bob Dyson

Anna Edel

Joseph & Melanie Giordano

Jackie Muller & Family

Ann Marie Pantaleo

Jerry and Barbara Philipp

Nancy Piscitello (Lifetime Member)

Lauren & Brian Simone

Jeff Stickle

Marty and Marybeth Vanihel

Kate Zhang



All photos are from the Wappingers Historical Society Collection unless otherwise noted.

The History of New Hamburg

New Hamburg was an early riverfront settlement that had three other names before the present one was adopted. It is also one of the few communities on the Hudson River located between the railroad tracks and the river.

As early as 1770, there were shipping facilities at New Hamburg. The road records of that year refer to a road going to "the Hook Landing". In 1815, John Drake Jr. had docks, a store and 30 acres of land in this area and it was known as Wappingers Landing. The first post office, established in 1813, was named "Wappinger Creek." Its first postmaster was Walter Millard, formerly of Marlborough, Ulster County.

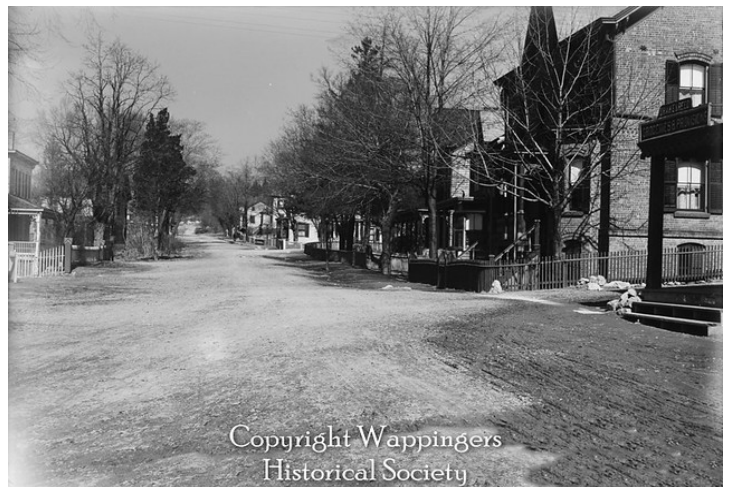
Members of the Drake family had docks at New Hamburg for several generations. John Drake was instrumental in having the road built between Hughsonville and Hopewell Junction. Of course, this was to encourage farmers to use his landing. He also built the first bridge, in 1808, over the lower Wappingers Creek, which was known as "Drake's Drawbridge."

The rocky point of land between the Hudson and the mouth of Wappinger Creek was known as High Point, now known as New Hamburg. The low area, which projected into the river a few miles south of High Point, was known as Low Point. Low Point became Carthage, then Carthage Landing. That area is now known as Chelsea.

Aside from its shipping, New Hamburg had another important early industry, lime burning. Lime kilns have been recorded on maps as far back as 1797, pretty much where the New Hamburg Yacht Club now stands. Lime burning produced strong mortar for building and the lime was added to New Jersey's sandy soil to counter its acidity. Adolphus Brower, previously of Brooklyn and Ulster County, purchased the land surrounding the lime kiln in 1837. He built a brick house just north of the kiln, which stands today at 1 Water Street, now part of the National Register of Historic Places. The land he purchased encompassed Water Street and part of Division Street. He was listed on the 1850 US Census as a "lime burner". Captain Abraham Brower built a home in 1835, at 2 Water Street, which is also part of the Historic Register. It is not



Horse and Buggy crossing Drake's Drawbridge



Glass Negative Print, looking north on Point Street. William Shay's house is the first brick house on the right (see next page).

The History of New Hamburg (Continued)

known if they were related, but the houses are almost identical and the timing is the same. Another Historic Register house in New Hamburg belonged to William Shay, born in Ireland. It is located at 32 Point Street, a double brick house with double bays on each end. It was constructed in 1870. He worked out of a warehouse, in the area of what is now 18 Point Street. Shay was a rag merchant, or “dealer in paper material”. He gathered the rags, or “scraps” from the mills in the Village of Wappingers Falls and sent them on to paper mills for processing.

In the early 1820's, New Hamburg had acquired a new industry that proved to be of much greater importance than either the landing or the lime kilns. Charles Millard, who owned a lumber business in Ulster County, expanded his business by opening a lumberyard in New Hamburg's Lower Landing, where White's Marina is now located. Since most of the lumber and log shipments were made by water, Millard's son, Walter decided to branch out into ship building and freighting. He and a partner, Uriah Mills, built the barge "Lexington," which carried freight up and down the Hudson River and the steamer, "Splendid," which carried both freight and passengers. By the end of the 19th century, Millard employed over 150 men. Howard C. Millard opened a tile yard in New Hamburg where drainage tiles, cement pipes, chimney flukes and stench traps were made with super-strong Rosendale (Ulster County) cement.

With all that shipping, it is not surprising that the residents of this busy little riverfront settlement decided that it should be named New Hamburg after the great European port of Hamburg, Germany. Population stood at around 500 by the second half of the 19th century.

When the railroad was built, one of the toughest problems facing workers was drilling and blasting the 900 foot New Hamburg tunnel. Rail service, both north and south, was established in 1849 before the tunnel was finished. Passengers were transferred from one train at Old Troy, just south of the mouth of the Wappingers Creek, to a small boat and then they got back onto another train, at what was to be the north end of the tunnel.

On February 6, 1871, a horrific crash between a passenger train and an oil train occurred on the iron bridge that spanned the mouth of the Wappingers Creek. Up to forty people lost their lives in the fiery inferno.

During the mid to late 19th century, the docks were doing a big business in freight. The companies owned by William Hasbrook and Vermilyea & Jackson sent freight barges up and down the Wappingers Creek transporting goods to and from the Garner Print Works and later the Bleachery complex.



“The Hasbrouck” grounded near New Hamburg

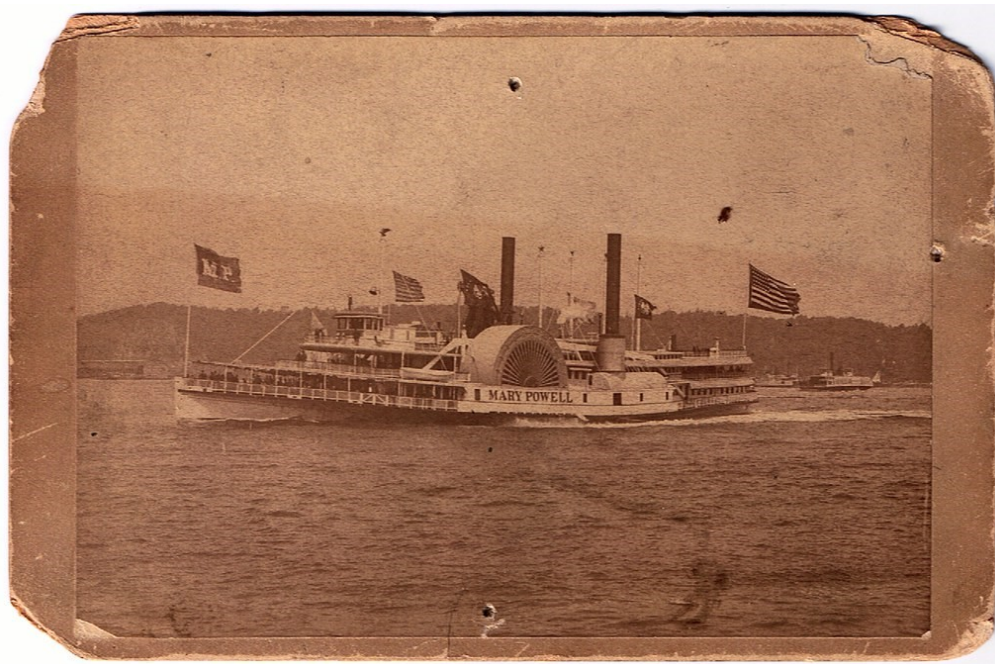
The History of New Hamburg—Continued

The railroad also transported goods for the Garner Print Works. Nine passenger boats stopped at the docks every day. The “Hudson Taylor”, piloted by Captain William P. Drake, made two trips a day between New Hamburg and Newburgh and one between New Hamburg and Poughkeepsie. Even the glamorous passenger boat of that period, the "Mary Powell," stopped there. By the turn of the 20th century, there were two churches, Wappinger's Creek Presbyterian Church and Methodist (housed together), and Episcopalian. One public schoolhouse existed, as well as a small private school taught by schoolmistress Caroline Brower. There were three hotels: Van Anden's, run by Marvin Van Anden, The Central House, owned by Jacob Madison and the Perrine House, Charles Perrine, owner. Abraham Myers and H. B. Merritt each had a shoe shop. William Parker and T.S. Merritt were the hamlet's tinsmiths. John VanNosdall and John Terwilliger both had a blacksmith shop, H. VanNosdall had a wagon shop and John Moore, a cooper shop.

The 1910 US Census showed approximately 500 residents of the hamlet, with the railroad being the overwhelmingly largest employer, followed by retail workers, the iron foundry workers, farmers and fishermen. By the 1940 Census, the population had dropped to about 300 people. The residents mostly found employment outside the hamlet, working in various factories in the Village of Wappingers Falls, and Trap Rock. The railroad employed much fewer people from the hamlet at that time. Clerical worker positions were increasing. This shift in employment was certainly due to improved methods of transportation and that owning a car could get you a job outside of your hometown.

New Hamburg today remains a quaint hamlet and commuter rail stop in the Town of Poughkeepsie, bordered by New Hamburg Road/ Main Street to the east, and the New Hamburg Yacht Club and White's Marina to the west on the Hudson River.

Portions of this article contributed by Beth Devine



The Majestic
Mary Powell
steaming south on
the Hudson River

Forgotten Hamlets of Dutchess County

On November 14, David Turner spoke to a large group assembled at the Wappinger Town Hall. It was a very informative and enjoyable talk, interspersed with postcard pictures of these hamlets, taking us all over Dutchess County. Many of the old hamlets were located along the rail lines, such as Sharon Station, Shekomeko, Quaker Hill, Mt. Ross, Cokertown, Wurtemburg, Manchester Bridge and Glenham.



David has an extensive collection of postcards, and has published a book "Wappinger" which is available for purchase in our Bookstore. We hope to welcome him back in the near future for another postcard presentation.



Partial Railroad Map of Northern Dutchess County—Many of the Hamlets that are shown on this map were discussed by David Turner during his presentation.

(Map courtesy of Bill Stickle)

WAPPINGERS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

UHPCOMING EVENTS

- Homestead Tours—Visit our Homestead Page on our website for details on our upcoming tours—we have many planned. We are now open year round (new this year!)—and have several special themes planned for specific dates. The tours are continually updated—Fun for all ages!
- Movie Night! Video interviews with Local Residents with group discussion on our memories of the same places and events in our area.
- “Setting the Record Straight” with Tony Musso— Get first-hand accounts of the trials, tribulations, joys and tragedies of life on the road during the infancy of the rock and roll era - be sure to sign up for our mailing list on our website to get details on the date and time as this is finalized.
- June 19th is Spirit of Mesier—Join us at our annual get together at the Homestead and Mesier Park for an pleasant summer evening of comradery, live music, cocktails, appetizers, silent auction and more!
- Member Picnic at the Mesier Homestead in July—Enjoy the Lazy, Hazy Days of Summer with us
- Cool off at our Ice Cream Social—August—Stay tuned for details!

Visit us at:

www.wappingershistoricalsociety.org

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Memories of Wappinger

by Steve Dunham

The areas of All Angels Hill Road I was most familiar with were between Meyers Corners Road and Old Hopewell Road. A 1959 “tour” sixty years ago of the people I knew or knew of, from Meyers Corners heading south, and down the west side of All Angels Hill. At Meyers Corners was the Magdalany family, of which two of their sons were around my age. Continuing the same side of All Angels was Bob Diesing’s apple orchard at the bottom of the hill. Continuing on was Len Cohen’s farmland of some cropland fields. Kent Road was on the right, the same side of the road. Al Schottler’s large apple orchard began along Kent Road. There was large lake in the orchard. Next was the red brick house of the Locurto’s whose farm we rented. It was a weekend, vacation type home as their permanent home was in the Bronx. In the mid 1960’s it became a church. Next was the old Adams 400 acre farm we rented from 1953 to 1960. So much history in that farm. I wish I knew lots more on it than I do know. Continuing, we come to a long driveway off All Angels Road. At the end of it was the home of Henry Vorndran Jr. and his family. He and his younger brother John and their dad Henry Sr. operated a 60 dairy cow large farm on Brown Road. Next was “Dead Man’s” a very sharp curve. Just beyond it was Samuel’s Stephen’s Farm. In 1953, the large barn caught fire and every cow perished in the fire. Samuel Stephens sold the farm to Rockingham Farm, owned by J.C. Penney. The farm had land on both sides of the road. Last was Whites Corners Farm at the intersection of Old Hopewell Road. We begin again at Meyers



This is the farmhouse on All Angels Hill Road which Steve Dunham’s family rented from 1949 until 1960. He knew it as the Adam’s Farm, built in 1773. This photo was taken in August of 1949. His father was a farmer who worked on the Samuel Stephens Farm from 1949-1953. It is located just south of Brentwood Drive.

Corners Road going south on All Angels Road on the east side of the road. Harvey Semp and his family lived right at the intersection. Next was the Lorenzo Acker dairy farm. He and his son Harvey operated the farm. They were “Farm-All Tractor Farmers”. Next were three or four houses in a row right at the bottom of the hill. On the top of the hill was the Len Cohen farmstead. He was a chicken and dairy farmer. Most notable was his huge, at least four story tall, chicken rooming house, a hotel years earlier when Len’s farm was a resort for New York City people. Many would stay a few days or weeks on the farm to get fresh air and enjoy the beautiful farm countryside of the Town of Wappinger. When the resort business ended there, the big hotel was converted to a chicken house. All the floors housed hens. A very clever, unique use for the hotel! It was the “Talk of the Town” for a while.

{Ed. note: See our newsletter of April 2018 for the article on All Angel’s Hill Farm:

<https://www.wappingershistoricalsociety.org/homestead-chronicle-archive>}

Memories of Wappinger by Steve Dunham

Continued

Next down the road was Al Schottler's orchard. All the buildings of the orchard business and the huge three-family house were on the east side of the road, the orchard on the west side. Al had a beautiful looking orchard named "Ye Old Apple Orchard" which became a housing development around 1962-63. Al's father in law, Sid Smith, operated the IGA at the intersection of Rte. 376 and All Angels Hill Road. I really enjoyed going there after Sunday School at New Hackensack Church. Buying a double-dip ice cream cone for only 5 cents! Next up was the home of Alfred Jones and wife, which was a large, tall, very old home. Alfred was the local ham radio operator. Next was the home of Don and Beverly Jones and their five children. Fine neighbors. Carl Erickson, who had his own milk business, Erickson's Dairy, built a home next door in 1959 on a lot purchased from John Holler's farm. Next is Holler's Farm. Originally a dairy farm, he then had a poultry operation. He and his wife Maude lived in a very large, very old Colonial home that fronted Pye Lane. Continuing on All Angels going around the very sharp turn at Brown Road was the White sister's farm which extended to Old Hopewell Road. Going north again and exiting onto Brown Road was the Henry Vondran Dairy Farm on the left. Across the street was the Wayne Ireland dairy farm, formerly the Ketcham Farm.



John Holler's Farmhouse c. 1947 (courtesy of Bill Stickle)

As a kid, I enjoyed sledding. We had a very energetic pointer dog who enjoyed pulling me around on my sled. I was around 10 (1957) when the dog began his role as a sled dog. He seemed to really love giving me rides on the sled. I had a well-built very old sled. Much stronger and better than the usual sled, mine was quite old when my grandparents bought it used. It was higher off the ground than those "Flyer" sleds. They also bought for me at that same shop, a very solid 28" wheel bicycle. It had a tank type construction, a luggage rack over the rear fender, plus built in headlight. But I was unable to use it at age 10 & 11. Even with the seat all the way down I still couldn't reach the pedals very well sitting down. They traded it in for a new 26". My parents restricted how far I could ride my bike- to the top of All Angels Hill to the north, and going south to White's Corners. I cheated sometimes by riding down the long steep All Angels Hill Road to Meyers Corners Road. I couldn't resist riding down the big hill. Bike riding was the main reason I got to know a good deal from Meyers Corners to White's Corners, who lived where.

Steve Dunham was a resident, now living in Florida, who sent the Historical Society his recollections of growing up in the Town of Wappinger in the 1950s.

Sinterklaas in the Dutch Homestead of Peter Mesier



On Sunday afternoon, December 8, “Sinterklaas and Dutch Holiday Traditions” was held at Mesier Homestead. Children were encouraged to leave their shoes by the door for Sinterklaas to fill. Meanwhile, the children and their parents were entertained with stories, activities and tasty Dutch snacks. A special thank you goes out to our own Peter Mesier (George Hemroth), Sinterklaas (David Costello), and Trish Costello, as well as all the volunteers that contributed to making it a very special afternoon.



WHS Member Holiday Party

The Wappingers Historical Society's annual Holiday Party was held on Friday, December 27 at the Mesier Homestead. A good time was had by all! Photos of a few of our party goers are courtesy of Tony Siconolfi.



Wappingers Historical Society
PO Box 174
Wappingers Falls, NY 12590

Visit our website
wappingershistoricalsociety.org
To find out our schedule for
Mesier Homestead Tours!

