

Newsletter

Historical Society of Shawangunk & Gardiner

Volume 7, Number 2

Spring 2010

The Diary of Annie McElhone DuBois

Our glimpses of life in an earlier time depend on family stories, paintings, court documents and whatever else is passed down from generation to generation. It also helps when family members stay in the same place. This article is about the DuBois family who have lived in Shawangunk since the 19th century and the diary kept by Annie McElhone DuBois for a few years in the 1880s.

Annie's grandfather, Daniel Deyo DuBois, was born in 1823. When he married Esther Ann Hunt in 1853, his father, Simon LeFevre DuBois, gave him the farm on River Road. That farm had been purchased from Dr. David Wharry who in turn had bought the farm in 1843. The original house was a story and a half, with the kitchen and dining room in the basement.



DuBois farmhouse, painted by itinerant painter in 1890

After Esther died in childbirth, Daniel married Cornelia Bogardus of New Paltz in 1855. Daniel and Cornelia had two sons, Simon and Evert Bogardus (called Gard). In time, the brothers married sisters, Annie Pauline and Ida, who were the daughters of Harrison McElhone. Daniel died in 1887, so his wife Cornelia, Simon and Annie lived on the farm on River Road. Gard and Ida lived across the river in Galeville in the McElhone home because Harrison and his wife had moved to Mountainville.

We are indebted to Annie Pauline McElhone DuBois for a lively diary that she kept between the years of 1887 and 1889. We learn that Annie played piano and

painted landscapes; a skillful painting on a plate has survived. The sisters visited back and forth across the river, had tea together, and traded in the Basin (as Wallkill was called at the time).

The family income came mostly from the land. Annie worked in the flower and vegetable gardens and the family sold potatoes, hickory nuts, apples, hay, eggs, and chickens. Simon was also a cattle dealer who bought cows over the mountain and drove them home. In April 1887 Simon bought four young cows that Annie named Daisy, Pink, Cherry, and Bluegee and sold the milk to the Borden Condensery by the river. The family also employed a married couple, a "girl," Hannah Fuller, who worked in the house, earning \$18 for six months' work, and a farm worker, Eugene Fuller, who earned \$16.50/month and \$179/year.

Annie recorded unusual events, like the time on July 22, 1887 when lightning struck the church steeple and also hit Mr. Borden's cornfield. In August she went to the Galeville Festival and heard the Home Farm Band. That same August, the family travelled on holiday to Minnewaska, which Annie thought was not as nice as Mohonk, where they had gone the year before.

The most dramatic event of the Diary was the Blizzard of '88 which started on a Saturday in March. Cornelia DuBois had gone by train to New Paltz for a funeral, but because of the snow, it was several days before she could return. Another casualty of the storm was the DuBois milk which the Borden Milk Condensery would not accept because the trains were not running to New York City where four feet of snow were reported. As a result, Annie had to make a lot of butter and churned 22 pounds worth.

The weather in 1888 was about as bad as the winter weather in 2010! On April 1, 1888, the Wallkill River
(continued on page 3)

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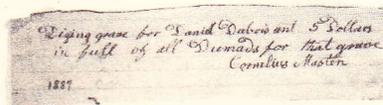
Dear Members and Friends,

There has been great progress in the restoration at the Andries DuBois house. It is being made structurally sound, literally from bottom to top, all being accomplished with sensitivity to the great historic value of the house. New beams are being inserted to help out with the old.

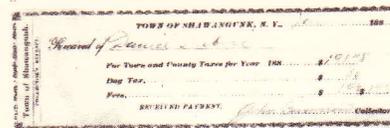
We're very pleased that John Valk has indicated that a display case donated by Nanno Bienstock can be set up in the lobby of the new Town Hall for the display of artifacts from the Society. We will be able to display the quilt made by the New Hurley Quilters and Elizabeth Hammesfahr's Friendship tablecloth (see article, p. 3) on lobby walls. We will also have access to the climate-controlled archives room for our valuable papers.

Carolyn and Stewart Crowell

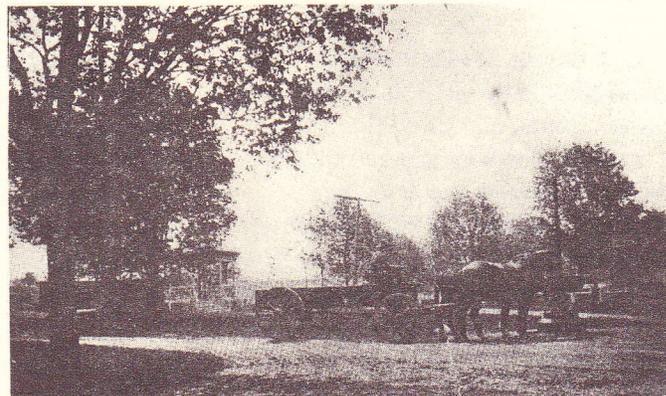
**From the Family Scrapbook of Mary DuBois Wright:
"Basin-Shawangunk, Wallkill 1863-1978-2002"**



Digging (sic) grave for Daniel DuBois and 5 dollars in full of all Demands for that grave. Signed, Cornelius Masten, 1887



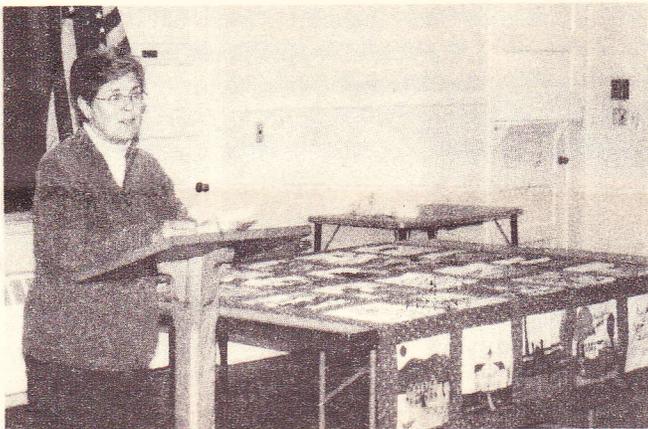
Town of Shawangunk: Received from Daniel DuBois, January 15, 1883. For Town and County Taxes for year 1882....\$191.48, Dog tax....\$.34, Fees....\$1.42.



Fountain at the center of the Basin (Wallkill), undated

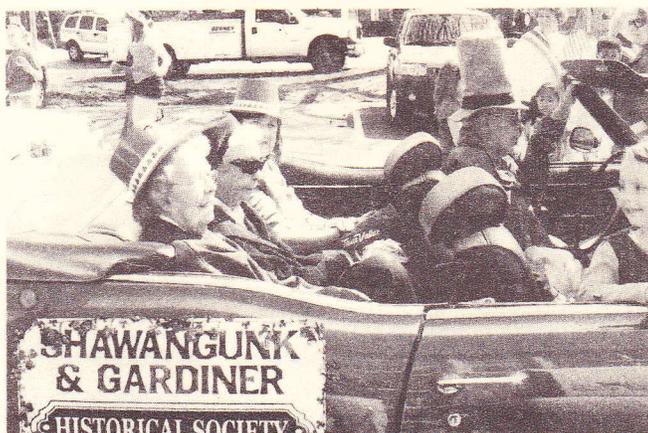
Event Highlights

On March 3 at the Wallkill Reformed Church, a quilt sewn by the **New Hurley Quilters** in 1976 depicting local landmarks such as the Andries DuBois House and the Galeville Bridge was presented to the Historical Society. Also on display was a tablecloth donated by **Elizabeth Hammesfahr**; visitors to Elizabeth's home were asked to sign the "Friendship" cloth and she embroidered the names on top of their signatures. Some attendees at the meeting were able to identify their own names. Other quilts and woven cloths were also on view. Carolyn Crowell displayed a quilt made by her mother, and an early woven coverlet in traditional colors of red, blue and tan, created on a hand-loom was shown; in each corner it read, "Agriculture and Manufactures are the foundation of our Independence, July 4, 1883."



Co-president Carolyn Crowell chairs the quilt meeting

* * *



St. Patrick's Day parade in Wallkill

Historical Society member **Ed Weed** drove his antique car in the March St. Patrick's Day parade in Wallkill carrying Historical Society banners. Riding with Ed this year were **Elaine Weed, Mary Wright, Doris Callan, Bob Mooney and Holland Rain Mooney Janosek.**

* * *

Andries DuBois House Restoration

The restoration project is midway into the Phase II portion of the Restoration and Stabilization Project. AMHS, our contractor, has put numerous support posts in the basement and new floor and ceiling joists to support the weight of the entire building. They have almost completed the slow jacking of the structure to even out the stress and weight on the supports. Pictures of the progress of this restoration project can be found on our Website. Please check this out.

* * *

(Continued from page 1) was very high and covered the road. "Our island [in the middle of the Wallkill River] is about all under water," Annie wrote.

Annie and Simon lived into the 1920s and 1930s, long enough to contribute to the cultural, political, and economic life of their community. Annie was active in the Republican Party; in September 1922, the Board of Elections elected her Member of the Republican County Central Committee for the First District in the Town of Shawangunk. She, with her sister Ida, was a charter member of the Wallkill Women's Club. Simon DuBois was a Director of the National Bank of Wallkill Bank in the 1930s, when "times were real bad," but the Wallkill Bank never closed because nine directors of the bank, including Simon DuBois, put up \$30,000 to secure deposits. Annie Pauline DuBois died in 1930 and Simon DuBois in 1932.

This article is based on research and a presentation by Mary DuBois Wright, granddaughter of Annie McElhone Dubois, at the Historical Society's Meeting of April 7, 2010, at the Wallkill Reformed Church.

**Historical Society of
Shawangunk & Gardiner
Spring Programs**

Wednesday, May 5 – 7:30 p.m.

Slide Show/revisiting old houses mentioned in Frank Mentz's "Shawangunk Hearths."
Presented by Harold VanAiken & Al White,
Wallkill Reformed Church

Wednesday, June 2 – 6:30 p.m.

Summer picnic potluck at the Andries DuBois House
(or Wallkill Reformed Church in case of rain)

Saturday, June 26, 9 - 4

Annual Garden Tour: Six Gardens

\$15 - includes cold water and snack bar. Raffle, plant and bake sale. Tickets at Andries Dubois House, 75 Wallkill Ave., Wallkill.

NEED A GOOD IDEA FOR A GRADUATION GIFT? One-Room Schools of the Town of Shawangunk 1800-1943, by Elaine Weed, \$20. Available at the Wallkill Public Library or call 845-895-2903.

REMINDER TO PAY YOUR 2010 DUES

Individual: \$20	Business: \$50
Family \$30	Patron: \$100
Supporting: \$50	Benefactor: \$250

Checks payable: Historical Society of Shawangunk & Gardiner. P.O. Box 570, Wallkill, NY 12589

Advanced notice: Start saving good unwanted items for the upcoming summer yard sale.

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