

Newsletter

Historical Society of Shawangunk & Gardiner

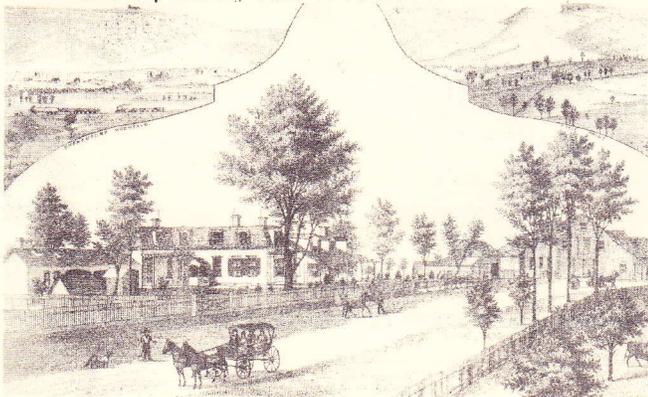
Volume 8, Number 1

Winter 2011

The Cornelius Hasbrouck House

By Alex Hoyt

The Cornelius Hasbrouck house is nestled high above the Wallkill River and the Hamlet below. Built in 1771 as a simple stone walled rectangle with gabled roof, it would, in the ensuing two centuries reflect both the change in the community and in the country in often uncanny ways. The walls still are held together by mud, horsehair and straw, its cellars never held slaves (counter to sometime rumor) and it must have endured a horrendous fire sometime after milled lumber became available (after 1830 and before 1866). The Hasbroucks served with distinction in the Revolution and four more generations would reside above the Wallkill before the family sold both house and lands to a railroad builder named John Andrews in 1866 for the princely sum of \$31,000.



First known illustration of the John Andrews house

The Civil War and the railroads brought new wealth and manufacturing to the Valley and Andrews proceeded to turn Hasbrouck house into a grander manor. He added a mansard roofed clapboard addition (the latest style from France, of course) which contained a parlor, a grand dining room, several additional bedrooms, servants quarters and a large kitchen (still there). Andrews built Grand Central (the first terminal) for Commodore Vanderbilt and was very active in raising the Reformed church in the Hamlet. A man of considerable accomplishment, he moved about from New York City to Newburgh (where he was

involved in many construction projects) and ended his career as a vice president of the Edison Electric Company (now known as General Electric). When he died the last sentence in the NYTimes obituary stated 'for many years he resided at Wallkill's famed Home Farm'.

And now comes the third great stage of development, namely that in 1881 John Andrews leaves the Valley and sells his impressive house to John Gail Borden, the genial president of the Borden Milk Company and the man most responsible for giving the Hamlet and the hillside its permanent look. In 1880 he had already spotted the Valley as ideal for his largest condensary (a ruin on Rt. 208 today) and decided to buy up some 1,800 acres and establish his Family Farm.

Immediately, he built a most attractive Brick Office next to the house and began to add the latest stylistic flourishes to the house. Gone was Andrew's simplicity (see 1876 illustration) and in its place elaborate Italianate decoration and tower loomed. A second kitchen was added to the cellar and central heating via an immense coal furnace. In the brief span of ten years Borden created a national showplace, but death came early (in 1891) and his widow Ellen would live until 1928 in the Borden House on the hill.

Daughter Marion continued in her illustrious father's manner and enlarged the Home Farm structures and built the still magnificent Mansion next to her parental house. All was well and grand until Marion's untimely death in 1930 at the onset of the Great Depression.

The entire Home Farm was left to the Masonic Order, a grand but extremely cash strapped organization. In no time everything was sold off or leased with the only bright spot being the 550 acre Hoyt Farms (originally the Borden Hedges Farm) between Straw Ridge and Borden Road. (continued on p. 3)

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Letter from the Co-Presidents

Dear Members and Friends,

We start the new year with great hopes and aspirations for the continued success of the **Shawangunk and Gardiner Historical Society**. During the past year **Carolyn and Stewart Crowell** and the entire board of directors have done a tremendous job leading the society with great programs and successful fund raisers, such as the **Garden Tour**, the **Holiday Tea** and the **Flea Market**. The **DuBois House restoration** is progressing. A system is in place to categorize and access artifacts . The new Town of Shawangunk community room is our new place to meet as it is large and free to nonprofit groups.

Carolyn and I will be Co-Presidents for the coming year and we have goals to see furthered with the help of all our members. We want to increase our membership. Getting youngsters involved in learning about our history and joining our group is very important. We want to pursue more avenues for raising money since we will have major expenses with the Dubois House. Presenting relevant and interesting programs for our members is critical. Continuing to access artifacts and find a safe place to store them is essential. And a continuing **Borden Day** is an educational treasure.

I hope we will all work together to further these goals in the interest of sharing our local history and preserving a historic building.

Carolyn Crowell and Toni Gagan, Co-Presidents



One of the imaginative table settings at the Winter Holiday Tea

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Recently our Board of Trustees voted to establish a new subcommittee for **Capital Fund-Raising**, charged with identifying and pursuing public and private sources of funding for major expenses like rebuilding the chimneys at the Andries DuBois House. After the Board has approved the scope of work and budget for a project recommended by the Building and Grounds Committee, for example, the Capital Fund-Raising Subcommittee researches potential grants and other funding sources, submits the necessary applications, and follows up as needed. "Results-oriented" people are needed for this subcommittee! If you would like to join, please contact **Suzanne Isaksen** at 845-778-1736, or sisaksen@earthlink.net.

Event Highlights

On October 6 at Wallkill Town Hall, **Wesley & Barbara Gottlock** presented a digital slide show based on their book, "**Lost Towns of the Hudson Valley.**" The towns arose in response to mid-19th century population growth, supported by a demand for building materials. Rich clay deposits along the Hudson River triggered the opening of brick yards, such as the Roseton Brick Co., and subsequently the Hamlet of Roseton. After two World Wars, a Depression, a change in building materials, and the development of the Ashokan Reservoir, the towns declined. The Gottlock photographs revived the spirits of these bygone towns and a lost way of life.

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On November 3, local historian **Marc Fried** spoke at the Wallkill Town Hall about his latest book, "**Lake Maratanza, the Evans Patent, and the Search for Dongan's Pond.**" His use of a hand-drawn map illuminated his explanation of the difficult search and adventures in locating Dongan's Pond.

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Status Report/Andries DuBois House

The Building Committee has been meeting to establish a priority of restoration needs in order to proceed with the project. Chimneys need to be repaired and stabilized prior to the beginning of the roof and eave repairs and estimates are currently being sought for this work. Still under discussion is use of the building, repair of the rooms for the school house exhibit and general permanent exhibits for the public.

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A wonderful **Winter Tea Fundraiser** filled the Community Room at the Wallkill Town Hall to overflowing. The sold-out event raised over \$1600 on behalf of the Andries DuBois House Restoration Project. Seated at charming tea tables with settings contributed by volunteer hosts, guests enjoyed a splendid tea with sandwiches and desserts, before being royally entertained and enlightened with a cooking demonstration by master chef **Brad Gulden**. The winner of Chef Gulden's dinner for 10 - **Lottie** - has given an unexpected holiday glow to a lucky

family in Wallkill; she donated the dinner - which will be cooked at the Wallkill Reformed Church - to a family less fortunate.

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The Historical Society held its **Annual Pot Luck Christmas Dinner** on December 1 at the Wallkill Town Hall. The holiday crowd enjoyed the music of **Lois Crist-Woodward** on violin and **Carolyn Crowell** at the piano.

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(Continued from p. 1)

Here the milk for West Point was made. Borden House was rented out and slowly declined so that by the late 1940s it resembled an Addams Family House, eerie and silent and derelict upon the rise.

By 1950 America was in the full grip of a Colonial Revival. At this point my grandfather, Dr. CJ Hoyt purchased the house and with the efforts of his energetic second wife, Johanna, and the most able interior designer, Brewster Board, proceed to restore Borden House to its 1870s look. Gone was the elaborate Italianate look and tower and in its place, the 1771 stone wing really came into its own. Colonial paint colors and period Schumacher wallpapers were added and the North Parlor's stunning prayer book mantle became a focal point.

One concession to the house's stunning location were the addition of large picture windows in the mansard addition (these would become less and less appealing with the passage of time). For many decades several generations of Hoyts lived and died there. However, the house would endure yet one more major upheaval. On the bitter cold night of December 29, 2009 while a family Christmas Dinner was in full swing embers from a fireplace ignited on the roof and for over four hours the house suffered as the entire second floor burned off. About one third could be saved and today anyone looking up to the hill can see beams and mansard rising as able workmen race against the weather to enclose the house for its major renovation. Completion is hoped for the fall of 2011.

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**Historical Society of
Shawangunk & Gardiner
Spring 2011 Programs**

Wednesday, March 2 – 7:30 p.m.
Old Houses of Wallkill: A Slide Show
Presented by Harold Van Aken & Al White, Part II, at the Wallkill Town Hall

**Monday, April 4 - Program at the
Gardiner Town Hall. TBA**

Wednesday, May 4 - 7:30 p.m.
The Making of Brick *A demonstration and talk, presented by Stewart Crowell at the Crowell Brick Mould Complex*

Wednesday, June 1 – 6:00 p.m.
Annual picnic – Location to be announced

TIME TO PAY YOUR 2011 DUES!

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

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

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