

# Newsletter

Historical Society of Shawangunk & Gardiner

Volume 9, Number 1

Winter 2012

## Honoring Our Own: Civil War Heroes from Gardiner and Shawangunk

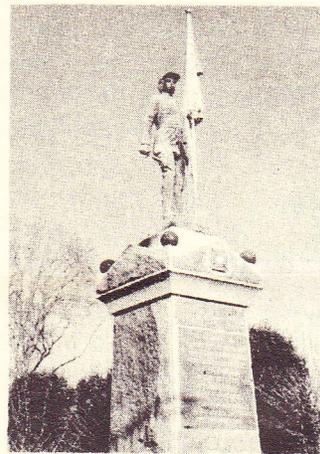
Between 1861 and 1865, more than 250 young men from the towns of Gardiner and Shawangunk left their homes and families to fight in what we know as the Civil War. Previously, very few had traveled far from their farms or communities. Yet within a few months of their enlistment, they found themselves with their regiments in such "remote" places as Chancellorsville, Virginia; Fort Wagner, South Carolina; or New Orleans, Louisiana.

Thankfully many returned home to resume their lives as farmers, laborers, or merchants. They shared their stories and mementos with their children and grandchildren. Some of you may even recall hearing these war stories or seeing photographs or medals handed down through generations. Other local soldiers lost their lives in battle or in hospitals. One young man from Shawangunk, George Thomas Conklin, died at Andersonville Prison in Georgia.

Activities back at home in support of, or in response to, the war also are an important part of the story. Newspapers of the time preserved in repositories like the Elting Memorial Library in New Paltz tell about local views of the war, battles, and politics of the time, as well as local efforts to raise funds or supplies for the troops. One of the most popular activities was sending supplies for Thanksgiving dinner. Newspapers also published letters or articles of thanks from the troops.

Young men from Gardiner and Shawangunk served in several different regiments, in the infantry, cavalry, and artillery. At least one local man joined the Navy. A large number enlisted with the 156<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, known as the "Mountain Legion". **New York in the War of the Rebellion**, edited by Frederick Phisterer, records recruitment in the following companies: A – Plattekill, New Paltz, Gardiner, and Shawangunk; B – Kingston, Woodstock, Lloyd, Olive, and Marbletown; C – Durham, Kingston, Warwarsing, Esopus, Hurley, Saugerties, Cairo, and Rosendale; D – Warwarsing, Marbletown, Kingston, and Shawangunk; E – Plattekill, Rosendale,

Shawangunk, Gardiner, and New Paltz; F – Kingston, Saugerties, Hurley, Rochester, Marbletown, and Olive; G – Esopus, Marlborough, and Kingston; H – Rochester, Southfields, Middletown, Newtown, Greenville, Castleton, New York City, Westfield, Northfield, Hillsdale, and Baltimore; I – Castleton, Northfield, Westfield, Hillsdale, Southfields, and Greenville; and K – Castleton, Middletown, Newtown, Northfield, and Hillsdale.



Town of Highland monument honoring the 156<sup>th</sup> NY Volunteers Infantry Regiment

A published history of the Union Army states that the "One Hundred and Fifty-sixth Infantry" mustered in on November 17, 1862, and left New York December 4, 1862, bound for New Orleans. Troops saw battle at Fort Bisland and Port Hudson, Louisiana, during their first several months of service. After a nine-month period of "post and garrison duties", in 1864 the 156<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment became part of the Red River campaign in Louisiana, eventually sent to Virginia and Maryland. There they fought in the Shenandoah Valley campaign led by General Philip Sheridan. In January of 1865, the 156<sup>th</sup> moved south once again to see battle in Savannah, Georgia, and the Carolinas. They mustered out of service on October 23, 1865.

Published sources generally agree that the regiment lost 4 officers and 60 enlisted men killed in action or  
*(continued, p.3)*

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**Letter from the Co-Presidents**

Dear Members and Friends,

As one year ends and another begins, we note changes in our governing Board. We give deep thanks to **Alex Hoyt**, retiring Trustee member, for many years of enlightened and dedicated service, and we welcome returning board member (and former President) **Suzanne Isaksen** who brings vast expertise to the Board as Historian of the Town of Montgomery and also Communications Director for the National Maritime Historical Society.

We look forward to spring even more than usual, thanks to a gift by Society member **Metsie Schmoll** of a flowering pear tree and bulbs planted by Treasurer **Bob Mooney** at the Andries DeBois House. See the article below that records **Keith Roosa's** generous gift of his significant collection of historic postcards, visual remembrances of local scenes for over a hundred years. We also thank Keith and his company **Hickory Mountain Chimney & Masonry Co.** for completing the rebuilding of the DuBois House chimney. Take a good look as you drive by. (see picture on p. 3).

**Carolyn Crowell and Toni Gagan, Co-Presidents**

**Come join your friends at the Historical Society – we welcome new members!**



## Event Highlights

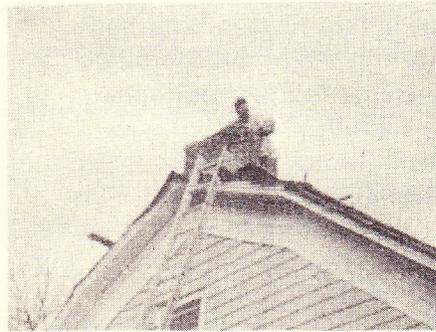
On October 5, **Board Trustee Bob Mooney** presented "The Honey Bee – an Historical Perspective." Bob displayed a complete hive, tools, books, honey and other interesting objects relating to beekeeping. He gave a slide presentation of the history of bees and of beekeeping, which has gone on for thousands of years. The bee is important to the food industry and we rely on their pollination for much of what we enjoy. Here in the Hudson Valley, the Borden farm would have certainly buzzed with bee excitement as it developed vast orchards and a full line of crops and food for both animals and people.

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**William L. Staats**, professor emeritus of accounting and computer studies at Hudson Valley Community College, gave a lively talk on November 2 about the relationship of his family from 1696 to 2009 (!) to the Hoogebergh House, a more-than-three-centuries-old stone house in Schodack, south of Albany. General George Washington paid a daytime stop and the house retains bullet marks from an incident of hundreds of years ago. The ninth generation made it through the Depression in spite of the death of a father leaving behind a courageous widow with 7 children and no Social Security. Only the generosity of relatives saved the family from foster care. The Hoogebergh House became an important weekend refuge for the family. Said Staats, "We didn't have much money, but we had a lot of fun!" In the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, house ownership was transferred to a family foundation. For further stories about this remarkable house and the family that occupied it for 11 generations, read Staats' book "*Three Centuries on the Hudson River.*"

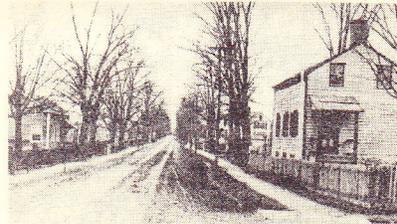
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The restoration of the **DuBois House** continues and we are pleased that the chimneys at both ends of the house have been completely restored. It was necessary to dismantle the loose or damaged bricks down through several floors and then to rebuild it from the inside. The purchase of appropriate bricks to finish off the visible tops of each chimney gives the house a beautiful look as well as being structurally sound. Thanks to **Keith Roosa** who volunteered his services and his crew, we were able to complete this job in the most cost-effective way possible. We will now turn our restoration attention to the repair of the roof and the building of proper eaves for the house.



\* \* \* \*

The Historical Society has been gifted with a fine collection of local history postcards by Society member **Keith Roosa**. The 90 photographs record scenes of long ago in Wallkill, Bruynswick, Pine Bush, Gardiner, and environs. You will be interested in going through the collection to discover streets, houses, bridges, and lakes that will bring back memories or show you what the Town of Shawangunk looked like many years ago. A rural paradise! The Society is selling copies of the cards for \$3/each to benefit the Andries DuBois House. A catalogue of the postcards is available at Historical Society meetings.



*Postcard: North Main Street, Wallkill*

\* \* \* \*

(continued from page 1) mortally wounded; and 4 officers and 163 enlisted men dying from disease and other causes, including 17 enlisted men in the hands of the Confederacy.

On September 19, 1908, the Town of Highland dedicated a monument to the 156th NY Volunteers Infantry Regiment. The inscription on the pedestal is as follows: "To the Memory of the Brave and Patriotic Men of this Regiment who Served Their Country Faithfully in the Third Brigade, Second Division." A website documenting the "The Mountain Legion" was created by Bill Rose, whose great-grandfather was Private Alexander Lown from Company C of the NY 156th Infantry Regiment. This website can be found at <http://www.geocities.ws/mountainlegion/>. As we observe the sesquicentennial of the Civil War, the

Historical Society of Shawangunk and Gardiner will document and recognize the local men from Gardiner and Shawangunk who went to war, as well as their families and friends who supported them. Look for profiles of our soldiers in future issues of the Society's newsletter, as well as on our website at <http://wallkillhistory.com/>. *Written by Suzanne Isaksen*

Please help the Society document our Civil War heritage in Gardiner and Shawangunk by "adopting" a soldier to research. You can help us learn about his family, his military service, and where he is buried. For more information, please contact Suzanne Isaksen at [sisaksen@earthlink.net](mailto:sisaksen@earthlink.net) or 845-778-1736.

The talented Suzuki players taught by violinist Karin Warner entertained at the Historical Society Christmas Potluck on December 7 at the Town Hall Community Room.



**Historical Society of  
Shawangunk & Gardiner  
Spring 2012 Programs**

**Wednesday, March 6 - 7:30 p.m.**  
**How to Trace Your Family Tree** by Hal Van Aken (Wallkill Town Hall Community Room)

**Wednesday, April 4 - 7:30 p.m.**  
**Local History: Journey Through the Village of Wallkill** (Wallkill Town Hall Com. Room)

**Wednesday, May 2 - 7:30 p.m.**  
**An Orange County Master Gardener presents a program on Heirloom Plants** (Wallkill Town Hall Com. Room)

**SAVE THE DATE: Saturday, June 9**  
**Annual Tea to benefit the Historical Society of Shawangunk & Gardiner**

*Printed courtesy of Shawangunk Correctional Facility*

**J.T. Smith, Superintendent**  
**J. Nicotera, Instructor**

Return Service Requested

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