



Newsletter

Historical Society of Shawangunk & Gardiner

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THE CENTER OF THE TOWN FOR OVER ONE HUNDRED YEARS: THE PERRINE BUILDING IN WALLKILL

By Libby Ross

Only residents with long memories recognize the building on this page. The picture was probably taken in the early 20th century from the porch of Dr. Brooks' home across the street (now the site of Key Bank) on Wallkill Avenue in the center of town. A local man, Alfred Perrine, built the structure in 1869 on the foundation of an old barn that had once been part of the Phinney homestead, in what was then known as The Basin. This property is now the site of The Wallkill Valley Federal Savings and Loan Association.

On the ground floor, he opened the Perrine Drug and General Store where you could buy just about anything, from clothing and shoes to dishes and tin ware. He also set up a drugstore counter where he introduced the first soda and ice cream fountain in town. The enterprising Perrine partitioned off two additional stores and rented space to a harness maker, a barber, and later, a butcher who carried on the business for many years. On the second floor, he constructed a public hall where town meetings were held. And a staircase on the outside allowed for access to apartments over the stores.

Now it gets complicated. After Perrine's death around 1908, the building was bought by Robert Terwilliger who sold the general store business to McCullough, with later proprietorship to Lester Terwilliger until his retirement in 1954. Terwilliger sold to John Wolfe who operated Johnny's Meat Market with his wife Lucille. Wolfe later sold to Dominick and John Fasciano.

Perrine's drug store was taken over successively by Millspaugh, Fred Brown, Dr. Alfred Luks, Griffen, and finally to Dr. Edsall (before he moved across the street). If you are still following this complicated saga, the building's next incarnation (after a number of internal alterations) was to house the Town Clerk's office, and finally, the Ulster County Health Department where a public health nurse served the community!

Over the years, the building suffered a number of indignities, including inept safecrackers who blew up the safe of the original Perrine business without gaining anything for their efforts, and three fires over the years. In each case the Wallkill Fire Department saved the building. Ultimately, however, the building went down by fire in the early 1970s; Raymond Haas next door was working in the bus garage with a torch - a spark flew and the wooden building next door with its squeaky wooden floors sprinkled with sawdust caught fire and burned to the ground. No one was hurt, but that was the end of the building.

Long-time Wallkill residents still have memories of the businesses in the Perrine building. In the 1930s, J. Addison Crowell, owner of the Crowell Brick Mold Factory and a talented amateur artist, painted designs on fresh eggs and then slipped them into the egg barrel in the grocery store where buyers would delight to find them among their pristine neighbors. More than one remember the squeaky wooden floors and climbing the stairs to the public health nurse, part of the memories of growing up in Wallkill. *Thanks to Frank Mentz's Shawangunk Hearths, Cindy Edsall Difford, Bob Mooney, Al White, Linda Terwilliger and Carolyn Crowell.*



The Perrine building on Wallkill Avenue

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Events

The Majestic Family of Gardiner. On **Monday, October 2**, a large audience convened at the Gardiner Town Hall, where Board member **Robert Borden Reifmueller** presented a program on the history of the Majestic Family, beginning with immigration to the U.S., and intertwining stories of the family history with the growth of Gardiner. The presence of many members of the Majestic family in the room added life to a story of one family's impact on the economic and political character of the town.

Sip n'Paint Fundraiser. On **Saturday, October 19**, 19 people gathered at the Wallkill River School in Montgomery to paint a fun, Fall watercolor scene. Artist **Lana Privatera** led participants through basic watercolor techniques, such as masking, splatter painting, and color mixing, with breaks for wine and snacks. Many thanks to **Donna Myer** for organizing this fundraiser on behalf of the Historical Society.

On **Saturday, November 4**, the Historical Society held its **Annual Holiday Benefit Tea**, a wonderful yearly event that took place at the Shawangunk Town Hall. A capacity crowd enjoyed elaborate, beautiful tables set with fine china and imaginative centerpieces. Tea served with delicious, delicate sandwiches, followed by multiple choices from a long table set with cakes and cookies was the centerpiece of the afternoon, but the pleasure was enhanced by raffles of generous donations from community organizations and individuals, emceed by **Bob Mooney**. Entertainment was provided by Wallkill High School songsters in a program of beautifully-sung English madrigals and bell-ringing musicians. Special thanks to **Carolyn Crowell, Freda Fenn**, and a long list of volunteers for their organization of the day, resulting in over \$2000 for the Historical Society Restoration Fund.

Mary Ellen Matise presented a **History of the Walden's Women's Club and the Village of Walden**, at the Knights of Pythias House in Wallkill, on **Wednesday, November 1**. It was the women of Walden who formed a woman's study group in 1909 to improve the village. The wives of ministers, merchants, publishers, and doctors, educated, well-connected women, were determined to do public service and to educate themselves. Over the course of years they helped mothers and children, started a children's garden club, a sewing club for girls, and established a home-reading circle.

The last event of the season took place on **Wednesday, December 6**, at the **Andries DuBois House**, where the **Winter Pot Luck Party** attracted members and guests to enjoy food and drink, contributed by those who attended. An evening of conversation among friends, presentations about many restoration activities currently underway, and

a membership vote to renew Trustee terms of office for **Robert Mooney, Libby Ross, Doris Callan, and Jim Malloy** completed the program for this delightful evening.

Status report from the Restoration Committee. Restoration efforts at the DuBois House have centered on the kitchen at the SW corner of the first floor which is the oldest section. We have removed layers of wallpaper and paint to return to original surfaces. We will repair damaged sections in the spring and the walls and window frames will be painted with historically appropriate colors. Several sections will be framed and covered with Plexiglas to show earlier construction. At the Knight's Lodge, major refinishing of the floors in two rooms and removal of old plumbing has kept the restoration crew busy. We completed the replacement of broken window and door glass and restored a working kitchen with nearly new appliances, cabinet, and sink. Our goal for spring is for the plumbing and electrical changes to be ready for regular Historical Society meetings.

Happy and a Healthy New Year to Members and Friends of the Historical Society of Shawangunk & Gardiner. We will see you in the Spring!



Terwilliger Store

Officers

President Debra Wolff
Vice President Libby Ross
Recording Secretary
Doris Callan
Corresponding Secretary
Donna Myer
Treasurer Bob Mooney

Trustees

Doris Callan
Freda Fenn
Jim Malloy
Bob Mooney
Donna Myer
Robert Borden Reifmueller
Libby Ross
Harold Van Aken
Alan White
Karen Wohlforth Dale
Debra Wolff

Publications

Libby Ross, Doris Callan, Freda Fenn, Bob Mooney, Hal Van Aken

Standing Committees

Programs and Education:
Freda Fenn, Donna Myer

Fund Raising: *Trustees*

Membership: *Bob Mooney*

Publicity: *Hal Van Aken*

Restoration/Bldg Maintenance:
Bob Mooney

Finance: *Bob Mooney*

Archives and Collections:
Hal Van Aken

Publications: *Libby Ross*

Webmaster: *Hal Van Aken*

Letter from the President

Dear Members and Friends,

It looks like winter is upon us for another year! Thankfully, both the DuBois House and Knights of Pythias house are set for the cold weather. The HSSG Board of Directors will not waste this precious downtime; we meet in January for our annual Strategic Planning Meeting where we will vote on our annual budget, plan educational programs, and brainstorm fund raising ideas. Please let us know if you have suggestions. Remember, this is a member-driven organization and we encourage your input!

This past October we met jointly with the Gardiner Historical Society at their Town Hall. Our newest board member, **Robert Borden Reifmueller**, presented to a packed crowd the history of the **Majestic Family**. Also in October we sponsored a Sip and Paint fund raiser at the **Walkkill River School** in Montgomery. Thank you **Donna Myer** for arranging this fun event. In November **Mary Ellen Matise** presented an informative slide show on the history of **Walden Women's Clubs**. On November 4th, we had our 2017 Annual Holiday Tea; many thanks to **Carolyn Crowell** and her committee for their creativity and hard work, and also to the businesses and individuals who contributed gifts for the raffles. This event raised more than \$2,200 for the historical society! Our last event for the year was our annual Holiday Party at the Andres DuBois House; old friends and new attended and enjoyed each other's company. At the general membership meeting a vote was taken for **Bob Mooney, Libby Ross, Doris Callan** and **Jim Malloy** to continue serving on the HSSG Board of Directors. Many thanks to each for their many contributions throughout the years!

The Board has several estimates for repairs on the front windows of the Andres DuBois house. Money from the estate of **Mary Wright** has been earmarked for this purpose. The remainder of this major restoration cost will come from donations and other fund-raising efforts directed to area businesses and organizations. Please consider donating toward this project; you can send a check to the Historical Society or go to our website and donate via PayPal. Every little bit helps!!

We welcome members to participate in any capacity – through volunteer work, attendance at events, by contributing your expertise, donations of artifacts or photos, recruiting new members, or making a financial donation. Remember, HSSG is your organization and is committed to preserving the rich local history of Shawangunk and Gardiner.

Debra Wolff, President

There will be no meetings this Winter until April 4, 2018

Historical Society of Shawangunk & Gardiner Mission Statement

In one of the oldest settled townships in the U.S., The Historical Society of Shawangunk & Gardiner preserves historic buildings, stories, records, and artifacts. We share them with the community through absorbing and inspiring programs, strengthening a shared understanding of local history.

Historical Society of Shawangunk & Gardiner
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Stamp

Please join the Historical Society to continue receiving the Newsletter. You can join the Historical Society at <http://WallkillHistory.com>

Last Dues

Complementary Copy



Figure 1 - Terwilliger Store at the turn of the century