



Newsletter

Historical Society of Shawangunk & Gardiner

Volume 13, Number 1

Winter 2015

COMING OF AGE PARTY – THE ANDRIES DUBOIS MUSEUM OPENS

The Annual Holiday Celebration at the historic DuBois House on December 3 was the occasion for a large crowd to cheer the opening of the Andries DuBois Museum. Since the turn of this century, volunteers, offering their labor and planning skills, have been responsible for bring this event about. Every Saturday morning, Historical Society members can be found swinging a hammer, felling a tree, painting a wall, preserving wallpaper, polishing an old stove, and performing a million other tasks to restore a battered structure to healthy condition. As a result, we are proud to open two front parlor rooms to the public, dedicated to two outstanding members of the community.

The Hazel E. Ronk Room was named in honor of a devoted teacher in the Wallkill Central District for many years. Hazel Ronk taught at the Ostrander Elementary School, but notably, her first ten years teaching were in one-room schoolhouses in Skaneateles and New Hurley.



School House Room

Appropriately, this room houses a one-room schoolhouse exhibition of desks, books, and other memorabilia of the history of teaching in Shawangunk. Present at the dedication ceremony were Hazel's niece, nephew, and other family members. Also honored were Elaine Weed and her late husband Ed, for their role in scouring the Shawangunk Hills to locate the desks, books, and other materials that fill the room.

The second room was dedicated to honor Mary DuBois Wright, the direct descendant of twelve generations of the DuBois family, which includes the house's namesake, Andries DuBois, born in Kingston in 1737. In 1759 he purchased 590 acres of land and constructed his homestead.



Exhibit Room

This room has been restored to late 19th century – early 20th century appearance and provides a showcase for revolving exhibitions, including the current display of an oil portrait of Elizabeth Ronk (1782-1862), the wife of Andries Lefevre and Great-Great-Great-Grandmother of Mary DuBois Wright, and a hand-carved and painted child's rocking horse, among other treasures.



Elizabeth Ronk

We encourage the Shawangunk & Gardiner public to stop by on a Saturday morning starting in March to view the newly opened rooms and to tour the rest of the house where active restoration is underway. And we can always use another set of hands willing to bring the past to life again.

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Letter from the President

Dear Members and Friends,

This past Fall found Historical Society members quite busy – and happy!! Progress on renovations at the DuBois House exceeded expectations as we had several volunteers show up each Saturday morning to pitch in. Special thanks to some new faces – **Gene Niles** and **Donna Myers** – for all their hard work with clean-up both inside and out. Also kudos to **Adam Seelig** and **Chara Lambert** for their fine craftsmanship on framing out the wallpaper in the parlor of the DuBois House. The Wallpaper Committee members (**Libby Ross, Karen Wohlforth Dale & Leslie LeFevre Stratton**) continue work on the preservation and identification of the wallpaper in each room. Many thanks to **Jim Malloy** for his donation of a small cast iron stove and to **Elaine Terwilliger Weed** and **Mary Wright** for their generous donations that allowed the Historical Society to purchase two display cases for the schoolhouse room and the front parlor. And finally, please note that the DuBois House now has a front porch light, thanks to **Alan White**. To check out more renovations, visit the website (www.wallkillhistory.com) and check out the pictures taken by our own **Hal Van Aken**, who has thoughtfully chronicled each step of renovations. What a great team of workers we have!!

Over at the Knights of Pythias House there was also great progress. **Bob Mooney, Debra Wolff, Chara Lambert and Lisa Dunn** worked to paint several rooms. Floors were polished and curtains hung, too. Lisa surprised everyone with a beautiful stencil over the front window that reads, “*Historical Society of Shawangunk & Gardiner.*” Many thanks to **Pete Taedger** who did a wonderful job cleaning the upstairs Knights room. We have all the furniture moved back and the room ready to be set up in the Spring. Volunteers will be needed then to help set up Historical Society office space, too. Please let us know if you are interested – wolffd@nycap.rr.com.

Not only did members work hard, but we also had fun and learned a few things this Fall. Thanks to **Freda Fenn** we had speakers on Bannerman Castle, the first moon landing, and the Rhinebeck Aerodrome. Freda also organized a basket-making workshop conducted by **Mary Bikel**. And we have requests for another workshop. Our final fund-raiser for the year, the **Holiday Tea**, was a huge success – we could just about fit everyone into the room. Thanks to Committee Chair **Carolyn Crowell** and committee members **Doris Callan, Freda Fenn, Mary Lou Van Aken and Toni Gagan** for a wonderful job!! Last, but not least, our year ended with the Annual Holiday Celebration at the DuBois House (see story and pictures, p.1)

As always, we welcome all members to volunteer in whatever capacity you can. We guarantee you will have fun!

Debra Wolff
President

FRIENDS OF THE ANDRIES DUBOIS HOUSE

This Fall, the Trustees of the Historical Society of Shawangunk & Gardiner authorized the formation of a Friends offshoot, a subordinate body established to provide extra support for the restoration of the Andries DuBois House.



DuBois House 2013

Charter members of the Friends joined together because they share a belief in the value of preserving the DuBois House. For over 10 years, generous members of the Society have contributed money and labor to create a museum dedicated to preserving, understanding and sharing local history. In the lead story of this newsletter, we have announced the opening of the museum's two front rooms to the public. Work on the other rooms continues. The newly established Friends group supplements the Society's limited budget by supporting small-scale construction and materials on an as-needed basis, ensuring that the work goes on, and that the investment in funds and labor continues for the benefit of future generations. Of course, we will continue to seek grants from external sources for big expenses, such as the roof, but it's the small stuff that is equally important. For example, in October and November, we spent \$606.64 for plaster and wood for the basement, wood trim for historic wallpaper, Plexiglas to cover a section of wallpaper, electric and plumbing supplies, Tung oil for the exhibit room floor, an exhibit room display cabinet, curtains and rods. In the initial donations from our Friends, we were able to cover these expenses. During that same period, 20 volunteers contributed 172 hours of labor.

Friends include those who donate money and/or labor. Charter members include:

- Carolyn Crowell, Adam Seelig,
- Chara Lambert, Freda Fenn, Toni Gagan,
- Holland Janosek, Carol LeFevre,
- Linda & Jim Malloy, Donna Myer,
- Kitty & Bob Mooney, Gene Niles,
- Karen & Paul Dale, Libby & John Ross, Elaine Weed, Alan White, Debra Wolff,
- Mary Wright, Vic Work
- Mary Lou and Hal Van Aken.

Won't you join us?

Contact: Libby Ross, lantarshross@gmail.com

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On November 5 at Town Hall, **Lou Cariola** of New Paltz presented a program **Remembering the Apollo Moon Landing of July 20, 1969**. Cariola was among the team of brilliant technicians that built the lunar module that made possible the landing of astronauts Armstrong and Aldrin on the moon. It looked like a "crazed insect, like a piece of junk" said Cariola. It didn't matter what it looked like; taped together and gerry-rigged, it worked. It was extraordinary that the astronauts were able to land and even more remarkable that they were able to leave the moon's gravity pull and rendezvous with the mother ship that had been circling the moon during their exploration of the moon's surface. Cariola let the audience touch the tissue-paper-like materials that had covered the module and it was like touching history. "[President] Kennedy had the nerve to get out there," said Cariola, "He had the will of the people to support him. We should learn from history."

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It is with great regret that we record the deaths of two loved and respected members of the Historical Society, the Pulitzer Prize winner and author **Carleton Mabee**, age 99, long-time resident and town historian of Gardiner, and **Jennifer Parker**, age 69, flight attendant with Pan American and Delta for 39 years, and lover of the arts.

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Change Service Requested

Last Member Dues 2014

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The Trustees of the Historical Society of Shawangunk & Gardiner extend warm greetings to our members, with hopes for the brightest New Year with health and happiness for all. We will hunker down for the winter with family and friends and hope you all do the same. See you in March!



Mary DuBois Wright



Elaine Terwilliger Weed



Holiday Tea Committee



Mary's Corner – Dec 3, 2014



Christmas Party Dec 3, 2014



Holliday Tea Setting