THE HOMESTEAD CHRONICLE

VOL.5 NO. 2 A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE WAPPINGERS HISTORICAL SOCIETY April 2019

The Mesier Homestead

Pease donate to the Homestead Preservation Fund. Make checks payable to the Wappingers Historical Society.

Established 1967

P.O. Box 174
Wappingers

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HOMESTEAD CHRONICLE

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President's Message

Dear Friends;

Spring is in the air and it's time to get out of the house, enjoy the warmer weather and come visit us at Mesier Homestead. We have made some exciting new additions and can't wait to share them with you.

I would like to thank outgoing Trustee Mike Vacchio who has given many, many years to the WHS. Mike was always there to lend a helping hand whenever needed with a smile and a story. We wish him well.

A big 'Welcome Aboard' to our new Trustees – Brian Alexander, Evelyn Conners, and Renee Ellis.

Congratulations to Brenda VonBerg upon being appointed as Trustee Emeritus in the Wappingers Historical Society. Brenda was the Town of Wappinger Historian for 25 years and is currently the Village of Wappingers Falls Historian. She has great love for the Village and is very proud of its resurgence.

This year we are embracing the THINK LOCAL philosophy and partnering with local eateries each month. In April we will have treats from Sweetbakes Café for sale in our gift shop. Stay tuned to see who will be coming next! (Think Local-- and Think Yum).

Save the date for "SPIRIT OF MESIER"- June 14th, 2019. Thanks to the generosity of so many last year we were able to restore the windows in the front of the Homestead. Today they look beautiful on the outside and the inside. This year we will be raising money to restore the windows in the original 1741 portion of the house. Some are over 250 years old — and they look it!!

We will be posting events on Facebook and in the Southern Dutchess News (and soon on our new website). Stay tuned.

Beth Devine

History of Swartwoutville and its Founding Settler

By Joey Cavaccini

Jacobus Swartwout was born on November 5th, 1734 in Wiccopee (Fishkill), N.Y. He was the son of Jacobus and Gietetjen Nieuwkerk. Jacobus began his military training in 1754 under Lord Jeffery Amherst at Fort Ticonderoga and Crown Point during the French & Indian War. In 1760, he purchased 3,000 acres of land from Madam Brett (part of the Rombout Patent) in the area centered at All Angels Hill Road and Rte. 82. He built his first home after his wedding to Aaltje Brinkerhoff, of Fishkill. Jacobus and Aaltje filled their house with eight children: Sarah, Moses, Derrick, Gilletje, Isaac, Jacobus I., Aaltje and John. A second home was built further north on All Angels Hill Road in 1779.

In the 1770s, when the American Revolution started, Jacobus became a Captain and then, a Colonel, for the Dutchess County Militia Unit. By the middle of the war he attained the position of Brigadier General. Swartwout's Farm, known as "Outpost Farm", grew wheat that was used to feed the troops stationed at the Fishkill Supply Depot complex.

[*Editor's note: On July 13, 1775, at Captain Jacob Griffin's Tavern (nicknamed "The Rendezvous") in Swartwoutville, there began a series of meetings, the last held on September 9, 1775. Meetings such as these were being held all across New York State at the time in an attempt to garner support and equip the army in the fight for independence from Britain. The Rombout Precinct Committee of Observation was formed by Captain Griffin, with Dirck G. Brinkerhoff presiding as Chairman. Jacobus Swartwout acted as Deputy Chairman. Some of the notables present at these meetings were Capt. Abraham Brinckerhoff, Capt. Jacob Griffin, Captain Joseph Horton, Elias Van Benschoten, John Langdon, Thomas Storm, John G. Brinckerhoff, Mathew Brinckerhoff, John A. Brinckerhoff, Richard Van Wyck and Dr. Theodorus Van Wyck. These men were the leaders of their community which was comprised of the area of Fishkill (and now Wappinger) and East Fishkill. The Committee gathered 502 signatures from local Patriots who opposed the British rule and were supporting of the Continental Congress. They also began the process of confiscating firearms from the Tories (in a "friendly" manner) who were loyal to the Crown, for use in the Continental army. If the arms were given up willingly, the owner's name and weapon was duly noted so that it would be returned after the war. The firearms were distributed between the companies of Captains Griffin, Southhard, Beedle, Horton, Brinckerhoff, Hageman and Leyster.*]

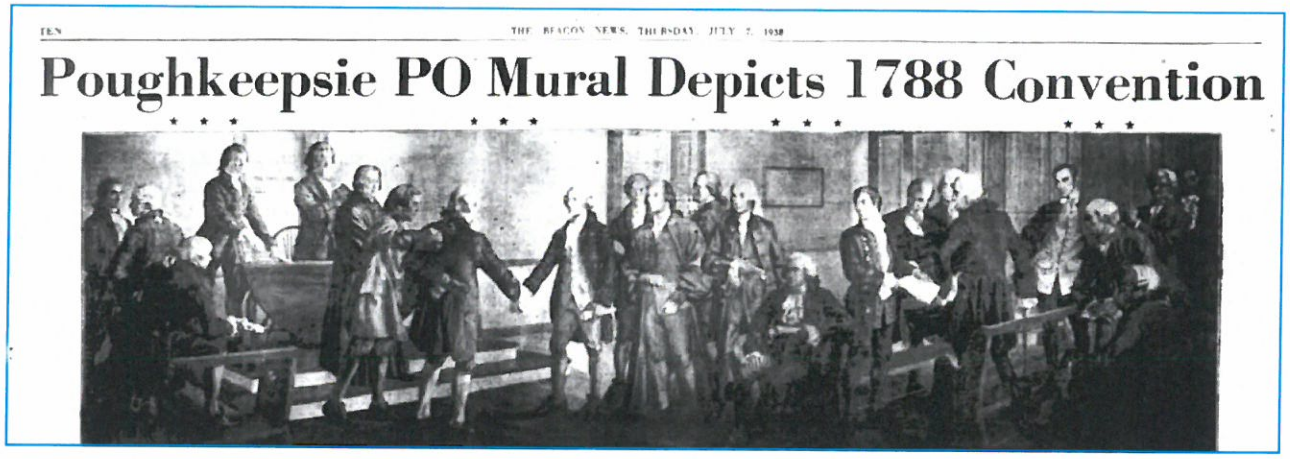
These meetings defined the role Dutchess County played during the American Revolution. General George Washington, Marquis de Lafayette, Baron Friedrich von Steuben, and Israel Putnam all visited the hamlet during the Revolution.

Continued on page 3

History of Swartwoutville and its Founding Settler

Continued from page 2

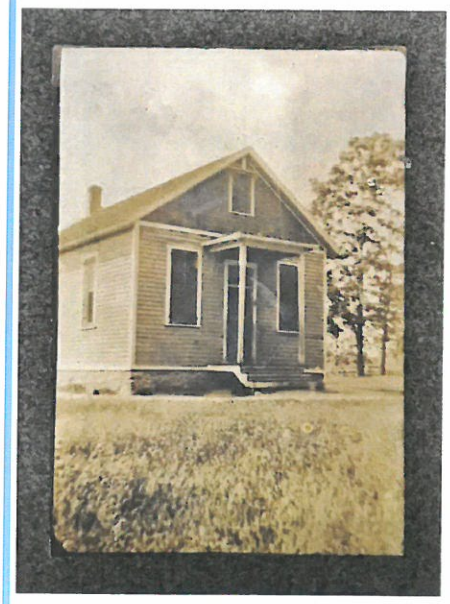
By the end of the war Swartwout became interested in civil rights and government. In 1788 he became a delegate for the United States Constitutional Convention in Poughkeepsie, New York. but voted against the document because he thought it needed the Bill of Rights. He also served as a New York State Assemblyman and State Senator, the latter for 12 years. In 1824, at 90 years old, he rode on horseback to Lafayette's banquet on Market Street in the city of Poughkeepsie and was his guest of honor being seated to Lafayette's right. On February 16th, 1827 Jacobus Swartwout passed away at age 93, leaving a large legacy behind.



THE BEACON NEWS, THURSDAY, JULY 7, 1938

Poughkeepsie PO Mural Depicts 1788 Convention

The commercial center of the hamlet was centered around a short strip on Route 82 between Lomala in the Town of Fishkill and the bridge at the Sprout Creek. Here the hamlet boasted some stores, light brick manufacturing due to the swampy mud nearby, a blacksmith shop, the Swartwout family burial ground, and a district school (No. 7). The remainder of hamlet stretches to the west up "Moccasin Hill" from Pine Ridge Drive to Cedar Hill Road, once Swartwout's property, and which was later owned by the VanVoorhis family. Approximately 10 homes were located in Swartwoutville in 1867.



Swartwout School

Wappingers District No. 7

Photo Courtesy of Joey Cavaccini

Continued on page 4

History of Swartwoutville and its Founding Settler continued

With the invention of the automobile, many of the hamlets within the Town of Wappinger lost their purpose and areas such as Swartwoutville lost its commercial corridor. Swartwoutville became a farming community and hunting ground until the 1950s when the Cedar Hill - Pine Ridge Civic Association was formed to develop the Moccasin Hill part of the hamlet. By 1940, the Wappinger District School No. 7 at Swartwoutville was auctioned off by the Wappingers Central School District and the building was modified to later become Brenner's Ice Cream and finally Handshakes Bar & Grill on Route 82 in the Town of Wappinger.

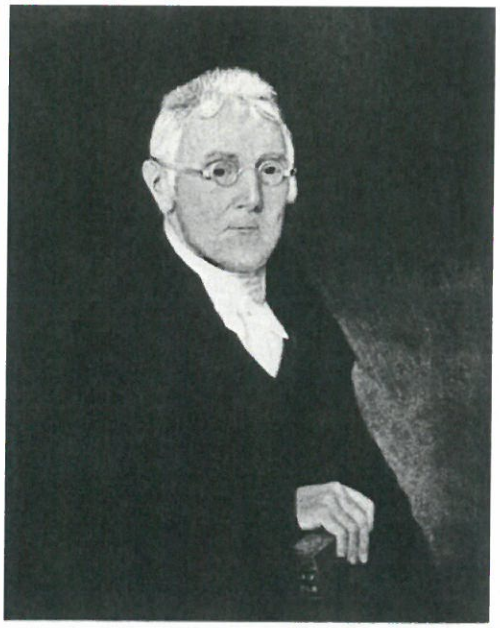
The Forgotten Wappinger Hamlet of Swartwoutville was officially recognized by the Town of Wappinger in 2019 with gateway signs marking the entrances to its once radiant commercial district.

Description

Portrait of Ann Seward Swartwout (1778-1868). Daughter of Rev. William Seward (1747-1822), who bought "Old Hundred" in New Hackensack c. 1795. Ann married Jacobus Swartwout (1770 -1846), son of General Swartwout. Sister of William & of Philander, who built a large brick house, "Seward Place," c. 1835, where this painting hung for many years.

Description

Portrait of Mr. & Mrs. James A. Seward & family, of New Hackensack.



THE HON. JACOBUS SWARTWOUT, STATE SENATOR, 1784-1795.

Description

The Honorable Jacobus Swartwout, State Senator, 1784-1795.

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Families of Swartwoutville circa 1860-1900

Ann Seward Swartwout:

Ann was the daughter of James Seward, New Hackensack. She married Jacobus I. Swartwout, son of General Swartwout, in 1801.She died a widow in 1868 at age 88. Remaining childless, she was the last of the Swartwout family to live in the family home. She is buried at Hopewell Reformed Church Cemetery.

General Theodorus Annan:

Daniel Annan of Baskenridge, New Jersey, settled in Dutchess County in1770. He purchased a large tract of land in Matteawan in 1790. His first marriage was to Lavinia Van Wyck, granddaughter of Judge Theodorus VanWyck of Johnsville (Wiccopee) and daughter of Lt. William Van Wyck. They had several children, including a son born in 1785, Theodorus William Annan. Theodorus became a Lieutenant in the War of 1812, and a Major, Colonel and Brigadier General in the State Militia. He was a staunch Whig and was nominated several times to the State Assembly. General Annan was an Elder and Trustee of the First Presbyterian Church of Fishkill. He married Lucia Myrick of Putnam County and lived in a home in Swartwoutville, located near the intersection of what is now known as NYS Rte. 82 and All Angels Hill Road. They had two children, Anna Augusta (1837-1901) and John (1841-1920).

John and Anna Augusta Annan: The two siblings never married and lived in the family home until foreclosure in 1900. John's occupation was mentioned alternately as farmer, or gentleman. Augusta, or "Gussie" as she preferred to be known, appeared to be quite a character. In newspaper articles dated December 1900, Gussie fought to stay in her home, despite the fact that the bank sold the property to William Tompkins due to foreclosure. Her brother had failed to make the mortgage payments. Gussie made threats towards her brother, writing that "she would cut off her brother's head and hurl it through the window of the savings bank". In letters written to several other parties, she "threatened to kill, burn the buildings, call down the wrath of God on the heads of those described enemies". Miss Annan was arrested and said "My hands and my mouth are mine to do with what I will and I propose to do it". She also said that she wrote to Governor Roosevelt on the subject. She was examined by two doctors and was admitted to Hudson River State Hospital, only to have several witnesses, including her brother, speak up for her several days later, asking for her release. Her brother stated that he had no fear of decapitation. It appears she was released, as an obituary in February 1901 said that she died of pneumonia in her home at Swartwoutville. She was 64. John moved to Poughkeepsie and lived there until his death in 1920.

Families of Swartwoutville circa 1860-1900 —continued from page 6

Hiram Manning:

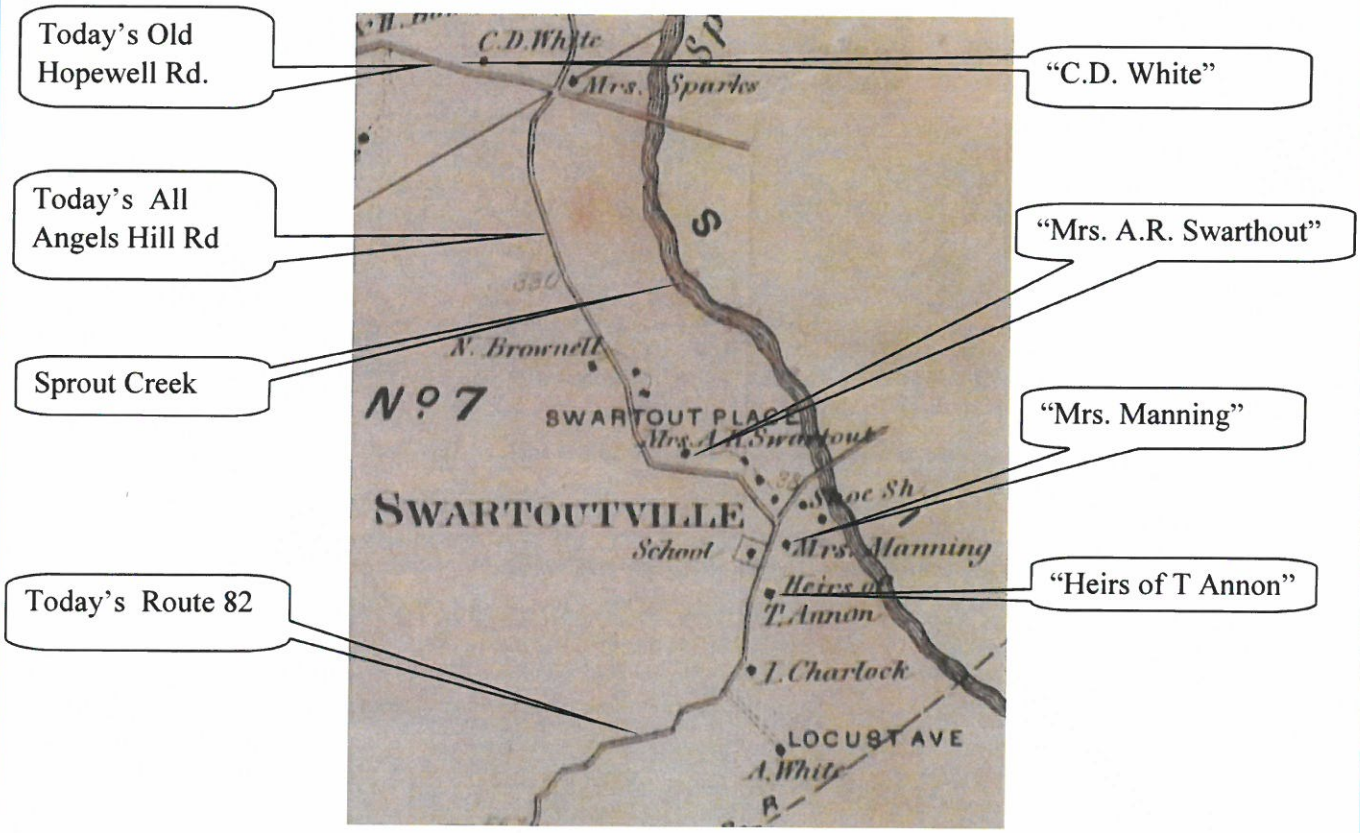
Born in the Town of Clinton, Hiram settled in the Swartwoutville hamlet and became the resident shoemaker and a farmer. He was a neighbor to the Annans.

Charles White, George White:

"White's Corner" located at Old Hopewell Road and All Angels Hill Road. Both were farmers. Charles' occupation was listed as a merchant in the 1860 census, and a painter in 1892.

Jennie Flagler:

Jennie's parents were John and Elizabeth and they had a farm. Jennie was born in 1860, and in the 1880 census, her occupation was teacher. I have not been able to verify if she taught at the Swartwoutville school, but she and her family lived very close to the school.



William Baxter, M.D.

William Baxter was born in Delhi, Delaware County, NY to Levi and Mary Washburn Baxter February 9, 1805. He was the grandson of a Revolutionary War Patriot, Levi Baxter, from Hartford County, CT. William attended both Hamilton and Union Colleges, and graduated from Union in 1828. He studied under physician Henry Mitchell, of Chenango County, and attended the College of Physicians and Surgeons in New York City. Mr. Baxter received the degree of M.D. in April 1831 and was appointed the first resident physician of New York Lying-in-Asylum.

William (the son) and his wife, Rowena. Photo courtesy of Ancestry .com

In April 1936 he married Mary Tanner of Wappingers Falls, moving permanently to the Village in 1938 where he opened his practice of medicine. Dr. Baxter became a believer and practitioner of Homoeopathy. Homoeopathy is the belief that the body can cure itself with minute doses of a remedy that, with larger doses in a healthy person, would produce symptoms similar to those of the disease. He was made a member of the Institute of Homeopathy in Boston June, 1847. He was also a member of the Dutchess County and New York State Homoeopathic Medical Societies.

William and Mary had four children: Helen Frances (1843-1920), William (1848-1929), Reuben Tanner (1834-1903) and Levi (1846-1902). William (the son) was also an M.D. and a practitioner of homoeopathy medicine. He married Rowena Warhurst at Zion Episcopal Church on November 1, 1873. They had four children: George, William, Rowena and Elizabeth. George married Jane Amelia Travis, Reuben married Catherine Dean and Levi married Iantha Moore. George had a general store located at East Main and Remsen Avenue.

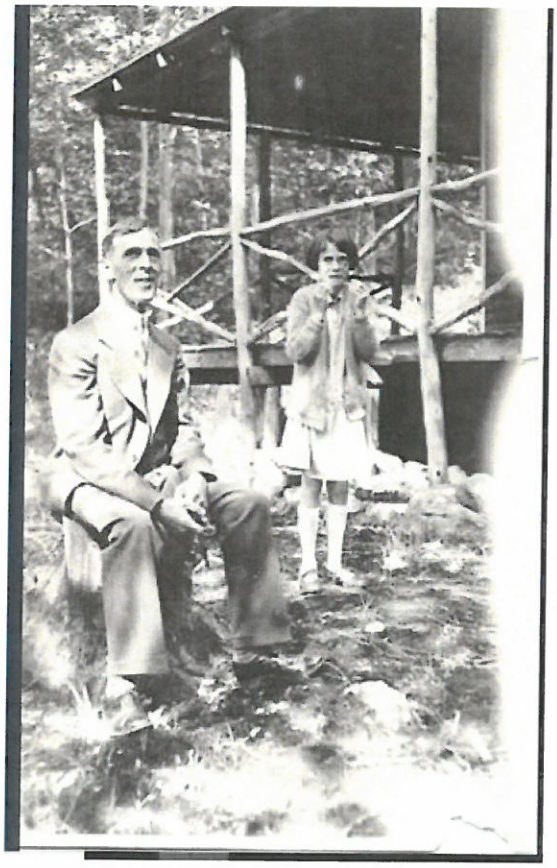
Dr. Baxter (senior) became ill with kidney disease in 1873 and succumbed to the illness July 3, 1875. He and his wife are buried at Wappingers Rural Cemetery.

This Homeopathic Medical Kit belonged to Dr. William Baxter, and was recently donated to the Historical Society by his family.

Dr. William Baxter and wife, Rowena Warhurst Baxter

WAPPINGERS HISTORICAL SOCIETY UPCOMING DATES AND EVENTS TO REMEMBER

- Homestead Tours—Second Sunday of each Month: April 14, May 19, June 9, plus a bonus day of June 8 for the Festival at the Falls from 1:00 to 4:00
- Spirit of Mesier; June 14th at the Homestead
- Member Picnic; July 11th at the Homestead
- Ice Cream Social; August 8th at the Homestead
- Joey Cavaccini, Wappinger Town Historian; *A History of Wappinger* coming in September, location and exact date TBD
- Taste of History coming October 11th at the Homestead
- Holiday Party; December, location and exact date TBD

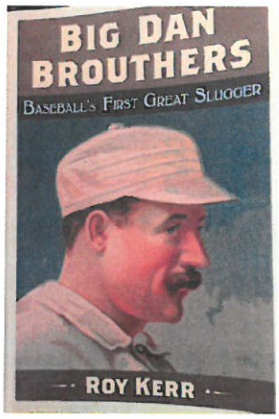


George Baxter with daughter, Ruth (son and granddaughter of Dr. William Baxter)

We are happy to announce that we now have the ability to take all major Credit Cards in the Homestead Gift Shop.

In addition to the bumper sticker featured to the right, we have added additional souvenirs for our younger visitors, including reproduction arrow heads and a Story Book about a young Native American. We have also stocked up on our favorite local interest books, including all of Tony Musso's *Hidden Treasures of the Hudson Valley* series. Please stop in to see our updated Gift Shop!

Check out what's new at the Mesier Homestead and Museum gift shop! Show your pride in Wappingers Falls with a "WF" bumper sticker! Available on Sunday, April 14th in our gift shop, which is open during the tour hours of 1pm-4pm. Stickers are $3 each and measure 4" x 2 ½".



Kick off the 2019 Baseball Season with a fascinating read of *Big Dan Brouthers, Baseball's First Great Slugger*. This Hall of Frame great and his family called Wappingers Falls home. Roy Kerr's book on the "greatest Batsman in the Country" not only is a terrific story of Big Dan's baseball achievement, but tell a detailed look at this Comnmunity minded member of our area. Pick up a copy of this book in our Gift Shop.

We welcome our new Administrative Assistant, Christina Ungar

The Board of Trustees unanimously agreed in January to create a paid position within the Historical Society. Out of dozens of applications, we found Christina to be a *perfect* fit for this position!.

Christina has many years of experience in marketing and promotion through her past employment and volunteer work. She is passionate about the beauty and history of our region, having been a volunteer gardener on Bannerman's Island, an Interpreter Guide for the Formal Gardens at the Vanderbilt Mansion, and as an active volunteer with Duchess Tourism.

Christina is working to increase the public's awareness of the Mesier Homestead, its tours and special events, as well as the mission of the Wappingers Historical Society. She plans to be proactive in community outreach in an effort to increase our membership and volunteers.

Have a portion of your Amazon orders donated by Amazon to Wappingers Historical Society!

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Make your next Amazon order through their AmazonSmile site. When first visiting AmazonSmile, customers are prompted to select a charitable organization . In order to browse or shop at AmazonSmile, customers must first select a charitable organization. For eligible purchases at AmazonSmile, the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price to the customer's selected charitable organization.

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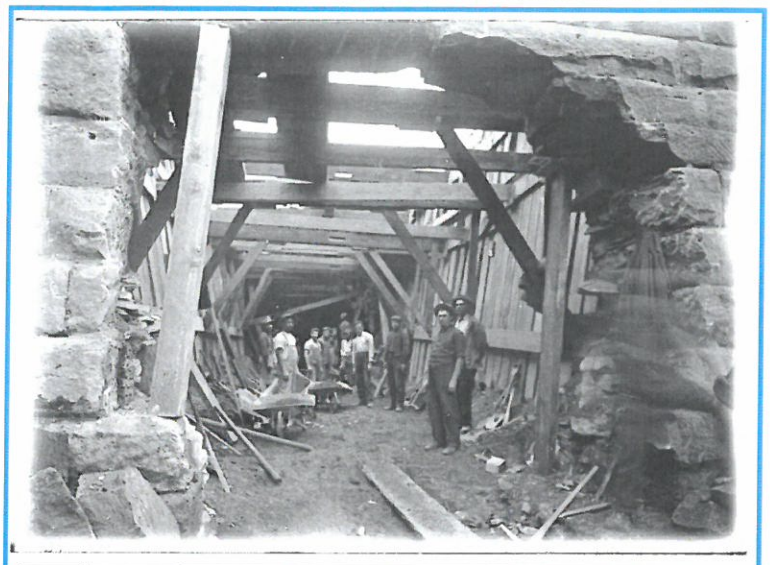

Building the Stone Bridge at the foot of East Main Street in the Village of Wappingers Falls

Docent & Greeter Team Training Days

Are you interested in sharing your love of the Mesier Homestead with visitors, but are not quite sure how to go about it? We've made it easy for you!

Please join me for training sessions for tour guides and greeters – you'll be provided with a standardized script for tours and we'll view the Homestead together during the training sessions. Greeter sessions will include a brief tour of the Homestead as well. Several training sessions are planned. **Docent/tour guide sessions on April 30th at 11am -or- May 9th at 2:00pm;**

Greeter sessions on May 2nd at 2pm -or- May 7th at 11am. As a tour guide or greeter you will meet many interesting people and help promote Mesier Homestead and the fascinating history

of our village and town. Public tours typically take place the 2nd Sunday of the month from 1pm-4pm. If you are interested in helping us with tours and would like to sign up for a training session,

please send Christina Ungar a note with your name and telephone number: christinaungar@wappingershistorical.org, or you may call 845-632-1281 and leave a phone message.

Zion Church, decorated for Easter

Visit us at:

www.wappingershistoricalsociety.org

Contact us at:

info@wappingershistoricalsociety.org

Join us on Facebook - Search for Wappingers Historical Society from your id and then

Old postcard, postmarked April 16, 1908

Receiving Hardcopy of *The Homestead Chronicle*

Many of our readers prefer receiving our newsletter in electronic form. Without the cost of hardcopies, envelopes and stamps, we save money that can be used for other things at the Society.

For Members that do not have access to email or a computer, Per Jensen, a longtime member of the Society, produces and mails hardcopies of the Newsletter to these members as one of his many donations to the Society (Thanks again Per!)

We would, however, like to make the Newsletter available to any of our Members and friends that prefer that media. If you would like to receive the Newsletter in hardcopy form each quarter, please drop us a note (Wappingers Historical Society, PO Box 174, Wappingers Falls, NY) and enclose a check for $5.00 (annual) to cover our additional costs of providing this service.

All photos are from the Wappingers Historical Society Collection unless otherwise noted.

The Spirit of Mesier

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ANNUAL DUES: _____ INDIVIDUAL MEMBER ~ $20.00

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_____ LIFETIME MEMBER ~ $500.00 _____ BENEFACTOR ~ $1,000.00

You will receive a confirmation membership card upon processing of your application.
We are a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. Donations are tax deductible.

Website: www.WappingersHistoricalSociety.org Contact us at: Info@wappingershistoricalsociety.org