

# THE HOMESTEAD CHRONICLE

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Summer 2020



Established 1967

P.O. Box 174  
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## HOMESTEAD CHRONICLE

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## President's Message

Hi everyone,

I hope this finds you well and healthy. It has been a long, hard 4 months and to me, it feels like forever since we were open at Mesier. Our biggest challenge facing us is to stay engaged with one another. We haven't been able to open for tours, have our speaker series, or our fun member events – however, we have not been idle. Thanks to our neighbor Charlie Ferry, we now have a 360 virtual tour of Mesier Homestead! So, if you are feeling nostalgic or just plain miss coming to visit you can now do it from your easy chair. Visit the Wappinger Historical Society website and click on 360 Virtual Tour from our homepage and “voila” – you are there. We are so excited to have this new option and hope it whets your appetite to come in and learn more about our history.

According to the state guidelines, since we are now in Phase 4, museums will be able to reopen with limited capacity. We will be starting our new *Signature Experience* tours of Mesier Homestead – private, by reservation, customized by the guest based on what they want to spend time looking at and learning more about. It will be limited to 4 guests at a time, and everyone will, of course, wear a mask and socially distance. Kids, especially, will be able to engage and discover all the cool things we have in the Homestead!

Our “bring-your-own” member picnic will be in Mesier Park on July 29 at 6PM. We hope you will join us -wearing a mask and making sure your group is socially distancing from the next group. Bryan Lammers will entertain us with his great repertoire from the gazebo. More information to follow.

Times they are a-changing but I remain hopeful and optimistic as we all try to navigate this uncharted territory. Stay safe and enjoy the summer!

*Beth Devine*

## Robert J. Stuart, Industrialist

The Eagle Foundry was built in 1852, owned by Nicholas Disbrow and Edward Goring. In 1869, a Mr. Halliwell, employed at the Dutchess Print Works, made a financial investment in the company and the name was changed to Disbrow and Halliwell. It was located on the north side of what is now known as East Main Street, adjacent to the Sweet-Orr Factory in the Village of Wappingers Falls. According to "The Birth and Growth of an Old Village" by Edgar Popper, the Foundry made iron and brass castings for agricultural equipment, Disbrow water pumps, as well as legs and supports for school desks. In 1873, a fire broke out at the Foundry, and all was a total loss. The owners decided to rebuild and moved the Foundry two miles down the east side of the Wappinger Creek, just above the drawbridge at New Hamburg. Around 1886, Robert J. Stuart purchased the Foundry and renamed it RJ Stuart's Foundry and Machine Works. It was alternately known as RJ & TH Stuart Foundry. The Foundry was located on Creek Road in the Town of Wappinger, but many references were made to it being located in New Hamburg. This was probably due to the fact that the owner, RJ Stuart, and his brother, TH Stuart, both lived in New Hamburg at the time of purchase and into the 1890's.

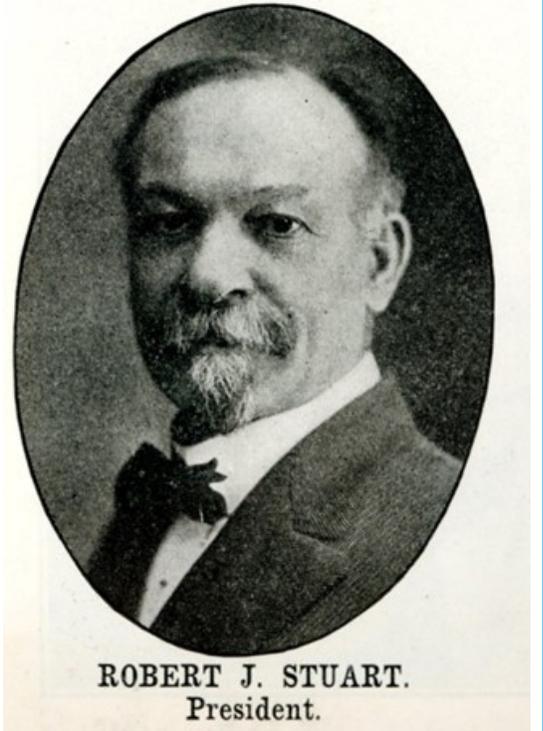


Detail from an 1891 Town of Wappinger Map

## Robert J. Stuart, Industrialist (Cont'd)

### **An Immigrant from Ireland**

Robert James Stuart was born in Darkley, County Armagh, Ireland in 1849. He immigrated to America on the ship "Albion" with parents William and Sarah and his brother Nathaniel in 1862. Siblings Emily and Thomas were born later in New York City. The family eventually settled in Westport, Connecticut where Robert worked as a machinist. He married English-born Esther Toburn in 1881. They made their home in New Hamburg initially, moving to Delavergne Avenue in the latter part of the 1890's. Mr. Stuart was an elder at the First Presbyterian Church in Hughsonville. After the death of his wife in 1909, Robert married Etta Barlow, a school teacher from New Hamburg. Shortly thereafter, they built a home at 40 South Hamilton Street, in the City of Poughkeepsie. They, along with his sister Emily, took a month's long trip to the Holy Land in 1912 as noted in the Daily Eagle. Robert held a directorship for The Merchant's National Bank of Poughkeepsie from 1916-1919 and was a member of the Stuart Drug Company of Cherry Street. He obtained US Patents for a shaft coupling and a coat holder.



From a pamphlet  
*Courtesy of David Turner*

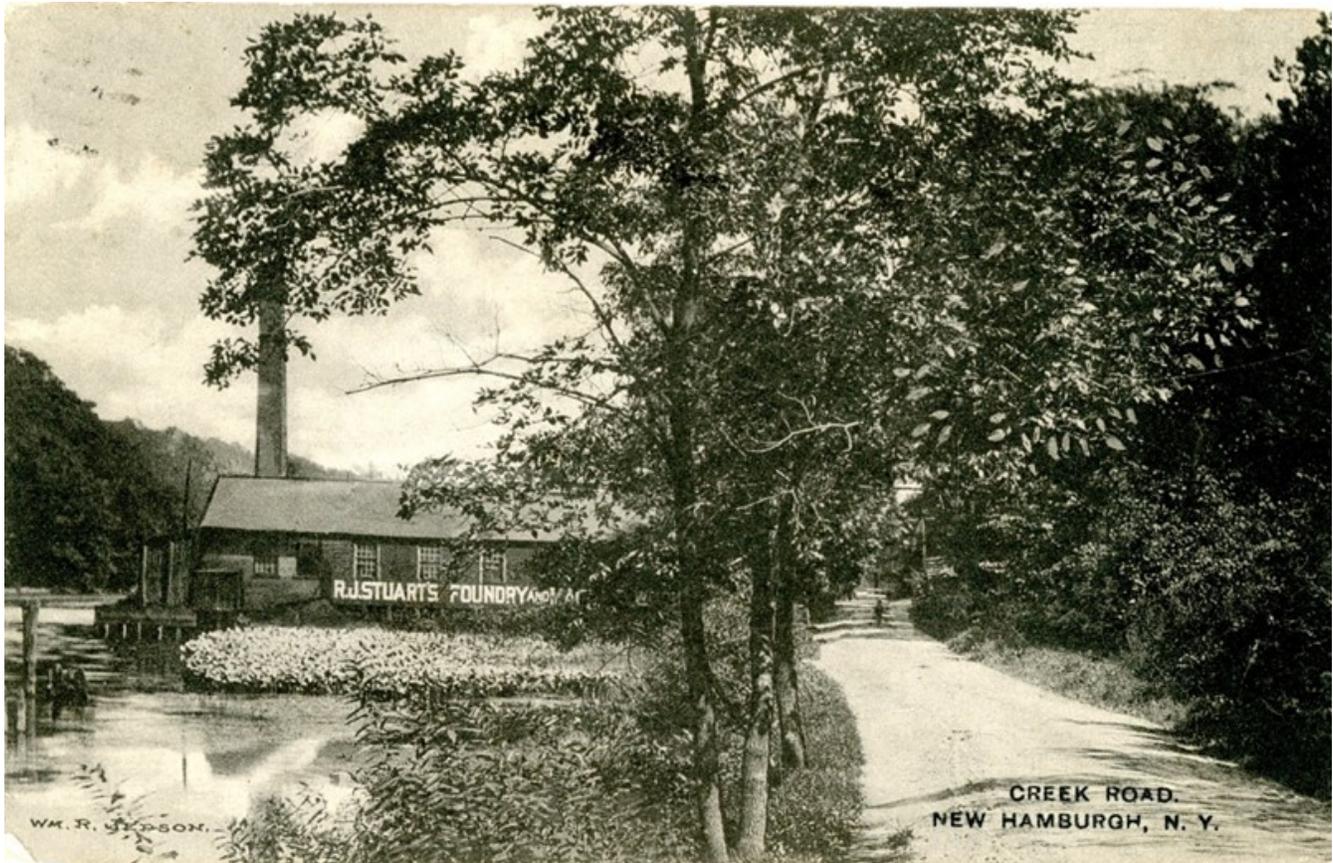
### **The RJ Stuart Foundry**

Mr. Stuart's initial venture in Dutchess County was purchasing the Disbrow and Halliwell Foundry. He advertised in the Poughkeepsie Daily Eagle regularly in 1887, the ads reading, "R.J. Stuart's Foundry and Machine Works New Hamburg, New York" "Iron and Brass Castings" "Mowing Machines Repaired and Guards Sharpened". Robert named himself President of the Foundry, and gave his brother Thomas, who also lived in New Hamburg, the titles of Secretary and Treasurer.

The area around the Foundry, along the Hughsonville-New Hamburg Road from the bridge up to the Reese Estate, was known as Stuartville and Stuartville Road. The Foundry employed engineers and moulders, most of the men living in or around Stuartville, Marlorville and New Hamburg. A few homes were built in Stuartville to house the workers.

## Robert J. Stuart, Industrialist (Cont'd)

In 1893, according to the Poughkeepsie Daily Eagle, “Mr. RJ Stuart is erecting a 16 room dwelling in the Hughsonville Road near the Foundry. Close by, he is digging a reservoir 24’ in diameter and 8’ deep, to supply water to the Foundry, in case of fire. The reservoir is in a bank above the building, thus affording satisfactory pressure”. In January 1895 a “fire broke out at the Stuart Foundry in New Hamburg, but was easily extinguished by the excellent fire equipment of the establishment”. In the history of the Foundry, few injuries were ever reported in the newspaper, but a noteworthy injury was that Stuart crushed his thumb. Burns were always a danger from the hot metal, and a few were reported.



**RJ Stuart's Foundry**

*Postcard, Courtesy of David Turner*

In 1918, a labor dispute between the moulders and management saw them walk out of their job for one week. A pay raise of \$1.00 a day was initially refused by management. The Stuart brothers agreed to grant the raise, increasing pay to \$5.50/day. It was noted in the Daily Eagle that other firms in Poughkeepsie were having similar demands made on them and it was agreed by all companies to give into the demands of the workers. The article stated “the present demand was presented in a manner that did not disrupt the existing good feeling in any way”.

## Robert J. Stuart, Industrialist (Cont'd)

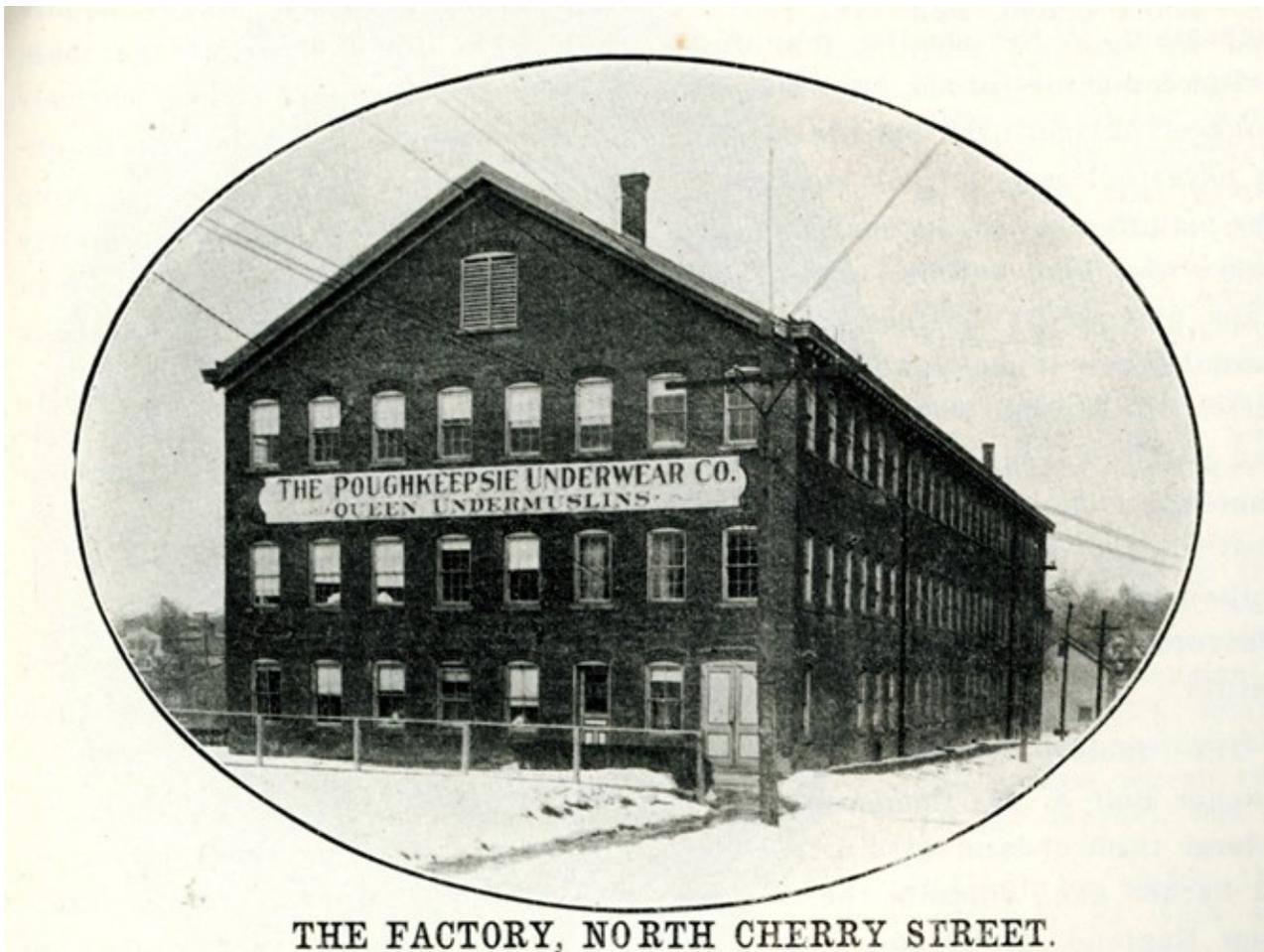
A pamphlet from the Company states (regarding Mr. McLean) “his first interest is the promotion of the business, but next to that is the improving of the working conditions of the employees. All questions of differences are talked over between employer and employee and an amicable agreement reached. To this together with the delightful surroundings and the light, easy work is due to the class of high grade, self-respecting young women operators employed in this factory”.

The trade mark of the goods,



is placed on every garment, and every garment bears the indorsement of the Consumers' League, which is the absolute guarantee of cleanliness and freedom from sweatshop conditions.

The Factory grounds were well tended with a privet hedge, flower gardens and a tennis court for the women to use for exercise.



THE FACTORY, NORTH CHERRY STREET.

**Poughkeepsie Underwear Co., Queen Undermuslins**

*From a Pamphlet, Courtesy of David Turner*

This building today, known as the Poughkeepsie Underwear Factory, houses a coffee house and cafe, open kitchen, conference spaces and apartments and is owned by Hudson River Housing.

## **Robert J. Stuart, Industrialist (Cont'd)**

Mr. Stuart sold the Foundry and land, the area known as Stuartville, to W. Willis Reese of Manhattan in July 1923. The land consisted of several hundred feet along the Wappinger Creek as well as the land from the drawbridge to the Reese Estate. It was said in the Poughkeepsie Eagle News (regarding Mr. Reese) “a few months previous he purchased three houses in Stuartville and he owns all the property on both sides of the road from Hughsonville to the drawbridge with the exception of the Swords Property” (see map inset). The purchase included “a machine shop, battery storage building, casting room, cupolas, sheds, and storage rooms. WW Reese will demolish all. Barns, a warehouse and dwellings on New Hamburg to Hughsonville Road are included in the sale.”

### **Real Estate Owner**

Mr. Stuart owned and rented out three buildings in New Hamburg. During the thirty odd years that he owned the buildings, he rented a store front, at the corner of Railroad Avenue and Main Street, which did business as a drug store. He also rented a building known as Meyer Hall, and its proprietor, John B. Fleming, used it and the garage behind it as a rag shop.

Meyer Hall, in 1900 and before the rag business, was the site of scandal and misfortune to the residents of New Hamburg. Mr. Theodore Deibner, a pocketbook manufacturer, rented the Hall in August from RJ Stuart. He advertised for help, and enticed many men to bring themselves and their families from a Jersey City pocketbook factory to work for him. Deibner went to New York City to drum up investors. He rented a large house for his wife and family and boarded some of the new hires there as well. It is said that his checks to the workers seemed to come slow, and it continued for six weeks before it was suddenly noticed that he and his family had vanished. According to the paper “Mr. Stuart seems to be the heaviest loser by the shutting down of the plant, and the actions of Deibner. The employees have gone away, hoping they will find Diebner and bring him to justice.” It appears he went back to either Brooklyn or Jersey City where he continued to manufacture pocketbooks. [*Ed. note-I could not find out if “justice” was ever served.*]

### **Poughkeepsie Underwear Company**

Robert Stuart and JC McLean founded The Poughkeepsie Underwear Company, which was incorporated in 1899. The original factory was located on Mill Street in the City of Poughkeepsie, but was quickly outgrown and moved to 40 North Cherry Street in the same city. It produced high quality muslin underwear for women and children. Mr. Stuart was named President, FA Conklin Vice-President and JE McLean Treasurer and Secretary. An ad printed in the Poughkeepsie Daily Eagle in 1906 sought help “Operators Wanted. We require fifty additional operators. The work is light and easily learned. Experienced girls can earn from \$8 to \$12 per week. We guarantee steady work throughout the year. A few beginners will be taught.”

## Robert J. Stuart, Entrepreneur (Cont'd)

### The 1920's

In May of 1920, Stuart was driving his car on South Road and collided with a motorcyclist, causing the man to lose his right leg. Charles Speckenbach was awarded \$6500 in damages.

He attempted to sell a building, formerly the Poughkeepsie Cutlery Company on the Underwear Company property, in August of 1923 to AG Papastrat, who planned to open the Poughkeepsie Ice Cream Company. It was discovered that the title had been given to his wife in a manner that was not legal, and the sale was cancelled. Mr. Papastrat was refunded his \$1000 deposit. It was mentioned that Mr. Stuart was beginning to face financial difficulties, as the Underwear Company was failing. The Underwear Company's building was assessed for \$33,000 in 1923. At that time, Mr. Stuart began divesting himself of his properties and belongings. As mentioned above regarding the Foundry, the year 1923 was the year it was sold to Mr. Reese. In January 1924, Mr. Stuart's home on South Hamilton Street was sold for \$25,000. It was described as "a large brick residence and a garage on the site, which is one of the most desirable on the south side". The ad to the right is regarding an auction of their personal household items.

Mr. and Mrs. Stuart moved to 10 Forbus Street, where, on February 19, 1925, Robert Stuart succumbed to pneumonia. It was said in his obituary that "he retired from business about one year ago and was a local druggist, being a member of the Stuart Drug Company of Cherry Street". Mrs. Etta Stuart and Mr. Thomas H. Stuart were named executors of his estate. An auction was held on Thursday, February 10, 1927. The North Cherry Street factory, a 3 story building, and a 1 story building in the back, were auctioned and sold to Joseph Perlmutter, Michael Weiss, and Isadore Bloch for \$35,000. RW Stuart, a nephew, purchased the drug store in New Hamburg for \$4,250, Meyer Hall "the rag shop" for \$1,975 along with the barn and garage for \$550.



**WILSON'S AUCTIONS**  
**WILSON'S AUCTIONS**

### Auction of Furniture

Having sold my house I will sell at auction at 40 So. Hamilton Street

## Thursday, May 1st

at 10 a. m. daylight saving household furniture partly as follows: Dining room suit, dark oak dining table and china closet, light oak parlor suit, chairs, bookcases, one walnut bedroom suit, 2 oak bedroom suits, one oak chiffonier, one birch chiffonier, two white enamel bedsteads, springs, mattresses, dresser, one bed couch, two trunks, clocks, pictures, three marble top stands, carpets, rugs, dishes, screens, library table, stone jars, fruit jars, portieres, lace curtains, medicine cabinet, hall settee, gas lamp, gas stove, sewing machine, lawn mower, garden tools, feather beds, pillows.

ROBERT J. STUART.  
4Apr18

Ad, appearing in the Poughkeepsie Daily Eagle in 1924

## **Robert J. Stuart, Entrepreneur (Cont'd)**

### ***An Interesting Local Aside***

In August 1927, Henry Morgenthau Jr., of Wiccopee, purchased the Underwear Factory building. He owned the publication *American Agriculturist*, and planned to “move the mechanical, editorial and circulation departments to this city, bringing here about 25 employees”. “Mr. Morgenthau is one of the foremost advocates of scientific farming and dairying in the United States and has a large farm in Wiccopee”. Henry Morgenthau was a close friend of Franklin D. Roosevelt, and was appointed to many positions by Roosevelt, culminating in his appointment to Secretary of the Treasury, in which he served for most of Roosevelt’s presidency. Robert Morgenthau, one of his children, served as New York County District Attorney from 1975-2009. He lived on the family farm in Wiccopee, which is now known as Fishkill Farms. The farm transferred to his son, Joshua, in 2019, when he passed on at the age of 99.

### **The Franny Reese Victorian Fan Collection**

The Wappingers Historical Society is extremely grateful to Alison Spear and Alex Reese, who graciously donated nine beautiful ladies’ fans belonging to the late Franny Reese. We have displayed them in the Homestead and we look forward to the day that we can be together indoors and properly unveil them to our members and friends.



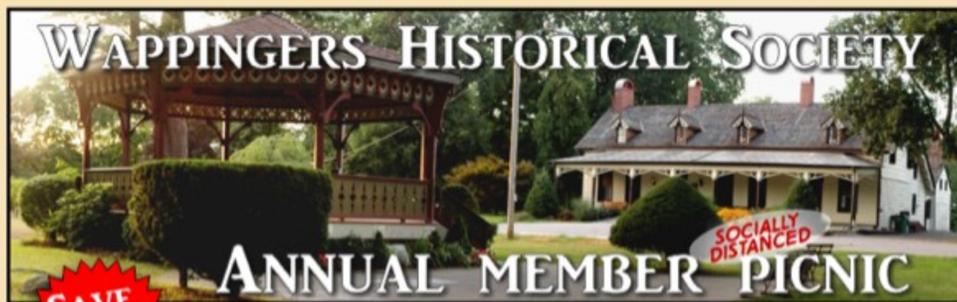
**“Another Fight at the Halfway House”**



Stock Photo

Saturday night another brutal fight occurred at the notorious “Halfway House”, now conducted by John Tait, with James Dyson as barkeeper, on the New Hamburg Road. During its progress an employee of the Stuart foundry was struck on the head with a beer bottle hurled by Patrick Laffin, and was so seriously injured that he had to be brought to Vassar Hospital for treatment. Laffin is the soul of amiability when sober, but is a fiend when filled with Tait’s liquor. There will be more of these affairs at intervals, and then next year the Wappinger excise board will renew Tait’s license, and so on, ad infinitum.

*Editor’s Note: John Tait and James Dyson were residents of Marlerville. In 1892, according to the NYS Census, both men were 43 years old and probably lived in a multifamily home. James was single. John was married to Ann, and had 4 children. James’ work was saloon keeper, and John was a foundry man. John Tait’s house, according to the 1891 map, was near the corner of Marlerville Road and Creek Road. We don’t know where on the New Hamburg Road the Bar was located— If you do, let us know!!*



Please consider purchasing your picnic dinner from one of our local restaurants. County Fare, Mama Musetti’s and Café con Leche will each have a special offering the day of the picnic for members of the Wappingers Historical Society. Please call them one day ahead to reserve your dinner.

**SAVE THE DATE!**

WEDNESDAY,  
JULY 29, 6 PM  
MESIER PARK  
(RAIN DATE 8/5/20)

WEAR A MASK.  
BRING A CHAIR AND  
YOUR OWN PICNIC DINNER

(OR BETTER YET ORDER TAKEOUT  
FROM ONE OF OUR LOCAL RESTAURANTS )

ENJOY THE MUSIC OF BRYAN LAMMERS

## James Marlor

James Marlor was born at Gibraltar Farms, Oldham, England in 1834. He arrived in the United States in 1857 and settled in New Hamburg.

James married Elizabeth “Lulu” Downing, daughter of Edward and Jane Downing, in 1860. During the early days of their marriage, they lived with Jane’s family in New Hamburg. In 1880, James and Elizabeth, according to the US Census, lived on Market Street in the Village of Wappingers Falls. They had three children: Louisa, Edward M. and Edith. James was a bookkeeper at Dutchess Print Works.

The Marlor family employed servants to assist their household. Twenty year old Ellen Potter, from Ireland, worked in this capacity, as noted on the 1892 NYS Census. In the 1900 US Census, Annie McDonald, 25 years old, was also employed in this position.

## The Wappinger Chronicle

In July of 1891, it was reported in “The Register Pine Plains” that Gates and Fitzgerald sold The (Wappinger) Chronicle to James Marlor. “The Chronicle has been a good paper under its late management, but judging from its valedictory, it has not been a financial success. Its new proprietor is a well-known and esteemed resident of Wappingers Falls and the general opinion is that he will succeed in making the paper a paying investment”. James worked at the Chronicle as its editor and printer. Mr. Marlor retained ownership of the Chronicle until 1903.



A section of The Chronicle from the Historical Society’s archives

## James Marlor (Cont'd)

### Marlorville Coal Yard

Mr. Marlor owned a coal yard on the Creek in Marlorville. Below is a newspaper article from April 1926 taken from the Poughkeepsie Eagle News:

#### *“Firms Angling for Creek Land”*

*“The docks have been used to supply the Wappingers coal trade for more than a half century and were formerly owned by the late James Marlor, who sold his coal business to the Millard Company. The Millard Company recently discontinued using the Marlorville property and transferred its coal business to New Hamburg where deep water facilities are available.”*

This coal yard was located on Creek Road north of the RJ Stuart Foundry, opposite Marlorville Road. *Note: See the map in the article on RJ Stuart to refer to the location of the coal yard.*



Looking north from the New Hamburg Bridge- RJ Stuart's Foundry is on the right; the coal docks at Marlorville are seen beyond the Foundry in the center of the postcard.

***Postcard, courtesy of David Turner***

## James Marlor (Cont'd)

### “A Well Known Man”

On Christmas Day in 1907, James Marlor “completed a half century of continuous service” as chief bookkeeper of the Dutchess Print Works. Mr. Marlor had been in ill health for some months, and passed on December 27, 1907. He was remembered as a public spirited man who belonged to many fraternal organizations, such as the Wappingers Lodge, the Royal Arch Masons, and was Senior Warden, Knights of Temperance of Zion Church. He also served as a vestryman at Zion Episcopal Church and a trustee of the Grinnell Library Association.

### Marlorville

James Marlor put little Marlorville and Marlorville Road on the map. Hamilton Road, (its name is from the Hamilton family that settled there from Scotland) is also included in Marlorville. The coal docks were directly in front of Marlorville Road and Hamilton Road.

Looking as the NYS Census of 1892, the employment in Marlorville and Stuartville was pretty much evenly spread between factory work (the Print Works), foundry work, and surprisingly, gardeners. Adam Laub and Son owned greenhouses on Marlorville Road (as well as in Marlboro, across the Hudson). Their land was sold to W. Willis Reese in the 1920's, thus expanding Mr. Reese's estate to the north.

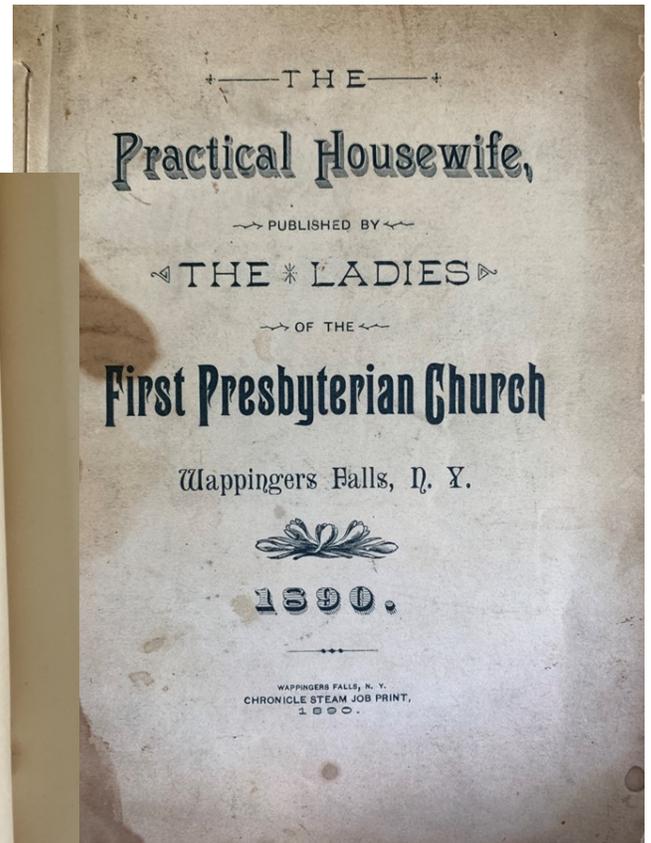
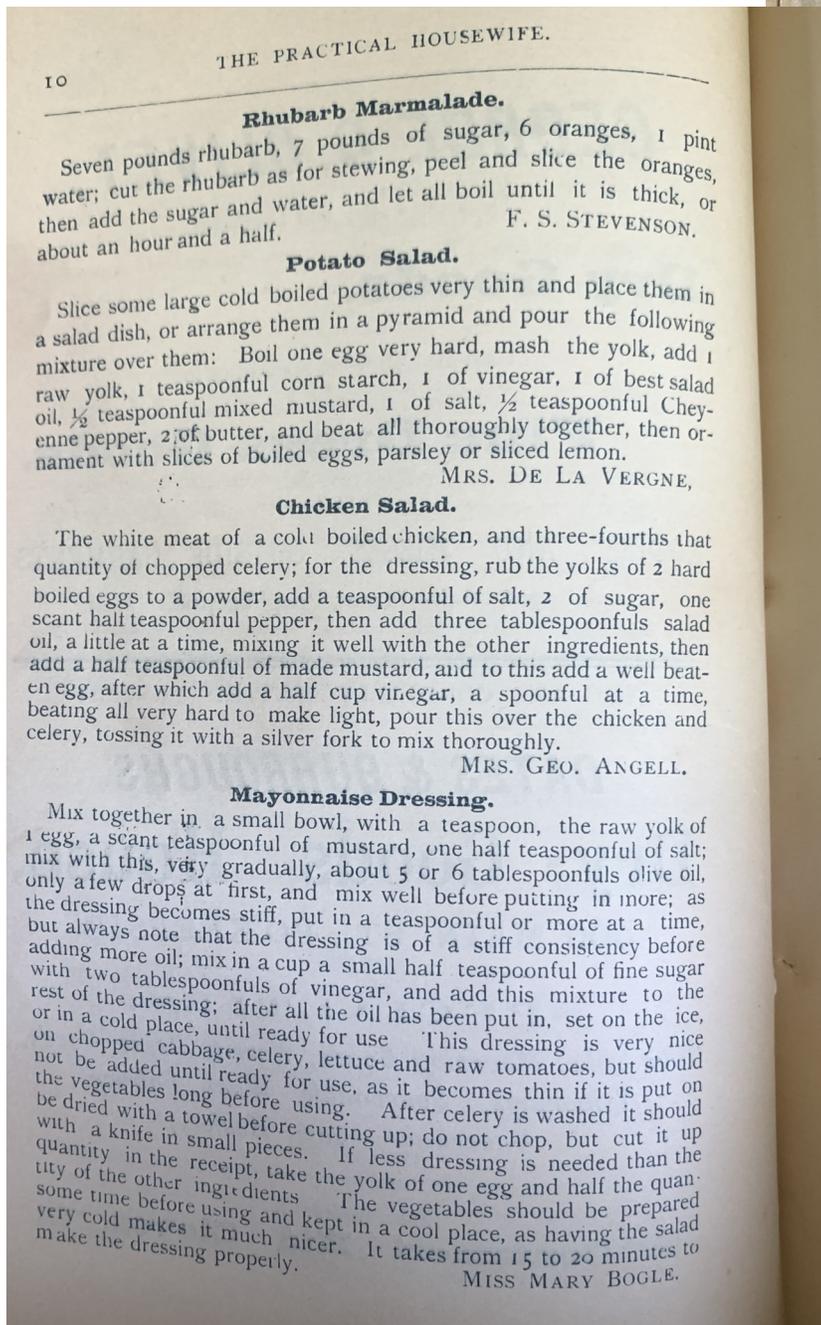
By 1900, most residents in the Marlorville/Stuartville area were first generation Americans. Their ancestors had travelled to the United States from northern Europe- Scotland, Ireland, England, Germany and Sweden.



*Photo is of shop on corner of current day route 9D and Marlorville Road.*

## The Practical Housewife Cookbook

The Practical Housewife was published in 1890, featuring recipes from the ladies of the First Presbyterian Church in Wappingers Falls. The Wappinger Chronicle printed the cookbook. The sixty page soft covered book was filled with recipes such as Hickory Jumbles, Date Pudding, Strawberry Shortcake, Staten Island Clam Chowder, and Pickled Peaches. Ads appear on most every other page, most likely to offset the cost of the printing. Store ads ranged from Poughkeepsie- M. Schwartz & Co., Luckey Platt & Co; New Hamburg -H. Vannostran, "Carriage and Sleigh Making"; to Wappingers Falls- Dr. C.J. Woods Dentist, South Avenue "gas always on hand and administered free of charge".



## **New Members**

The following people joined the Wappingers Historical Society in the second quarter of 2020. Thanks to all, and again welcome!

David Costello Family

Delia Engstrom

Florence McCafferty

Wendy & Doug McNeil

Fran & Phil Shepard (Lifetime)

Many thanks as well for the continued support of all our members who have renewed and/or upgraded their membership for the upcoming year in our current membership renewal campaign.

Your continued support is greatly appreciated!

## **Honorary Lifetime Members**

In June, the Trustees recognized the following people with Honorary Lifetime Memberships as a result of their significant and longtime support of the Wappinger Historical Society

Peter Brent

Anthony Musso

Alex Reese & Alison Spear

Visit us at:

**[www.wappingershistoricalsociety](http://www.wappingershistoricalsociety.org)**

**[y.org](http://www.wappingershistoricalsociety.org)**

Contact us at:

**[info@wappingershistoricalsociety.org](mailto:info@wappingershistoricalsociety.org)**

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wappingershistoricalsociety



**Thomas and Lena Hamilton out for a ride on their honeymoon to Rock City— 1914 . Thomas was born in Marlerville. He and Lena owned the house next to the present day “Nesting Doll” shop on New Hamburg Road in Hughsonville.**

## WAPPINGERS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

### UPCOMING EVENTS

All tours, meetings and Speaker Series events are **tentative**, due to the current public health crisis. Go to our website [www.wappingershistoricalsociety.org](http://www.wappingershistoricalsociety.org) for up-to-the- moment information. We are hoping to reschedule any cancelled events for later in the year.

Currently Scheduled:

October 11            “Taste of History” Tours 1-4 PM Mesier Homestead  
November 8            Tours of Mesier Homestead 1-4 PM  
November 28           Small Business Saturday Mesier Homestead Gift Shop  
December 6            Sinterklaas Celebration 1-4 PM Mesier Homestead  
December 11           Members’ Holiday Party  
December 13           Holiday Open House 1-4 PM Mesier Homestead  
December 8, 10, 15, 17- Morning/afternoon Holiday Open House

To Be Rescheduled:

- Speaker Series: Tony Musso “Setting the Record Straight”
- Speaker Series: Quercus Cooperage “Barrel Making”



**Beach Scene**  
**August 24, 1907**  
**T. Hummel is one**  
**of the people in**  
**this photo**

**Donated to**  
**Wappingers**  
**Historical Society**  
**by Mrs. Alice**  
**May Hummel**  
**Jaycox**

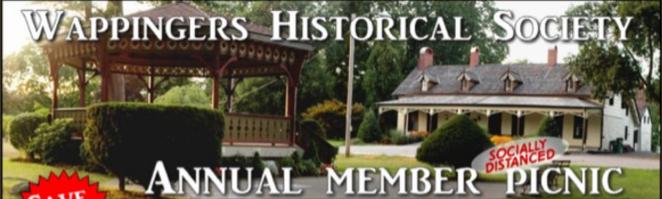
**Wappingers Historical Society**  
**PO Box 174**  
**Wappingers Falls, NY 12590**

Visit our website

*wappingershistoricalsociety.org*

To find out more about this special  
event

.



The poster features a photograph of a park with a gazebo and a house. The text 'WAPPINGERS HISTORICAL SOCIETY' is at the top. Below the photo, it says 'ANNUAL MEMBER PICNIC' and 'SOCIALLY DISTANCED'. A red starburst graphic says 'SAVE THE DATE!'. The date and location are listed as 'WEDNESDAY, JULY 29, 6 PM MESIER PARK (RAIN DATE 8/5/20)'. Instructions for attendees include wearing a mask, bringing a chair and picnic dinner, or ordering takeout. It also mentions 'ENJOY THE MUSIC OF BRYAN LAMMERS'.

**WAPPINGERS HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

**ANNUAL MEMBER PICNIC**

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