



DISCOVERING DOVER HISTORY

The Newsletter of the
Town of Dover Historical Society

Volume 1
Issue 1

Save the Date!!
Events, see page 4

Winter
2019

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Town Co-Historians:

Caroline Reichenberg
Valerie LaRobardier

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**Preserving
&
Sharing
Dover History
Since 1974**

**Incorporated as a
501(c)(3)**

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Welcome to Volume I, Issue 1 of the Town of Dover Historical Society Newsletter! It is the plan of the Historical society to publish this newsletter four times a year ... winter, spring, summer and fall. The issues will highlight past events and focus on future events of the Historical Society.

Our editor, Val LaRobardier, will be writing the newsletter. Should you have any suggestions for articles or questions, please feel free to contact her at valarobardier@gmail.com.

I hope that you enjoy this issue and look forward to the next one, sometime in May. If you have questions or comments, please contact me at alfranb@optonline.net.

Fran Braley
President, Town of Dover Historical Society



WING FAMILY OF AMERICA REUNION

The Society was honored to have the Tabor-Wing House chosen for the NYS District 2 Chapter of the WFA as the venue for their fall meeting held Saturday, Sep 29th.

Valerie LaRobardier gave a talk on the house and the influence of the Wing family on local history. Robert Wing also spoke on local history and provided an original jar of "Wing's Ointment", which was sold starting in 1827 through the early 1900's.

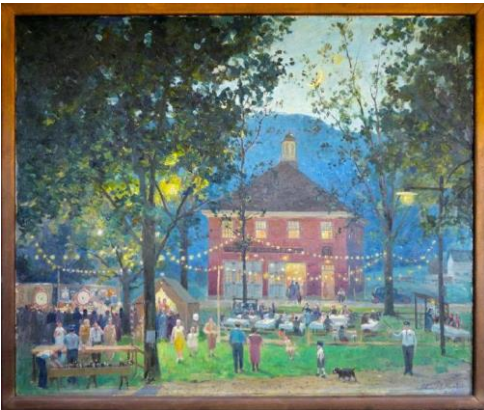
After lunch, catered by our own local El Paradiso/Freshco 22, the group traveled south to the Meeting House at Quaker Hill. John Brockway and Bob Riley of the Pawling Historical Society opened the Meeting House and gave a talk on its history and the Quakers.

NEW HAMLET TOUR

Dover's High School Art History Students Produce a Virtual Reality Tour of the Historic Hamlet

Contributed by Valerie LaRobardier

The Dover Plains Hamlet, rich in historic buildings, provided an excellent project for Michelle Mullaly's senior honors high school art history class that focuses this year on art and architecture of the region. Following the basic tour route established by the Town of Dover Historical Society's fourth grade Junior History Club, the students split up into teams, each researching a site. Involving Jack Zangerle, the tech support teacher, made the project into an excellent cross-discipline experience. The students did their own research and fleshed it out with photos, video and answers to questions asked on the walking tour.



We had great weather for the field trip—a warm sunny February day sandwiched between two periods of bitter cold. At our first stop, the J.H. Ketcham Fire House, President Brian Kelly and 2nd VP Phil Race met us for a tour and a talk. The fire company is rightly proud of their collection of WPA Era art. Brian Kelly had the students' full attention telling them about the history of the fire house, the art work, and the life story of John Henry Ketcham himself. Photo at left contributed by Richard Deon. "Fireman's Carnival at the Fire Company" oil painting hangs in the chief's office, capturing the spirit of a small rural town at play. The artist, Arthur Powell, was one of the "Dover Plains Four" WPA era artists.

Next, we visited the Tabor-Wing House across the street, home of the Town of Dover Historical Society. Co-Historian Caroline Reichenberg gave a talk on the house history and led a tour pointing out architectural details that were of special interest to this class. The house, built c1810, housed generations of Wings until 1928 when it was sold out of the family. The Historical Society purchased the building in 1976 and began restoring it. For many years it was home to the Dover Library. In 2003 the society turned the building over to the Town but continues to use it for meetings and events and raise funds for ongoing restoration work. Tabor-Wing is on the National Historic Register, along with the Dover Stone Church and Second Baptist Church on Mill Street.

Mike Wheatley met us at the Baptist Church for a tour that included a visit to the bell tower with the students each getting a turn to ring the bell. Sloan Haughton had prepared a scavenger hunt to help teach us the church history. Plaques and other items around the church provided answers to questions. We all had fun detecting and learning with this novel approach.

Next, we had lunch at Freshco 22 in Ketcham Corners Plaza, itself another historic building. Built in the late 1940's as a state-of-the-art theater with an advanced sound system and luxury lounges, it



attracted visitors from around the county. John Henry Ketcham's house once stood on this corner, now lending the name to the plaza that houses shops and apartments in addition to the restaurant.

Fortified with a hearty lunch we headed for Railroad Square where we viewed the many buildings in the hamlet center that are still in excellent shape today. The stories of bygone days come alive viewing the Elliott Hotel, Losee House/Preston Hotel/Ye Olde Dover Tavern, Feeney's Furniture and Dover Plains Opera House, the



Great Atlantic and Pacific Tea Company, Colligan's meat Market, Hanna and Company, the Dover Plains Bank and the Octagon House—one of only nine such unique houses in Dutchess County. Today these buildings are repurposed as apartments, offices and a thrift shop.

The bus was waiting for us at the “bank” parking lot for the short ride down Mill Street to the former home of the Dover Electric Light and Power, now lovingly preserved and retrofitted as a beautiful private home. The electric company was established in 1895, making Dover one of the few towns with electricity that early. A wraparound porch overlooks the Ten Mile River, where you can still see the weir that housed the mill wheel. Before the current owners bought the house, it had stood empty for a time, but the previous resident had outfitted the living room with two 500-pound wrought iron lanterns and the exterior with an iron dragon lantern that remain, purchased from the Park Savoy and Sherry-Netherland Hotels in New York City. John Davis and Kathy Gallo welcomed us in, and as always, Kathy's tales of the building's previous lives along with her historic artifacts collection and yummy cookies made the visit memorable for all. Photo at right contributed by Anthony Musso.



On the way back to the high school we stopped at Old Drovers Inn for a look at the gracious building that hosted town meetings from 1807 to 1839. The first section was built in 1750, most likely by Ebenezer Preston. The center section added in 1805 contains the dining room and the distinctive barrel-vaulted meeting room above. Ebenezer Preston's grandson John used the property as a drover's inn from the early 1800's on. His wife Amy was sister to Jackson Wing, who had a similar inn and tavern in Wingdale. Jackson's wife Hannah was John Preston's sister—thus the two inns are related both by family and function. Old Drovers has had several owners in modern times and has also been closed for extended periods. It has been lovingly restored for use as an inn and event venue. The restaurant and tap room are also open on the weekends. The photo at left, taken from a former owner's business card, shows the inn as depicted on the dining room mural.



In the weeks following the field trip the students have been tweaking their research and combining it with photos and video taken on the tour. Soon it will be ready to publish on the web as a virtual reality “walking” tour. Watch for a link to it on our Facebook page. The class sent me a beautiful thank you card, with each student adding their own message. I in turn am grateful to them—what a joy it is to see young people excited to learn about local history and proud of their town!

DOVER TOURISM NEWS

The Town of Dover Partners for Economic Development

Over the past decade Supervisor Linda French and Co-Historian Valerie LaRobardier have explored ways to promote heritage, agricultural and recreational tourism in Dover—with the help of others building what some thought impossible slowly into a plan with achievable milestones. In 2017 Dutchess County Planning and Development in conjunction with the Pace University Land Use Law Center conducted a study of Dover's Route 22 Corridor. This fall we took part in the Pace Land Use Leadership Alliance intensive four-week course where we gained an in-depth knowledge of these issues. This February Dutchess Tourism and Dutchess County Planning met with leadership in towns around the county to gather input as to the importance of tourism to our communities, and we attended. Currently the Appalachian Trail Community is hosting workshops in Pawling and Dover to assist in the development of a regional tourism marketing plan pulling together an amazing group of consultants. Watch for a public meeting to be announced for March 28th. Excitement is building rapidly on this front now!

Supervisor Linda French participated in both tourism workshop meetings and was very enthused about “seeing the Harlem Valley come to life again.” Next up: Strategic Tourism Initiative at Locust Grove.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Researching Your Veteran Ancestor March 23rd at Tabor-Wing

The Town of Dover Historical Society is hosting the March meeting of the Dutchess County Genealogical Society from 1:00 to 3:00 PM^r at Tabor-Wing House, 3128 Route 22 in Dover Plains. DCGS President Valerie LaRobardier will conduct a workshop on beginning genealogy web research techniques, focusing on military research. Come out and socialize with fellow sleuths. All are welcome! Refreshments will be served.

The Dutchess County Tavern Trail Returns

This year our Society will again host the Tavern Trail at Tabor-Wing House on Friday, May 17th at 6:30. This will be our fourth year hosting the Tavern Trail, the second time at our own Tabor-Wing. The 2016 and 2017 events were held at Old Drovers Inn.

The presentation will cover the history of four of our lesser known hamlets, once thriving, now some are all but ghost towns. Watch our Facebook page and Dutchess Tourism's MeetUp connection for details and reservations.



The Clark Preston House. Photo from *Up On Preston Mountain, The Story of an American Ghost Town* by John and Richard Polhemus

Annual Fund-raiser ~ Silent Auction & Cocktail Party ~ Date TBD

Our eighth annual fund raiser will be held at the Tabor-Wing House at 3128 Route 22, Dover Plains, NY, to benefit the continued restoration of this unique historic home. An early autumn date is anticipated and will be announced later.

NEW ACQUISITIONS



At the January meeting Janet and Jim Griffin and Joy Brown presented a hand-hooked rug made by Priscilla Hunt Van Horn. Janet and Priscilla were friends, and Janet now lives in Priscilla's former home in Webatuck. Priscilla was an early member of the Society. Joy Brown gave a brief talk about Priscilla and presented her book of memories, *The Goosery Book*.

Left to right: Janet Griffin, Joy Brown and Jim Griffin

At the same meeting, President Fran Braley thanked Karen Lambdin for donating some nicely used pewter pieces including a creamer and saucer, a bowl and a tray.