



Newsletter

Historical Society of Shawangunk & Gardiner

Volume 15, Number 2

Spring 2015

TURN OF THE CENTURY BUSINESSES IN THE HAMLET OF WALLKILL

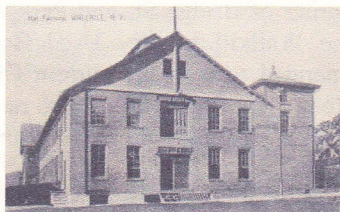
The United States acquired Alaska, the Wright Brothers flew, Mark Twain published, Teddy Roosevelt rose to the Presidency, and the Panama Canal was built. But change came slowly to rural Wallkill.

After the Civil War, a railroad linked the little towns on the west side of the Hudson with the markets of New York, accelerating the rate of change and eventually enabling an important dairy industry. On the central streets of Wallkill a changing configuration of small businesses emerged in response to a growing farming community. This article notes a few of these early establishments, mostly local, a few with eyes on larger markets (The Borden story will not be told here.)

After an 1874 explosion devastated Condit's Paper Mill Factory (1- see map, p. 3), it was replaced on the same site on the banks of the Wallkill River by The Wallkill Hat Shop (2) which sold fur-felt hats primarily internationally.



Paper Mill



Hat Factory

Around 1900, the horse barn on the west side of Wallkill Avenue, part of the old Bruyn farm, was moved back 30 feet from the street to the rear of the present Savings and Loan building, near the river, and Edward Moore set up a blacksmith shop (3).

The Wilkins General Store (4), located near the Wallkill River bridge entrance, across from the present Post Office, sold commodities and served as a social center for men who gathered around its potbellied stove. It was an exciting event when a team of three horses pulling a stout market wagon arrived in Wallkill from the City of Newburgh, a three-hour trip, carrying goods, including fish from the Hudson River, and returning with farmers' produce for sale in Newburgh.



Wilkins Store



Knights of Pythias

To the north of Wilkins, a barber shop (5) operated for more than 50 years. African-American John White ran another barber shop on the first floor of the Knights of Pythias House on Main Street (6); he lived in back of the business with his wife and three daughters. After his death, the shop was purchased by Dick Sleight, and later by African-American John Cox who converted the shop into an ice cream and candy store. When the business closed, the Knights turned the first floor of the building into a social center.



Terwilliger Hotel - (Clam Bar)

Next to the Wilkins store stood the imposing Terwilliger Hotel (7) where town elections were held.

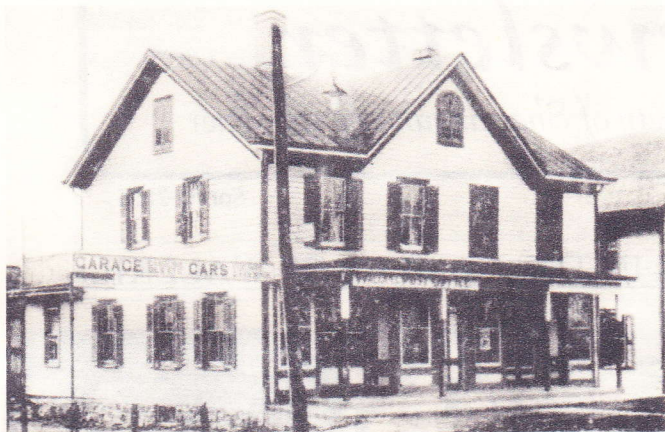
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Page 1

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Post Office - E.B DuBois Postmaster

The Post Office moved around with each new postmaster. When E. B. DuBois was appointed, he slightly moved the building that today houses Chela's Market to build a livery stable to the side and rear. He put the Post Office in the main building (18) and shared space with a meat market operated by Ted and Nick Cocks until 1898, then by Ben Van Wagenen. At one time, post office and meat market changed sides!

It was common for small businesses to operate out of houses, rather than in a "commercial" building. Mrs. Relyea opened a millinery shop (10) in her home where she made Easter bonnets from the late 1800s to the early 20th century. Later the shop sold school supplies, then became the Town Clerk's office, and then a plumbing and steam-fitting business. Dr. Peter F. Masten's home, on the east side of Wallkill Avenue near Bridge Street (11), also housed a dress-making shop in the early 20th century.

The Sam Dill Harness shop (12), built in the 1870s, was located on the NE corner of Main and Church. Mr. Dill made harnesses by hand for farm horses and light carriage horses and when he gave up the business, Eli Alrich set up Garfield Flats (13) across the street to make harnesses, until he was put out of business in the 1920s when the automobile came in. Edward VanWagnen had a bake shop on the Dill premises, the business taken over by a Mr. Crawford. Later the store operated as a drugstore, then a grocery store. (to p.2)

The Manning and Belcher Store (14) located on the Plank Road opposite the current Chela's Market, dealt in groceries and dry goods and, as at the Wilkins store, the pot-bellied stove drew townsmen to tell stories and hear the news. Belcher sold his interest in the business to John DuBois in 1903 who sold to John Manning who sold to Charles Huttemeyer who kept it going until 1928. H. W. Dunn operated a butcher shop (15) on the Plank Road longer than any other business in the hamlet's history. The second floor of this building over time was used for storage, as a dance

hall, and for Catholic services by the Church of the Most Precious Blood of Walden.



Manning & Belcher Store

The James P. Caswell home was the site of a hardware and tin shop (16) located on the west side of Central Avenue. Mr. Caswell operated the shop until he was kicked by a horse in 1898 and never recovered; his wife continued the business.

In 1900 there were horses, wagons, and dogs, but no automobiles. Livery stables were common, often near the railroad station to meet passengers; the stable (17) at the NE corner of Bridge St. and Park Avenue is now occupied by the Wallkill Library Used Book Store. Another stable operated next to the current Chela's Market on the Plank Road (18). E.B. DuBois also ran a livery stable, but after he bought his first automobile around 1909, he sold the horse business and opened what may have been the first garage. As more automobiles appeared, the stables closed.



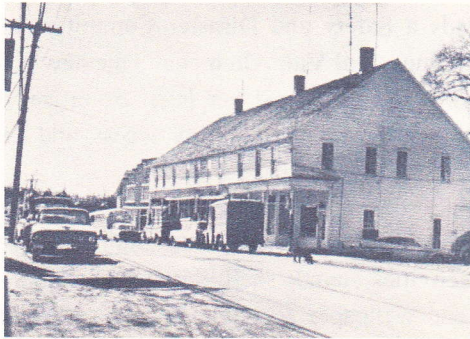
E.B. DuBois Livery Stable



Perrine Park View Hotel

The Alfred Perrine Drug and General Store (19) was built in 1869 and was located on the NW corner of Main Street and Central Avenue. It was expanded several times to include a meeting hall and hotel.

Perrine built a bigger store (3) on the foundation of the barn that had belonged to the old Bruyn farm. It featured the first soda and ice cream fountain in Wallkill; In the early days, part of the building was rented by

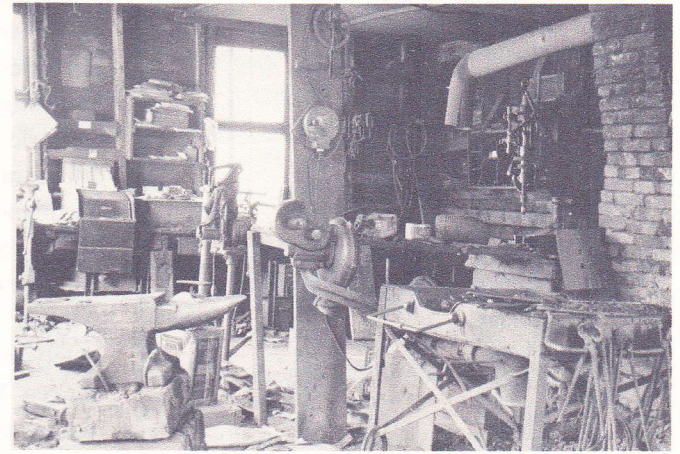


Perrine Valley Food Store

Eli Aldrich, a harness maker, part by a barber by the name of Corwin. Other businesses operated in this building during the mid-20th century and it ultimately became a drug store owned by Dr. L.C. Edsall who later moved the store to the corner of Wallkill Avenue and Church Street.

Jimmie Valley, the "hamlet blacksmith," operated a shop just east of Wallkill Avenue near the Bruyn Turnpike (20); he died in 1901. By the 1920s, the Charles Brach

Blacksmith Shop (21) was the last in Wallkill; it was located on the SW corner of Wallkill Avenue and Bridge Street.



Jimmie Valley Blacksmith Shop

Larger businesses of this era included The Mentz Brick Mould Company (22), established in 1904, now the location of Fair-Rite Products, and the Crowell Brick Mould Company, outside the hamlet, which has been operating continuously since the 1860s.

Early in the 20th century there were ice cream parlors and candy shops, wagon makers and undertakers, plumbing shops, blacksmiths, and drug stores. Before the malls arrived to drive many businesses out, the villages pretty much provided everything needful to its inhabitants.

By Libby Ross with thanks to Frank Mentz and his Shawangunk Hearths and to other long-time residents who remember people and places.



MAP OF DOWNTOWN WALLKILL BUSINESS LOCATIONS

Officers**President** Debra Wolff**Vice President** Libby Ross**Recording Secretary**
Doris Callan**Corresponding Secretary**
Donna Meyer**Treasurer** Bob Mooney**Trustees**

Doris Callan

Freda Fenn

Carol LeFevre

Jim Malloy

Bob Mooney

Libby Ross

Adam Seelig

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

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,

As we enter into the warm weather (thank goodness!), Historical Society activities also heat up. In January The Board of Trustees held a Strategic Planning meeting at **Adam Selig's** house. **Liselle LaFrance** from Historic Cherry Hill led the discussion thanks to a grant from the Museum Association of New York (MANY). Her insights and recommendations point to several new areas. The Board also reviewed the NYS Education Law Relating to Chartered Museums, Historical Societies and Cultural Agencies to identify gaps and as a result, **Jim Malloy** now heads a Safety and Disaster Committee to consider fire safety for our buildings, **Hal Van Aken** chairs the new Audit Committee, **Karen Wohlforth Dale** will lend her legal expertise, draft an ethics policy, and explore resources for disability access, and **Libby Ross** will draft an updated mission statement.

Back in Wallkill, work is underway on the dining room at the Andries DuBois House; activities include shell-blasting the ceiling to remove old paint, rewiring, and wallpaper preservation. At the Knights of Pythias House, we have sorted storage containers, preparing to find a permanent home for each item. This year's plans include cleaning and painting the dining room and kitchen and organizing the HSSG office. **Arlene Rousch** is a new volunteer who comes down from Albany with Debra to help at the Knight's house. She came to the November benefit tea and was so impressed that she asked to come help in the spring! What a nice impression you made on her!

As always, we welcome all members to volunteer in whatever capacity you can. In addition, we welcome financial donations! We have lots of ways for members to contribute.

Debra Wolff, President

Wilkins Store Delivery Horses and Wagon

Meeting Highlights

A good-sized and enthusiastic crowd appeared at the Shawangunk Town Hall on April first to hear **Elaine Weed** present **One-Room Schoolhouses in Shawangunk**, based on her book, "One-Room Schools" with photos by her late husband Ed Weed. Many in the audience knew first-hand about those schools and shared reminiscences, like skating on a nearby pond during lunch break, and braving winter with insufficient heat from a wood stove.



Photo of Elaine Weed

On April 26, at the first of two events that for children in the community this spring that involved the DuBois House, **Girl Scouts** came for a special educational event...a talk and lesson on the history of the house, and presentation of the one-room schoolhouse exhibit by board members **Donna Mayer** and **Bob Mooney**, assisted by

Historical Society's youngest member **Holland Janasek**. The Scouts also learned about Marion Borden and her important relationship to scouting in Wallkill. Mothers of the Scouts attended the program which included a house tour and refreshments served on the front lawn.

Shawangunk Town Hall was the setting on May 6 for an extravagant display of beautiful quilts, courtesy of the **Shawangunk Textile Quilting Group**. Members of this group showed off quilt after quilt, some historic, some newly designed. The handiwork was dazzling, but as one quilter explained, "You just need a little patience, and it's all done." The quilters have donated many quilts to veterans and nursing home residents. On this evening, the final display was a quilt made specifically for the Historical Society of Shawangunk & Gardiner and presented by its members to **Trustee Freda Fenn**, representing the Board. The quilt was of the "Courthouse Steps" pattern, created from used scraps to produce a beautiful quilt. This pattern became very popular during the Civil War. The centerpiece of the pattern is a red square which, according to folklore, represents the hearth of the house. The strips of material surrounding the centerpiece were added in an alternating pattern of light and dark that represent the happiness and sorrow of life.



Audrey Keelser, Judy Gehrer, Lynn Wing, Sherri Pullar, Terry Ryther, Freda Fenn, Leslie Raymond, JoAnn Versusky, Mary Ferguson, Sharon Orr, Carolyn Thorenz.

On May 8, **Historical Society Trustee Adam Seelig**, and Technology Teacher at the Borden Middle School, led 19 students on a **Then and Now** walking tour of Wallkill, an on the spot history lesson. It went very well and the kids had a great time. Their route took in the middle school, the Park View Hotel, the district office, the Wallkill Reformed Church, the Andries DuBois House, the Knights of Pythias Lodge, Main Street, the Wallkill Public Library, the Rail Trail, and included Rob's for lunch. At the end of the day, almost all the students commented that their favorite parts were the DuBois house and the Knights Lodge - none knew there was a secret society right here in Wallkill. Adam urged the students to bring their parents to visit the historic houses!



Adam Seelig & Wallkill Middle School Students
visit the Andries DuBois House

Look what we have accomplished at the DuBois House

- Design and construction of the new kiosk
- Landscaping
- Back steps repaired
- Plumbing (water access in the basement)
- Acquired an entry light & Electrical work
- Basement cleanout and organizing
- Reclamation of the kitchen
- Main Display Room Work
- Sandblasting the ceiling with walnut shells to remove old flaking paint
- Sanding and staining the laminate beams
- Removed old plumbing pipes
- Patched the ceiling (where the pipes were)
- Replaced the old electrical wiring with molding
- Oiled the floors
- Patched/repainted and painted the bare wall space
- Trimmed selected wallpaper with molding
- Installed a donated rug in the Display Room
- Rearranged the room for better flow
- Put a donated woodstove for the Display Room
- Installed protective Plexiglas coverings over lath
- Enclosed open areas in the Display Room
- Scraped flaking paint of the Dining Room door
- Repaired the closet door
- Cleaning, Cleaning and more Cleaning

Dear Historical Society Members, If you attend our meetings, if you read this newsletter, if you appreciate our efforts to preserve our Shawangunk heritage through the restoration of historic buildings in Wallkill, if you believe in the value of our young people connecting with local history in one of the oldest settled townships in the United States, then support our efforts.

Please pay your dues

Single \$20, Family \$30, Business & Supporting \$50, Patron \$100, Benefactor \$250

Send to Historical Society of Shawangunk & Gardiner, P.O. Box 570, Wallkill NY 12589

Thank You



10th Annual Garden Tour



Sponsored by the Historical Society of Shawangunk & Gardiner

Saturday June 27, 2015

9:00 am to 4:00 pm (rain or shine)

Self-guided driving tour of local Gardens and Studios

A map and descriptive brochure will be provided with your ticket.

Tour includes the Knights of Pythias House

For advanced tickets (\$15) call or visit:

- **Freda Fenn at 845-895-3986**
- **Wallkill River House 845-895-1410**
35 Wallkill Ave. Hamlet of Wallkill NY
- **Pine Bush Public Library 845-744-3375**
227 Maple Ave. Pine Bush NY

Tickets on the day of the tour will be available (\$15)

From 9:00 am to 12:00 pm

At the Andries DuBois House 75 Wallkill Ave. Wallkill NY

**On the day of the Garden Tour visit the
Andries DuBois House for a plant sale
75 Wallkill Avenue, Wallkill NY**

Website: <http://WallkillHistory.com>

Email: ShawangunkHistoricalSociety@gmail.com



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Wallkill, NY 12589-0570

Last Member Dues 2014

Libby & John Ross
517 Dubois Road
Wallkill, NY 12589

Historical Society of Shawangunk & Gardiner

Spring and Summer Events

Wednesday, June 3 at 6 pm Picnic at the historic Andries DuBois House, 75 Wallkill Avenue in the hamlet of Wallkill.
Potluck – bring a dish to pass. Hot dogs, drinks, place settings provided. Speaker.

Saturday, June 27 at 9-4 (rain or shine) - 10th Annual Garden Tour & plant sale including tours of the Knights of Pythias House. Tickets - \$15 (see full page description on page 7). Contact: Freda Fenn, 845-895-3986

Saturday, July 11 from 3pm till 6 pm Bannerman Island Tour

Leave from Newburgh Landing by boat at 3 pm for a guided tour at Bannerman Island Castle.
Return to the Newburgh Landing at 6 pm.

Tickets are limited and must be purchased in advance - \$35. Contact: Donna Myer, 845-851-8105

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.