



Warwick Roots

The Newsletter of the Historical Society of the Town of Warwick
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Warwick's Great Awakening

By Dr. Richard W. Hull

There's a popular American myth that 'in the good old horse-and-wagon days' people were more religious and God-fearing and that modernization led to secularization. Yet viewing our own community two centuries ago, in 1804, it can be argued that the overwhelming majority of its citizens were not members of any organized church and rarely attended religious services. Taverns and distilleries vastly outnumbered churches and Sundays were usually spent laboring in fields or resting from an arduous week. Sure, most households had a family Bible, usually the only book in possession, but few pastors were around to interpret it and then only at baptisms, weddings, and funerals. The dead were interred on the farm not far from the kitchen door.

Two centuries ago in Warwick, only the Baptists and the Presbyterians had houses of worship. The Baptists came over from Connecticut and founded a congregation here in 1765. Presbyterians had been in Florida since 1741, in Warwick from about 1750, and in Amity from 1796. But these were small sometimes fractionalized congregations often led by outspoken, uncompromising, and remarkably well-educated and charismatic preachers.

This year, the Reformed Church in Warwick and the United Methodist Church in Sugarloaf will celebrate their bicentennials and what makes this so significant is that from about 1804, Christianity in our valleys experienced dramatic growth. It was our first 'Great Awakening'. Protestant denominations became fervently evangelical and everywhere itinerant preachers scoured our countryside, holding open-air revival meetings and winning converts. In 1804, the Warwick Presbyterians became 'Dutch Reformed' and competed fiercely with the more imposing Baptists. Methodism, on the other hand, began to spread through our valleys like a brushfire, carried on horseback by so-called 'circuit riders' to a mainly poorer strata of society. Sugarloaf became the mother for other Methodist congregations which in a generation sprouted in nearly every hamlet in our town.

Between 1804-14 membership in all these denominations grew explosively. Meeting-houses were enlarged or built anew and were financed by selling or renting pews to families. From the 1820s through the 1840s Sunday schools were established among all but the Baptists who vehemently scorned formal Christian education. Consequently, their membership steadily declined.

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Historical Society Museums Are Open to the Public
From 2:00 - 4:30 PM on Tuesdays and Saturdays
During July and August, Or By Appointment



2004 Calendar of Events

Sunday, June 6

Wine Tasting & Cheese
Sampling
4:00 PM
Lewis Park.
Live Music!!

Sunday, June 27

Exhibition Opening

"In the Good Old Summertime:
Apparel & Accessories
1885 - 1915"
2:00 - 4:00PM
Baird's Tavern
**Exhibit continues through
July & August**

Saturday, July 24

George Washington Picnic
5:30PM
-- on the lawn next to the
Old School Baptist Meeting
House

Saturday, August 28

"Under the Tent
(End of Summer) Party"
6:00 - p:00 PM
On the Lewis Park Lawn.
Live Music & Auction !!!

Saturday December 4

Holiday Historic Homes Tour
Check newspapers for info

Sunday, December 5

Wassail Party
4:00 -6:00 PM
1766 Baird's Tavern

Friday, December 24

Christmas Eve Sing
5:00 PM
in the Old School Baptist

2004 Officers

President

Henry L Nielsen, Jr.

First Vice President

Donald Lomax

Second Vice President

Michael Newhard

Third Vice President

Gary Randall

Corresponding Secretary

Mary W. Bradner

Recording Secretary

Carol S. LeBrecht

Treasurer

Anna C. Wilson

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Publicity

Salvina Michel

Trustee Emeritus

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Trustees

Marina Alario
Mary W. Bradner
Tom Frangos
Sue Gardner
Elizabeth Hurd
Mary Neal McFarland
Nell Rothschild
Harold Wilson

Society Curator

Michael Bertolini

Society Historian

Florence Tate

Archivist

Sue Gardner

In Memorium

Peter Betley
Donald Coonan
Harry Pinckney
Tom Miller

This Year

In addition to our regular annual calendar of events, here's what we've been up to...

Participated in the Warwick in Bloom competition by mounting an exhibit on Warwick Trees and creation of a new period herb garden at Baird's Tavern by the scouts.

Hosted two joint programs with the Albert Wisner Public Library on "Ghosts of the Warwick Valley" and "Freedom Quilts of the Underground Railroad".

Gave tours of the museum buildings for over 400 fourth graders in the WVCSD.

Donated use of Lewis Park was used for the community events of Springfest, Applefest, Albert Wisner Library, and during the holidays we hosted the fire department's Christmas tree, the Menorah lighting ceremonies, the nativity scene, and the community carol sing at the Old School Baptist Church

One Step At a Time

The Society would like to send a hearty congratulations to

New Milford Historical Society on the acquisition of their new museum building, the former Roy Vail property. They are doing repairs and restoration and hope to open our community's new museum in the near future.

Florida Historical Society on their award-winning book, "Florida, NY: an early look at its faces, places, and winding staircases"

The Reformed Church which is just releasing an updated anniversary book to commemorate their 200TH anniversary. It includes a reprint of their centennial volume, plus updates for the last 100 years.

Our support goes to John and Karen Cleary, owners of the Waterbury/Heman Rowlee House, est. 1790, who had a massive oil spill this winter and are trying to save this historic structure. Heman Rowlee served in the Warwick Militia during the Revolution under John Hathorn.

Renovated the Ketchum House, which will become a residence for the Society's curator in addition to being maintained as a museum of the society.

Held a farewell luncheon in February for our dear friend and devoted member, Tryntje Stephen, who helped for many years to coordinate events, and cared for the Old School Baptist Church. We'll miss you!

The Old School Baptist Meeting house hosted 16 wedding, memorial, and church services last year.



Ben Franklin charms the crowd at last year's Washington Day picnic.

Did you know that the society.....

*Has 450 members locally and around the country!

*Has to raise \$40,000 per year operating expenses and general maintenance, and \$40,000 in capital expenditures this year to preserve our museum buildings! This year alone the Shingle House needs major repair of a supporting wall, and a project to properly re-point the stonework of Baird's Tavern begins.

Grants & Gifts Received

Warwick Savings Foundation

\$10,000/Year for four years-Matching Funds
For re-pointing of Baird's Tavern

Upstate History Alliance

\$2,500

Consultants for long range planning process

Office of Orange County Historian--Ted Sly

\$800

Sumner Gerard Foundation

\$200

Cushman & Jean May

\$1,000

Jerry Duane

\$340

A Digital Camera

Michael Bertolini

\$500

For Costume Care

Our Collections

Costume Collection:

We have over 200 items dating from around 1820 to the mid 20th century. Our costume committee has been diligently sewing inventory labels into each item and entering them into the catalog. A number of items in the collection were evaluated as excellent and rare examples of early clothing. Fundraising is underway to clean, restore, and purchase acid free storage boxes for this wonderful collection.

Artifact Inventory:

Thanks to our new museum computer and software, we are embarking on a project to catalog and describe our artifacts. This year we will complete cataloging of items in Baird's Tavern.

Archives:

A major gift to the collection came this year from Duane Joslyn; we are currently organizing over 400 glass plate negatives from the late 1800's through the 1900's of local scenes and people which were discovered and saved by his father when he purchased the old photo studio at West and Main many years ago.



Two piece satin ball gown, mid 1800's.

Warwick's Great Awakening . . . (continued from page 1)

By 1848 the second 'Great Awakening' had begun as congregations began to build ever-larger edifices, usually in the style of Greek Revival Doric Temples. In this era of prosperity and upward mobility, families yearned for respectability and found it in the church. It was also there where women found opportunities for community leadership and expression. In the 1860s, entirely new denominations appeared, notably the Episcopalians of Christ Church, who this year will celebrate their sesqui-centennial in Warwick village, and the Roman Catholics of St. Stephen - St. Edward. African-Americans hived off from mainstream Methodists and formed their own independent churches in Florida and Warwick. The venerable Baptists split in two and the 'New School' faction built a competing 'Calvary' Baptist Church on West Street with a huge Sunday school program.

Remarkably, by the end of the Civil War Warwick had totally transformed itself spiritually and socially. Most families were regularly attending church services and churches had become vital centers of social life. Every one of Warwick's hamlets boasted a church and it was these institutions which gave each hamlet its unique identity.

By 1870, Warwick's landscape was punctuated by soaring spires and pealing bells. Nearly every church was bursting at its seams. Ministers had become enormously influential in the social and religious lives of almost all Warwickians and remained so well into the 20th century. Thus, 1804 was truly a turning point in the spiritual development of our town and Warwick would not witness its third 'Great Awakening' until the turbulent 1970s and 80s.

Community Helpers.. We couldn't do it without you !!

Girl Scout Troop 8 Cadets, under the direction of Alicia Frosini created a 18th century herb garden at Baird's Tavern as part of the Warwick in Bloom project

**Garden Club of Orange and Dutchess graciously maintains our Herb Wheel Garden at the 1810 House
W.V. High School History Club for grounds work at Shingle House**

All Historical Society volunteers who coordinated over a dozen major fundraising & educational events

A Message from the President

Dear Friends,

In 1906, the founders of our Society urged the nascent organization to collect, study, and publicize the history of our community. And that is precisely where we've focused our efforts over the past year.

As our centennial approaches, we have begun to hold planning workshops and have engaged experts to help us in developing bold strategies for the century ahead. We are also in the process of re-examining our mission statement and our long-term goals. Your Society is on the move and we invite all of you to share your ideas and energy.

The survival of an institution like our Historical Society rests on the volunteer work of its friends and members. But it also must rely on the financial assistance of the community it serves. Together, I'm confident we can continue to be one of the foremost historical societies in the Hudson Valley.

Henry Nielsen, Jr

Young Historians

High School History Club Forms

By: Joe Bartolotta, President

At the Warwick Valley High School this year a History Club was created in association with the Historical Society. The History Club has had a good response from the students thus accounting for its large membership. The advisors for the club include Mr. Nelson, a WVHS US History teacher, and Mrs. Hurd, retired WVHS English teacher and an active Society member.

The History Club has worked on many projects for the Society. In the fall some members did grounds work at the Shingle House with Raey Webster, Society Officer, while other students developed pictures from old glass slides provided by Sue Gardner, Society Archivist. In the winter, club members learned about local history from Dr. Richard Hull and Michael Bertolini as part of a field trip to the Old School Baptist Meeting House and Baird's Tavern.

Currently a group of students are involved with collection assessment at the Baird's Tavern that involves identifying, photographing, and numbering all items in the tavern. The collection assessment has been very successful with the help of society members and some very diligent students. Other students will research and prepare presentations for the Historical Society's "In the Summertime" Exhibition at Baird's Tavern during July and



Members of the High School History Club and the Society's Collections Committee begin the project of cataloging and describing the artifacts in Baird's Tavern

August. Finally, at the end of the school year, Dr. Hull will present a lecture to US History students at the high school sponsored by the History Club. Next school year, the History Club hopes to be involved in even more projects and have even greater participation from the students.



Elder Benedict's Chair Donated

This past year, the Society received a very special gift; Joan and Tom Frangos donated a chair owned by Elder James Benedict, founding minister of the Old School Baptist Church. Joan is a descendent of Elder James, and the chair has been handed down by the family. Joan and Tom reside in the Captain James Benedict stone house on Colonial Avenue at the village boundary; according to family stories the chair stood in the same location, next to the fireplace, for over 100 years.

Elder James Benedict and his wife Mary Blackman arrived in the Warwick Valley and established the first permanent church here in 1765. Both are buried in the plot of land at the corner of Galloway Rd. and Forester Ave., the site of the original log meeting house. You can learn more about them and their lives in "Elder James Benedict, Pioneer Preacher of the Wyoming Valley", transcribed online at "Warwick Valley History" www.albertwisnerlibrary.org, click on 'Local history'.)

The chair is the first piece installed in what will become the Benedict Room in honor of this pioneer family, in the Shingle House museum.

Join Us . . . in Saving Our History

The Warwick Historical Society is always looking for a few great men and woman. Whether you are able to donate time, skills or money, we would love to have you join the Society. Each year we strive to assist people, young and old, in remembering the Warwick Valley's past. We aim to collect, catalog and showcase those elements of the past that we still have. And most importantly, we capture those elements of the present that have an impact on us all.

If you are interested in joining us, please contact the Society at 986-3236, or fill out the coupon. And remember, whether it is a monetary or physical contribution, it will become a part of our history!!

Thank You!!

_____ I want to join the Warwick Historical Society. Please send me membership information.

_____ I wish to make a monetary contribution to the Warwick Historical Society. The amount is: _____.

_____ I am able to donate my time to the Warwick Historical Society. Please contact me!!

_____ I wish to donate an item to the Warwick Historical Society

Name: _____

Address: _____

E-Mail: _____

Phone: _____

The Warwick Historical Society is a 501(c)(3) organization.