



Warwick Historical Society

PO Box 353, Warwick NY 10990 ~ www.warwickhistoricalsociety.org ~ 845-986-3236 fax 845-986-8932 Newsletter: November, 2008

SAVE THE DATE

Wassail Party at Baird's Tavern

December 7

4 - 6

\$10.00

Board Meeting

Saturday

November 22

9:30 - 11 am



EXTENDED

Baird's Tavern Gift Shop Hours

December: Wed.
through Sat.

10 am to 2:00 pm

Closed

for the winter
from

Dec. 24 until

March 4, 2009

Office Hours

most days 10 to 2

call Jo at: 986-3236

1810 Archives Office

Tuesdays 9 to 12

(by appointment)

986-5987

HARVEST TO HOLLY 2008

The Board has decided not to have a traditional Harvest to Holly event this year. We are opening Baird's Tavern for the holidays. Our Wassail party on the 7th of December is going to be a warm wonderful party. Pianist Michael O'Neill will play holiday music. Wassail and cider will be served and our Board members are making delicious things to munch on. The Tavern will be decorated as we have private parties during the month of December. Actually, we have a few dates left for small events - perhaps you want to have a business get-together? Our main room is lovely, inviting, and just right for up to 24 people. Call Jo in the office (986-3236) to discuss the possibilities!

Since the last newsletter:

HISTORY CAMP AND GEORGE WASHINGTON DAY

Grants from Provident Bank and the Orange County Historian's Office made it possible to have a fabulous 3 day camp here at the Baird's Tavern. Pat Reinhardt and Betty Hurd ran the summer camp. The sign-up was overwhelming so that two sessions were created and even then there was a wait list. The camp was planned around our annual George Washington Day.

The campers, ages 9-11, were given roles and a costume to play a prominent Warwick resident from the 18th or 19th century. They also made paper, dipped candles, ate vegetarian stew with biscuits and generally had a very active time for three half days.

George Washington Day started at 2pm and ended with a picnic supper. The Black Powder Association set up camp and brought a cannon which was fired several times during the day. The Bellvale Community made flower garlands and played music with Early American instruments. The hit of the day was twofold. George himself arrived and stayed throughout the day talking about his life. And homemade peach ice cream was provided by the Bellvale Creamery!

UNDER THE TENT 2008

On August 23rd, we held our main fundraiser of the year. Thanks to the generosity of the community, including individuals and businesses, we netted \$25,000 which will go towards the preservation of our buildings. Restaurants donated platters of hors d'oeuvres and so did many members. Garden centers and other businesses gave generously towards our raffle and silent auction. Frank Truatt from WTbQ played background music. Everyone who came seemed delighted to be there. We will mention only a few tireless workers - Candy Ahrenholz, Jane Glazman and Debbie Iurato certainly made the evening happen with ease and the Historical Society cannot thank them and all the other volunteers enough.

2008 YARD SALE IN LEWIS PARK

This year we had 13 tables at our sale. Everyone seemed to enjoy the day. Beautiful weather makes a difference. Thanks to all who donated. Thanks also to those who sold, and most of all to those who shopped and found treasures. Don't throw out your 'junk'; save it for next year!

WARWICK SCHOOLS' FOURTH GRADE

Believe it or not, this was the 26th year for the fourth grade tours. The Society opens eight buildings and docents guide over 450 students and parents through Warwick's rich history. They spend the whole day, having lunch in Lewis Park and playing Early American games before boarding the bus back to school. Gerald Decatur suggested the idea in 1982 when there were about 150 students in fourth grade. Today Betty Hurd has the day well organized with exact times for visiting each building. There are over 35 volunteers, some of whom don period dress and entertain the students. A great time is had by all!

TEACHERS' IN-SERVICE PROGRAM

During the month of October, the Warwick Historical Society welcomed 25 teachers from the Warwick Valley School District who participated in a four week seminar on Slavery in New York and the Black Experience in Warwick. In the first session the teachers heard Kim Seckel, educator from the New-York Historical Society, lecture on "New York Divided" showing, with the use of slides, how slavery divided the New York merchants and abolitionists. The second session brought the teachers to the Warwick Cemetery where Society trustees pointed out the Civil War burial places of both black and white soldiers. Later, they returned to the Education Center to discuss the Society's archives. Session three involved a wonderful lecture by Dr. Travis Jackson, whose topic was the "Separate but Equal Education" in the community of Hilburn, New Jersey between 1930 and 1950. In session four Dr. Richard Hull discussed the black experience in Warwick from revolutionary days to the present time. And Dr. Corrine Nyquist of SUNY New Paltz lectured on Sojourner Truth.

The Society's volunteers – Ivy Tulin and Betty Hurd – co-ordinated the program, which was extremely successful, and it was decided to do more of this type of programming. Our thanks to the Warwick Valley School District, the presenters, and the volunteers for a most interesting series and to the teachers who, after a full day of teaching, came for two hours beyond.

A BIT OF BACKGROUND FOR THESE TIMES By Richard Hull, Town Historian

The Great Depression: Its Impact on Warwick

Warwick weathered the Great Depression of the 1930's better than most communities in America. In fact, we came through it stronger in many ways than before the Wall Street crash of 1929. By 1939 we had built two new schools and a hospital, reconstructed and paved our major roads, electrified most of our homes and farms, and bought a record number of appliances such as radios and telephones as well as trucks and automobiles.

While over 5000 banks collapsed across America our three local banks survived. In the Depression's depths of 1933 unemployment rates here were among the lowest in New York State. In 1932 the vast New York State Training School for Boys opened on Wickham Lake and provided many jobs for our local workers. We also increased our hiring of teachers in our local schools. Dairy and muckland farmers modernized their operations and the overall output in farm produce actually increased.

So how do we account for this? There are many reasons, but the major one lies in the strength of our local banks. For decades they had been paying high interest rates on personal savings accounts and thus accumulated substantial capital from local farmers and businessmen. The banks themselves were founded, owned and managed largely by local residents and they followed conservative fiscal policies. Thus, when the Depression came in 1929 it was almost a non-event in Warwick. The local papers headlined money donations to charitable causes from the Boy Scouts and other community groups. True, during the Depression some people lost their jobs, especially those who worked on the railroad. And some marginal farms were foreclosed. Many service people in Greenwood Lake's hotels also found themselves without employment.

Nevertheless, most people in town survived relatively intact albeit with fewer nest eggs. But everyone learned to be more self-sufficient, more astute as consumers, more aware of their community's strengths and weaknesses. And through it all they never lost their trust in their local banks, and the bankers, in turn, never lost their confidence in their clients.

STATE OF THE SOCIETY

The Historical Society is of course affected by the downswing of the economy. We are fortunate to have nine buildings and Lewis Park. We are unique as we have an enormous array of important costumes and furniture of the 18th and 19th centuries which for the most part come from local families. And the papers – including newspapers, letters, memos, etc. – are continually being archived by a dedicated group of volunteers. We also have picture postcards and other fascinating photos depicting life and landscapes of generations past.

The question posed is how to take care of it all? The buildings require an enormous amount of upkeep – witness the Forester Avenue complex: We have received grants to begin the renovation of the Shingle House but it's only the tip of the iceberg. Eventually the house will have heat and air conditioning – primarily through geo-thermal. It will keep the temperature at approximately 55 degrees so that furniture and fabric will not have the constant up or down swing degree change. The Sly Barn needs new/old wood to shore up the doors and the old UAME church is waiting in the wings for completion of the bathroom, interior walls and restored windows. At the end of all that, we hope to terrace it all together, inviting people to enjoy the complex of buildings and use the church for exhibits, movies, concerts, lectures and anything else that might be apropos with the permanent display of our African-American community artifacts.

LATE BREAKING NEWS

Michael Newhard and Judy Pedersen have loaned the Society a baby grand piano. It has been placed in the Baird's Tavern and the plan is to have winter concerts – say Sunday afternoons. We are just beginning to formulate the schedule – so stay tuned!

MAKING USE OF GENEROUS GRANT FROM WVT COMMUNICATIONS:

With this wonderful corporate grant of \$5000 from WVT's President Duane Albro, the Society has been able to upgrade its technology. We now have a wide-area network (WAN) between the office in Baird's Tavern and the computers in the 1810 House and in addition are hooked up to our two PC administrators.

The purpose of the WAN is to connect all the PCs so they are able to access the common data base of information through our particular software called Past Perfect. The business information is administered by Jo Hull and the logging of the documents and artifacts is done by volunteers Sue Gardner, Pat McConnell, Ivy Tulin, Femi Roecker and Jeff Page. The data base is backed up daily to a remote site over the internet.

The WVT gift also enabled us to buy a PC projector to facilitate the ever increasing activities of our educational center so aptly managed by Betty Hurd, Ivy Tulin and Sue Gardner.

We are particularly pleased with this grant because the Warwick Valley Telephone Company is the area's oldest historical institution which has provided telecommunications for 106 years and offers state-of-the-art telecommunication services. We thank them profusely as we are now in the 21st century technologically speaking! - a living historical society.

HAVE A WONDERFUL HOLIDAY SEASON!

Think Gift shop at Baird's Tavern

**Historical Society of the Town of Warwick
PO Box 353
Warwick, New York 10990**

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Join our community ~ Share our commitment



History Camp summer 2008



Under the Tent 2008

Our Gift Shop is filled with interesting objects – some old, some older and some new. Sherry glasses with decanter, felt Christmas stockings, this year's ornament which is the 1810 House, fun jewelry, old postcards. You never know what you'll find! And if you have anything you might want to get rid of, bring it in. Most of our items have been donated. The shop is in Baird's Tavern and is run by Candy Ahrenholz with a crew of wonderful volunteers. The hours have been extended for the holidays, but the shop will close for the winter except when an event is taking place in the Tavern.



We are planning winter events – concerts and of course our now famous Tavern Night. You'll hear more when the dates have been set.

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