

Centennial History
of the
Historical Society of the
Town of Warwick
1906-2006



by
Patricia Roy McConnell

“Let us not lose interest in this little society of ours. It is a good thing and the books and statistics that we are collecting are valuable now and will be more valuable and possibly more appreciated fifty years from now than they are at present. Try to help the work along all you can, one and all.”

Elizabeth Burt,
First Recording
Secretary, 1910



Author's Forward

It has been a pleasure writing this history of the Historical Society of the Town of Warwick. Though I have learned a great deal, I know that there may be errors. I take full responsibility for them and apologize in advance.

I am indebted to many people who have been extremely helpful to me by providing information to fill in the gaps, including the Anna and Harold Wilson, Michael Bertolini, Mary Hope Lewis, Perch and Greg Masefield, Raey Webster and especially to Sue Gardner.

It has been fun! Thank you.

Patricia McConnell, Assistant Archivist

The Early Years

In April of 1906, a small group of Warwick residents gathered in one of the YMCA rooms to formally establish a Historical Society for the Town of Warwick. A few of these citizens maintained residences in NYC, and were keenly aware of the NYC Historical Society that had been started in 1805 also by a few farsighted and enlightened people.

The first few meetings involved discussions on the title for the Society and the mission. The name which they rather quickly chose was the Historical Society of the Town of Warwick (HSTOW) and the mission was essentially the same as today. The original mission read:

“Its object shall be the marking of historic places, the discovery, collection, preservation and publication of the history, historical records, genealogies, biographies, and topographical information relating to the Town of Warwick, in the County of Orange and neighboring localities and the diffusion of a sound historical taste and the fostering of a patriotic sentiment”.



Ferdinand V. Sanford

Note that this mission statement is taken from the first Constitution, Section II and has been amended and considerably shortened. The Bergen County Historical Society, Newburgh Historical Society, Unionville and the Highlands Societies were invited to attend a meeting to assist in the formation of this new organization. Judge Ferdinand Sanford was elected the first President and Elizabeth Burt as the Recording Secretary. The first Constitution was adopted on May 4 of 1906. The membership fee for the year was \$1.00 and \$20.00 for a lifetime membership--astounding numbers in today's world. Many times after these meetings the group adjourned to the Red Swan Inn where “ they partook of a

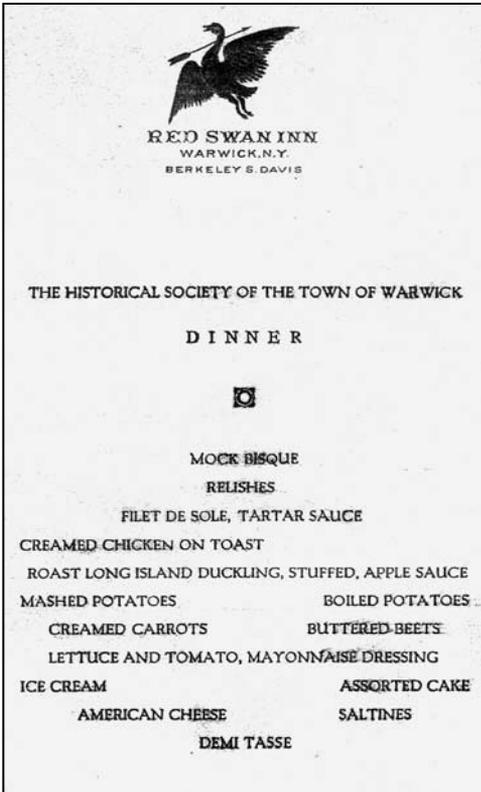
very enjoyable dinner”.

On September 25, 1906, the members met again. The treasury held \$32.00. Mr. Frank J. Welles presented a program on “Indian Relics” and gave them a copy of a photo depicting a part of his collection. This photo and lecture were later reprinted in the



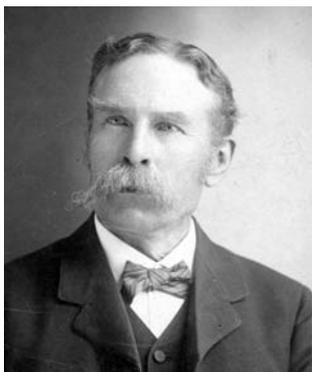
Warwick Historical Papers.

In **1907**, the Society held their annual meeting in the YMCA room and after the election of officers and required business matters adjourned to the Methodist Episcopal Church to hear a lecture given by President Sanford on General John Hathorn of Revolutionary War fame. These annual meetings often ended with a lecture of local interest but sometimes of a broader scope. Their annual dinner was almost always held at the beautiful Red Swan Inn. This lovely and gracious Inn was torn down in 1958. The Inn was located on the present land of the Warwick Country Club. They dined well!



In those early years, the members began to gather books, pamphlets and historical papers of “great interest” and stored them in their YMCA room for use by the Society members only. The YMCA organization gave consent to the use of the room with certain stipulations and charged the Society a mere \$10.00. The members wisely recognized the need for preservation of these myriad archival materials and continued throughout the 100 years to amass a very important and valuable collection. In addition to these archival materials that include photographs, postcards, books and pamphlets, glass negatives, maps and diaries, Society members began collecting furniture and other artifacts

for display and preservation. Members donated most items, but some were loaned for a specified period of time to the Society, then later donated. Our incredible archival collection and equally impressive collection of furniture and other artifacts such as paintings are unusual for a Society of this size. We are indebted to those early members with such farsighted thinking and we recognize and applaud their generosity.



Hiram Tate

The April **1908** meeting centered on a discussion of an appropriate seal for the Society. Officers were elected. Judge Sanford continued as President guiding this newly fledged Society well. Membership totaled 60. The Society now had 96 books and 99 pamphlets in its possession. Elizabeth Burt, in her exquisite handwriting always made note of gifts received that year and her accuracy made the job of cataloging the many gifts received so much easier. The Society joined the New York State Historical Society. The treasury held \$89.12. That August, the Society members gathered once again at the Red Swan Inn for their

annual dinner and heard an excerpt read of Mrs. Eliza Benedict Hornby's book "Under Old Roof Trees". Their meals were very elegant and cosmopolitan for such a rural area and must have been very tasty indeed. Mr. Hiram Tate, one of the founding members was present. His granddaughter Florence joined the Society as a young woman and is still a member today. She, as the Town and Village Historian and Historian for the Society, retains an enormous wealth of information about the Society, its members and the history of the region.

In **1909**, the Society owned about 132 books and 139 pamphlets which they stored in a donated bookcase in the YMCA room. Mrs. George (Genevieve) VanDuzer reported on her exciting trip to Washington, D.C. to do research in the Library of Congress to determine if General George Washington had really stopped at the Francis Baird Tavern in 1782, and discovered that he and his aides Col. Trumbull and Major Walker had been entertained on July 27, 1782 as they passed through by way of the Kings Highway to their headquarters in Newburgh. (Note that there is an article on this topic in Volume II of the *Warwick Historical Papers*, pages 201-203). In later years, Baird Tavern became the home of William B. Sayer; "Uncle Benny" was another venerable citizen steeped in local lore and history.

In **1910** further discussions were held concerning a seal, but it was not till 1911 that the seal was finally adopted. The seal was designed by Ames and Rollinson of NYC with input from the Society members. The Society valued its collection of furniture, paintings and much more at \$500.00 yet they had only \$151.40 in the treasury. Members were eager to learn about local history but also to hear topics of a wider nature. Mr. G.C. Mayham thus read a paper entitled "Two Treaties of Paris".

Excursions, Events, and the First Museum Building

By **1911** the members realized they needed a permanent home for their collection and for their meetings, and so asked for contributions from the community. Mr. William B. Sayer, owner of the Francis Baird Tavern offered the lower rooms for an exhibit to raise funds for the acquisition of a permanent home. Isn't it interesting that eventually that same building would become the property of the Society in later years!

In **1912** Society members traveled by train to Minisink to celebrate the 133rd anniversary of the Battle of Minisink. They also attended a pageant commemorating the arrival of Sarah Wells to Orange County 200 years ago. Sarah Wells was known as the Waywayanda Pioneer Maid who married Thomas Bull then the couple settled in Orange County.

In **1913**, during their annual meeting, a lecture on neglected graveyards within the town's borders spurred the Society into forming a committee to investigate this issue in order to rectify the problem. President Sanford and many of the same founding officers continued their dedicated work. The lecture for their annual dinner was entitled "The Romance of the Old Highways", an intriguing topic. Though these early Society members worked diligently to maintain and grow their fledgling organization, they certainly knew how to have a good time.

In **1914**, as the first *World War* was starting in Europe, the Society continued to meet, to hear lectures frequently, and to dine at the Red Swan Inn. In April, they distributed copies of their very first pamphlet of research and listened to a lecture by Prof. Mayham that had originally been presented at the "Fortnightly Club". The Fortnightly Club was a literary and social society formed in 1896 to hear lectures and papers of particular interest. Many of the Fortnightly Club members were also involved in the Society.

In those early years, both the Dispatch and the Advertiser sent copies of their newspaper to the Society on a regular basis. These are all on microfilm in the Albert Wisner Library and the Society retains some of the early copies as well. Both newspapers were locally owned but only the Dispatch remains so today.

There were 100 members in **1915**. At the annual meeting, the



discussion centered around the possible purchase of the Shingle House on Lake Street (Forester Avenue) for their permanent home, for \$3000.00. This was the oldest standing house in the Village, built by Daniel Burt for his son Daniel, Jr. in 1764. A few members donated substantial amounts of money to the cause and by July the Society had \$1182.00 in the bank for the purchase. The members authorized President Sanford to sign a contract, moved to incorporate the Society, and purchased a Franklin stove and a small safe for the house. They were busy! There was the possibility that Lake Street was to be widened, but the house was so situated that this would not have had much of an impact.

In **1916**, the Society held its very first meeting in the Shingle House. It certainly must have been an exciting time! Gifts of furniture, other antiques and archival materials were gratefully received and documented. Elizabeth Burt resigned her post as Recording Secretary. She had done an admirable job with her neat and legible handwriting, her accuracy and her wonderful comments in the minutes such as “retiring for dainty refreshments” after one of the annual meetings. It was delightful to read her notes.

An elm tree was planted in the front of the house in **1917** and though it died soon after, the members continued to replant an elm. It was not known at that time that elms were suffering from Dutch Elm disease; so many of our stately trees were lost.

In **1918**, a flag donated by Wm. S. Sayer was flown over the Shingle House grounds and the members then sang the Star Spangled Banner to commemorate the donation and to honor men and women of the town who had volunteered for the war effort. A committee was established to locate and mark all war veteran graves, and also to clean up the Locust Hill Cemetery, on Kings Highway (near the Kings Elementary School).

Washington Day Picnic is Established

In **1919**, the Society celebrated the first of many Washington Day picnics on the grounds of the Shingle House, a practice that continued there for several years. From April 1919 to April 1920, there were only a very few meetings as the U.S. had entered into the war and times were very hard. During these first very critically important years of the Society, Miss Julia Wheeler and others had faithfully kept scrapbooks. Although the archive contains many news clipping scrapbooks, we have been unable to identify which were Miss Wheeler’s. What a wonderful resource to have!

In April of **1920**, there were many donations to the Society, including books and pamphlets. From April 1920 to April 1921 was a busy time as a Memorial Plaque for Frank Forester (pen of name Henry William Herbert) was dedicated at the corner of Colonial and Main /Maple Avenue,

originally the site of a beautiful Bandstand. Henry William Herbert was a sportsman and a writer who visited Warwick often and wrote the famous “Warwick Woodlands” and many other books. Although there were a few cars, many still traveled by wagon, coach, horse, etc. Cars were “frightfully expensive” and with the war, gasoline was hard to find. For more on the Forester Day event, see article in the *Warwick Historical Papers, vol. 1*.



In **1922**, Mr. Sanford remained as President-- a span of 16 years until then, an impressive record. In **1923**, the Society celebrated the 150th anniversary of the building of the “quite charming” *Hathorn House*, south of the Village. The house still stands and at that time was owned by a descendant of the original owner, General John Hathorn of Revolutionary War fame. The basket picnic brought approximately 400 people to this momentous occasion.

In **1924**, the members attended a talk that was held in the *Oakland Theatre* on Main Street. The older generation today still remembers that as a child it was a real treat to go there to the “picture show” on Saturday morning for 5 cents. It is truly unfortunate that our only movie house was torn down in the 1950’s to make way for parking and later a Burger King restaurant. Next to the theatre was the Oakland Diner, a great place to enjoy a hearty snack after the movies. It too was later removed.



Oakland Theater

In **1925**, there is a note about another Elm planted on the lawn of the Shingle House which is “growing nicely”. Later that elm succumbed to the Dutch Elm Disease, as did its predecessor, and a maple was planted instead. The following year, the Society celebrated the 150th anniversary of the signing of the *Declaration of Independence*, and began the practice of meeting in various members homes. It certainly was most pleasant and comfortable to meet in one of these gracious homes and to enjoy “dainty refreshments” afterwards.

In **1928**, Mrs. George (Genevieve) VanDuzer began answering letters from individuals asking for information on genealogy and local history. She had faithfully replied to 31 letters of inquiry, according to her annual report.

Regular Museum Hours, Seward Memorial Erected

In **1929**, the Society began the practice of opening up the Shingle House to visitors on Friday afternoons in July and August, a practice continued to this day on Tuesdays and Saturdays for the museums. The nation was in the grips of "*The Great Depression*" following the crash in 1929. Although there was no mention of this at all in the minutes, this must have affected many of the families in Warwick. During these years, meetings were few and many of the larger projects were placed on hold.

On September 24, **1930** a memorial plaque and bust of William H. Seward was dedicated. This Warwick native became President Lincoln's Secretary of State from 1861-1869 and urged Congress to purchase Alaska for the price of approximately \$7 million. As we all know, although this was called Seward's Folly, history has shown this to have been a most wise choice. We were (and are) indeed indebted to Mr. Seward for his perseverance in this matter. His boyhood home still stands in Florida on the main street.



In **1934**, a Historical Marker Committee was appointed to put historical markers around the town as a visible reminder to passers-by of the rich heritage of the land they traveled. At that time, 12 markers and one roadside tablet had been placed along the town and village roads.

In April of **1936**, the Society held its annual meeting at the home of Miss Julia Demarest, a founding and most supportive member of the Society. This was a festive occasion as they were celebrating the *30th anniversary* of the founding of the Society. How grateful we are today as we celebrate the *100th anniversary* of this organization to these dedicated individuals who, despite many odds such as a World War and the Depression, carried on with the business of maintaining this organization.

Faithful Efforts to Restore and Repair

By **1938**, the Society recognized the need for major repairs to the Shingle House. This was a theme oft repeated many times over the years and it has been always of great concern.

Repairs continued into **1939**. Volunteers donated many hours to clean, paint and make necessary repairs. Orange and Rockland Utility Company donated wiring and by November, electric lights were installed.

In **1940**, as the *Second World War* continued to rage, the Society was forced to borrow some money to pay for the needed repairs to the Shingle House. Although the amount of money for the repairs seems small today, the total amount was large for this small organization. The Society never wavered in its intent to preserve this building and its contents and to follow its mission set down so many years before. The practice of answering inquiries continued.

There were several exhibits in the Shingle House including one on “Shawls” and teas were held, all to raise money to continue with their work. Though the United States did not enter into WWII until the bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1941, the people felt the impact, especially economically. There were Victory Gardens planted, all metal was recycled to make airplanes and tanks etc., and many families saw a young son or husband go off to war. Although the Society carried on with the usual business of running this organization, there were few meetings. They continued their fundraising activities and attempted to claim some normalcy in their lives.

During the Washington Day Picnic in **1942**, a sign for the Shingle House created by Mr. Roy Vail was dedicated. He was an active Society member and a nationally acclaimed wood carver and gunsmith.

In **1943**, the dues still remained at \$1.00. At their annual meeting the members discussed canceling future meetings as there was a gas shortage due to the war. This obviously must have happened as there were few recorded minutes of meetings although the members did carry on with some necessary maintenance and repairs.

Seward Highway Dedicated, More Markers Erected

In **1944**, Route 17A was renamed Seward Highway in honor of William H. Seward. In **1945**, the Washington Day Picnic was held and a talk on “Freedom and Responsibility” was given. How appropriate! It should be noted the Society almost always had a speaker both for the Washington Day festivities and also for their annual dinner still being held in the Red Swan Inn.

The lecture in **1946** was “The Romance of the Hudson” given by Mr. Gordon Wightman. Mr. Madison Lewis was appointed by the Society President to place an appropriate marker on Seward Highway.

A marker was placed on Wisner Road in **1948** to honor Johannes Wisner and his family, the very first settlers to farm a large parcel. For the first time, Isabel (“Sis”) Palmer was mentioned in the notes. She was a long time member, lived for many years in the 1810 house after it had been acquired by the Society, acting as the Caretaker and watched over the Herb Garden after it was established in 1957. During the Washington Day Picnic

of **1949**, there was a display of over 40 antique teapots, a very popular exhibit. There was unfortunately no mention of the person(s) who owned and displayed these teapots nor were there any photographs.

In **1950**, the *Warwick Historical Papers*, Book 2, no. 1 was printed by the Society and was sold for \$4.00 each. Book 1 had been printed and distributed in 1914. These books contain many of the lectures, the Constitution (revised many times), obituaries, a copy of the seal, a list of all the officers through the years and many other interesting stories and research papers. The annual meeting was held on April 19. It was interesting to note that the Society did manage to hold their annual meeting in April.

Old School Baptist Meeting House Saved

In **1951**, the Society considered taking possession of the Old School Baptist Meeting House, a stately and elegant edifice erected in 1810. Located on a rise in the heart of the village, it has stood since its building as a landmark. The congregation numbers had dwindled to only 12 making it most difficult for them to maintain this lovely building. In order to prevent it from reverting to the state and being torn down completely, at the 11th hour the Society was able save it. It remains a consecrated church to this day. It has been photographed by professionals and amateurs alike, used for weddings and other ceremonies and made its Hollywood debut in the film "In and Out".



The initial cost of the repairs to the church was estimated at \$1150.00. However, by August, the Society had \$1473.22 in the bank and the church itself contributed another \$500.00 to the cause as the members were still holding services. The church was not electrified but did have coal stoves. Card parties were organized to raise funds, notepaper with sketches by Edith Vail was sold and an exhibit of matchboxes and trivets, compliments of Mrs. Pierson Booth was held. The deed was presented by Mr. Isaac Dolson from the church to Mr. Lawrence Stage, Treasurer of the Society, in **1952**.

The church members knew the Society would "see old, fine landmark" preserved. Both newspapers carried the story of this momentous occasion

with a history of the church and its august members. The Society was very concerned about the use of the facilities as there was always the possibility of fire which would have been devastating not only to the Society but to the community as well. The Society drew up a protocol for use of the church and worked with the church members and other organizations to ensure preservation of this fine old edifice.

Lewis Park, Sly Barn

In **1953**, Mrs. Elizabeth Lewis purchased the American Legion property on Main Street, formerly the YMCA building and known today as the 1810 House, which adjoined the Old School Baptist grounds. The building was restored and converted into the *Warwick Valley Museum*. Early in **1954**, the Society began their preparations for this Museum. Meanwhile, in the Shingle House a huge, walk in fireplace complete with all the cooking utensils was located in the old kitchen and then restored. In the summer, the Society opened up the Shingle House for tours.

During this year, the Village was considering their future direction and the Society participated in the Master Plan process with commentary at meetings and letters of support.

In April of **1956**, the Society marked their fiftieth year. A booklet about those first fifty years was published under the direction of Miss Hylah Hasbrouck (copies still available). There were 60 members and the treasury held over \$1100.00 in the general fund and over \$1000.00 in the OSB Meeting House fund. The Society was active; they owned both the Shingle House and the OSB Meeting House which they were determined to preserve; the annual Washington Day Picnic was a regular attraction; books, pamphlets, antiques and other artifacts were being preserved. In July, an exhibit in the newly named Warwick Valley Museum, of old copper and brass, compliments of Mrs. Albert W. Buckbee was very popular during the annual Washington Day picnic.



Madison and Elizabeth Lewis

Beginning around **1957**, *Lewis Park* was gradually created by Mr. and Mrs. Madison Lewis as a memorial to his father Edward B. Lewis, through judicious purchase and removal of structures on adjacent properties.

The *Sly Barn*, located opposite the Landmark Inn was moved by Mr. Henry Tenkate and Mr. Harold Wilson with the assistance of others to the rear of the Shingle House, to store, preserve and display the collection of many farm implements. The discussion at the annual meeting centered on the restoration of the Meeting house especially the pulpit. The original



Wine Glass pulpit had been removed in 1865 so the Society members wanted to restore the pulpit to its original design. Another batch of notepaper with sketches by Edith Vail was now for sale. The members discussed whether they should sell the land that originally was the Baptismal lot of the OSB Meeting House on High Street,

along Wawayanda Creek. It was sold later to the Telephone Company. A very successful afternoon tea was held in December with the assistance of the Jr. Historical Society to introduce and sell the 50 year booklet.

The restoration of the Meeting House was proceeding well. The members discussed replacement of some of the windows and then working with some of the neighborhood boys to discourage further vandalism. This program did appear to be somewhat successful.

Celebrating Historic Homes, Growing Larger

During the **1958** Washington Day Picnic, Mrs. Fred Houston's paper "The Story of Early Bellvale" was read and well received by a very large audience. In **1959**, the members met in the home of Dr. and Mrs. M. R. Bradner, Sr. to continue their discussion on the meeting house restoration. Mr. Roy Vail had contacted Mr. Lyons of Lyons Millwork to construct a new pulpit of the Wine Glass design. The members had decided to use the annex attached to the rear of the Shingle House for storage of their books. Most of the books were later retrieved and moved to the small room in Baird Tavern.

A successful Open House Day was held in September **1959** which included the Shingle House, the 1810 House and the OSB Meeting House and other historic homes in the Warwick Valley. These Open House Days were useful educational tools to acquaint the public with the Society, its activities and its benefits to the community. Two hundred people attended.

Mr. and Mrs. Roy Vail hosted the annual meeting in **1960** in their lovely home south of the village, now the Italian Villa restaurant. Genevieve VanDuzer reported that she had answered 40 requests for information, mostly on genealogy. How knowledgeable she must have

been to answer all these requests. The Washington Day picnic was very successful as there was a record crowd.

In **1961**, the Vails again hosted the annual meeting. Miss Hylah Hasbrouck reported that \$30.00 had been raised from the card parties which would be given to the Junior Historical Society for their annual outing, this year to Lake Placid, N.Y. The members discussed a proposal to host “Silver Teas” in their homes to raise money for the Society. All through the history of the Society, money for maintenance of the buildings has been a common theme and still today remains a large focus for the members.

During the annual meeting in **1962**, Miss Hylah Hasbrouck spoke of the overwhelming response to the Junior Historical Society event held at the new high school. There were many exhibits and over 200 young people attended. “They were a nicely behaved group and handsomely hosted by our local Juniors”. The Society was officially granted tax-exempt status due to the efforts of Mr. Lawrence Stage, Treasurer. This was an important step for the Society as it was critical to their financial well being.

Herb Garden Created

In **1963**, the Society raised the annual dues to \$1.50 and decided to hold the Washington Day Picnic at the Old Schoolhouse on Prices



Switch Road, located on property owned by Henry Coster. It gave \$20.00 to the Jr. Historical Society for their trip to Saratoga Springs this year. Funds to create an Herb Garden behind the 1810 House were

allotted. The *Herb Garden* was originally planted by Mrs. Elizabeth Lewis and Mrs. M R. (“Fan”) Bradner, Sr. with professional guidance from Mrs. Charles Reed and Mr. Ralph Schaeffer of Newburgh, N.Y. It remains today as a beautiful example of an 18th century inspired herb garden, cared for by the Orange and Dutchess Garden Club.

Shingle House Bicentennial

In **1964** The Shingle House annex was painted and John Earl Davis edited a book on the Shingle House to celebrate the 200th anniversary of this fine structure (copies still available). Mr. and Mrs. Davis were active members of the Society and their community.

The Washington Day Picnic on July 31 was very special in 1964 as it marked the bicentennial of the Shingle House. Mr. Vernon Ives read "A Day in the Life of Mrs. Burt" or "June Morning, 1790" as it is entitled in the Shingle House booklet, from the story written by Frances Sanford Bradner (Mrs. M. R. Bradner, Sr.).

Also in 1964, Orange and Rockland Utilities donated their services to the Society to provide lighting in the Meeting House. Dues were raised to \$2.00 and a lifetime membership was now \$500.00, quite a change from the original \$20.00.

Genevieve VanDuzer died in **1965**. She was a founding member of the Society, aided in the formation of the Constitution and the design of the Society seal. She, through her research in Washington, D.C. established the fact that Gen. George Washington and his aides had indeed stopped at the Baird Tavern for refreshments. She was also the first official local government Historian of Warwick. We are greatly indebted to her for her active and vital role in the early years of the Society.



Discussion continued on whether to permanently acquire the schoolhouse on Prices Switch Road. Because the land and the schoolhouse lie within the borders of Sussex County, an agreement was drawn up to deed the property to the Sussex County Board of Freeholders. The generosity of Mr. Henry Coster was clearly noted by the HSTOW. The Society was allowed the right to use the site for 99 years.

In **1966**, the Society had 200 members and as always some of the discussion centered on the maintenance of the two buildings. Several of the window panes in the OSB Meeting House had been broken and needed replacement at a cost of \$1200.00 just for one side. The work of course was done. The July picnic was as popular as ever. The speaker, Mr. Lewis Popham 3rd spoke of the agreement in 1818 with Canada to maintain the "longest non-fortified border".

In **1967**, the lot next to the 1810 house belonging to the Madison Lewis's was given to the Society. The comment in the minutes on the Washington Day picnic in this year was "It did not rain" so it must have rained on their festivities many times.

Smith Welling House Saved

In **1971**, the annual meeting was held in the estate home of the Lewis's, Wyndhurst. The Lewis family were most generous to Society over the years. New slate was put on ½ of the Shingle House, the other half to be done at a later date as slate was expensive and time consuming to

install. In October, the members were most distressed to learn of robberies at both the 1810 House and the Shingle House. Insurance claims were submitted and through newspaper articles and good police work, many of the items were recovered.

David Brandt, an architect and member urged the Society to become involved in the preservation of historic homes within the village, especially those along Oakland Avenue. This was an ongoing discussion as the Society was most interested in the preservation of all historic homes, and initiated the idea of historic status for the village. A Revolving Loan Fund was established to help private owners restore and preserve their historic buildings. Alarms were placed in all the buildings to deter further theft, and a telephone was placed in the Shingle House. What progress!

A special meeting was held in August of **1972** to discuss the proposed demolition of the former Warwick Hospital/Smith-Welling *Home* on Forester Ave. David Brandt detailed many reasons for preservation and the Board agreed to investigate the issue. The Society so wisely agreed to negotiate a sale of the building for \$60,000.00 and to use a \$2500.00 option to prevent almost immediate demolition. An appeal to the public brought in some needed funds and another loan for \$5000.00 was granted to them. Thank goodness the Society did! The donations were used to begin restoration, and title to this graceful and historic building was turned over to the Society in July of 1974. The old Hospital building proudly stands today, preserved for the future and purchased later that same year by the Kennedy family.

1810 House and Ketchum House Donated

In **1973**, Society treasury had a whopping \$10,635.47. The dues were raised to \$4.00 per person. The members discussed celebrating the 200th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence in 1776 and their participation. Funds, which were recouped later with a 2nd



printing, were granted to Dr. Richard Hull, for his first printing of the “People of the Valleys: A History of the Valleys of the Town of Warwick 1700-1975”. The book would represent the Society’s participation in the

upcoming national Bicentennial.

Mrs. Elizabeth Lewis Van Leer, President of the Society, offered to donate the 1810 House along with money for maintenance. The furniture belonging to several different individuals would remain for the time being. This would make the 1810 house the fourth structure that the Society owned. What an incredible achievement for such a small society! Mr. Robert Richmond would live in a portion of the house and act as Curator. The contents of the Frank Forester room loaned by the Vails were purchased and then donated to the Society where they remain to this day.

Mrs. Grace Bennett, a Society member, approached the board of Trustees as she wished to donate her house at 26 Church Street known as the *Azariah Ketchum House* and lot to the Society as long as she was granted life rights to the home. This was accomplished adding a fifth structure to the Society's holdings. The Ketchum House was built around 1810 by Azariah Ketchum, a master carpenter who assisted in the construction of the OSB Meeting House. It was considered a very fine example of the Federal style architecture. The Society was fortunate to have acquired it.



Caboose Donated

In **1977**, 45 new members were added to the roster and 845 people toured the Society's buildings during the summer months of July and August. All revolving fund projects were completed and money was refunded to all investors. Robert Richmond, Curator of the 1810 house and longtime Society member wrote and published a brochure on the buildings owned by the Society, which was given to the people on the tour. Discussion continued on the ever constant need for funds to maintain all these buildings and ways to raise these funds.



Mr. Edward Brown from the Lehigh and Hudson Railway donated a circa 1900 Caboose to the Society which was eventually moved in 1979 to its current location beside the Sly barn and behind the Shingle House.

The first issue of *Warwick Roots*, the Society's annual newsletter, was published, edited by Mr. John Earl Davis. Later in 1977, Grace Bennett released life rights to the Ketchum House which then became tax exempt, an enormous financial benefit to the Society.

In **1979**, a local law firm, Mandell and Charde purchased the Baird Tavern from the current owner. Funds from the Revolving Fund

were granted to them for restoration of the outside of the Tavern. Later, they granted the HSTOW right of first refusal to purchase the Tavern.

The outhouse on the grounds of the OSB Meeting House was a source of constant annoyance to the maintenance crew and discussed at length during meetings. It was constantly broken into and at one time, according to Mr. Harold Wilson used as a temporary residence for a young woman who was persuaded to find another home. Eventually it was boarded up but does still remain on the grounds of the meeting house as a monument to earlier times.

Both Edith and Roy Vail died in 1979, a real loss to the Society and to the community. Mr. Vail was President for many years and he and his wife Edith contributed much to the Society.

In **1980**, Isabel(Sis) Palmer moved into the 1810 House to act as Curator and Custodian.

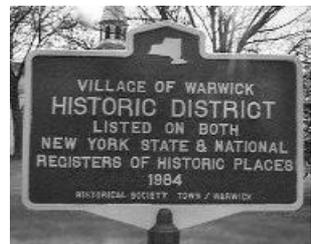
In **1981**, the very first “*Wine and Cheese Party*” was held in Lewis Park raising over \$1500.00 and was deemed most successful.

In **1982**, Anna Wilson took over as the Treasurer, serving in this office until 2005. Mrs. Francis (Babette) Roy had donated her considerable talent by providing sketches of the Society’s buildings for notepaper, to be sold to raise money. In the summer, Mr. Gerald Decatur of the Warwick School system asked if the Society would provide tours for the 4th grade classes in the fall. This was begun and continues to this day. There are many volunteers in costume to lead these popular tours who show the houses, discuss the lives of the people who lived in them and demonstrate crafts appropriate to the period.

The Lehigh and Hudson River Railway Caboose was repaired in **1983**, and discussion centered on the Ketchum House and its fate as Mrs. Bennett was ill. The Society voted to lend the Chamber of Commerce money to repair and restore their caboose on South Street. A loan was also granted to the owners of “10 Railroad Avenue” ,a restaurant in the village, located on Railroad Ave. to restore the outside façade of the building which used to be Kelly’s bar. Restoration work continued on the OSB Meeting House.

National Register Status for Main Street

The Village of Warwick received its Historic District designation in **1984**, a project that many Society members had worked diligently to see finalized. This was a really major accomplishment for the Village and for the Society. The designation would aid in preserving the period construction of



Main Street by discouraging erection or alteration of buildings that did not reflect the surrounding historic architecture. Purple polka dots with pink stripes definitely would not be allowed!!

The Society urged the Town to keep the Town Hall on Main Street in the village but it was eventually moved out to its present location on Kings Highway. Historical markers placed around the Town needed attention and so the Heritage Committee, formerly the Landmarks Committee, was re-formed to clean, paint and repair those still in existence and to replace others. This has been an ongoing project. Florence Tate, the historian for the Society reported that she had responded to requests for information mainly of a genealogical nature.

Refurbishment and Renewal

Discussion in **1986** centered on the need for repairs and maintenance of the Society buildings. A tree had just fallen on the OSB Meeting House roof requiring immediate attention. Mr. Michael Bertolini, a certified appraiser had completed the appraisal of all the furniture in the Shingle House and in the 1810 House. A special fund raiser to secure funds to repair the meeting house roof was most successful and Mr. Martin VanDeWeert, a local and capable contractor completed the work.

The bake sale was held again in **1987**, in front of the 1810 House, in June as it had been for many years. A substantial donation from Mrs. Ruth Blanke, sister of Isabel (Sis) Palmer, coupled with other monies raised through various functions, which allowed the Society to continue with repairs to the various buildings.

In **1989**, the Society found a caretaker for the Ketchum House who cared for the museum for several years. Mr. Edward Klein, owner of the local radio station and of the newspaper the Advertiser, assisted the Society to print ROOTS which he did for a number of years. The Society had over \$80,000.00 in its regular treasury and \$40,000.00 in the Revolving Fund. Though this seems to have been a great deal of money, the demands on the Society for constant repairs and maintenance required large financial support. Later, another generous donation from Mrs. Ruth Blanke would be used for the purchase and installation of the new reproduction carpet in the OSB Meeting House. Gary Randall reported that more markers were placed in Pine Island, Bellvale, Amity and New Milford. The Orange County Historian's office always supported the Society with grant monies for specific projects such as \$750.00 most recently to defray the cost of the historic roadside markers.

A donated sundial was placed in the 1810 garden in honor of Mrs. Elizabeth Lewis Van Leer. Her strong leadership and her incredibly generous contributions to the Society were remarkable. Underneath this gracious facade was an iron will determined to preserve as many historic

buildings as possible. She served as president for 25 years, and the Society is most grateful to her.

Weddings continued to be held in 1989 at the OSB Meeting House, six in this year- a lovely tradition. Money from the Revolving Fund was loaned to the Iron Forge Inn for exterior restoration, which was completed and the money repaid to the Society. The organ in the OSB Meeting House was repaired at Dr. M.R. Bradner's own expense, again a generous donation.

At the April annual meeting in **1990**, President Dr. M. R. Bradner, Jr. stressed the need for a wider, more diverse membership. This was a critical moment for the Society. It is worth noting here that both Dr. M. R. Bradner Sr. and his son Dr. M. R. Bradner, Jr. were Presidents of this Society providing strong leadership at crucial times. Mr. John Lee, Vice President, with his fine artistic sense had started the "Puppet Show" in May, held in Lewis Park, which continued for many years delighting both young and old alike. Mr. Lee, a lawyer had drawn up a list of rules for use of the OSB Meeting House. These were accepted and adopted for future use as there were always many requests for the use of the meeting house. Mr. Edward Klein continued to underwrite the cost of publishing ROOTS, a most generous contribution. A painting of the Village Hall by Dr. Donald Hull, father of Dr. Richard Hull was presented to the Village and remains there today. That year in 1990, there were many meetings and discussions concerning the proposal to move the Village Hall as they were in desperate need of more space. The Society encouraged the Village to leave the offices there in order to preserve this fine old building. Eventually the village police department, after merging with the town police department moved to Kings Highway in the Town Hall, freeing up much needed space. The village hall remains today on Main Street as a fine example of Greek Revival architecture. The building was originally the first Reformed Church built in 1847/1848 and had been moved to its current location from the site of the present Reformed Church across from the hospital on Maple Avenue.

The Society wrote letters urging the town and village to preserve the Welling Farm just south of the village line from development, as it was an important archeological site with Indian artifacts from the Mistucky tribe.

The membership list was put on computer, compiled by Mrs. Alfred Lewis (nee Nina Sanford) which made record keeping more efficient. The Society brochure was included in the Welcome Wagon Kit dispersed to all newcomers. The Florida Presbyterian Church was celebrating its 250th anniversary. A few of the Society's members attended. John Sanford Jr. reported that there were no new applications for money from the Revolving Fund. A committee was formed to investigate the

current state of all cemeteries within the town's borders and to urge legislation to preserve these historic records.

At the March meeting in 1991, Victorian Treasures, a shop in the village on Main Street asked The Cat's Meow Company to create a model of the OSB Meeting House for sale. Other models of the Society's buildings followed. The Society would receive \$1.00 for each replica sold. In the early 1990's, grants were applied for, from various organizations and businesses by Mr. David Rothschild. He was quite successful.

Baird Tavern Acquired

In May of **1991**, Mr. John Sanford, Jr. voiced the desire of the Society to acquire the Baird Tavern, which was for sale, and through the enormous generosity of Mrs. Elizabeth Lewis Van Leer, this was accomplished. This was a very important purchase for the Society. Mrs. Van Leer covered all the costs of this acquisition and she, along with other Society members, vowed to restore the Tavern as accurately as possible.



Society members have always had to keep a sharp eye out for potential damage to the buildings and collections, and in October, Mrs. Gregory Masefield (nee Frances Bradner) said that damage had been done to the Shingle House by mice and she and her committee were working hard to prevent any further harm. She, her mother, Mrs. M.R. Bradner and their committee had taken care of the Shingle House for many years with great devotion.

Hasbrouck Carriage Barn Relocated

The Hasbrouck House Carriage Barn located behind the Key Bank immediately adjacent to the Tavern had been offered for free if the Society would move the structure. The officers readily agreed.

The very first meeting in the Baird Tavern was held in November in **1992**. The renovations were almost complete and many had donated furniture and other items for the Tavern. Mr. Robert Fletcher, a well



known local artist produced a fine pen and ink sketch of the Tavern in a snowstorm. The original hangs in the Tavern.

In **1993**, as repair bills mounted for each of the seven structures, the Society considered the sale of the Ketchum House; fortunately that proposal was postponed. Reproduction 18th century street lamps were made and given to the Society with a most generous donation from Ruth Blanke and placed around the Society's buildings by Mr. Greg Masefield. Some were privately acquired, and the remainder belong to the Society.



Anna and Harold Wilson at the "Wassail"

The Society discussed hosting a Wassail Party which they did hold in December, a popular holiday tradition. A most welcome and needed anonymous \$50,000.00 donation was made to the Society for maintenance of

the many buildings; and the

John Earle Davis Memorial Fund monies were used to build cabinets in the main room of the Tavern.

In **1995**, the Revolving Fund program was discontinued and the money transferred to another account.

In **1996**, the Society noted with sadness and regret the sudden death of its current President, Dr. Bradner, who had contributed so much in his tenure. Mr. John Lee, Vice President, took over. In January, a pair of Mr. Roy Vail's guns were donated to the Society by Mr. Ronald Vitella. The Society was very grateful for his donation.

The state advised the Society in **1998** of new regulations requiring a certain number of hours of operation each week and a certain number of hours that the buildings be open to the public for non-profits and so began the task of complying which was most time consuming. Grants were received to repair the OSB Meeting House steeple yet again and the front porch entrance to the church. Mr. Greg Masefield spearheaded the effort to publish a Society calendar, the first one was published in 1998, a really exquisite calendar with scenes of the Society's buildings and interiors. The photographs were taken by John Stage, a nationally recognized photographer who resides locally. The photographs for the other two years were taken by a number of talented individuals along with paintings and drawings of the buildings and interiors.

Moving Forward

Henry Nielsen, Jr. was elected President in **1999**, and the Society began a process of re-evaluation and growth. Sue Gardner, local history librarian at Albert Wisner Library, began a cooperative project with the society to properly record and catalog the Society's huge collection of books, pamphlets, photos, postcards and so much more. She was joined that summer by Patricia McConnell and later by Femi Roecker.

In **2000**, PDR or purchase of development rights was proposed by the Town as a viable alternative to the loss of farmland. The Society issued a statement favoring the passage of local funding, and the measure was passed that fall.

“Village Green” and “Hallowed Ground” Parks Preserved

The archive project encouraged the Society to begin a similar process with their artifacts and antiques, a project coordinated by Raey Webster with the help of curator Michael Bertolini and others, so that eventually there will be a complete inventory. The History Club with the guidance of Betty Hurd has assisted in this work. The Society members contributed over \$14,000.00 to the preservation of the Village Green park and later participated in the preservation of the small triangle of land located at the intersection of Galloway Road and Forester Avenue which was the original burial ground and building site for the first Old School Baptist Meeting House and its cemetery, now called “Hallowed Ground”

A project to clean, properly house, catalog, and exhibit the excellent costume collection was begun by Ms. Betty Hurd with Michael Bertolini. At that point the collection was inventoried at 250 items, dating from 1810 to the 1960's.

In **2003**, the Society noted that its web page was “up and running” thanks to all the computer literate people within our ranks. The archival committee had identified 662 items in various buildings and with a donation from IBM of specialized software was able to begin the process of entering information about the collection on the computer. The artifact committee under the direction of Raey Webster was likewise entering information into the computer. Raey Webster was responsible for obtaining that grant. Mrs. Mary Bradner provided funds for a new computer. The first CD of the postcard collection, “Greetings from Warwick” became available, due to the efforts of Betty Hurd and Sue Gardner. The second CD, “Warwick Album” was available the next year. In May of 2003, during an Executive Board meeting, the comment “Buildings and Grounds in good shape” was made. It is a tribute to the many volunteers who put in hundreds of hours, and most especially to Mr.

Harold Wilson and Raey Webster for their thousands of hours of dedicated service that these buildings still stand for the enjoyment and education of the community.

In July of 2003, the possibility of Mr. Michael Bertolini and Mr. Jerry Duane moving into the Ketchum House was discussed and everyone thought this to be an excellent solution for all parties. Betty Hurd had reported that a group of 30 high school students would like to become more involved in the Society. What wonderful ad-ditions these young people

have been. They have been a real asset and they have been learning about our local history. The re-pointing of the outside walls of the



Warwick H.S. History Club 2005

Tavern was con-
tinued with a
generous grant from the Warwick Savings Bank of \$10,000.00 which was
matched by the Society.

The Society began a “Harvest to Holly” fall tour in 2004 after a great deal of planning and preparation. The buildings were beautifully decorated, the response was significant and the praise well deserved.

In the spring of **2004**, the first costume exhibit took place on the second floor of the Baird Tavern. “Women in White” was highly successful. The Ketchum House was being restored and an addition completed through the generosity of Michael Bertolini and Jerry Duane. When Mrs. Grace Bennett had acquired the house, she had also done considerable work to both the exterior and the interior with financial assistance from the Society, but it was currently in poor shape and in desperate need of repair. It was decided to create a more spacious residence for the curator at the same time the renovations were being done, with life residency given to Mr. Bertolini and Mr. Duane as it had been for Ms. Bennett.

During the fall, there was much discussion on the need for a part time administrator and so the Society’s first administrative coordinator, Sybil Skinner, was hired for 10 hours a week. She came with considerable experience, as she had been coordinator for a Living History Farm. A throw blanket, showing the Society museums and other historic buildings, was specially made for the Society to be sold at major events. The Gift Shop, housed in the rear of the 1810 House was very successful selling a variety of items during the Open House Days in the summer.

In **2005**, the HSTOW was off to a very busy start with meetings in January to set the dates for the programs for the year; to set aside money for materials to make period costumes for the Docents and to discuss

adoption of the Long Range Plan which the Committee had been working on for some time. President Henry Nielsen relocated to Florida that winter, and Mr. Donald Lomax succeeded Henry Nielsen as President. Henry contributed much to the Society.

In April at the annual meeting Anna Wilson retired and was thanked for her many years of service to the Society as the Treasurer. Later that year Joan and Tom Frangos retired and gave on loan a collection of Benedict family memorabilia, to be housed in the Shingle House. A project to identify the names of all of the members of John Hathorn's militia regiment who lived in Warwick was begun by Betty Hurd and Gary Randall, in order to create a plaque honoring them at Town Hall. History Club members from the high school held fundraisers to help with costs for the plaques. Raey Webster and the Artifact Committee have ascertained that there are over 2000 artifacts in the Society's collection.

The annex to the Shingle House was refurbished in order to display the Helen and Edward Stidworthy Mineral Collection by the Eagle Scout Joseph Michel and Troup 45 of Warwick.



Society officers 2005-2006: Tom Frangos, Gary Randall, Sheila Warner, Sue Gardner, Don Lomax, Abbey Oppen, Mary Near McFarland, Sandy Glazman, Nell Rothschild, Harold Wilson, Betty Hurd.

Harvest to Holly's second year was as successful as the first bringing many new people to view the beautifully decorated homes and buildings owned by the Society.

It is now **2006** and the Society is planning many interesting and informative activities, some old and some new for the entire year The following is the schedule planned for this, our Centennial year:

March 25--Official release of the book " Days Gone By" and reception will take place: This book of over 500 photographs is a spectacular addition to the Society's publications.

April 8--Annual dinner and membership meeting: This will be held this year at the Warwick Valley Country Club. Mary W. Bradner and Dorothy A. Sanford will be honored as recipients of the Elizabeth

Sanford Lewis and Madison Lewis Award for their dedicated service to the Society.

May 6--Grand opening of the Stidworthy Mineral Collection in the Shingle House annex which will be on permanent display. This collection gathered over many years was carefully identified and labeled to be ready for the grand opening.

May 21--“100 Years of Fashion” Show and reception. The show will be held in the OSB Meeting House and the reception will be held in the Baird Tavern. The fashions will include many of the Society’s clothing collection.

June 4--Annual “Wine and Cheese Party” to be held on the lawn of Lewis Park

June 24-- Friends of the Society” Invitation only reception and garden party will be held at the 1810 Garden. This will also mark the kickoff campaign for the planned future major restoration of the Shingle House, the first building to be acquired by the Historical Society.

July 29--Annual George Washington Parade and Picnic to be held on the lawn of Lewis Park. “George” has been invited and is sure to attend.

August 26- Annual “Under the Tent Preservation Party” to be held also on the lawn of Lewis Park. This has always been a very popular and enjoyable get-together for all with good food, music and of course the auction to raise money for the needs of the Society

October 3 /4-Date TBA- Annual fourth grade tours of all the buildings with docents will take place. The children really enjoy this educational outing and the Society members and docents do as well.

November 18 &19-- The annual “Harvest to Holly” tours will again be held this year with the planned addition of “Candlelight Tours” to all the buildings on one of those nights.

November- Date TBA-The presentation of the “Revolutionary War” plaque at the Town Hall by the Society and the members of the History Club which will hang in the Town Hall for all to view.

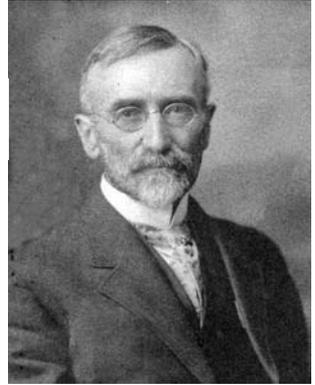
Then and Now: A Few More Photos



Joel Henry Crissey
Founding Board Member

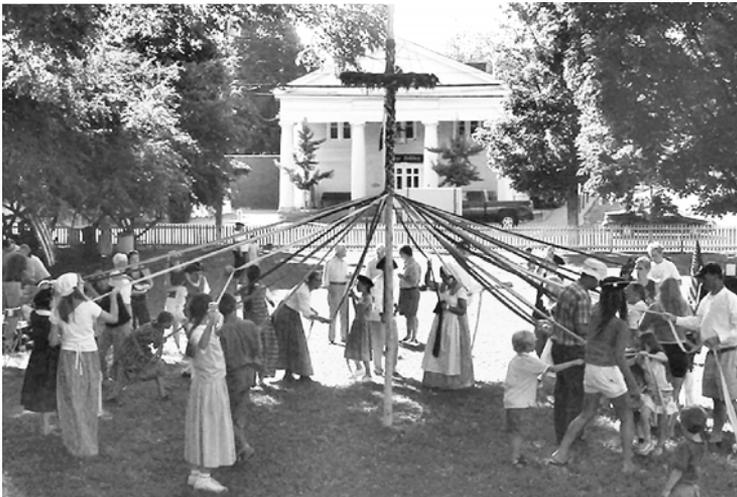


Henry Pelton
Founding Board Member



George F. Ketchum
Founding Board Member

Maypole at Washington Day Picnic, 2005





Our Seal

The old double arch bridge that stood at Wisner signifies our mission to connect Warwick's past to its present and future.

The chain forged at Sterling Furnace during the Revolutionary War kept the British from advancing up the Hudson River; it is also a symbol of the strength of a community that is linked with its historic past. Together, we can preserve our heritage.

In the background, Mts. Adam and Eve symbolize the goals which we aspire to achieve.

OFFICERS AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS

FIRST OFFICERS: APRIL 1906

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| President | Judge Ferdinand V. Sanford |
| First Vice-President | Mr. George F. Ketchum |
| Second Vice-President | Mr. Hiram Tate |
| Third Vice-President | Mr. Lewis J. Stage |
| Fourth Vice-President | Mr. Henry P. Demarest |
| Corresponding Secretary | Mrs. Sallie A. F. Servin |
| Recording Secretary | Miss Elizabeth Burt |
| Treasurer | Miss Genevieve Crissey |
| Executive Board | Rev. Taber Knox, Mrs. Elizabeth C. Van Duzer Miss Julia Demarest Miss Juliet V. Wheeler |

FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OFFICERS: APRIL 1956

| | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| President | Dr. Morris R. Bradner, Sr. |
| First Vice-President | Mr. John N. Beattie, III |
| Second Vice-President | Mr. Ludlow S. Fowler |
| Treasurer | Mr. Lawrence Stage |
| Recording Secretary | Mrs. Fred Houston |
| Corresponding Secretary | Miss Genevieve Van Duzer |
| Trustee for 5 Years | Mr. Madison H. Lewis |
| Curators | Mr. and Mrs. Roy Vail |

CENTENNIAL YEAR OFFICERS: AS OF MARCH 2006

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| President | Mr. Donald Lomax |
| First Vice-President | Mr. Thomas Frangos |
| Second Vice-President | Mr. Michael Newhard |
| Third Vice-President | Mr. Gary Randall |
| Corresponding Secretary | Mrs. Mary Bradner |
| Recording Secretary | Mrs. Sheila Warner |
| Treasurer | Mr. Jeffrey Alario |
| Assistant Treasurer | Mrs. Abigail Opper |
| Trustees | Mrs. Marina Alario Mr. Michael Bertolini Mrs. Mary Bradner Mr. Sanford Glzman Mrs. Elizabeth Hurd Mrs. Debbie Iurato Mrs. Mary Neal McFarland Mrs. Nell Rothschild Mr. Harold Wilson |

