

## ***East Fishkill Historical Society Newsletter***

***P.O. Box 245, Hopewell Junction, N.Y. 12533***

***(845) 227-4136 [www.eastfishkillhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.eastfishkillhistoricalsociety.org)***

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***REMINDER: Christmas Open House, Sunday December 6<sup>th</sup>. 2-5PM***

### **Ramblings from the Director – Malcolm Mills**

At the time of the last newsletter we were looking forward to the site being opened for the Taste of History weekend. This event was coordinated with all the local historic sites as a way of encouraging visitors coming to see the fall colors, to detour and see local historic buildings. As an incentive, each site offered its unique “taste” of history. The Brinckerhoff house’s contribution was Dutch cookies and apple cider. Although numbers were light on Saturday, 30 visitors came to our site on Sunday. This made the effort worthwhile and brought in two new memberships. There were several out of town visitors, including some from Long Island. We offer our thanks to the trustees who acted as docents and also to Joy Mills for baking all the cookies. One visitor was so smitten with the cookies that he asked to post the recipes on the Hudson Valley Historic Destinations website. <http://midhudsonhistoricdestinations.com>

Long time members, Tom and Norma Jacobs have been doing that thing that most of us should be doing....“Downsizing!” Tom and Norma have given the society an assorted collection of red ware pottery, china pieces, small Shaker boxes and other items. These have been donated in memory of their daughter Suzanne, who sadly passed away in 2009. The trustees were delighted to accept these gifts and will be displaying them in the “new” kitchen. This has given us an excuse to bring out the very early kitchen dresser, which has been overlooked in the 1835 summer kitchen. This originally came from the Cestone farmhouse and passed to Elton Bailey Jr. who gave it to the Brinckerhoff house a few years ago. This cabinet will be moved into the kitchen and will provide a perfect platform to display the Jacob’s collection.

### **Christmas Open House Sunday December 6<sup>th</sup> 2 – 5PM**

Probably you need no reminding of the society’s popular Open House which starts the Christmas holiday season. The Brinckerhoff farmhouse will be filled with music and the sweet smell of mulled cider being warmed over the 1750 kitchen hearth. This annual

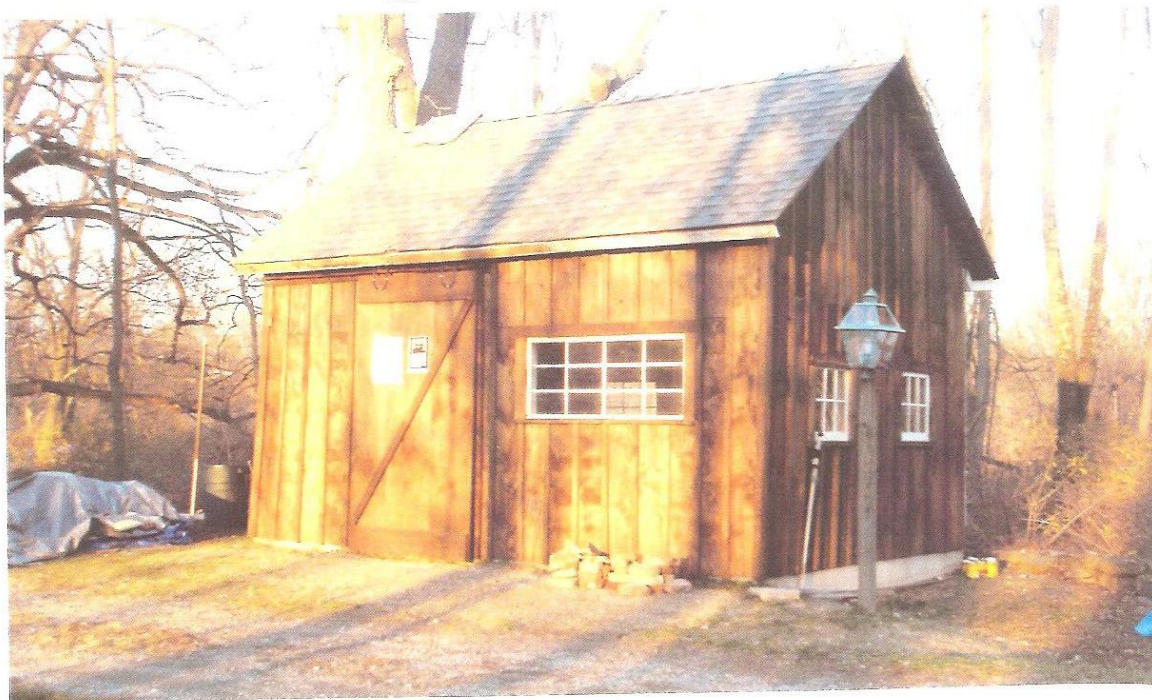


event is open to members and the general public. It is an opportunity to bring along friends and neighbors and introduce them to the town's historical heritage. Festivities begin at 2PM and extend into the gathering gloom of a winter evening at 5PM. There will be a special visitor this year. Santa Claus will be visiting us from 2 - 3PM. If children come early, they can have their pictures taken with Santa sitting in his red sleigh. Unfortunately he cannot bring his reindeer as they are resting for their big journey later in the month.

The house will be decorated as in the early 19th. Century with live greenery and a lighted Xmas tree will greet everyone entering the center hall. Enjoy the seasonal cookies and partake of a sip of egg-nog or wassail from the punch bowl. The event is for all the family. Children will be able to sit at the desks in the 1820 one room schoolhouse and visit the ice house museum to learn how ice was harvested and stored for keeping milk fresh in the summer months. Take a look at the partially restored blacksmith shop and possibly meet the blacksmith.

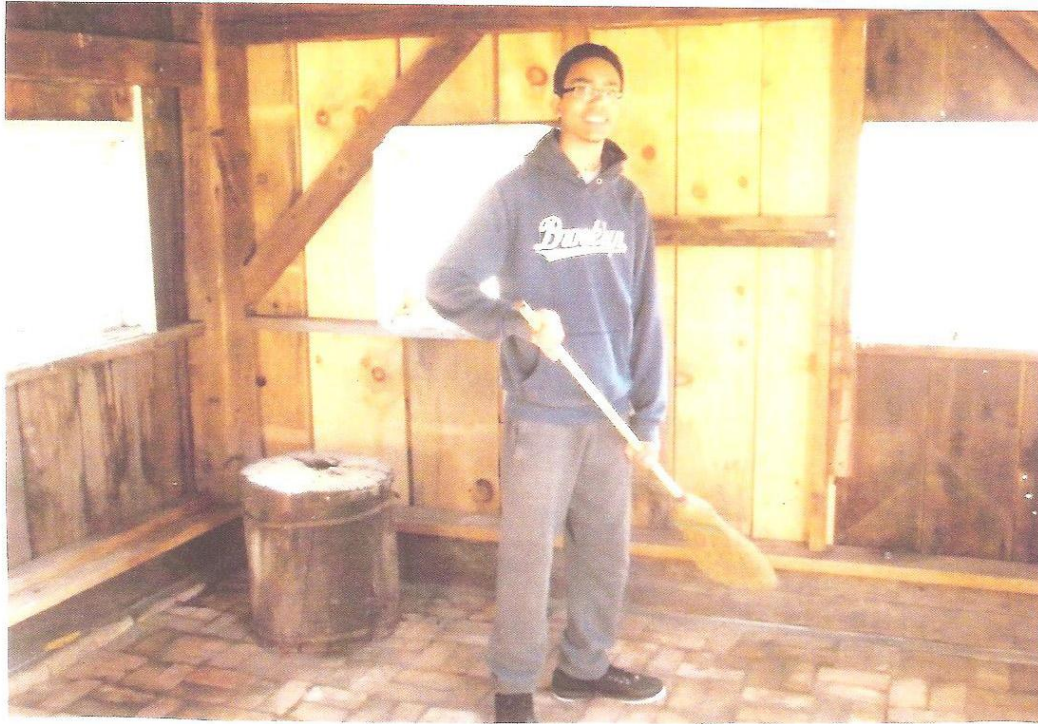
### **Blacksmith Shop**

The warm fall weather extended well into the beginning of November and allowed progress to be made towards restoration of the Hyatt blacksmith shop. The aluminum siding that protected the building for the past 45 years was removed to reveal the wood siding. Some of the original lime washed boards remained and clearly indicated that the shop had been clad with board and batten. Quick repairs and alterations over the decades had diminished the appearance of the exterior.





The trustees agreed to restore the original board and batten style. Using some boards left over from the carriage barn door project and sawn wood donated by John Paraskeva, Rick Soedler, our site manager, spent many mornings cutting and nailing new boards to match the lines of the original boards. The open vertical seams were then covered with wood battens donated by our director. The doorway has been widened to improve viewing into the shop and a sliding door installed. Rick has been the craftsman on this project and reset the windows flush with the siding. He took advantage of recent warm days to apply a dark stain to all the new wood so that it blends with the original boards.



David Santiago, a scout with troop 3048, has undertaken laying a brick floor in the shop for his Eagle Scout project. Old bricks were donated by Tim Leeds from his early Wicoppee house, which was demolished earlier this year. The rest were salvaged, more than a decade ago from the original site of the schoolhouse. The bricks, which are handmade and therefore not uniform, have to be set in sand and levelled individually. David and fellow scouts have spent many weekend days on their knees setting the bricks in a basket weave pattern. The floor now looks as though it had been there for a hundred years. Thank you David, you certainly earned your badge.

We have also been contacted by Jim Burr, a young blacksmith who wants to work at the forge, when the restoration is complete. He has been advising us on layout of the equipment and cannot wait to get started! We plan to have an official opening next year, when the forge will be fully operational. The ringing of the blacksmith's hammer on the anvil and sparks from his forge will signal the return of an earlier time.



## Minutes of the 1816 Debating Society

I recently discovered in our collection of documents a number of flimsy paper sheets folded and sewn together with cotton. Upon carefully opening the pages I realized they were the 1816 minutes of a local debating society which met monthly at member's homes to debate various subjects. The group typically consisted of twenty members who were divided equally and voted at the end of the meeting as to which side had prevailed during the discussion. The following are some of the questions that were debated.

Is dueling justifiable or not?

Which destroys the more lives in the US, strong liquors or the sword?

Was the conduct of our forefathers justifiable in expelling the Aborigines?

Is it justifiable to hold any of our fellow beings in slavery?

Would it be best for the United States to build a permanent navy?

Is wealth a greater incentive to marriage than beauty?

These were fascinating topics and enlightening of the times. Sadly true debating is almost a lost art practiced only by those at universities and in a few parliaments.

## Membership Renewal:

It is coming up to the time to renew your membership with the society. Why not renew early and claim your dues on your 2015 tax return. If you use the attached form it saves the society the cost of mailing renewal reminders in January. Also you may be feeling in a generous mood at this season and decide to enclose a little extra. The society has not raised the dues for many years and everything will be greatly appreciated. Thank you.

**Happy Holidays and a Healthy New Year to Everyone**

.....Tear Off.....

Annual Dues 2016 (January 1 – December 31)

### *Membership Categories*

Single \$15, Family \$20, Contributing \$\$35-\$99, Patron \$100 & over

I have enclosed dues in the amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_ (Tax Deductible)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

I am willing to assist in the society's activities Yes\_\_\_\_\_ Not this year \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail to: E. F. Historical Society, P.O. Box 245, Hopewell Jct., NY 12533