

The

# Orangetown Crier

News from the Orangetown Historical Museum and Archives

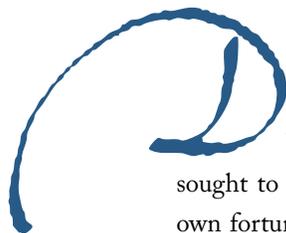
FALL 2010

## Blauvelt Entrepreneurs

by Joseph Barbieri



Home of David D. and Gilbert D. Blauvelt  
(known today as the Seth House)  
*Ca. 1890, Lydecker Collection, OHMA*



David D. Blauvelt (1777-1856) and his son Gilbert D. Blauvelt (1807-1877), of Orangetown, New York, both sought to enhance the local economy of Orangetown and their own fortunes by recognizing and pursuing new opportunities in the transportation industries.

David and Gilbert owned some property which had remained in the family for several generations. David's father had been a Loyalist during the Revolutionary War, which caused him to lose some of the land. After the war, the family worked to repurchase much of the land that had been confiscated by the colonial government. David and his wife Lena gained control of the property when David's mother, Catherine Perry Blauvelt, died in 1813.

Much can be learned about their successful farming activities from the 1860 Federal Census which reported a farm of 250 acres valued at \$13,000, a tremendous amount of money in those years. The census also notes that Gilbert had \$200 in implements and machinery, five horses, two oxen, and two "other cattle," he kept nine cows which produced 550 pounds of butter, 49 sheep, and 11 swine, making it one of the most productive farms in Orangetown at the time.

Father and son were interested in local transportation, and invested in ventures to connect Orangetown to New York City, providing them, and everyone in Orangetown, with more efficient ways to transport and sell their agricultural goods. David was a member of the Rockland County Farmers' Steamboat Association. Sadly, this venture fizzled out by the mid-1840s, probably due to intense competition. Similarly, Gilbert invested in building railway platforms in Orangetown for the New York & Erie Rail Road in 1859. By this time, unfortunately, railway traffic through Orangetown was already in decline as Jersey City, not Piermont, was the terminus for the line.

David D. Blauvelt was one of Orangetown's innovators and his son Gilbert would follow in his footsteps. While their investments into the transportation industries were not always highly successful, they were able to recognize the importance of commerce with New York City. Both attempted to use their personal wealth to further incorporate Orangetown into the larger economic sphere of not only New York City, but a rapidly expanding American nation.

# FINDING Harold Hendrickson

by Elizabeth Skrabonja



Harold Hendrickson seated with a female relative, Ca. 1910.  
Photo by George Springsteen, OHMA

From time to time we get inquiries for information from people researching their past. Last May, we received an interesting email from Norway, sent by the granddaughter of a Norwegian immigrant who had settled in Pearl River. He became an American citizen but, for reasons unclear, returned to Norway with his wife and four children, three of whom were born in Pearl River. She was hoping to find out more about her father's life here, and, hopefully, why he left.

“My name is Ellen-Karine Egner,” the email began, “and for the first time in my life I shall be visiting New York. I will be visiting Pearl River for the following reason: My grandparents left Norway, probably in 1905, and settled in Pearl River. They brought one son with them from Norway and got 3 sons during their stay in Pearl River. One of them was my father, George Hendrickson, born February 3, 1908. My grandfather, Harold Hendrickson who worked for the Dexter Folder Company as a pattern maker, became a citizen of the USA in 1913, left for Norway the same year and never came back.”

Several emails were exchanged to prepare for her visit, including one from Ellen that contained a picture of the Pearl River house her father had lived in. When she and her family arrived, they were graciously hosted by Bob Knight, board member of the Friends of the Orangetown Museum. In our archives, we were able to locate and show her several images of her family taken by Pearl River photographer George Springsteen at the turn of the 20th century. Bob took our Norwegian visitors to the site of the Dexter Folding Company, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, the Pearl River Library and to lunch as guests of the Pearl River Rotary Club. It is unfortunate, however, that we were unable to locate the house depicted in the picture she had sent us, or to find out exactly why her grandfather — and father — moved back to Norway so abruptly. Connecting Ellen with her Pearl River roots showed us that the reach of the Orangetown Museum extends far beyond what we had imagined, giving new meaning to the phrase *coming home*.



The Salyer House

# A Memorable Visit

On Wednesday June 9th, 60 fourth-grade students from the Strawtown School in West Nyack visited with us. The unique aspect of this particular trip was that the students wanted to visit both the Salyer House and the DePew House. We rallied our troops and the outcome was deemed a great success. Starting at the historic Salyer House, we divided the group in half, with 30 students taking an indoor tour and the other half exploring the grounds. Having recently studied local New York history, the Strawtown students had a particular interest in *A Spy in Our Midst – Major John André*. They shared some curious observations about *At Home in Orangetown* and were able to identify several important buildings from *Our Dutch Sandstone Houses*. Touring the exterior the students took note of the graceful gambrel roof and charming front stoop – which everyone, of course, had to sit on. Over at the DePew House, our family of resident groundhogs did not make an appearance, but notice was taken of local flora and fauna. Bearing witness to the significance of those who protect our lives and property, the exhibit, *Our Lives in Their Hands – Fire, Police & Emergency Services of Orangetown*, left a distinct impression. With the collective assistance of a dedicated staff of volunteers, namely; Joe Barbieri, Paul Clark, Aruna Shah, Sandy Miller, Henry Rennie and Ernest Robbins, a memorable visit was enjoyed by all. EKS



Mary Cardenas (in period dress), with students in the André Room.



196 Blaisdell Road  
 Orangeburg, New York 10962  
 Tel. (845) 398-1302  
[www.orangetownmuseum.com](http://www.orangetownmuseum.com)

**OPEN NOW:**

☛ at The DePew House  
 196 Blaisdell Road, Orangeburg, New York  
*Our Lives in Their Hands –  
 Fire, Police & Emergency Services  
 of Orangetown*  
 through November 7<sup>th</sup>  
 HOURS:  
 Tuesdays 10 – 2 pm; Sundays 1 – 4 pm  
 by appt: (845) 398-1302

☛ at The Salyer House  
 213 Blue Hill Road, Pearl River, New York  
*A Spy in Our Midst,  
 Our Dutch Sandstone Houses &  
 At Home in Orangetown*  
 Permanent Exhibit  
 HOURS:  
 Tuesdays 10 – 2 pm; Sundays 1 – 4 pm  
 by appt. (845) 398-1302

**COMING THIS FALL AND SPRING:**



**Antiques & Collectibles Sale: Saturday, October 2<sup>nd</sup>**, 10 am – 4 pm, Rain Date, Sunday, October 3<sup>rd</sup>  
 Presented by *The Friends of the Orangetown Museum*  
 Antiques • Fine Collectibles • Jewelry • Glass • Decorative Arts • Fine Arts • Furniture  
 At the **DePew House** 196 Blaisdell Road, Orangeburg, New York



**Holiday Show: Four Fabulous Sundays – November 28<sup>th</sup>, December 5<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup>**  
 at the Historic Salyer House, 213 Blue Hill Road, Pearl River, New York, from 1-4 pm.  
 Join us for a cozy Victorian Christmas. There is sure to be caroling, hot cider and a visit from a special guest from the North Pole.



**Orangetown – Edward Hopper’s Backyard** will open at the DePew House, 196 Blaisdell Road, Orangeburg New York on Saturday, **May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2011**, from 1-4 pm. A historic snapshot of the surrounding area formative to Edward Hopper’s early years, featuring objects, photographs and personalities of the late Victorian era in Orangetown. This multimedia presentation will focus on Hopper’s early influences and how they informed his mature work. Open through November 13<sup>th</sup>, 2011.

**THE ORANGETOWN HISTORICAL MUSEUM & ARCHIVES**  
 Mary Cardenas, MUSEUM DIRECTOR • Elizabeth Skrabonja, MUSEUM CURATOR  
 The Orangetown Historical Museum & Archives was founded in 1992 to acquire, preserve and exhibit objects which reflect primarily the history of the Town of Orangetown. The Museum’s additional, but not lesser mission is to document, research, promote and publicize the town’s rich, historical heritage of the town for the people of Orangetown.



Paul Whalen, SUPERVISOR • Nancy Low-Hogan, COUNCILWOMAN  
 Thomas Diviny, Michael Maturo and Dennis Troy, COUNCILMEN

**FRIENDS OF THE ORANGETOWN MUSEUM**  
 Your membership in the Friends of the Orangetown Museum helps to collect and preserve the history of Orangetown. Members will receive notices of programs and events as well as free admission to the Museum’s special exhibits and events. The Museum is a 501 (C) (3) organization and all donations are tax deductible.

STUDENT/SENIOR \$10 SINGLE \$15 FAMILY \$20  
 LIFE MEMBER \$100 CORPORATE \$250