

The

# Orangetown Crier

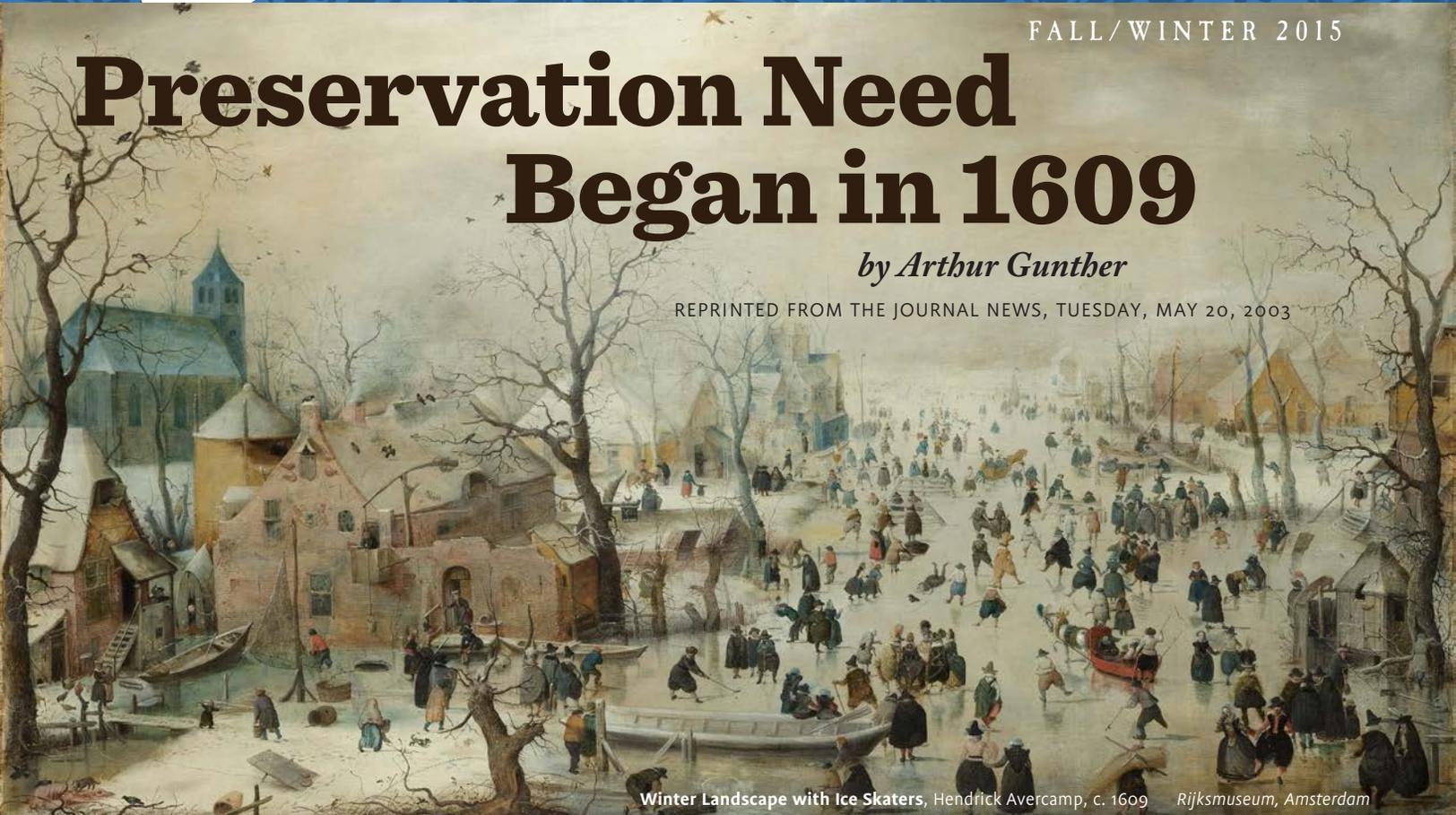
News from the Orangetown Historical Museum and Archives

FALL/WINTER 2015

## Preservation Need Began in 1609

by Arthur Gunther

REPRINTED FROM THE JOURNAL NEWS, TUESDAY, MAY 20, 2003



Winter Landscape with Ice Skaters, Hendrick Avercamp, c. 1609 Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

### When did historic preservation become necessary in Rockland?

If you are an 'older' Rocklander, one who came to the county around the opening of the Tappan Zee Bridge in 1955, you might think the need for such preservation started with the development push of the 1950's.

If you are an even older countryite, perhaps saving old homes, farms and open space became important a few years after World War II, when sections of the old Camp Shanks were bulldozed for smaller, Levittown-like tracts. So began large scale Rockland housing development.

Or maybe your family has roots to the end of the 19th century, and they witnessed the industrial development in Piermont, Nyack and Haverstraw, worrying that the Hudson River could not stand the pollution and the assault of 'progress'.

Or perhaps the family came to what was then Orange County in the 1700's and vacated Tappan after too many 'city dwellers' arrived to live and do business there. It was time to seek the rural life anew, to move north, south or west, the family might have said.

While the perception of historic preservation is relative to each generation, the only true answer to the question, "When did historic preservation become necessary in Rockland?" is that it began on a day early in September 1609 when one Hendrick Hudson, sailing in search of a northwest passage that would bring to his patrons the wealth of the Indies by a shorter route than that about the capes, anchored inside Sandy Hook. He had discovered not the strait he sought, but a New Amsterdam that, under a different name, was to excel the old Amsterdam in metropolitan grandeur, as Frank Green's *The History of*

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EDITORS NOTE: This coming year The Orangetown Museum will be considering the following formula:

**Preservation = Reconstruction + Restoration.** As we begin this conversation, let us know what is important to you.

# Gone but not Forgotten

Our blockbuster exhibit **From Holland to Here** has closed, but certainly left its mark on Orangetown. Visitorship exceeded all expectations, with guests traveling from various states (and countries!) to learn the story of the first residents of Orangetown and marvel in the collection of George Way. Scholars, students, neighbors and Dutch descendants all found something of interest, and our collective museum family was enriched by the contacts that ensued. Topping the list was Ms. Tessa Dijkers, Policy Officer, Press & Cultural Dept., Shared Cultural Heritage, Dutch Old Masters, Education, Consulate General of the Kingdom of the Netherlands who attended **Sunday in the Museum with George**. Blauvelts abounded during the **Association of Blauvelt Descendants Reunion**, with many of their younger members experiencing Dutch culture for the first time. Special tours for groups took place, among which **The Haworth Women's Club**, **St. Thomas Aquinas**



**Titelprent Livres de Plusieurs Paniers**, Jean Baptiste Monnoyer, c. 1680 – 1695  
Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

**History Dept.** and representatives from our local libraries and genealogical groups as well as a **Dutch Treat** program for children.

The take-away from our all-Dutch year has been profound. We learned not only how

important this early heritage was to the development of our area, but also about how preserving the past informs the future. The mere fact that the legacy of the Dutch has been sustained in Orangetown is significant. It takes more than words, architecture and objects to preserve the past. It is with this in mind that we are now setting off on a year exploring the various ramifications of preservation. History is about the continuity of place that occurs within the context of change. We saw how living with landmarks can anchor a community – and celebrate daily creative repurposing as we come to work here at the DePew House where generations of Dutch descendants lived. I like to think that we ‘did them proud’.

*EKS*





# An Amazing Turn of Events for THE JOHN GREEN HOUSE

by Mary Cardenas with Joeseeph Barbieri

It is not often that we read that a house has been donated especially by a bank or in this case Ocwen Loan Service. However, this was the situation with the John Green House, which is located near the end of Main Street in Nyack. This sandstone house was built about 1817 by John Green who was instrumental in investing in the early steamboat *Orange* which connected Nyack and the rest of Rockland County to New York City via the Hudson River. He also helped establish the Nyack Turnpike, a major step in East-West transportation in Rockland, linking Suffern to Nyack.

John Green's house has stood for almost two hundred years, sadly, however in recent years, on the verge of demolition. At one time, the house was divided up in several apartments, since then, it has been boarded up and neglected. Some of the sandstone had fallen out and was replaced with cinder blocks and then the house was covered over with yellow stucco. The placement of windows and front door had been changed along with a porch that was constructed probably the late 1800s or early 1900s.

In recent weeks, concerned citizens formed the "John Green Preservation Coalition," which rescued the house. Rick Tannenbaum, the president of this committee, petitioned Ocwen with a plan that would refurbish the house, and turn it into a visitor center, small museum with living quarters on the second and third floors. Some initial work around the house is visible – the yard around the house is being cleaned and tarps have been put on the roof of the house to prevent any further water damage. Braces have been added to shore up some of the exterior walls. To follow the John Green Coalition's progress, visit their website at [www.johngreencoalition.org](http://www.johngreencoalition.org)

## Preservation

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Rockland County puts it. Green wrote in 1886 that Hudson "found ...a race whose birthright those that followed...were soon to obtain by crushing that race from existence."

And "those that followed Hudson" have been doing just that, sometimes obliterating heritage in the name of progress. In the 1600s – 1800s, Rockland, though the smallest county geographically in New York state outside New York City's five boroughs, still had so much land and offered so little thought about history (we were still such a new country) that original homes were torn down or remodeled in new design, and industry set up shop wherever it was convenient.

If we were once asked, "Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country", let Rocklanders now do what they can to preserve our history rather than pave it over for our temporary convenience. That is the mission charged to all of you: to officialdom; to the wealthiest and the poorest of our population; to our children and to societies such as this.

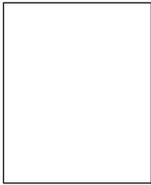
## Holiday Open House



at the Historic Salyer House  
Saturday, December 12, 1:00 pm



196 Chief Bill Harris Way  
 Orangeburg, New York 10962  
 Tel. (845) 398-1302  
 www.orangetownmuseum.com



☛ at The DePew House  
 196 Chief Bill Harris Way  
 Orangeburg, New York  
*Office, Archives by Appointment (845) 398-1302*  
 Opening April 2016  
**GOING – GOING – WAIT! PreservationNow**

☛ 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 by appointment  
 (845) 398-1302

THIS FALL AND WINTER:



**Holiday Open House, Saturday, December 12th @1 pm.** At the Salyer House, 213 Blue Hill Road, Pearl River, NY. Admission free: Donations Accepted. Join us for an old fashioned holiday in our beautifully decorated homestead. This year, *Pink Flamingo Puppets* presents the classic fairy tale **The Shoemaker & the Elves**. Holiday music, cookies and a visit from Santa top off this gift from the museum to our community.



**Going, Going – Wait! PreservationNow.** Exhibit opening April 2016 at the DePew House. If Preservation = Reconstruction + Restoration the Town of Orangetown can look back on a history of achievement as well as some significant losses. Featuring local history superstars, with a nod to some spectacular saves. Exhibit runs until November, 2016. At the **DePew House** 196 Chief Bill Harris Way, Orangeburg NY. Please call (845) 398-1302 for further information.



**Antiques & Collectibles Sale:** Saturday, May 21, 2016, 10 am – 4 pm  
 The museum will be open free of charge! Enjoy a beautiful Spring day with some fabulous Antiques, Fine Collectibles, Jewelry, Toys, Decorative Arts, Furniture, Fine Arts & Ephemera. Table Rental for Dealers is \$25. At the **DePew House** 196 Chief Bill Harris Way, Orangeburg NY. Please call (845) 398-1302 for further information.



**Friends of the Orangetown Museum Annual Dinner:**  
 Save the date! Sunday, June 5th at the historic '76 House in Tappan. In the spirit of celebrating the museum and all things Preservation, join us for a lively repast honoring a woman who keeps history current – Marilyn Schauder.

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.



Andrew Stewart, SUPERVISOR  
 Thomas Diviny, Tom Morr, Dennis Troy and Paul Valentine, 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