

Society for the Preservation of  
**HUDSON VALLEY**  
**VERNACULAR ARCHITECTURE**



March 2006

**NEWSLETTER**

Vol. 8, No.3

**HVVA MEETING.....Maggie MacDowell, Secretary**

**Saturday, February 18, 2006**, The HVVA meeting held at the Germantown Parsonage, Columbia County, was called to order at 10:20 AM by President Jim Decker. He called on members to help with Peter Sinclair's load, publishing the newsletter and distributing books. Jim Decker has been handling the tax forms. Rob Sweeney offered to help with the distribution and said that Karen Markisenis would help with the newsletter.

Our next meeting will be Saturday, March 18 at 10AM at the Ulster County Historical Society where John Stevens will be giving a talk and sign books. We had intended to document the Lem Boice House in the afternoon but have since learned that Hartgen Associates, and others, will be doing a presentation about the archaeology and restoration work that is presently underway at the Van Allen House Museum. (see Coming Events)

Bob Hedges and Peter will be attending the TTRAG meeting in Lenox, Massachusetts, May 12-14. Peter said that the Barn Repair Workshop being planned for May 22-26 at the Palatine Farmstead Museum will cost \$3,000 and \$1,500 is being requested from HVVA. Jim thought it should not come from the Book Fund. There was no official treasury report.

*(continued next page)*



**The 1746-1767 Parsonage "Pfarrhaus"**  
**Germantown, Columbia County, NY**  
**(NY/Col/Ger/04) photograph about 1900**

This stone side-hall bank-house was built in 1746 for the parsonage of the Germantown Reformed Church. (see, HVVA Newsletter March, 2004)

**FROM THE JOURNAL**

**Saturday, February 18**, After their monthly meeting in Germantown, a group of HVVA members were given a tour of the 1766 Conyn/Van Rensselaer House, nearby in Claverack. This two-story brick house with gambrel roof has been going through a long process of interpretation by its owner Nancy Ginsberg. A number of students of New World Dutch architecture have examined and documented the building. Nancy has done a dramatic restoration in replacing six massive beams that had been destroyed when they were reduced in size to accommodate a plaster ceiling. It has finally been concluded by Bill McMillan that the original two-room center hall house had a Dutch jambless fireplace at one end and an English jambed fireplace at the other. This was hard to determine as the framing and the hearth support for both seemed Dutch.

*(continued, next page)*



**1766 Newel-Post, Hand-Rail and Stairs**  
**Conyn/Van Rensselaer House**  
**Claverack, Dutchess County, NY**  
**(NY/Col/Cla/06)**

(HVVA Meeting, continued)

There was talk about our needs for better publicity for HVVA and the book, several suggestions and a number of organizations and publications were suggested. Jonathan Nedbor, a blacksmith from High Falls, Eddyville, told of his coming trip to The Netherlands, in an area near Amsterdam and east of Appledorn, near the German boarder, where he will be teaching blacksmithing for several days. He is not teaching restoration but more contemporary work. He says the Dutch look down on the reproduction work, but he will speak and demonstrate the way smithing was probably done and is currently accomplished. Our early Hudson Valley settlements were into survival and not specialization, he says. Johnathan is always interested in early records and what they can tell. He will also be going on to Germany and Italy.

The meeting was adjourned, and the group drove to the Conyn/Van Rensselare House in Claverack.

The following 10 members attended: Jim Decker, Bob Eurick, Conrad Fingado, Maggie MacDowell, Jonathan Nedbor, Alvin Sheffer, Peter Sinclair, Paul Spencer, Rob Sweeney, Denis Tierney and guest Jim Aneshasley.

**Tuesday, January 31** I went to see two barns today, the first at 107 Main Street, New Paltz, Ulster County, NY, owned by Ken Verney (845) 255-9718. I registered it:

4-bay two-and-a-half story, side entrance barn with partial basement  
 \_\_\_/Bloomer/Verney (NY/Uls/NP/15)  
 Village of New Paltz, Ulster County, NY

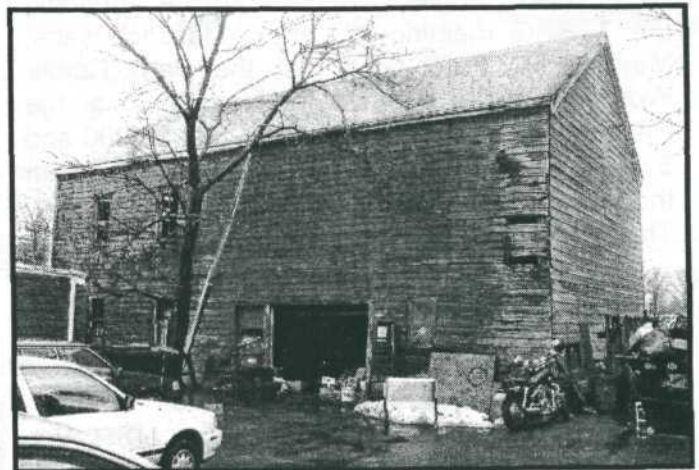
Repair of this tall 30 by 40-foot barn was estimated at \$150,000. The owner wants to sell the frame. The stone foundation is failing and the sill plates have rotted away. There is water damage to the bottoms of some posts but the barn above this is in good condition and would be worth dismantling and putting back up as a house or workshop. It is a two-and-a-half-story frame with 30-foot beams that span its width and support queen posts and purlins. All the timbers are hewn.

Next I went to see a farm in Hyde Park on the Fallkill (Valkill). It is owned by Jim Smith and is on North Quaker Lane. The complex of buildings maintains a little-altered historic farm setting. It received a NY State Barn Repair Grant last year. Bob Hedges, his son Nathaniel and John Copell, have begun the repairs. I registered it:

4-bay swing-beam, side-entrance, scribe-rule barn with double beams, added side-aisle and extension, also outbuildings and contemporary frame house, circa 1790  
 Briggs/Hatfield/Smith (NY/Dut/HP/07)  
 North Quaker Lane, Hyde Park, Dutchess County, NY  
 N 41'48.566 - W 073'52.097 - elevation 308'

from the floor and were scarfing (joining) it to the 24-foot long upper-beam of bent 3.. They used lap dovetailed-tenons to join the ends. The center of the original beam had been cut out when a hay track was installed. Cutting tie-beams out of bents for hay tracks was a common practice in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and often lead to the spread and distortion of the frame.

An inscription on a stone in the back of the foundation wall reads "SSE March 10, 1851", probably the construction date. An official yellow notice, nailed to the siding nearby reads, "Unsafe Building - Vacate Immediately - May, 2005".



**Verney Barn with Addition**  
**Village of New Paltz, Ulster County, NY**  
 for information call:  
 Ken Verney (845) 255-9718; 107 Main Street

When I arrived the carpenters had erected scaffolding in the center bay and had raised a 14-foot long, 8x10-inch white-oak timber 12 feet