

DRYDEN HISTORY HOUSE AT SOUTHWORTH HOMESTEAD

February, March
April 2024
Volume 48 (2024)

Dryden Town Historical Society
14 North Street,
Dryden, NY 13053
607-844-9209

Saturdays, 10am – 1pm
Every Tuesday, 10am – 3pm
and always by appointment

ANNUAL MEETING

MAY 22, 2024

Dryden Village Hall (14 South Street)

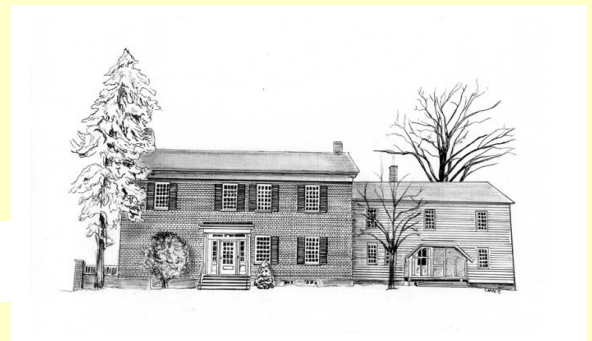
7PM (doors open at 6:30PM)

Presentation by Tompkins County Historian,
Laura Johnson-Kelly

DTHS will hold its Annual Meeting on Wednesday, May 22 at 7:00 PM at the Village Hall. This is our opportunity to summarize the activities we've worked on in the past year. We'll also touch on plans for the coming year and elect Trustees. We will also be voting on reducing the size of the board of trustees from 12 members to a more manageable 10. We meet monthly to conduct the business of the Society. That business includes plans for maintaining the Southworth Homestead and strengthening the programs and events that help members and other Dryden residents enjoy Dryden's history. After the business portion of the evening, we will be hearing from the new Tompkins County historian, Laura Johnson-Kelly as she introduces us to the role she plays in the Town of Dryden history.

If you think you might be interested in becoming a Trustee, please contact Debbie Fisher (debfisher451@gmail.com or 607-351-0699.)

Dryden Village Hall is handicap accessible, with plenty of parking across the street on the First National Bank parking lot.



“OP” Sale

June 14 and 15, 2024

Southworth Homestead

Friday, June 14 – 8am – 4pm

Saturday, June 15, 8am – 3pm

We will again be offering the “**Collector’s Corner**” to showcase better quality donations that could potentially bring a higher price. Remember, this is a fundraising event that will help sustain the Southworth Homestead.

No clothing, or mattresses: When in doubt, call **Shirley Price (607-844-8700)** or **Mary Hornbuckle (607-898-3461)**. Arrangements can be made for picking up donations or for dropping items off at the Southworth Homestead. Donate what you no longer want or use and then buy someone else’s treasure to take its place. Now mark your calendar and get ready for the Op-portunity of a lifetime!

RURAL SCHOOLS IN THE TOWN OF DRYDEN 1802 to 1936

NEW EXHIBIT AT THE DRYDEN TOWN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The history of the rural school districts in the town of Dryden is very interesting. The first Dryden school opened in 1802 in a log cabin built originally by Amos Sweet on what is now South St. In 1814, the Town of Dryden officially started a school district with \$192.47. Out of that they formed 14 rural school districts. They had to build the schools, train and hire teachers, provide water and heat. By 1852 there were thirty-one rural school districts, many very small. By 1936 the 31 schools were all consolidated into the Dryden-Freeville School District. In 1951 McLean merged with Dryden and it was then called the Dryden Central School District.

We have some great items exhibited – from graduation certificates, yearbooks and annuals, workbooks and textbooks, a stereopticon used in Hile School, an 1817 Tompkins County School Wall map, a large 1931 Websters Dictionary used in District 12, and too many items to list them all. Come learn about the fascinating history of the evolution of the schools in the Town of Dryden.



Display cases with textbooks, workbooks, and other great items.



Trish Sprague and MaryLou Taylor working on the Rural Schools exhibit



SOUTHWORTH HOUSE TOURS

Starting June 1

Guided Tours at Historic Southworth Homestead are held on first Saturdays from June – October 10 am, 11 am, and 12 noon

2024 TOUR SCHEDULE

**June 1 . July 6 . August 3 .
September 7 . October 5**

For 175 years, the Homestead built by John Southworth in 1836, stayed within the Southworth family. In 2012 the Dryden Town Historical Society became the new owner of the residence upon the death of Rebecca Wood Southworth Simpson. With the gift of the Southworth house came many treasures. This year, we can look forward to seeing more unique objects that were used by the family over the decades. And as always the opportunity to view the original 19th century french scenic wallpaper astounds!

In order to make this treasure available to the public, guided tours are offered on the first Saturdays. A guided tour takes approximately one hour. Individual and group guided tours can be arranged at all other times by appointment. These private tours make great family and organization activities. Call 844-4691 to make an appointment.

Donations welcome!
All proceeds benefit the Southworth Homestead.

WORK ON THE BARN

The work progresses on the barn. The stair to the second floor is ready for use including a new railing up top to keep us from falling into the stairwell. And of course with any repairs on a very old building, interesting problems crop up. Some foundation repairs were more involved than originally anticipated. We are also going to replace the roof, parts of which were falling into the building.

Seth Brewster discovered, when taking apart the old stairs, a small trap door to the basement leading to a small space that was only large enough for a child to get through. In there he found an old child size table and chairs, and other random items. Mike Lane remembers playing there as a child. See the story called “Black Bart” (page 4) for this interesting bit of Southworth history.

Sometime this fall, once the renovations are completed, we will be presenting a program documenting the rebuilding efforts.



Above, the West wall sill support

Far left, the old stairs

Left, the new stairs

Black Bart

By Michael E. Lane

Our exemplary Historical Society has embarked on a wonderful project to restore its nineteenth century barn at The Southworth House. During construction, a small room under the stairs was “discovered” that had some children’s furniture in it. Shirley Price stopped in my office one day and showed me a picture of it and asked if I knew about it. I said yes, it was a secret “hideout” we used when we played games like “Black Bart” as kids. While I do not have a particular recollection about the furniture, I well know the little room, having been in there many times as a youngster. Deborah Fisher asked if I would write about it and this is the result.

During the holidays I like to watch the movie *A Christmas Story* about the little boy “Ralphie” in the 1940’s and his quest to receive his ultimate gift—a Red Ryder BB gun. In one scene he dreams his house and family are under attack by a group of bad guys coming into the backyard, and Ralphie, dressed in his best cowboy outfit, drives them off by shooting them in the pants with his Red Ryder.

I always laugh and enjoy it because it reminds me of when I was a little boy in the late 1950’s. I was eight or nine years old, and a small group of neighborhood boys would frequently meet over at the Simpsons’ house (The Southworth House) after school to play with Monty and Tom Simpson. The house was central in the village, and had a wonderful yard and barn. When outdoors, we would play boys’ games like cowboys and Indians, or cops and robbers. One game we called “Black Bart.” Black Bart was an historical figure who was a stagecoach robber, but we did not know that then, only that he was a bad guy.

The Simpsons had quite a stash of toy guns, everything from cowboy six shooters to plastic army rifles. There were a couple of cap guns but I do not think there were any BB or pellet guns--nothing that really shot anything. Monty (George Montgomery) Simpson was three years older than Tom (Thomas Southworth) Simpson and I. He and the older boys would team up against the younger boys. They would always claim first pick of the toy guns and leave those less desirable for the younger ones.

As I recall, we would play “Black Bart” for an hour or so. One of the older boys would assume the role of Black Bart (usually Monty) and the other older boys would be his gang. We would start and the younger boys would hightail it to get away and hide. Soon after, the older boys would give chase shooting (or rather clicking) their toy guns at us and we would struggle to shoot (click) back.

The younger boys would usually head for the barn where there was a hideout. Entering from the basement door on the east side of the building, there was a ladder on the south wall that went up through a trapdoor into a little room under the stairs. The stairs led from the first floor to the second floor. [One might think a little of Harry Potter’s “cupboard under the stairs.”] We would lock the trap door from above. Soon Black Bart and the others would arrive, shoot (click) at us through the cracks. Finally, they would get at us through the opening between the stairs and the south wall on the first floor. “Bang Bang, you’re dead!” “No we’re not!” “Yes, you are! We win!” and the game would end.

Soon Mrs. Simpson would step into the yard and call for her boys to come in to get washed up for supper. Into the house they would go, and that was our own homes, ending a short but fun afternoon.



The playroom under the stairs



Back row: Dorothy Rowley, Eleanor Collier, Gertrude Neff, Elna Lawson, Marion Lobdell, Marie Rockefeller

Front row: Jane Williams, Lois Collier, Viola Simons, Nellie McGory, Audrey Givens Eunice Nicely, Geraldine Redmore

We found this old photograph of the **1935-36 Dryden Girls Basketball Team**, and thought it was a sweet slice of life. It was given to us by Laura Wilson in 1998. And came with a sweet story written by her mother.

Gertrude Neff was the team manager. Marian Lobdell, high school teacher in math and latin was also the girls team coach and advisor, very popular. Teams we played: Groton, Marathon, McGraw, transported by school bus driver, Walt Hunt. Both boys and girls teams took part (separate teams). As I recall, the uniforms were purchased by the Dryden School Athletic Department. Our principal, D.B. Harrington, was very enthusiastic about the basketball teams. This was during the great depression when extracurricular activities were scarce and difficult to fund. One of our unusual team members was Elna Lawson who came to Dryden with her family from Sweden. They lived on Carpenter Hill. The Dryden games were played in the Opera House on Library Street. As I recall, the girls games were played before the boys games. Basketball games were well attended and provided welcome entertainment during the winter season. Girls uniform shorts were blue. Tops were white and sleeveless (no numbers).

Dryden Open Gate Garden and Art Tour

Saturday, June 22, 2024

9am – 2pm

The Dryden Beautification Brigade is having their final Garden Tour dedicated to Mary Kirkwyland, a tireless and dedicated volunteer in the Town of Dryden, gardener extraordinaire, and friend to many who loved Dryden deeply. Mary's open heartedness, vision and expertise inspires gardeners both young and old to till the soil and create beauty in their own backyards.

The Dryden Historical Society will have an exhibit at one of the homes.

Tour 5 Gardens on James Street in the village, Enjoy the beautiful gardens, original art on display and local musicians.

Starting Point: Dryden Elementary School Parking Lot, James Street, Dryden.

Maps available the day of the tour!



Daffodils blooming in the front garden at the Southworth House. A welcome sign of spring!

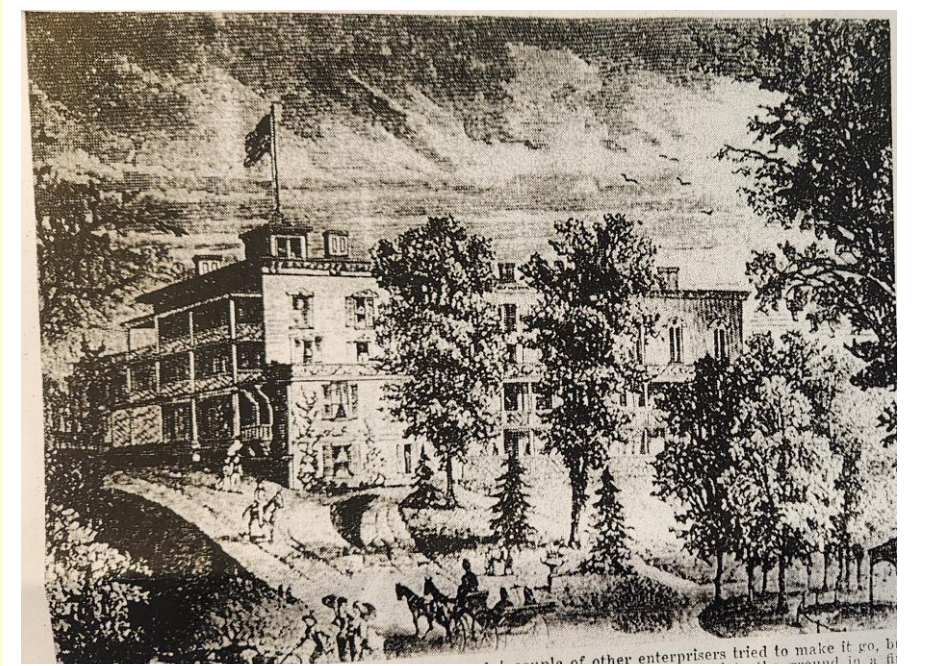
Did you know Dryden had a famous spa and sanitarium!



It was called the Nivison Medical University and Sanitary Home, and also the Dryden Springs House. It was located on Spring House Rd, near the Rail Trail. It had an impressive list of guests for many years. It was operated by Samantha Nivison. Dr. Nivison took over the spa in 1862 and ran it until 1906, when she died. After her death a couple of other of other enterprisers tried to make it go, but couldn't. In 1915 it burned to the ground. It was never re-built. Only one stone-encased, bubbling sulphur spring remains today to mark the location of this famous resort. Many have looked, but have not found this remain.

From an article in the Ithaca Journal, 4/3/93, the sanitarium offered water cures for "all affections" of the blood, stomach, liver, kidney and bladder, as well as rheumatic disorders, gout, diabetes, Bright's disease, eczema and "every phase of skin affection". Dr. Nivison began marketing sparkling water around 1900. Nivison's product was obtainable at grocers and druggists throughout the Northeast as well as by mail. And it was good stuff, Nivison believed, who touted its medicinal merits.

We have a lot of photographs and information about this fascinating locale from Dryden's past. Come for a visit.



Listings of APPRECIATIONS and CONTRIBUTIONS

(for January 2024 through April 2024)

Donations in Memory:

Sharon Andrus & Daniel Trembley	In Memory of Howard & Helen Andrus
Marsha J Ashbarry	In Memory of Frances Mary Schutt
Jack & Julie Bush	In Memory of Letha Sutton
Les & Kay Cleland	In Memory of Letha Sutton
Autumn C Rockwell Doulong	In Memory of Betsy VanSickle
Bruce Hollenbeck	In Memory of Janet Hollenbeck
Brad & Kathy Perkins	In Memory of Jean Fitzgibbons
Cassie Prugh	In Memory of Victor G Fulkerson
Shirley A Shackelton	In Memory of Horace Shackelton Jr
Robert & Dottie Slocum	In Memory of Bill Bailey
Richard Sweetland	In Memory of Edwin Sweetland
Robert & Joan Watros	In Memory of Bill Bailey
Pamela Shoemaker	In Memory of Belle (Schneider) Wolcott
Ann & James Zwart	In Memory of Frances Mary McKinney Schutt

Contributions to DTHS

David & Brenda Armstrong	For the Southworth Homestead Project
Paul Dedrick	For the Southworth Homestead Project
Michael Delahanty	For the Southworth Homestead Project
Dryden Mutual Insurance	Donation to DTHS General Fund
Maureen Finn	Donation to Barn Restoration
Jeanette Knapp	For the Southworth Homestead Project, to the DTHS General Fund
Michael Lane	Donation to Barn Restoration
Muriel Likel	Donation to Barn Restoration
Eric McAllister Jr	Donation to the DTHS General Fund
Sue & Sam Morrie	Donation to the DTHS General Fund
Ken & Cathy Paddock	Donation to the DTHS General Fund
Sandra Prugh	Donation to the DTHS General Fund
Richard Sweetland	Donation to the DTHS General Fund
Steve & Eileen Trumbull	For the Southworth Homestead Project
Susan Yanoff	For the Southworth Homestead Project

Our Business Supporters:

Bailey Place Insurance	Broom Hilda's Housekeeping	CNY Signs & Graphics	Timesmith Antiques
Dryden Realty-Apartment Co.	Dryden Mutual Insurance Co.	First National Bank of Dryden	
Freeville Publishing Co.	North Star Art Gallery	Michael Lane, Attorney	

In Memorium

A few long time members we remember

Nancy Harmon	November 2023
James Hogan	December 2023

Upcoming Dates

Annual Meeting	May 22
Dryden Dairy Days	June 8
OP Sale	June 14 and 15
Dryden Open Gate	
Garden Tour	June 22
House Tours -	June 1, July 6, August 3, September 7, and October 5

Dryden Town Historical
Society

14 North Street
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Dryden, NY 13053

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drydennyhistory@gmail.com

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14 NORTH STREET

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and always by appointment 844-9209

Would you prefer to receive the newsletter electronically, as an attachment in an email, instead of the print version that arrives in the mail?

If so, please send us an email with "Prefer Newsletter Electronically" in the subject line to drydennyhistory@gmail.com.

Dryden Town Historical Society
14 North Street
PO Box 69
Dryden, NY 13053

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