

HURLEY HERITAGE SOCIETY

Prologue

"The past is prologue"

June 2020

Glenford

Old Hurley Founded 1662

West Hurley



From the President

Greetings members and friends.

This June finds the Hurley Heritage Society charting the unknown waters of a "new normal." We certainly are not alone; small museums in every state are facing the same problems. Now is the time to use our own ingenuity and creativeness to keep our membership and visitors informed of the historical heritage of Hurley.

Our Museum remains closed, but we are working diligently on ways to expand our contacts, get our programs online, and bring Hurley to an unlimited audience.

I want to extend my thanks to our board members who are donating so much of their time and energy to navigate through these uncertain times.

Please visit our website: www.hurleyheritagesociety.org and our Facebook page; both sites are being updated frequently and will guide you in planning future visits.

Your volunteer help is always needed, perhaps now more than ever. We are aware of the mandates and are prepared to follow all guidelines for safe communications and connection.

I wish you a safe tomorrow.

Dale S. Bohan

President, Hurley Heritage Society

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Food Drive Success!

On October 16, 1777, British forces under the command of John Vaughn burned Kingston, the capital of New York. Many residents fled to the hamlet of Hurley where they were taken in by its residents. Thus, began the history of Hurley residents taking care of its neighbors.

Today the entire country is being faced with the Covid-19 Pandemic. As we know, many of our neighbors and local residents have lost their jobs or been furloughed as a result of the shuttered economy. Also, with the cancellation of the school year many children are at risk for not receiving their breakfast and lunch each day. Food pantries are being overwhelmed with the need.

In keeping with the tradition started in 1777, the residents of Hurley continue to be committed to helping its neighbors and residents. The Hurley Heritage Society and the Hurley Library partnered to run a food drive that would benefit the People’s Place. The word was sent out to the membership of the Hurley Heritage Society and the Hurley Library. In addition, the Hurley Fire Department and the members of Cross Point Fellowship jumped on board. The response from the residents of Hurley was overwhelming with three car loads of food being delivered to the People’s Place. Others chose to make monetary contributions.



Jack and Ellen Young deliver food donations from Hurley residents to the People’s Place.

Thank you to Hurley Heritage Society members, the members of the Hurley Library, the Hurley Fire Department, members of Cross Point Fellowship, and all of the Hurley residents who participated. You made a difference and you are awesome!

Please Support Us...

Membership in the Hurley Heritage Society is one of our major financial supports. Membership helps to enable us to keep the Museum open not only for the community, but also for visitors to our historic town of Hurley. If you have misplaced your membership renewal form, you can find one on our website, or you can find one on the back page of this *Prologue*.

If you have not done so already, we would greatly appreciate you sharing your email address with us. You will be able to receive updates via email on openings, exhibits, and events.

If you prefer not to share your email and want to see what is happening at the museum, please go to our website: www.hurleyheritagesociety.org.

Reaching Across 400 Years to Hurley’s Early Dutch Settlers

Explore Hurley history through the story of one original settler family, the Roosas. Go to our website historical library (www.hurleyheritagesociety.org, and then select Library) or use this direct link to the PDF: <https://www.hurleyheritagesociety.org/library/early-dutch-settlers/>

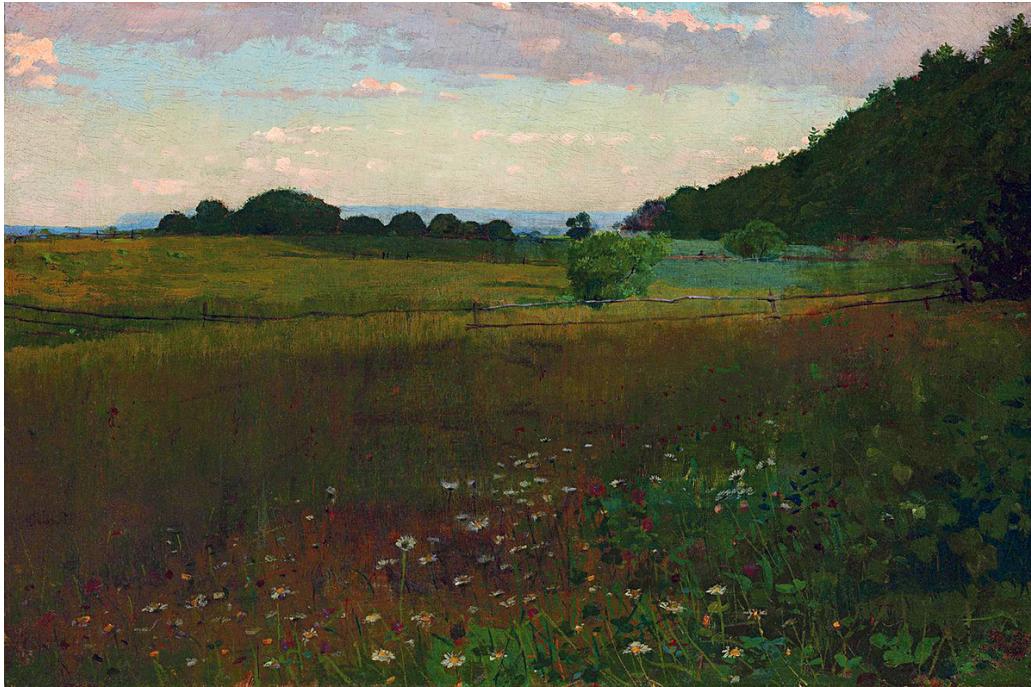


Fig. 1: Winslow Homer, *Evening*, 1870, likely location: southerly view from near Ten Eyck DeWitt Bouwerie (former Paul farm), Oil, Portland Museum of Art, Portland, Maine. Photo courtesy of Reilly Rhodes.

Evening on the Flats: *An Artist's Sojourn*

by Viola Opdahl with Gail Whistance

As the late afternoon was wearing on, the lanky man pulls his brimmed hat lower on his brow and makes his way up the farm road. At the crest of a gentle rise, he sets up his easel and lays out his oil paints. This was his first visit to the Hurley Flats but he had heard about the place from fellow artists at the Tenth Street Studio Building in New York City. It is 1870, and Winslow Homer, best known at this time for his wood engravings published in

magazines of the day, is about to paint a picture he calls *Evening*. The visual scene before him appears peaceful, silent, and inert. A camouflage? Or what?



Fig. 2: ca.1890 View of Hurley Flats looking south from Ten Eyck DeWitt Bouwerie (former Paul farm). From the album of Maguerite Veeder Yates Parker, a descendant of the Hurley DeWitt family, courtesy of her granddaughter Ellen Messick. Photographer: William Cressy Vrooman, of Schenectady, NY.

In reality, he is surrounded by sounds and activity as he surveys the field that he puts on canvas. Does the strident, uninterrupted, repetitious choral performance of thousands of katydids seem invasive and overwhelming to Homer, or does the enthusiastic choir add to a sense of kinship with the scene spread out before

him? Are lightning bugs showing off their tiny sparks of light in the gathering twilight? Is he aware of the splash of a bullfrog's leap into nearby Englishman's Creek? Does his presence momentarily send into flight frightened deer, cottontail rabbits, and wild turkeys as well as creek denizens like long-legged herons, honking geese, or wet muskrats? We are left to wonder about much of the details of Homer's travels and work because he kept no journals, diaries, or notes. Maybe he preferred to retain that aura of mystery.

As dusk was approaching, did Homer notice the shadow of the mountain growing larger as it slowly crept over the Flats until only a ribbon of sunlit ground remained. Later, that too, faded out as the sun slid lower and lower behind Hurley Mountain. The blue cornflower, the Queen Anne's lace, and the daisy were among the summer flowers that populated the roadside and uncultivated fields of the Flats, but Homer's choice was a scattering of daisies for his painting. Did he believe them to be the best blend with a landscape no longer lit up by the sun that had already disappeared? Were the cornflowers too small to notice and the Queen Anne's lace too big to fit? Perhaps! But, the daisies

proved to be the right size to blend into the landscape on his easel. Had daisies always been special to him? What we do know is that Homer included daisies in several of his other Hurley paintings including *Snap the Whip* (1872, MMA) and *In the Mowing* (1874, Wichita Art Museum).

Homer's painting *Evening* (Fig. 1) is readily associated with a similar southerly view in a c.1890 photograph (Fig. 2) of the Ten Eyck DeWitt farm (former Paul farm, now Row by Row Farm) on Hurley Mountain Road. In both images, the forested Hurley Mountain on the right slopes steeply down to the cleared fields. The outline of trees in the middle background and the fence rows compare well between the two. The general impression is that both Homer and the 1890's photographer used the site as the inspiration for their creations. What looks like small pools of water in the photograph are segments of Englishman's Creek as it angles its way through the landscape.

Winslow Homer's painting *Evening* came to light in a house once owned by Arthur Patch Homer and, after his death, sold to Margaret Christian in 1944. She discovered a clutch of unsigned and unstretched canvases in a neglected corner of the house and recognized the significance of the find. She contacted experts in the art field who determined, that the pictures were four of Homer's early works in oil. They are now in the collection of the Portland Museum of Art, Portland Maine.



Fig. 3: View of Englishman's Creek, Farm Hub complex, and Shawangunk Ridge looking south from near Wynkoop Road. Photo: Bruce Whistance 2019

During the Civil War, Homer, using the wood engraving technique, had provided several journals of the time with many drawings of military life and events of that war. As the century moved into the postwar decade of the seventies the new medium of photography became popular for its relative speed,

timeliness, and accuracy. During this transitional period, Homer turned from wood engraving to water color and oils as his main media. The theme of his very last wood engraving in 1875, *A Family Record*, was inspired by a setting in the interior of the Wynkoop House just down the road from where *Evening* was painted.

What was the condition of the long overlooked canvases when discovered in 1944? Some critics who made an initial study of *Evening*, one of the four canvases, felt they were seeing an impression of a shape like a woman's skirt and part of a basket in the lower center of the painting. Perhaps a profusion of daisies was intended to conceal this older image of a woman who may have looked like the woman in Homer's *The Four-Leaf Clover* also painted the 1870.

It was not a stretch for Homer author Reilly Rhodes to surmise that *Evening* is a Hurley subject. Less than a quarter mile down the road from the Ten Eyck DeWitt farm is the site of Homer's *Snap the Whip* (1872) painting and just across the road rose a giant American chestnut which inspired his wood engraving *Chestnutting* (1870). During the early 1870's Homer chose several locations along Hurley Mountain Road as settings for his rural genre paintings. Do you think while selecting the sites, he ever looked up and, by chance, happened to witness a desperate chicken hawk trying to outfly a flock of angry crows in hot pursuit? Was it ever pointed out to Homer that Englishman's Creek (see Fig. 3) forms a connection from farm to farm on the Flats just as the road does? Farm families along this stretch of road must have become accustomed to Homer and his sketchpad or easel and had, perhaps, offered a friendly hand to him. One thing that is known for sure is that in 1971, a century later, neighbors on the Flats extended helping hands and invitations to the newly arrived residents of the Wynkoop House.*

* The author Viola Opdahl and her husband Bob moved to the old Wynkoop farm on Wynkoop Road in 1971. Ms. Opdahl, a retired high school teacher, has observed the natural world from that vantage point for nearly fifty years.

IN REMEMBRANCE

We would like to pay tribute to the memory of the following members of the Hurley Heritage Society who have passed away over the last few months: Jean Semilof, Pat Manley, Helen Richter, Harry Anderson, Joseph Murphy and Dolores McGoldrick. They were all an important part of our core for many years. Thank you to their families and friends who have made donations to the Society in their memory.

Dolores McGoldrick was a Hurley Heritage Board member, President and museum gift shop manager. Whatever Dolores did she did with thoroughness, intelligence and kindness. She loved history, the arts and culture. Our Society benefited greatly from the generous amount of time she gave us. Dolores moved to Hurley with her husband, John, in the 1970s after she retired from teaching. Some of you may remember the bakery she opened in her home on Main Street and the wonderful aromas that wafted from it.

Coming This Summer...

- HHS Museum Shop Online!
- New HHS Museum website design
- Additional history articles and photos
- And more!

Check our website periodically to find out what changes we are making to share information about Hurley history and the HHS Museum as we continue to navigate through the pandemic times.

www.hurleyheritagesociety.org

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Please Donate

Like so many non-profit organizations, many of the HHS's fundraising plans have been put on hold. However, we still need to maintain the museum and so much more. Please consider making a donation so we can continue our mission to preserve and educate on Hurley's special heritage.

Donations may be made online at:

<https://www.hurleyheritagesociety.org/donate/>

Or you can mail a check to:

Hurley Heritage Society
PO Box 1661
Hurley, NY 12443

Donations are tax deductible.

Thank you.

Hurley Heritage Society Membership Form*

Name _____

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- | | |
|---|----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Single membership | \$25.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family membership | \$30.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Life membership | \$275.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate (Annual) | \$150.00 |
| Additional donation | \$ _____ |

Dues and donations are tax deductible.
Contact William Ryan at wryan1@hvc.rr.com
for IBM matching fund information.

Send payment to:
Hurley Heritage Society, PO Box 1661, Hurley, NY 12443

***You can also become a member or
make a donation online at
www.hurleyheritagesociety.org**