

CLINTON'S LANDMARK HOMES

CHS Landmark: 1561 Hollow Road



Photo 1949

Weiland Homestead - 250 Years

By Craig Marshall

Situated on a peaceful dead-end section of Hollow Road near the Taconic Parkway stands one of the oldest homes in town, the Weiland homestead built c. 1748. Originally containing over 100 acres, this was a working farm passing through many families, as researched by our late member Bill Benson in 1989, and before that by Clifford Buck and John Weiland. Records indicate that the home was built by Mordecai Lester, Jr., a man of means who added "features of class" to this English settler design farmhouse. These features included special moldings, chair rails, Palladium-style windows in the barns, and floorboards planed and joined with tongue-and-groove. On the east side, another home of saltbox construction was moved from a nearby site and added to the main house. In the back, a large summer kitchen was built over a huge cistern measuring 8' diameter by 8' deep. The cistern was built of dry-laid stone parged with cement, fed by gutters on the house, and still exists. Benson determined that this house stood on an early 1718 wagon

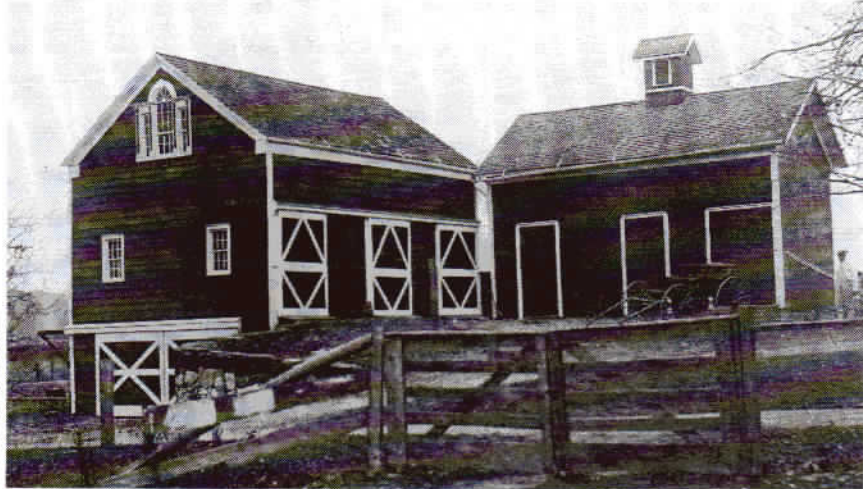
path from Dover to Rhinebeck that went through Clinton for tenant farmers to carry their rent (usually bags of wheat) to landowner Henry Beekman in Rhinebeck.

The 1850 farm census lists Alexander Wing and his wife, four children, one domestic, and one hired laborer occupying the 111 acre property. Animals included 25 sheep, 19 pigs, and 15 cows, horses, and oxen. Noting that \$185 worth of livestock was slaughtered, at about 6 cents/lb, along with 700# of butter, it appears that this was a busy farm. A small schoolhouse was on the property since about 1800.

The Webber family bought the farm in 1910, and Ivy Webber Brenner (mother of Clinton resident Gloria Brenner Chambers) was raised there. Ivy recently passed away in her 90s. John and Alice Weiland bought the 4.5 acre homestead in 1957 after the new Taconic State Parkway divided the property. They undertook major restoration work. Alice recounted that it was "quite a job", as there was no heat, one ceiling pull-chain light per room, and

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Photo early 1900's



Weiland farm (Continued from page 1)

few electrical outlets. Interestingly, they uncovered an 1886 obituary for Franz Lizst and a 1787 marking behind an attic baseboard. In 1960, they moved in permanently with their three children. Arthur, who has many childhood memories of the house and outbuildings, and his wife Phillippa took ownership of the historic homestead after John passed away in 1997.

The main house is pegged beam with no ridge, and timbers are marked with Roman numerals to identify placement during construction. It has two floors of living quarters, an attic, and a full basement. The porch is an 1800's Victorian addition that fully complements the design of the home. Upon close inspection, the floorboards appear to be "pit sawn" (handsawn) due to their random thickness and width.

One chimney is original with a large shallow shale-backed fireplace. When renovating the saltbox, Art found c. 1800's liquor bottles in the walls that, according to Webber family stories, presumably came from Tom, the hired man "who liked his drink" and who lived in the attic at the time. He also found half a dozen corsets stuffed in the walls, probably as a form of insulation in the drafty siding.

Seven doors lead from the original kitchen in the main house, indicating that this was a major room in the structure. Some of the barns and sheds have long disappeared, including a very large chicken barn. Two big barns in excellent condition remain near the house and nicely complement the property.

Art and Phillipa have sizeable gardens of flowers and vegetables. Chickens still freely roam the picturesque farm under the watchful eyes of hovering chicken hawks, reminiscent of years gone by.

The Weiland Homestead was designated a Clinton Historical Society Landmark in 1989.

Library (Continued from page 1)

1980's. Children who were blind, learning disabled or who had physical limitations were invited to participate through the use of Braille and talking books that came through the Mid-Hudson Library System. Transportation chains were organized to help out working families.

When the 'children's corner' was established in 1985, it became the center of indoor activities on rainy days. Featuring a round table and just-the-right-size chairs for the children to use, it became a mainstay of program development. Attendance grew from 40 to as many as 150 children. Junior library assistants were deputized, and mothers were encouraged to volunteer their time during the summer schedule.

Little has changed over the past 40 years as the Library continues to focus on its young patrons. Summer Reading Programs have become so much a part of the Town's culture that planning and supervisory work is now carried out in the funded position of a part time Director of Youth Services. Katherine Costello, daughter of Dacie Kershaw who founded the earliest programs in 1965, presently holds the post.

In 2004, Glenda Schwarze spoke on barns and the Underground Railway; local story teller Karen Pillsworth held the children enrapt on another Wednesday.

Park in a program co-funded by Town Recreation Director Dan Harkenrider.

Children's programming is a staple of our offerings and the Town's response is so enthusiastic that we must now use Town Hall space to accommodate everyone. We're delighted the Library is included in the Town Hall renovation plan that will allow us to double our space in the next few years. Given our past history, we're certain to use it well.

Story by Nancy Melin Nelson, Director of Library Services.



Do you know who these children are? Contact the editor.