

Clinton Landmark: TALE OF THE HAWK FARM

by Lisa Thomas

FOR MANY YEARS the Clinton Historical Society has recognized the preservation efforts of present and past owners of historic properties in the Town of Clinton by honoring them with a Clinton Landmark designation. The most recent addition to the Clinton Landmark roster is *Tale of the Hawk Farm* on Fiddlers Bridge Road.

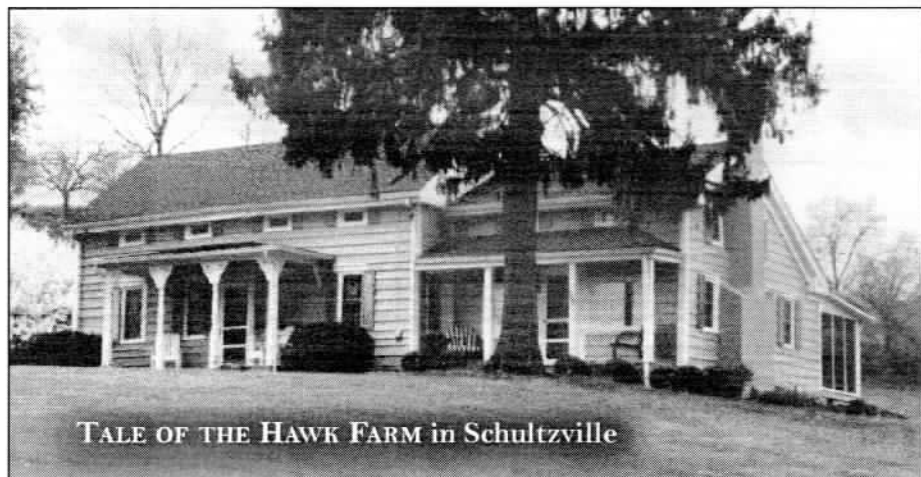
On August 29, 2011 the Trustees of the CHS approved Landmark Designation for the beautiful farmhouse and outbuildings owned by Lenore Maroney and Dot Distel. The current owners purchased the property in 2002 from James MacNair, whose family had occupied the farm since 1943. Lenore and Dot have researched their property extensively through historical documents and maps. They have been able to trace ownership of the land back to the original Nine Partners survey, which was completed in 1743

by Charles Clinton (father of George Clinton, the first Governor of NY and the fourth Vice President of the US, for whom our town is named).

In May 1770 the property was owned by Maria Van Benthuyzen, widow of Barent Van Benthuyzen, Jr., as indicated in the *Map of Rhinebeck previous to 1812*. According to the owner's records, between 1806 and 1943 the property was owned by Robert G. and Martha Livingston, Martin Burger, Martin Lyons, Sarah Lyons, and Evelyn and John Wilstach.

Tale of the Hawk Farm sits on ninety acres of rolling farmland with numerous stone walls, a stream, and two ponds. The farmhouse is a classic eyebrow colonial that was built circa 1825 on a fieldstone foundation using post and beam construction. Surrounding the house are extensive farm outbuildings,

(continued on page 3)



TALE OF THE HAWK FARM in Schultsville

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(cont'd from page 1)

including a wagon house, two barns, a chicken coop, a smokehouse, a pig house, a woodshed, and an outhouse. As with all old houses, repairs and renovations were done

over the years, but the structure retains

its original wood siding and trim and porch columns, as well as the original doors, chimneys, and wide-board floors in the interior. Phil Keck has worked with the owners on all the restoration that has been done at the farm, including the interior and exterior of the house and the barns.

The current owners have heard many anecdotal stories about their property from former caretaker Pat Liefer, who worked on the property for 42 years. Pat recalled that there was once an icehouse located down by Long Pond, as well as a fruit orchard on the hill east of the house. When the property was still actively farmed, there were Black Angus cattle, dairy cows, pigs, horses, sheep, goats, and chickens. Pat now serves as farm advisor to the owners.

Lenore and Dot do all of the brushhogging and lawnmowing and have restored many of the stone walls themselves. Freddie Poulson keeps the two Lazer lawnmowers and "Walter," the Ford 4600 tractor, in good working order at the farm; and, with the help of Terry and Lisa Kilmer from *Grey Horse Farm*, the property produced almost 500 square bales of horse hay and 18 round bales in one cutting this year.

When Lenore and Dot bought the farm, they changed the name



"Walter's cousin" in a hayfield at Tale of the Hawk Farm

from *Dead Horse Farm* to *Tale of the Hawk Farm* following a series of hawk sightings on the property during the course of the purchase transaction. The name honors the hawks that reside at the farm and recognizes the Native American culture's belief that hawks are sacred messengers and carriers of wisdom. The owners are very proud that they have been able to turn their property back into a working farm, and they feel very fortunate to be living in the Town of Clinton.

Tale of the Hawk Farm is an example of an historically significant house and property in the Town of Clinton that has been thoughtfully maintained and preserved throughout the years. Recognizing the efforts of these owners helps increase community awareness of Clinton's strong history and wealth of historic structures. We hope it will also strengthen interest in preservation as a legacy for future generations of Clinton residents. 🏠

Author Lisa Thomas serves on the CHS Board of Trustees and chairs the Society's Landmark Designation committee. To find out more about the Clinton Landmark Designation program or to apply, please contact Lisa at LisaNadelThomas@gmail.com.