



# Deerpark Diary

Town of Deerpark Museum, 1863 School House

Town of Deerpark Museum, P. O. Box 621, Huguenot, New York 12746

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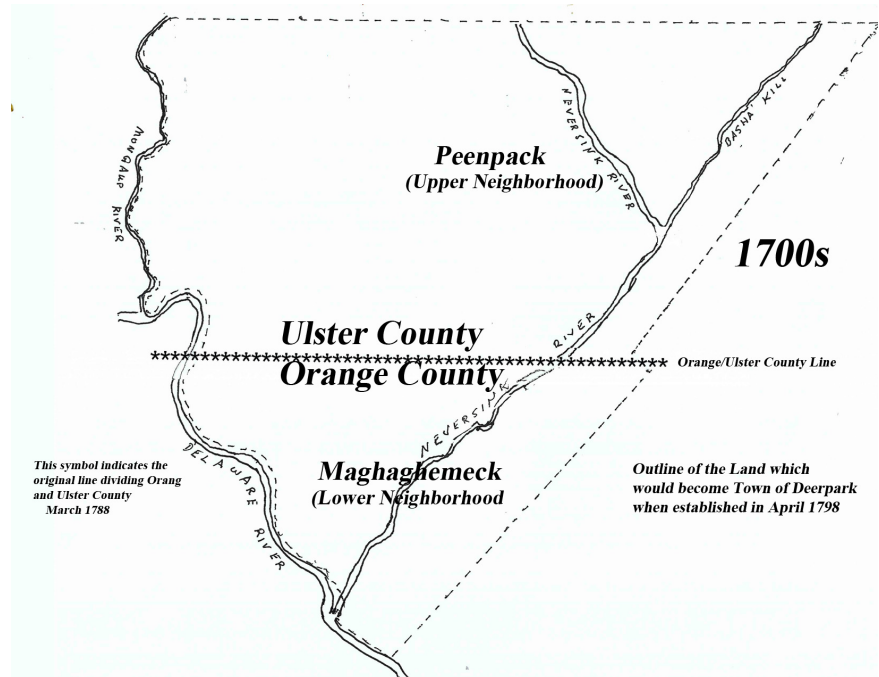
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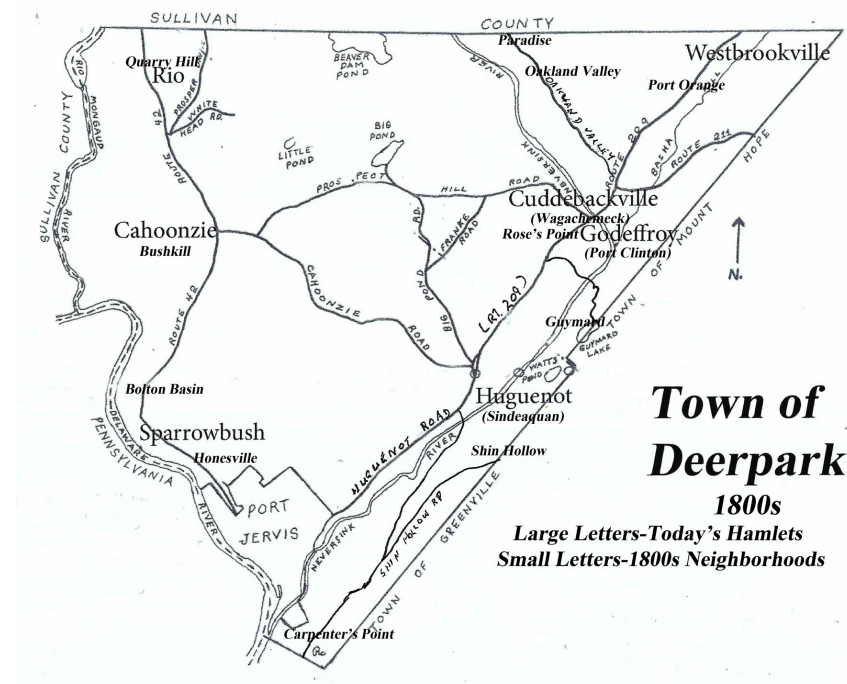
**Then**

What is now the Town of Deerpark, was one of the earliest regions of Orange County settled by European settlers. The fertile valleys of the Neversink and Delaware Rivers had attracted the ancient and native peoples to settle here long before European settlers moved into the area. Early settlers lived peacefully in this valley with the native Lenape tribe beginning in the 1690s.

In colonial times, Orange County was organized as one of the original counties of the New York Colony by act of the New York General Assembly in 1683. It was named after William, Prince of Orange, who was crowned King of England in 1689. Orange County included the lands of present-day Rockland County and the southern-most portion of today's Orange County.



Only half of present-day Deerpark was situated in Orange County. These residents lived in Maghaghemeck, also known as "The Lower Neighborhood". On October 18, 1701, the people of Peenpack, also known as "The Upper Neighborhood",



were empowered to give their votes to Ulster County.

The original boundaries of Orange County were changed in 1798 by an act of New York State when the present-day sixty-two counties were established. Parts of Ulster County were added to Orange County in order to keep its same size, because a section of the original Orange County became Rockland County.

March 16th, 1798 marks the date that the neighborhoods of Peenpack, (Old Ulster County) and the Maghaghemeck (Old Orange County) became organized as the Town of Deerpark making it the second largest town in present-day Orange County.

Neighborhoods changed over the years. On 1800s maps you will see neighborhoods with these names: Paradise, Port Orange, Peenpack, Guymard, Port Clinton, Oakland Valley, Sindaquan (Huguenot), Rose's Point, Carpenter's Point, Bushkill, Shin Hollow, Honesville, Bolton Basin, and Quarry Hill. Most of them had their own post offices and schools.



## Now

Over the years, some adjustments were made to the Town Lines and County Lines to create today's Town of Deerpark boundaries. The small neighborhoods were consolidated into the present-day hamlets of Cahoonzie, Cuddebackville, Goddeffroy, Huguenot, Rio, Sparrowbush and Westbrookville.

## § Valley Junction Station Then and Now

### Then

In 1868 The Port Jervis & Monticello Rail Road was built traveling through the Neversink Valley running parallel to the D & H Canal and then north to Monticello. The railroad was not successful, entered bankruptcy and was taken over the NYO&W RR in 1904.

As soon as the NYO&W took physical possession of the Port Jervis & Monticello RR, it set about making some much needed improvements. A cut off was built in June 1904 from the center of the great curve around the bluff at Roses Point on the Monticello line, to a junction with the Kingston line down in the valley directly below Roses Point. This junction, built to form a triangle, was located just east of the Neversink River Bridge. A station and freight house, named Valley Junction, was built. A Wye, allowing trains to back up and return to their original destinations, added to the importance of this station.

It was at this junction that some trains traveled to Monti-

cello while others continued east to make connections at Summitville. Two passenger trains daily ran each way between Port Jervis and Monticello and between Port Jervis and Summitville. In the summer there were three daily trains. The NYO&W operated until 1957.

As part of the station's history, there is a funny story about what happened one cold spring day when Gerald Best, who wrote the book "Minisink Express", was visiting Bosco Leibla, the agent at Valley Junction. Bosco let Gerald listen in on the dispatcher's wire, watch as train orders were copied and taught him Morse Code. The pot-bellied stove in the station had been fired up to warm the station. Gerald brought some sandwiches. Bosco put an unopened can of beans on the stove. As was his usual routine he would open the beans at noon and have his hot lunch. The day that Gerald visited, the fire in the stove was not doing so well, so he put in some more coal and stirred up the fire. Bosco was sending a report over the wire to the dispatcher when with a deafening roar, the can of beans exploded. Bosco disappeared in a cloud of steam. The beans covered the ceiling, walls, ticket racks and everyone's clothes. The



*Valley Junction Station*

roar, which Bosco let out, when he opened the stove and saw the nice white-hot fire, was almost as loud as the exploding beans. Gerald spent the rest of the day cleaning the inside of the station and trying to make nice with Bosco.



*2016 Historic Marker  
William C.Pomeroy Foundation*

## Now

Today the only remnant is the cement marker which had been part of the Valley Junction Station. In 2016, the Town of Deerpark received a grant from the William Pomeroy Foundation to purchase a historic marker to commemorate the importance of the Valley Junction Station and the Port Jervis & Monticello RR.

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### Autumn Months

#### September

The Ninth month of the year—The name September comes from the Latin septem, “seven” because this had been the seventh month of the early Roman calendar.

Special event—Harvest

Moon, 2024—The Harvest Moon relates to the timing of the autumnal equinox (September 22, 2024) the beginning of fall. It first appears in the evening of Monday, September 16th before reaching peak illumination at 10:34 pm EDT on September 27th. For several evenings, the moonrise comes soon after sunset. This results in an abundance of bright moonlight early in the evening, which was a traditional aid to farmers harvesting their summer grown crops, hence the name Harvest Moon.



*Harvest Moon*

#### October

The Tenth month of the year—The name October comes from the Latin word octo, “eight” because this had been the eighth month of early Roman calendars.

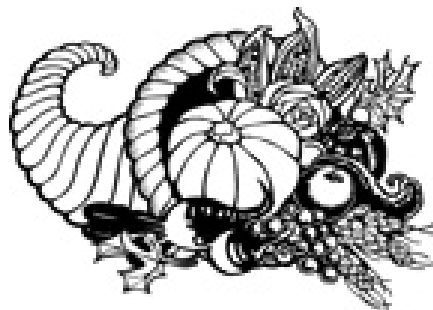
We celebrate the vivid colors of fall leaves. Those colors were actually there all summer, just masked by green. The waning hours of daylight trigger these



changes and the green chlorophyll is gone allowing the many colors begin to reveal their bright faces!

## November

The Eleventh month of the year—The name November comes from the Latin word novem, “nine” because this had been the ninth month of the early Roman calendar.



Thanksgiving is the big holiday of the month. Harvest festivals had been celebrated for centuries by Native Americans and then shared with the early settlers in Massachusetts and Virginia in the early 1600s. Throughout the centuries Thanksgiving was celebrated sometime in the fall depending on the geographic region. A number of presidents designated Thanksgiving as a holiday in November, however President Franklin Delano Roosevelt designated the fourth Thursday of November as a Federal holiday in December 1941.

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### Museum Programs

#### The Parting Glass

“The Parting Glass” a traditional Irish band will present a concert at the Neversink Valley #1530 Grange, 35 Grange Road, Hu-



guenot, NY at 3:00pm on Sunday, September 29, 2024. For years, Patti, Al and Tom Gessner have been playing their music throughout the Tri-State area and Hudson Valley Area.



*Tom, Al and Patti Gessner*

The Gessners play and sing Irish folk songs of love, of rebellion and hope. The name of their group was taken from a tradition dating back to a 1654 ballad “The Parting Glass”. This song was sung when friends departed after an evening of good fellowship. The parting glass was the final hospitality offered to departing guests. At that time horses were the means of transportation so when friends mounted their horses they were presented one final drink (one for the road) to fortify them for their travels.

This is one of the texts from one of the variations of the Parting Glass song:

*Be with you all, be with you all*

*Good night and joy be with you all*

*So Fill to me the parting Glass*

*Good night, joy be with you all.*

Al plays the button accordion. Patti plays the flute and tin whistle. Tom plays the guitar and all three sing traditional Irish songs creating a lively musical program.

The members of the Town of Deerpark Museum look forward to hosting

“The Parting Glass” concert which is being sponsored by the Deerpark Heritage Fund, a component of The Community Foundation of Orange and Sullivan Counties. The program is free and for refreshments scones will be served.

For additional information, please call 845-856-2702 or 845-754-8070.

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### Ghost Stories

Michael Worden, Town of Deerpark Historian, will present “Ghost Stories” at 3:00pm on Sunday, October 27th at the 1863 Huguenot Schoolhouse, 25 Grange Road, Huguenot.

Worden spent much of his childhood in the wildly haunted house of his grandparents, becoming accustomed to bumps in the night.

During an interview he was asked, “How old were you when you had your first experience with ghosts?”

His response was, “I don’t recall a specific age. However, when I think back to my childhood, encounters or experiences were fairly common when staying over at my grandparents’ home. We often spent the night there. I would often wake up during the night at the sleepovers to the sound of footsteps going up the stairs, down the stairs hallway, then back down the hallway, and back down the stairs. We could see from the living room into the dining room, where there was a large bay window. I’d look toward the

bay window. Several times I saw a male figure standing there looking toward the living room. And almost as if it knew that I noticed it, it would turn and start to move away, but it would fade as it was moving. It really creeped me out.”

From there he read all he could about the topic, watched a tape of Ghostbusters until it fell apart, and began tentative investigations in the 90s. Worden began investigating in earnest when he met Linda Zimmerman in 2001. His book, *Ghost Detective*, serves as a ghost hunting guide, a survey of some of his most absorbing cases, and a statement of his philosophy on life, paranormal investigation, and the afterlife. Among the topics covered are residual and intelligent hauntings, ghost hunting tools, the validity of personal experiences photographic evidence, EVP, orbs, ectoplasm and apparitions.

Worden also authored two true crime books, *Lynched by a Mob!* (2022) and *The Murder of Richard Jennings* (2013).



*Michael Worden*

The members of the Town of Deerpark Museum look forward to hosting Michael’s “Ghost Stories”. The program is free and refreshments will be served. For additional information, please call 845-856-2702 or 845-754-8070.