



# DEER PARK DIARY

TOWN OF DEERPARK 1863 SCHOOL HOUSE MUSEUM

TOWN OF DEERPARK HISTORIAN, P. O. BOX 621, HUGUENOT, NEW YORK 12746 (845-856-2702)

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PEENPACK PATENT  
1200 ACRES 1695

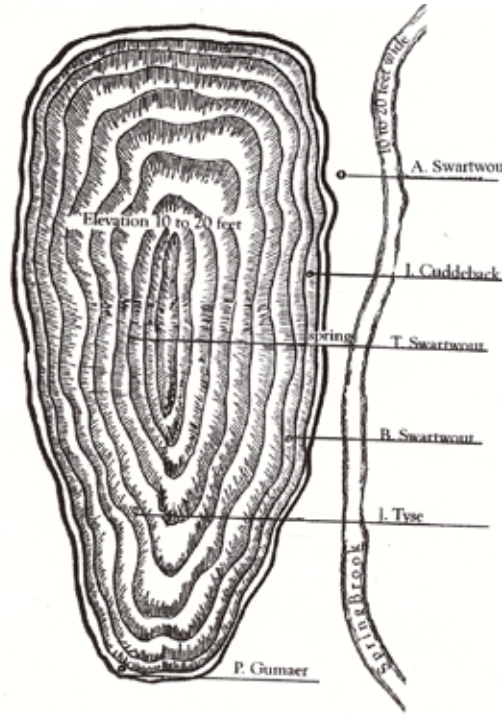
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- Old Stone Houses
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## Peenpack History Peenpack Patent

The history of the word Peenpack dates back to the Lenape Indians who lived here in the Neversink Valley. The tribe that lived in the Cuddebackville/Godfrey area were known as the Peenpack Indians. This area was also known as the Upper Neighborhood during the time of the early European Settlers. The tribe that lived in the Lower Neighborhood (Port Jervis/Tri-States) were called the Mahagkemik Indians.

Jacob Cuddeback went to the Governor of the New York Colony to ask for a patent for the land that the original settlers, Jacob Cuddeback, John Tyse, Peter Gumaer, David Jamison, and Anthony, Bernardus and Thomas Swartwout lived on. On October 14, 1697, a patent for 1200 acres of land was granted to all of the families. The Peenpack Patent covered land between the Old Mine Road (Route 209), and the Neversink River, south to the Peenpack Trail.



## PEENPACK TRAIL

The original Peenpack Trail was most certainly an Indian trail before it became a road used by the early settlers to travel between the Neversink and Delaware Rivers. Today it is a well-traveled road between Cahoonzie and Huguenot.

The 1875 Beers Map shows that the Peenpack Trail went from the Delaware River, over the mountain through Cahoonzie and back down into the valley to the Neversink River at the Swartwout Homestead. It cut out the entire southwestern section of Deer park.

Joseph Brant took this route when he attacked the Maghagkemik Neighborhood (Huguenot—Tri-States—Port Jervis—Sparrowbush) on July 21, 1779. The trail at that time went through wilderness. There were no houses. His stealth along the trail completely surprised the neighborhood. The residents in the more populated area weren't aware of the attack until they saw the homes in the entire valley in flames. Brant had led his Indian and Tory raiders into this Lower Neighborhood by fording the Neversink River and then burning, looting and destroying homes, barns, mills and a school. The destruction continued westward toward the Delaware River, with the burning of the Mahagkemik Church, Fort Decker, and other homes, barns and mills. Brant then headed north along the Delaware with cattle, horses and other supplies that had been looted.

On July 22nd, about 120 militiamen from Orange and Ulster Counties in New York and Sussex County in New Jersey gathered at Major Decker's storehouse (Neversink Drive) to plan an attack against Joseph Brant and his band of raiders. They forded the Neversink River at Huguenot and traveled northward on the

Peenpack trail until they reached the Delaware River. At that point they continued to Minisink Ford where a battle took place.

### **Houses that Survived the American Revolution**

The Brant raid on the Peenpack neighborhood on October 14, 1778 destroyed almost everything within present-day Cuddebackville, Godeffroy and Huguenot. The only habitable buildings left in the area were the homes of the DeWitts beside the Neversink River, the stone house of Ezekiel Gumaer, and Jacob Caudebec's stone house. The DeWitt home had been fortified with a picket fence, just as the Gumaer and DePuy stone houses were fortified. The militia and local residents fought off Brant and his raiders at the DeWitt and Gumaer forts, but the Depuy fort was burned down and the inhabitants escaped to Fort Gumaer.

No one knows why the Caudebec house was spared, especially since the patriarch's grandson was in command of Fort Gumaer. Over the years there have

been alterations to the original stonehouse, however its original lines are still visible today. The house is located on Route 209. A historic marker is located along the road marking the site.

Jacob Caudebec had fled France in 1686 with his friend, Peter Gumaer, to escape religious persecution. In 1755, he built the little house on the hill within signaling distance of Fort Gumaer. He was seventy years old at the time and lived to be about one hundred. He witnessed the wilderness being pushed back so far that a son complained that his parents had lacked the foresight to include in their patent sufficient woodland to provide fuel for their decedents.

As the neighborhood grew changes took place. Jacob built the first grist mill on the stream near his new home in the Peenpack region. Before this the Peenpack settlers had to carry their grain nearly sixty miles to Esopus (Kingston) mills or pound it to course meal in the manner of the Indians.

Mr. Caudebec experienced many changes in the one hundred years of his life from wilderness to the time of the French and Indian War.

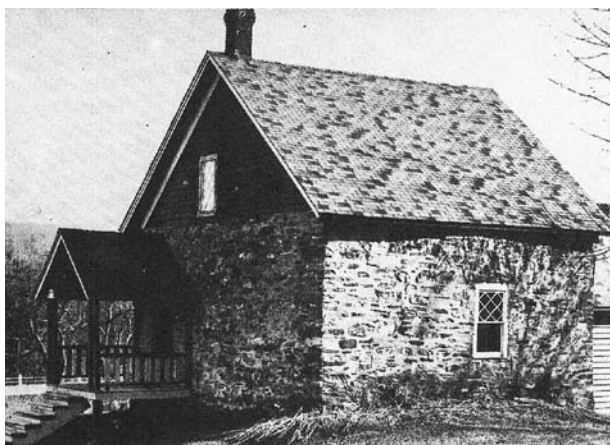
### **The DeWitt Clinton House**

The DeWitt house is in Cuddebackville and stands at the intersection of Prospect Hill Road and Route 209. Jacob DeWitt built this home prior to the American Revolution and it was used as a fort during that time. It had a stockade fence surrounding the structures and was fired upon by Joseph Brant and his raiders with little or no damage. During the winter of 1778-1779 sixty-five people from the Peenpack neighborhood lived there because the rest of the homes had been burned.

In the 1940s the building was used by its owner, Marcus Stamp, as a magistrate's office and court. The late Dr. W. L. Cuddeback asked the Stamps not to destroy the old building because of its historical associations, so they had new siding put on and left it otherwise unchanged. The broad, stubby chimney and inward swinging casement windows were original. The handrail of the stair was a rough hickory pole. Within the walls there is a mortar of plaster, corncobs and hair held in place by split poles.

In 1943 Mildred Seese published the book *Old Orange Houses Vol. II*. The following article, "Clinton Son said DeWitt was Born on the Neversink", is about the DeWitt house.

"Three places in Orange and one in Ulster County have been represented by local historians as the birthplace of DeWitt Clinton, Governor of New York and the chief figure in the development of the Erie Canal. One was the home of his maternal grandfather, Egbert DeWitt, at Napanoch



*Jacob Caudebec  
House*

*Brant's Raiders  
missed this one  
unfortified stone  
house during  
the 1778  
Peenpack Raid.*



*DeWitt Clinton  
House*

*Photo by Edward P.  
Dougherty  
ca. 1940s*

*Part of the original  
Fort DeWitt  
1700s*

“At least parts of all three of the Orange County houses still stand: his father’s in New Windsor, his Grandfather Clinton’s in Little Britain and his Uncle Jacob DeWitt’s home on the Neversink River in Godeffroy. (Cuddebackville—editor’s note) ... the building was part of the stockaded establishment of Captain Jacob Rutsen DeWitt before and after the Revolution and Deerpark historians offer good evidence, if not proof, that it was the birthplace of DeWitt Clinton...

“Family data agreed that he was not born at his father’s home in New Windsor. His son, George W. Clinton, wrote W. H. Nearpass of Port Jervis in 1878 that he had often heard his father was born when Mrs. James Clinton was detained away from home by a snowstorm. Captain DeWitt’s daughter, wife of William Rose of Little Britain, was quoted as saying that because of the storm her Aunt Maria barely reached the DeWitt fort before the baby was born; and an Ulster historian, relinquishing the Napanoch claim, explained Maria Clinton’s presence at Fort DeWitt at such a time by the fact that her husband was

on militia duty at the frontier. In addition, there was the incident of the early 1830s, when DeWitt, Jr., a member of the Army Engineer Corps, was surveying in Deerpark. In a conversation with William Rose of Rose’s Point on the D & H Canal, he expressed a wish to see his father’s birthplace in that neighborhood. He was directed to the former DeWitt property. ...a grand niece of the Governor, possessor of many Clinton papers, was the authority for the statement in a DeWitt Clinton High School publication of 1906 that DeWitt Clinton was born at the home of his uncle in Deerpark.”

**Gumaer Stone House**

This article is written to correct a misconception that the Gumaer Stone House, located in Godeffroy, is the same building as Fort Gumaer. At present, there are no physical remains of the original fort. Records state that the original Gumaer home was fortified with stockade fencing, just as the Depuy and DeWitt homes were. There were militia stationed at Fort Gumaer and Fort DeWitt. Unfortunately, Fort Depuy didn’t have any militia and was destroyed.

The original stone house, known as Fort Depuy in the 1700s, was built by Benjamin Depuy prior to the Revolutionary War. Joseph Brant and his raiding party destroyed the house and burned the stockade and other buildings on October 14, 1778. The Depuy household, fifteen persons in all, was forced to take refuge in the nearby Fort Gumaer.

Depuy rebuilt on the old site after the war and lived there



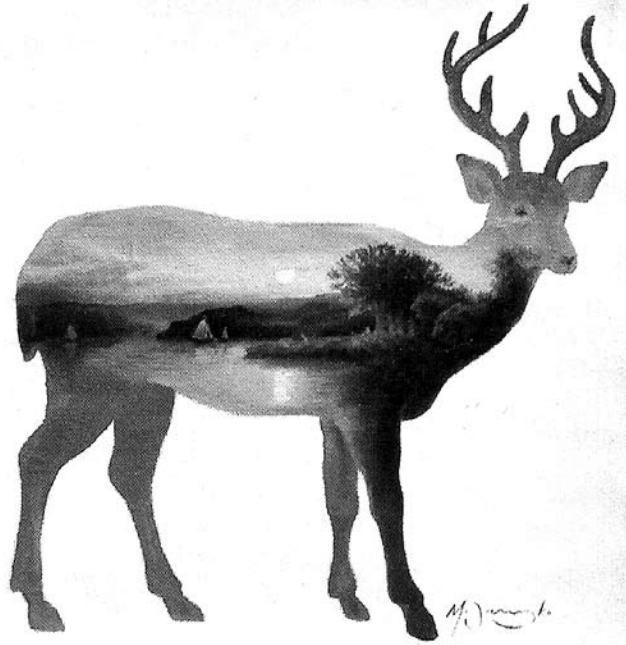
*GUMAER STONE HOUSE  
PHOTO CA. 1940s*

for a number of years and then moved with several of his children to a settlement in the Finger Lakes region in the early 1800s.

Peter E. Gumaer, Deerpark historian and grandson of the Peenpack pioneer, bought the house from Benjamin Depuy and lived there for many years. From the time of his purchase, this house has been known as the Gumaer Stone House.

During the late 1800s, this property was included in the Adolph Godeffroy Estate.

Dr. Joseph Benderly, owned the house during the mid 1900s and used it as headquarters for Camp Achvah.



*SUNSET DEER BY MIKE JAROSZKO*

## **DEERPARK HERITAGE DAY**

**A DAY OF GREAT FUN**

**SEPTEMBER 19, 2009**

**10:00-4:00**

**LITTLE RED SCHOOLHOUSE**

**25 GRANGE ROAD**

**HUGUENOT**

**NEW YORK**

**MUSIC**

**SCHOOL TOURS**

**EVERYTHING ANIMAL**

**XAVIER THE MAGICIAN**

**FACE PAINTING**

**GREAT FOOD**

**GAMES FOR KIDS**

**CRAFTS**

**DEMONSTRATIONS**

**DEEREST DEERPARK**

**ADMISSION—FOOD DONATIONS FOR**

**FOOD BANKS &**

**HUMANE SOCIETY**

## **DEEREST DEERPARK**

Sixteen completed Deerest Deerpark deer forms will be unveiled at the Town of Deerpark Heritage Day celebration on September 19, 2009 from 10:00 to 4:00 at the Little Red 1863 Schoolhouse, 25 Grange Road, Huguenot.

A Gala Reception will be on Saturday, October 3, 2009, 1:00-3:00 (exhibit 9/29-10/16) at Orange Hall Gallery, SUNY Orange, 115 South Street, Corner of Grandview and Wawayanda Avenues, Middletown, NY 10940. For additional information call Cultural Affairs (845-341-4891)