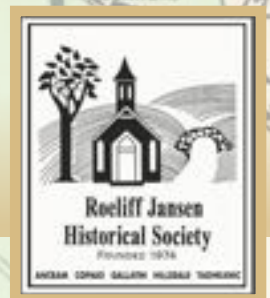


The Roeliff Jansen Historical Society



SITES to CELEBRATE: *Local History Revisited*

The 2025 Exhibition Catalog



SITES to CELEBRATE: *Local History Revisited*

**At its best, preservation engages the past in a conversation
with the present over a mutual concern about the future.**

— William Murtagh



This spirit is captured in the restoration of the Copake Memorial Clock, the iconic timepiece at the heart of Copake, NY. First dedicated in 1944 to honor the town's World War II veterans, by 2010 the clock had fallen into disrepair. In June 2011, after major restoration spearheaded by Hugh "Rus" Davis, the clock was rededicated to the community - not only restoring a beloved memorial, but also reaffirming identity of place, and linking past to present.

Sites to Celebrate: Local History Revisited highlights many such preservation stories from across the Roe Jan area. Created in collaboration with the Historical Society, a diverse group of community partners (below) and Hudson River Bank & Trust Company Foundation, the exhibit reflects a shared commitment to protect and honor our local heritage.

While much of the exhibition resides at the RJHS, it also reaches outward—inviting visitors to explore historic sites that tell the story of local life across agriculture, industry, commerce, transportation, worship, and education—set amid the landscapes, hamlets and waterways that define our region.

We invite you to discover these special places, to enjoy their multifaceted stories, and to join us as stewards of our collective past. It's up to us to preserve the past for the future.

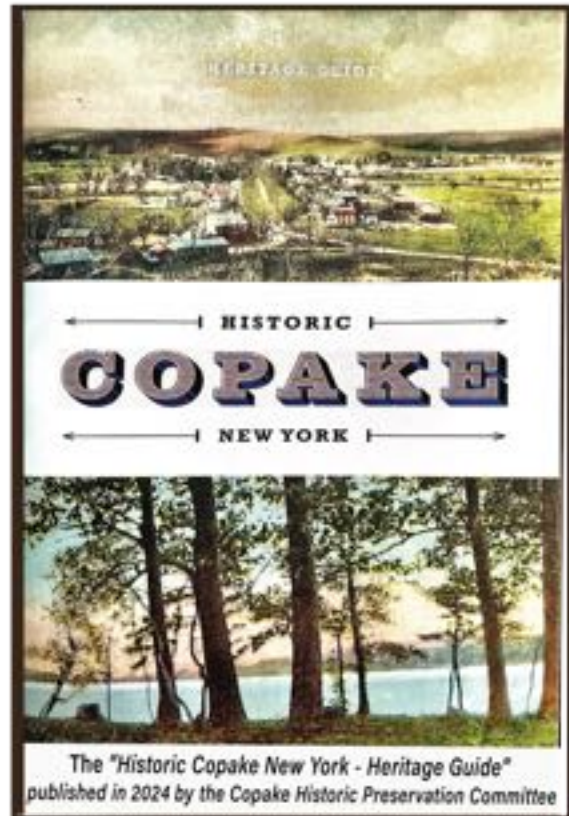
The Copake Historic Preservation Committee
 The Copake Grange 935
 The Sweet-Sherman Homestead
 The Copake Little School
 Copake Auction
 The Craryville Depot Complex
 Historic Peter Crary House
 Friends of East Gate Toll House
 The Icehouse Site at Copake Lake
 Friends of Taconic State Park

The Copake Iron Works & Railroad
 Former Sites of the Bash Bish Inn in TSP
 The Gallatin Reformed Church & Churchyard
 Mill Success at Pumpkin Hollow, Taghkanic
 Boston Corner Community Organization
 The Astor Guest Cottage, West Copake
 Historic Hillsdale: Hillsdale General Store,
 Cook & Larder, Books & Cake, the Pulver House,
 Twisted Sisters Coffee House, the former
 Hillsdale High School, and the Roe Jan Brewing Co.

Historic Preservation Committee

The Town of Copake formed the Historic Preservation Committee (HPC) in October of 2021 as a sub-committee of the Town Board's Conservation Advisory Committee. Its purpose is to support the protection, preservation and cultivation of public interest in local historic resources. HPC began its work by conducting a town-wide inventory of more than 120 noteworthy historic buildings constructed prior to 1924, representing key 19th century themes of Agriculture, Industry, Transportation, Ecclesiastical and Civic Life.

As part of the Town's 2024 Bicentennial Celebrations, HPC awarded more than 80 Bicentennial Commemorative Historic Markers to property owners including many homes. The project was accompanied by a first-time Copake Heritage Guide documenting Copake's notable buildings and sites that included eight properties listed on the State and National Register of Historic Places. These included two recent efforts by individual Committee members who achieved designation of two new National Register properties in Copake: the c.1845 Sweet-Sherman Homestead (2022), and the 1876 Copake Railroad Depot (2024).



The town's 2024 Bicentennial Celebrations increased broad community interest and engagement with local history. Since then, individual owners of historic properties have taken the initiative to protect and raise awareness about their lesser-known sites. These include vestiges of the 1923 icehouse once operated by the Copake Lake Pure Water and Ice Company, and the c.1720 Mill Success, a Livingston Manor-era grist mill on Taghkanic Creek. Each of these remarkable community-led initiatives and others across the Roe Jan area are the subject of this exhibition.

The Roeliff Jansen Historical Society and the Historic Preservation Committee have come together to present this show, and to celebrate the people of the Roe Jan community and the grassroots efforts that are expanding local awareness and pride in our rural cultural heritage.



Town of Copake, Historic Preservation Committee

Catherine Mikic, Chair

Lesley Doyel, Alison Kochey, Jed Luchow

Dale Peterson, Stephanie Sharp, Members

Edgar Masters, Advisory

Linda Gabaccia, Town Board Liaison

MIRACLE ON MILES ROAD



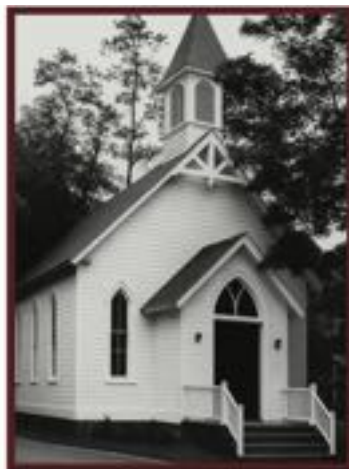
Miracle on Miles Road: A Story of Rescue, Restoration and Adaptive Reuse

Built between 1891 and 1892 for \$2,000, the Copake Falls Methodist Episcopal Church was described as “neat and comfortable and sufficiently commodious.” Designed in the Carpenter Gothic style, it featured tall lancet windows, a soaring belfry, and novelty siding. For 63 years, it served the local Methodist congregation before closing in 1955.

Over the next three decades, the building stood vacant and deteriorating. As *The Roe Jan Independent* observed in 1985, it had become “an abandoned and bedraggled building... windows broken, the door often left standing open, the front step littered with broken glass. Only the care of neighbors kept it from being overgrown and ruined.”



The church in 1909



The Restored building, 1974



The RJHS today

By 1981, thanks largely to the vision of Alfred “Butch” Near, widespread community support, and the Roeliff Jansen Historical Society (RJHS), the town of Copake purchased the church, which it still owns. Volunteers managed repairs: the Hillsdale-Copake Garden Club planted the grounds, and inmates from the Hudson Correctional Facility painted the building inside and out.

In 1983, the restored church reopened as the home of the RJHS and Museum—an inspiring example of adaptive reuse representing the five Roe Jan towns of Ancram, Copake, Gallatin, Hillsdale, and Taghkanic. Today, this once-abandoned church fittingly hosts the 2025 exhibition *Sites to Celebrate: Local History Revisited*, highlighting preservation projects across the region.

MILL SUCCESS

The Remnants of an 18th Century Grist Mill

MILL SUCCESS

In 1937, the Northeast Theosophical Foundation established a regional center for the Theosophical Society in Taghkanic, NY, offering a peaceful environment for spiritual and personal growth. On its grounds lie the remains of the Mill Success grist mill, discovered and studied by Michael Sellon, son of John Sellon, a co-founder of the center.

On October 9, 2024, Michael led a tour of the property for board members of the Roeliff Jansen Historical Society (RJHS) and the Copake Historic Preservation Committee (HPC). This account draws on Cheryl Benken's tour notes and Captain Franklin Ellis's *History of Columbia County* (1878).

HISTORY

Robert Livingston (1654–1728), a royal official under King George I, received a 160,000-acre land patent covering much of present-day Columbia and Dutchess-

counties. As "First Lord of Livingston Manor," he and his son oversaw the construction of numerous mills—grist, wool, paper, linen, lumber, and gunpowder—along the Manor's waterways. "Mill Success" appears on Claude Joseph Sauthier's 1778 map of Livingston Manor. Built around 1720 on the Bain farm, west of Copake Lake, it served tenant farmers who brought wheat to be ground into flour. The miller and Mr. Livingston each kept a share as payment. The grist mill operated until about 1790, when it was converted into a sawmill.

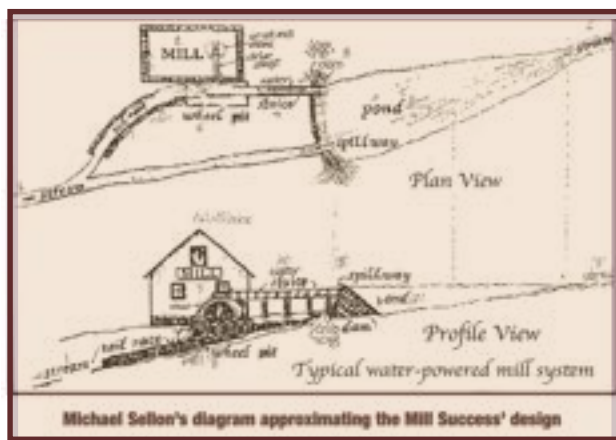
THE TOUR

Michael Sellon's tour began at the stream fed by Copake Lake overflow, part of the Claverack Creek watershed that flows to the Hudson. A large base millstone remains near the water; its runner (or rotating) millstone rests a mile away on private land. Around 1780, a house was built on-site for the miller's family. Visitors followed a wooded ledge to the mill site, visible only through traces in the landscape. Two carting stages marked where wagons once delivered grain to the upper floor, while the lower level held gears, shafts, and axles. A wooden sluice—formed by 20 to 30 logs—carried water from the dam to a large hillside wheel.

RJHS thanks Michael and Rebecca Sellon, Carolyn Wheeler, and the Pumpkin Hollow Board of Directors for preserving the site and sharing its history.



THE MILLSTONE



THE ASTOR GUEST HOUSE

in West Copake



The Astor Mansion in West Copake, before it burned in 1944



Henry Astor III and his bride, Malvina Dinehart of Copake

The Astor Guest House in West Copake, also known as the Astor Guest Cottage, is closely tied to the prominent Astor family. In the 1870s, Henry Astor III — grandson of John Jacob Astor — withdrew from New York society with his wife, Malvina, to live as a gentleman farmer in Copake. Their 1871 mansion was considered one of the most luxurious homes of its time, but was lost to a lightning fire in 1944.

In 1902, an elegant Victorian guest cottage had been added to the estate. Unlike the mansion, the cottage survives and remains a fine example of turn-of-the-century craftsmanship. Restoration has been ongoing, by the current owners, Ali and Casey Kochey, carefully preserving its historic character. Standing along County Route 7, the Astor Guest House highlights the Astor family's presence in Copake and represents an important chapter in the town's history.



The Astor Guest House as it appears today



One of the building's two turrets



In 1908, author Godfrey Greylock described the Bash Bish Falls as “awe-inspiring”, and by the mid-19th century, the Bash Bish Gorge and Falls had become a site of romantic pilgrimage and tourism. Now part of Taconic State Park, this natural wonder continues to draw visitors, just as it did over a century ago.

In 1874, successful New York lawyer Alfred Douglas bought the land in the immediate area, including the Bash Bish Falls. He built an elaborate Swiss-style residence and multiple outbuildings. Much of the estate later became the basis for a far-flung rural resort called The Bash Bish Inn.

The Inn, spread over 300 acres of woodland, boasted many quaint and charming guest-houses, breathtaking views, fine cuisine, and was run by a world-famous French chef, Louis Mouquin, a Gilded Age restaurateur.

A lavishly illustrated 24-page brochure from 1910 declared that the “Bash Bish Inn is unique. There is no other place in the country that offers such a variety of attractions, that is so accessible and satisfying.” At the height of the Inn’s fame, the main building was consumed by fire in 1918. There were several subsequent iterations, but the once beloved resort never fully regained its former luster. And in 1926, the area became part of Taconic State Park.

Over time, the Inn and its buildings disappeared, but photographs, documents, and memorabilia still point to the tangible remains of a once-famous retreat that drew visitors from around the world.

*(right) Montage of scenic highlights of the Bash Bish Inn campus
(AI enhanced version of original photograph that appeared 1910 Promotional pamphlet)*

(below left) The Hilltop Bungalow

(below right) Vintage postcard by T.B. Keating of the main building



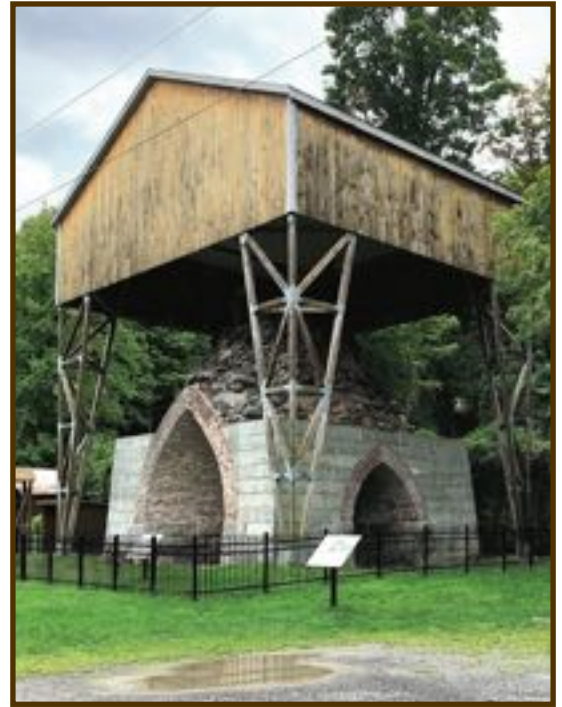


The Iron Works: AI-enhanced version of historical photograph

THE COPAKE IRON WORKS

Founded in 1845 by Lemuel Pomeroy, the Copake Iron Works drew on nearby ore, limestone, and timber to fuel its blast furnace. The hamlet of Copake Iron Works soon grew around it, aided by the Harlem Railroad's arrival in 1852. Frederick Miles and his sons purchased the works in 1862, expanded the furnace, and built a blowing engine house and narrow-gauge railroad. The works produced farm tools, stove parts, and high-grade iron for railroad wheels, with output peaking in the late 19th century. Flooded ore pits, exhausted timber, and competition from Pittsburgh steel forced closure in 1903. As Taconic State Park expanded, the site was left to decay, with major structures dismantled or lost.

In 2008, the Friends of Taconic State Park began restoration. Today visitors can explore the preserved furnace, museum, and reconstructed Pomeroy Family Railroad. With more original structures than any other site in the Litchfield Iron District, the Copake Iron Works was named a Hudson Valley National Heritage Area Site in 2016.



(above) The restored furnace with new canopy, (2016)

(left) The Machine Room at the Copake Iron Works

(below top) One of the original narrow-gauge railroads that the Iron Works employed during its operation

(bottom) Visitors ride on the new functioning railway; the "General Seth"



The Copake Little School



The school building today, 2025

The Copake Union Free School—fondly remembered by locals as the “Little School”—opened in 1921. For more than half a century, generations of children in grades K–5 learned their lessons here in just two classrooms. The school was part of a broader reform launched by New York State’s 1905 Consolidated School Act, which moved children out of scattered one-room schoolhouses into modern, centrally located buildings. The Little School’s tall, banked windows and soaring ceilings were hallmarks of this new design, intended to provide ample light and fresh air for learning.

By 1931, Copake had joined the newly formed Roeliff Jansen Central School District, but the Little School remained in use for its youngest pupils. Even into the 1950s, when the “Big School” was overcrowded, many Copake children still began their education here in kindergarten and first grade. The Little School was one of the last of Copake’s small schools to remain open, finally closing its doors to students in 1977.



Above, left to right: The school as it appeared in the 1920s, the building in 2022, and in 2025.



(above) A class in the 1940s.

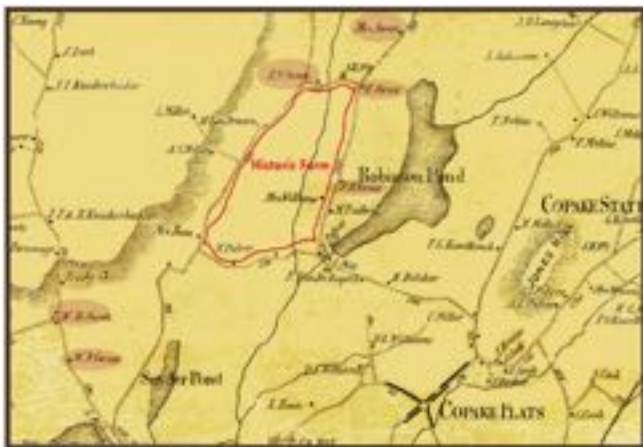
The Building

Historic photos suggest the school’s exterior was originally clad in stucco, considered both stylish and practical in the 1920s. Around 1940 it was re-sheathed in wood clapboards, and in the early 1980s, vinyl siding was added. A prominent central gable with a Palladian window reflects the then-popular Colonial Revival style, while much of the original slate roof survives today. Inside, 12-foot beadboard ceilings and paneled walls frame the wide wooden staircase leading to the two main classrooms. Former students recall the small central hall serving as both coatroom and nap space, complete with rugs. A narrow stairway led up to the kitchen—fondly remembered for its warmth—and the basement held the school’s modest gymnasium.

The Copake Little School building was purchased by Stephanie and Adam Sharp in 2022 and they have been tirelessly restoring it ever since.

The Sweet-Sherman Homestead

(1841-1923)



1858 Land Ownership Map (Note: Cluster of other Sweet family households.)

The Sweet-Sherman Homestead, built circa 1845, is the 19-acre core of the original 240-acre Bull Spring Farm—one of Copake's earliest deeded farms. Attributed to Fyler Dibble Sweet (1808-1889) and Dorothea Decker Sweet, the property remained in family hands until 1923. In 2022, it was listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places as "a good example of a rural Hudson Valley homestead," distinguished by its rare collection of intact mid-nineteenth-century barns.

Set on fertile land west of Robinson Pond near Unity Mills, the farm's domestic compound and barn complex faced one another across Center Hill Road. Wagon paths con-

connected the fields to the Columbia Turnpike (now Route 23) and, after 1855, to rail lines at Craryville, integrating Copake's farms with Hudson River and New York City markets and advancing the region's dairy economy. Fyler Sweet operated a diversified farm producing butter, wool, grains, honey, and livestock. His daughter Betsy married Pine Plains native Ebenezer Sherman; widowed soon after their son Frank's 1866 birth, she returned to Copake. In 1888, Frank and his wife, Nannie Miller, converted the farm to dairy. A respected farmer and civic leader, Frank served as founding president of Copake Grange No. 935. Burdened by debt and without heirs, he sold the farm in 1923 for conversion to gentleman's estate. The Sweet and Sherman families are buried in Copake's E & M Methodist Cemetery.

Architect and designer Catherine Mikic's preservation vision for the Sweet-Sherman Homestead emphasized the revival of vernacular knowledge and heritage practices as a foundation for future sustainability. Her leadership contributed to the property's formal recognition in 2022.



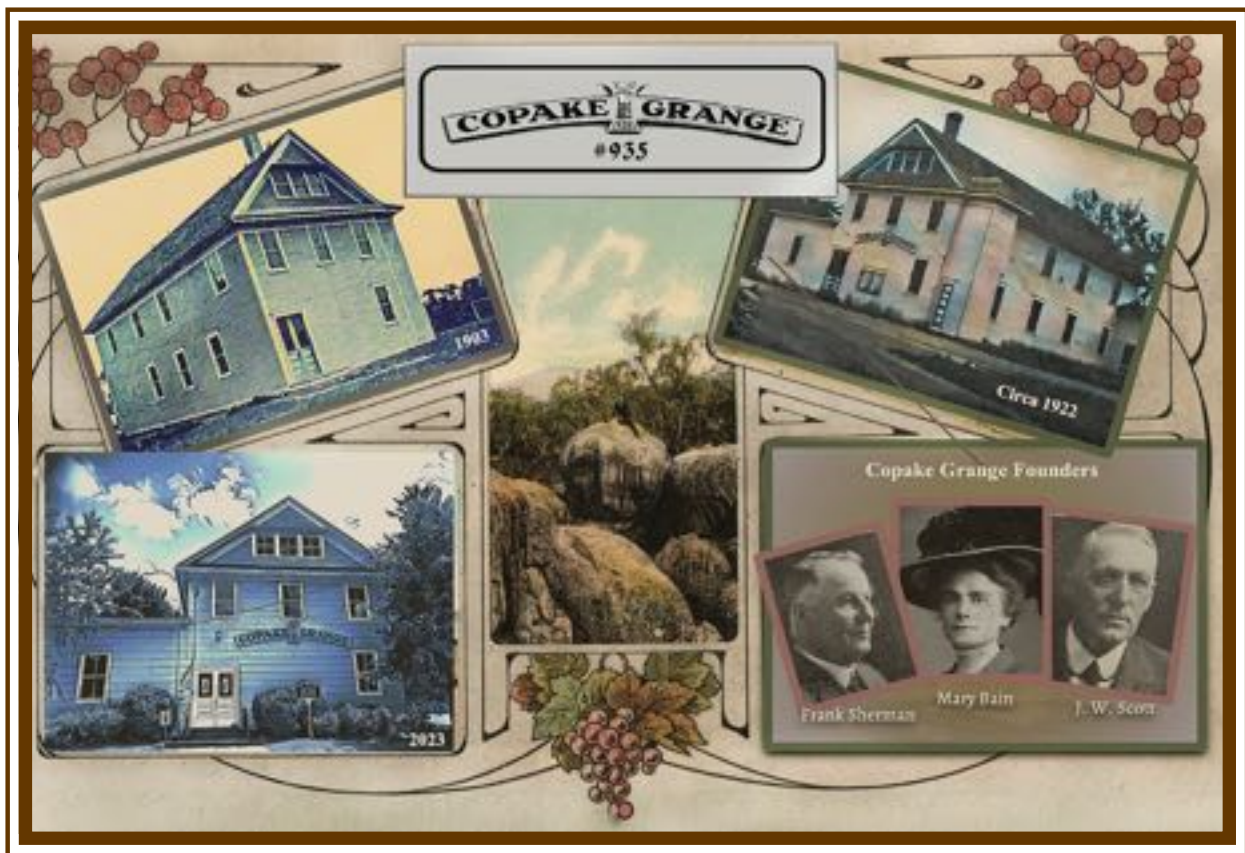
FRANK SHERMAN
1866 - 1938



The Sweet-Sherman Homestead today



An Aerial view of the property



ONE HUNDRED AND TWO YEARS OF **THE COPAKE GRANGE #935**

In 1902, a group of Copake farmers, tradespeople, business owners, homemakers, a minister, a doctor, and a funeral director came together to establish the Copake Grange. Among the founders was Frank Sherman, pictured above. Sherman was the last resident farmer of the Sweet family farm on Center Hill Road in Copake.

Sherman was elected Master, a position he would hold for seven years. Together, with the other twelve elected officers, consisting of seven men and five women, the Copake Grange was off to a propitious start. Soon, they would be having many exciting cultural activities—plays, dances, recitals, dinners, lectures, debates, and other social events. All the Grange needed was a hall large enough to hold them.

The Grange Hall was constructed in 1903, and still stands at 628 Empire Road. Today, Grange 935 is a non-profit organization comprised of members from the Roe Jan area, and is the only Grange building still operating as a Grange organization in Columbia County.

In the year 2025, membership continues to grow, and Copake Grange #935 is going strong.

Text and illustration by Copake Grange Historian, Janet Mackin.

Boston Corner



Boston Corner, New York, was once part of Mount Washington, Massachusetts. The town's name came from being the state's farthest southwest corner—158 miles from Boston.

The Massachusetts–New York boundary, set in 1731 along the Taconic Range, left Boston Corner isolated. The nearest sheriff was in Pittsfield, a full day's ride away, so the hamlet became a haven for criminals and a notorious site for bare-knuckle prize fights.

On October 12, 1853, a 37-round fight between John Morrissey and Yankee Sullivan drew some 3,000 spectators. With no local authority to maintain order, crowds overran the town until a freight train carried many back to New York City. Others rampaged south through Millerton. Outraged residents petitioned to join New York; the transfer was approved in 1853, confirmed by Congress in 1855, and annexed to Ancram in 1857.

By the 1850s, Boston Corner was a rail hub where the Harlem Line met the Poughkeepsie & Eastern and the Rhinebeck & Connecticut. In 1905, Borden's Dairy built a large processing plant there, handling milk from local farms until trucks replaced trains and the plant closed in 1948. Rail service dwindled, with passenger trains ending in 1972, freight in 1976, and the tracks pulled up in 1981. Today, the route lives on as the Harlem Valley Rail Trail.

Historic photographs show Boston Corner Station around 1920, where three railroads converged, along with survey markers, plaques, and the commemorative sign for the 1853 prize fight.



(top) The Historic Marker commemorating the famous prize fight held in Boston Corner in 1853
(above) Actual Survey Marker and plaque.



(left)

Boston Corner circa 1920, view from the Northeast.

*From the left: the P&E, the CNE, and the Harlem Division passing-siding with main track on the extreme right. The Harlem Station, serving the three railroads, is the large structure at the left-center of the photo. (Louis Grogan, *The Coming of the New York and Harlem Railroad*, 1989)*

Special thanks to Jane Peck, and property owners Norman Osofsky and Carol Falcetti.



Mill Success, Taghkanic Hosted by Carolyn Wheeler at The Pumpkin Hollow Retreat. Tour by Michael Sellon.



Copake Iron Works Historic Site, Copake Falls Hosted by The Friends of Taconic State Park.



The Astor Guest House, West Copake Hosted by Alison & Casey Kochey.



Former Sites of the Bash Bish Inn in Taconic State Park Tour led by Jane Peck.



Boston Corner - 1731 Survey Marker, Ancram Hosted by Carol Falcetti & Norman Osofsky. Tour led by Jane Peck.



SITES to CELEBRATE: Local History Revisited

The Site Visits



The Copake Little School Hosted by Stephanie & Adam Sharp. Alumnae Carol Gansowski & Judy Whitbeck (above right).



Sweet-Sherman Homestead & Copake Grange 935, Copake Hosted by Janet Mackin & Catherine Mikic.



Craryville Depot Complex & the historic Peter Crary House, Craryville

Depot hosted by Karl & Lily Skuggevig. Crary House visit hosted by Dan Pelosi & Gus Heagerty.



Historic Hillsdale Tours by Chris Atkins, Matthew White, Stephanie Sharp, Sharon Flitterman-King (above), & others.



The Gallatin Reformed Church Hosted by Melissa Curtis & Louisa Ruby, Bob Rogoshewski, and Steven Gubler, organist.



THE CRARYVILLE DEPOT

Complex



The Craryville Train Depot, built around 1853, is among the best-preserved depots in the region. When the New York and Harlem Railroad extended its tracks through Craryville, it connected New York City to Chatham and brought new energy to this rural community. The depot served both passengers and freight, with a distinctive high-level loading dock.

Originally called Bain's Corners, after local landowner Peter Bain, the station was renamed Craryville in 1870, when the property was passed to Peter Crary. Just north of the depot, Borden's Milk Company operated a major processing plant, shipping milk daily to the New York City market. This was one of many processing plants along the Harlem Line. In the 1920s, a spur line reached the Pure Water & Ice Co. at Copake Lake to haul harvested ice to the Borden's plant. However, the icehouse burned in 1934, and electric refrigeration made the trade obsolete.

Passenger service ended in 1972, and freight ceased in 1976. Yet the depot remains, remarkably intact, with vintage timetables, maps, and graffiti still on its walls—an evocative survivor of Columbia County's railroad era, now owned and preserved by Karl and Lily Skuggevig.



The Station Master's Window



The Depot's Pot Bellied Stove



The Cash Drawer



THE ICE INDUSTRY

and the

COPAKE PURE WATER & ICE CO.

AT COPAKE LAKE, NY



Photo: North Country at Work, a project of North Country Public Radio, Canton, NY ©2025

Ice harvesting became a major Hudson Valley industry in the 1830s. By the 1850s, with the arrival of the New York & Harlem Railroad, Columbia County ice was chilling farm products bound for New York City. For farmers, it was a welcome source of winter income—up to \$3.50 a day—though entirely dependent on weather. Ice had to be at least ten inches thick to support men and horses. Once frozen solid, workers marked out grids, cut blocks with horse-drawn saws, floated them to shore, and hauled them into immense storage houses.

At Copake and other area lakes, multi-story icehouses—some as large as football fields—stored tens of thousands of tons. Packed in sawdust, the ice was shipped south on a Harlem Railroad spur. In 1926, the *Chatham Courier* reported on a new Copake facility built and operated by the *Copake Pure Water and Ice Company*, with a 50,000-ton capacity, served by a dedicated spur line three miles to Craryville. Surrounded by barns, tool sheds, and powerhouses, these towering wooden structures made ice a defining winter industry in the Roe Jan region for nearly a century—until fire and, more significantly, the advent of electric refrigeration, brought it to an end.

The Copake Lake Icehouse itself burned in 1933. Today, Copake property owner Ross Mauri preserves its story by unearthing and cataloguing fragments of its foundations — reminders that no piece of history is ever truly insignificant.



Loading blocks of ice onto rail car.

Photo: North Country at Work, a project of North Country Public Radio, Canton, NY ©2025



On the night of January 8th, 1933, the massive Copake Lake Icehouse was consumed by fire after being struck by lightning.

Photo: Roeliff Jansen Historical Society

Borden's and Bicycles...



(above left) An illustration of Elsie the Cow, mascot for the Borden's company



(above right) Borden's plant in Copake

Gail Borden Jr. invented the patented process of condensing milk by vacuum in 1856. Borden's became a major force in the dairy industry.

Borden's had plants along railroad lines throughout Columbia County, including the Harlem Line and the Poughkeepsie and Eastern Railroad, and opened factories in several locations including Boston Corner, Ancram, Copake, Craryville, and Hillsdale. Borden's plants relied on the railroads to transport milk from local farms for the production of butter, pasteurized milk, and cheese. Borden's played an important role in the local economy for many years. Even the famous *Elsie* the Cow mascot had roots in Columbia County. She was conceived by Stuart Peabody, a Borden advertising director and lifelong weekender in Hillsdale.



The Copake Auction House is the longest-running auction house in Columbia County. Originally founded by Henry Folger in 1947, Mike Fallon purchased the business in 1985 and ten years later was joined by his son, Seth Fallon.

Over the years, the Fallons have developed one of the most successful auction houses in the country. The annual bicycle auction draws local clients as well as museum professionals, avid collectors, bicycle experts and enthusiasts from every corner of the world.

(left) Mike Fallon in his element at a site visit preview for the 2025, 33rd annual bicycle auction.



(above) Dimmick's interior circa 1890



(above) 2nd Floor of Hillsdale General Store today



Dimmick's Store, 1879

Dimmick Brother's store in 1917



Dimmick's store, approximately as it appeared in the heart of Hillsdale for most of the 20th Century

Hillsdale Sports Shop in the 1970s



For more than 170 years, the building at the center of Hillsdale has been a hub of commerce and community. Known for most of its life as Dimmick's store, it began with Eliphalet Dimmick, a tailor and merchant who ran a shop in town from 1852 and purchased this building in 1874. Three years later he sold it to his son Theophilus, launching a family tradition that lasted more than a century. Generations of Dimmicks lived upstairs while running the business below.

When Theophilus died in 1900, the store passed through his wife Elsie and eventually to their son Raymond, who modernized it into a grocery and then an IGA. For 109 years the Dimmick family kept the store alive, an unbroken presence honored in 1961 by a hand-drawn tribute from grateful townspeople.

The property changed hands in 1962, becoming the Hillsdale Sports Shop with a women's clothing store upstairs. By the 1970s, Vincent and Gail Owens joined with partners to acquire the building, which soon housed Hillsdale Electronics and later a video store.

A new chapter began in 2009 when David Ruede and Matthew White purchased the building, making it the first commercial restoration in Hillsdale's newly designated National Historic District. Confronted with structural decay and long-abandoned interiors, they reimagined the space for multiple businesses.

Today the building thrives once again. the Hillsdale General Store occupies the original shop and apartment above, reviving the spirit of its 19th-century founders. The adjoining storefront has become home to the Cook & Larder, run by owner Anthony DeCaria. The lower level houses Labspace, a contemporary art gallery, and Hudson Valley Letterpress, a working print shop with historic presses.

Since opening the Hillsdale General Store in 2011, Matthew White has kept alive the concept of "general merchandise," offering both new and vintage goods. Local resident Paul Amash, behind the counter since the store's founding, embodies the continuity of service. More than just a shop, the building remains a gathering place—where neighbors, visitors, and perhaps even a few lingering ghosts still feel at home.



The Pulvers of Hillsdale



The Hillsdale Mercantile Association Building, (built 1851)

Freeland and Ida Pulver

In 1865, 14-year-old Freeland Pulver left the Copake Iron Works with a dollar from his father to begin work as a clerk at the *Hillsdale Mercantile Association*. The store, built in 1851, sold medicines, clothing, and general goods, competing with *Dimmick's* store (today's Hillsdale General Store). His first year's salary was \$75 plus room and board. That same building, later an AGWAY, is now home to the *Roe Jan Brewing Company*.

Around 1890, the Mercantile closed and Freeland partnered with fellow clerk Henry Best to open Pulver & Best. After Best retired, the store became *Pulver Brothers*, then *Freeland Pulver's*, offering food, clothing, and sundries.

In 1875, Freeland built an Italianate home at 25 Anthony Street, directly across from the store. The house stayed in the family until 1976, when his granddaughter Louise Leonard sold it to David King and Sharon Flitterman-King, who still owns the historic house. Among the papers passed down was Freeland's 1875 deed showing he paid \$549 for the acre of land on which he built his home.



(above) In this photo of the old Freeland Pulver house Freeland and his wife are at the far left. Others in the photograph include Freeland's son Orson, the family cook and hired man, and other members of the Pulver family.

Ida Pulver: A Legacy of Her Own

Ida Haywood, born in Copake in 1864, was the daughter of Norman Haywood, proprietor of the Black Grocery, still memorialized by Black Grocery Road. She studied at the Hillsdale Classical Institute and trained with Hudson photographer Frank Forshew, mastering plate inspection and hand-coloring.



Ida's life took her to Manhattan, Paris, and into the fashion trade before she returned to Hillsdale in 1917 and married Freeland Pulver. Ida became a prominent community leader: founder of the Hillsdale Historical Society, board member of the Columbia County Historical Society, first president of the Hillsdale Garden Club, and organizer of its annual flower shows.

She cultivated notable gardens at 25 Anthony Street and remained active until her death in 1965 at age 101. Her granddaughter, Louise Leonard, later sold the house—and its original deed and documents—to the Kings, who proudly preserved home and garden.

The RJHS gratefully acknowledges Hillsdale Historians Chris Atkins & Lauren Lettelier, and Sharon Flitterman-King.



(above) The late David King and his wife, Sharon Flitterman-King seated on the front porch of their house in 1983. (right) Ida Pulver's (subsequently Sharon Flitterman-King's), lush garden behind the property.



The Gallatin Community Church



Listed on the State and National Register of Historic Places, the Gallatin Community Church (formerly the Gallatin Dutch Reformed Church) stands as a nearly 200-year-old landmark of faith and architecture. First organized around 1750 as the Greenbush Dutch Reformed Church, the present meetinghouse was dedicated in 1824 and remains a fine example of early 19th-century American meetinghouse design.

For more than six decades, Reverend Herman Vedder (1777–1873) guided the congregation, his influence so strong that the church was long known by his name. A Union College graduate licensed to preach in 1801, Vedder initially served congregations across 200 square miles before focusing solely on Gallatin. Even in retirement, he remained active. His grave lies in the churchyard. His ministry also fostered offshoot churches in Ancram, Copake, Milan, and Pine Plains.

The surrounding cemetery, in use since 1748, includes graves of Revolutionary War patriots, the oldest dating to 1770. The pulpit was later supplied by John Henry Livingston, a member of the prominent Livingston family and fourth president of Queen's College (now Rutgers). An 1872 addition created a space for the pipe organ, still in use today and restored to mark the church's national recognition in 2021.

Despite declining membership and rising costs, the church endures as a spiritual and community anchor. Since 2014, members led by Melissa Curtis and Pastor Bob Rogoshewski have sustained it through creative fundraising—most notably "Saved by Soup," a series of homemade soup sales that funded crucial repairs, including the roof. Gallatin's Town Historian, Louisa Ruby, continues to research the significant history of the church and the surrounding area.



(above) The Reverend
Herman Vedder (1777-1873)
(center) The Church and Cemetery
(far left) The recently restored
pipe organ

PRESERVING THE EAST GATE TOLL HOUSE

Sometimes You Have to Move a Building to Save It

At Hillsdale's East Gate Toll House, structural fragility and safety concerns demanded a difficult step: dismantling the building in order to save it. As of 2025, under the care of the Friends of East Gate, the structure has been carefully disassembled. Original materials will be reused wherever possible so the Toll House can be reconstructed with historical accuracy—just 30 feet back from its original site. When the toll gate operated from 1799 to 1906, the Columbia Turnpike was only one lane wide. As it became the two-lane Route 23, the Toll House grew increasingly vulnerable to accidents and weather. As one of the few surviving toll houses in the country, it remains a rare architectural and historical treasure.

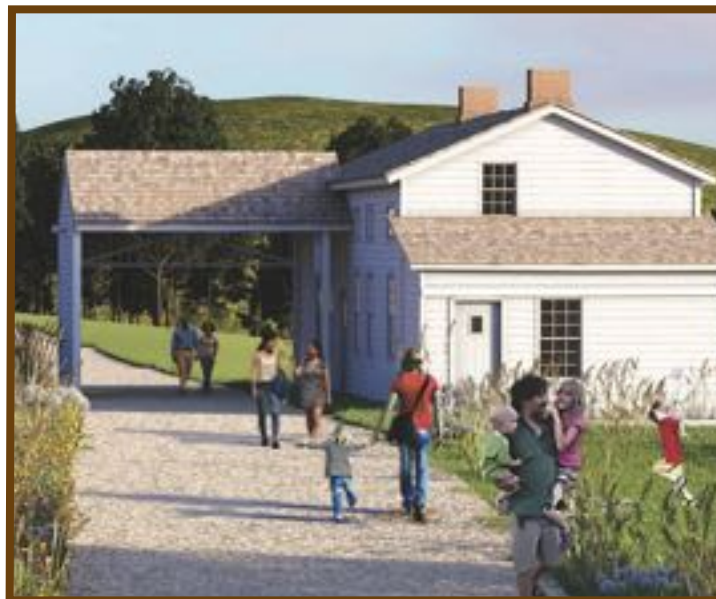
Honoring History Sometimes Means Rebuilding It

Historic preservation is not about freezing the past; it is about restoring it with care and integrity.

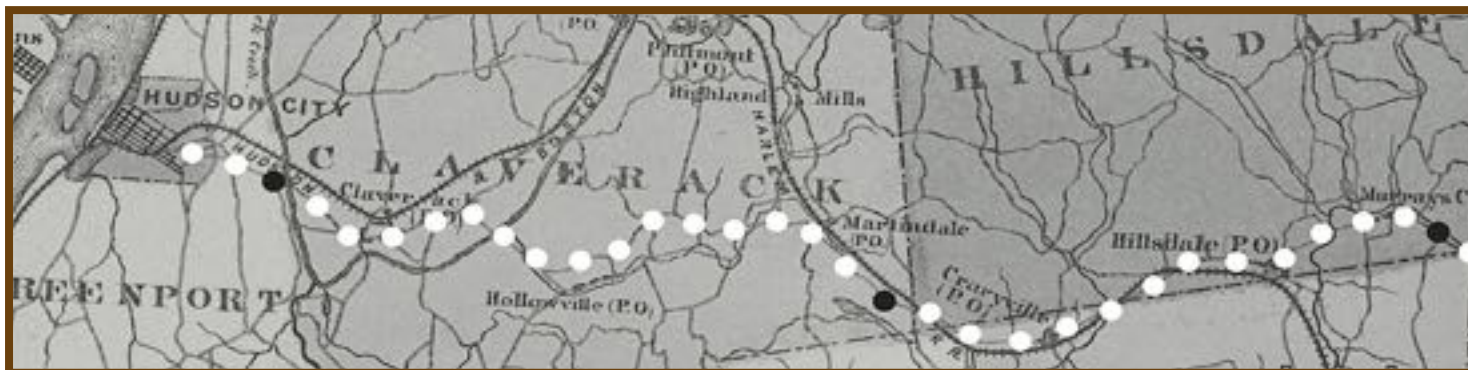
Once rebuilt, the Toll House's orientation and elevation will be unchanged. Its modest set-back will not diminish its presence or historic character. Instead, this thoughtful reconstruction ensures it endures as a vivid reminder of an earlier era in American transportation—before railroads and industry reshaped how people and goods moved across the landscape.

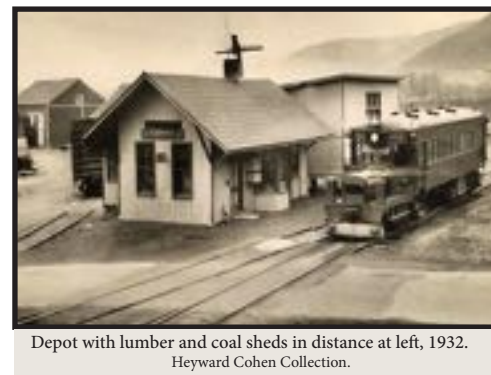


Colonial Williamsburg demonstrates this well: fewer than 20% of its buildings are original. Most were reconstructed using period materials, archaeological evidence, and historical records. Authenticity often lies not in untouched surfaces, but in the faithful preservation of purpose, design, and spirit.



(above) Rendering of toll house when completed





Built in 1876 for the Rhinebeck & Connecticut Railroad, this modest passenger station is a rare surviving example of a rural Hudson Valley depot. Originally it housed a waiting room and office, with a separate freight house added in 1913, linked by a covered ramp.

Of the seven depots constructed for the line, Copake's is the only one still standing without major alteration. In January 2024, owners Stephanie and Adam Sharp achieved National Register listing and began restoring the depot to its original appearance while converting it for residential use.

"The Rhinebeck and Connecticut Railroad Company have erected a new depot at Copake. The structure is small, but neat in appearance."

— Red Hook Journal, July 21, 1876

Soon after opening, passing freight cars rocked so violently on uneven tracks that they clipped the station roof, forcing corners of the eaves to be cut back. The line itself, opened in 1875, had been conceived to carry Pennsylvania coal to Hartford but soon became vital for moving Hudson Valley farm products. Local dairying flourished; across the road, a Borden's creamery processed milk, butter, and cheese for city markets.

Other businesses clustered by the depot included a hay mill, Socony-Vacuum service station, and, after World War I, Bristol Lumber, which grew to occupy much of the property. Though the railroad closed in 1938, the lumberyard lasted until 1994, ending all activity at the site. Today, no trace remains of these enterprises.



The Copake Depot in 2022. S. Sharp Collection.



Borden's creamery, across the road from the depot, as it appeared in 1909.



SITES to CELEBRATE: Local History Revisited

The Exhibition

The 2025 Roeliff Jansen Historical Society exhibition, *Sites to Celebrate: Local History Revisited* highlighted over a dozen historic preservation and adaptive reuse efforts across the Roe Jan area. With many objects on loan, the exhibit reflected the shared commitment to preserving the region's rich architectural and cultural heritage.

Featuring original documents, vintage photographs, rare artifacts, and recently unearthed tools, the exhibition brought local history vividly to life. Informative panels and multimedia displays - including an orientation video - explored each featured site and its broader historical significance. A series of guided site visits were offered on Sunday afternoons from July through October.



The central introductory panel in the "Sites to Celebrate" exhibition



The "Copake Little School" display



School desk with folding seat (Copake Little School display)



The Dimmick's/Pulver Hillsdale display



The Bash Bish Inn display, including rare Autochrome prints by color photography pinoneer, Paul Guillumette



The displays on the RJHS' southern wall including the Copake Grange and Boston Corner

The Exhibition (continued)



Three panels on the central divider screen:
the "East Gate Toll House", the "Copake Depot" and the "Astor Guest House"



The "Miracle on Miles Road", the
'Historic Preservation Committee' and the "Mill Success" panels



Farm tools from the Sweet-Sherman Homestead, the Copake Grange, & Borden's Milk



The Copake Lake Icehouse and the Craryville Depot displays



The Copake Lake Icehouse display case,
including artifacts found on the property



The Copake Iron Works display case,
including photographs, documents, & iron artifacts



The Gallatin Reformed Church display case
including 1803 incorporation document



The Sweet-Sherman Homestead display case,
featuring antique tools from the farm



The Ida Pulver display case, including
period photographs and photo retouching kit,
like the one Ida would have used



The Craryville Depot display case including
railroad lamps, Bain's cashbox, and several
Harlem Division vintage timetables and circulars

In fond memory of Robin Bruce (1950-2025).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

SPECIAL THANKS TO ALL OF THE FOLLOWING:

Bob Callahan, Master Builder, for another exquisite installation.

Jane Peck, for keeping track of site visit registration and communicating with all Site visit registrants from July - October, and for leading two extremely successful site visit tours; The Bash Bish Inn and Boston Corner.

Ron Otteson, for obtaining the HRBT Grant funding for the
2025 Sites to Celebrate
catalog - and for being an excellent Editor-in-Chief.

Gary Williams and the Williams family for their generosity enabling RJHS to enhance and expand the climate controlled storage facilities for the ever expanding RJHS collections.

The town of Copake, Richard Wolf, Bill Gregory and Bob Callahan for providing additional storage for the RJHS collection.

The *Copake Falls Day Committee* for inducing the RJHS in the annual *Copake Falls Day and Winter Walk*.

Our Corporate Sponsors - *Copake Auction, Copake Connects, the Hillsdale General Store, Herrington's Lumber and Fuels.*

Hudson River Bank & Trust Foundation for continuing to fund the RJHS exhibition catalogs.

The online newsletters of *Ancram, Copake, Hillsdale, Gallatin* and *Taghkanic*.

Our 2025 volunteer gallery docents and site visit guides: Richard Barton, Cheryl Benken, Kevin Curtis, Lizanne Hart, Sharon Flitterman-King, Jed and Sharon Luchow, Janet Mackin, Catherine Mikic, Jane Peck, David Saums, and Stephanie Sharp.

Special thanks to our membership, old and new!

The RJHS is Grateful to our Many Partners

Town of Copake

Richard Wolf
Bob Callahan
Bill Gregory
Lynn Connelly DeRocha

Special thanks to **Bob Callahan** for an exquisite installation
And to **Peter Nick Fritsch**, *Sites to Celebrate* panels, video
and catalog design.

The Roeliff Jansen Historical Society Board of Directors:

Richard Barton, Cheryl Benken, Lesley Doyel,
Lizanne Hart, Sharon Flitterman-King, Ron Otteson,
Jane Peck

The Copake Historic Preservation Committee:

Catherine Mikic, Edgar Masters, Advisory
Lesley Doyel, Jed Luchow,
Ali Kochy, Dale Peterson, Stephanie Sharp
Linda Gabaccia, Town Board Liaison

The Copake Grange 935, Copake, NY

Janet Mackin and Roberta Roll

The Copake Little School, Copake, NY

Stephanie and Adam Sharp

Copake Auction, Copake, NY

Mike and Seth Fallon

The Craryville Depot Complex, Craryville, NY

Karl and Lily Skuggevig, David Saums, Kevin Curtis

Historic Peter Crary House

Dan Pelosi and Gus Heagerty

The Sweet-Sherman Homestead, Copake, NY

Catherine Mikic

Friends of East Gate Toll House, Hillsdale, NY

Peter Cipkowski

Former site of the Copake Lake Pure Water & Ice Co. Icehouse, Copake Lake, NY

Ross Mauri

Friends of Taconic State Park and

The Copake Iron Works & Railroad, Copake Falls, NY

Edgar Masters, Deb Cohen,
Tom Ferguson, Brian Boom, Bob Hunter,
John and Janet Piwowaski and Ben Gedaminsk,

Sites of the Bash Bish Inn in Taconic State Park

Jane Peck, Blair Benken

The Gallatin Community Church, Gallatin, NY

Melissa Curtis, Bob Rogoshewski,
Louisa Ruby & Steven Gubler

Mill Success at Pumpkin Hollow, Taghkanic, NY

Carolyn Wheeler and the Pumpkin Hollow Board of Trustees

Boston Corner Community Organization, Ancram, NY

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Historic Hillsdale, NY

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The Twisted Sisters Coffee House,
Cassie and Kevin Hindes
The Roe Jan Brewery, Steve and Kathy Bluestone

Images courtesy of:

The Copake History Facebook Page
The Fallon Collection
The Roeliff Jansen Historical Society
The Vincent and Harvey Photo Collections,
Hillsdaleny.com

Town Historians

Hillsdale Historians, Chris Atkins and Lauren Letellier
Howard Blue, Retired Copake Town Historian
Lesley Doyel, Copake Town Historian
Nancy Griffith, Taghkanic Town Historian
Louisa Ruby, Gallatin Town Historian

