



Sponsored by
The Jug Tavern of Sparta and

HOULIHAN LAWRENCE
SINCE 1888
BRIARCLIFF BROKERAGE

PAINTING BY PAUL WEBER (1823-1917), CROTON RIVER FROM AQUEDUCT (1855)

We would like to thank **Houlihan Lawrence Briarcliff Brokerage**, our cosponsor for Sparta Speaks 2019. Since 2015, the Jug Tavern of Sparta has hosted 15 programs for the community through its Sparta Speaks series. This year's programs focus on the ecology of the river, art inspired by the river, and music that documented events along the river.

We are pleased to announce a partnership with the **Ossining Arts Council** to present "River Reflections," an art exhibit of Hudson River artwork by OAC members (see details below). Be sure to join us for this wonderful series of events at The Jug!



May 6, 2019: Scott Craven, Ossining Town Historian, presents "The Mouth of the Croton River" at the Annual Meeting of the Jug Tavern of Sparta. Scott offers a fresh perspective on the historic and natural themes of the Hudson Valley that can be seen where the Croton and Hudson rivers meet.



August 10 through October 27, 2019: The Jug Tavern and the Ossining Arts Council present "River Reflections," an exhibit of Hudson River art by OAC members.
Opening Reception: August 10, 2019, 4:00 to 6:00pm.
Closing Reception: October 27, 2019, 2:00pm to 4:00pm.
Exhibit can be viewed on Sunday afternoons from August 11, 2019, through October 26, 2019, from 12pm to 4pm, except during scheduled tours and programs.



August 11, 2019 (Sunday 3:00pm): Suzanne Altman presents "The Art of the Hudson River School." Suzanne will introduce us to the artwork of this group of painters working in the 19th century, who were inspired by the natural beauty of the Hudson River Valley.



October 26, 2019 (Saturday, 3:00pm and 7:00pm): Tim Rowell (banjo) and **Ambrose Verdibello** (fiddle) return by popular demand with two shows of **American Roots** music. They will perform songs from the early days of American Folk music and talk about the history of some of the songs written to commemorate events in the Hudson River Valley.

Make Time for the Sparta Tour

Each year from April through October, the Jug Tavern conducts monthly walking tours of the historic Sparta. Dr. Alan Stahl, a neighborhood resident and former president of the Jug Tavern, who teaches in the History Department of Princeton University, leads the tours. Each tour begins at the Jug Tavern at 1 p.m. Participants then walk about six blocks through the neighborhood learning about the historic homes in the landmarked district; the tour ends at around 3 p.m.

Upcoming dates for 2019 are all Sundays (there is no tour in June this year): July 8, August 18, September 8, and October 6. *The tour is free, but participation is limited to 20 people. For a reservation or further information, contact alan@jugtavern.org.*

*See You at
the Fair!*

Look for us on
Saturday, June 8th
at the Ossining
Village Fair



TOP LEFT: *The Jug Tavern (1885)* by Ludmilla Pilat Welch (1867-1925) before structure rebuilt by Geisler family. Note two chimneys and bridge over Sparta Brook. TOP RIGHT: *The Jug Tavern (1950s)* with covered well, which was buried sometime before 1974. BOTTOM LEFT: *Jug Tavern notecard (1976)* illustrated by Karen Pellaton for Ossining Restoration Committee. BOTTOM RIGHT: *The Jug Tavern of Sparta today.*

PROPERTY PROFILE: *The Jug Tavern (Davids-Garrison House)*

They say that George Washington watered his horse at the Jug Tavern as his troops passed by, and that the Jug Tavern was so named due to illicit liquor sales. The real story of the Jug Tavern is that for over 200 years, it has stood at the gateway of Sparta, Ossining's earliest neighborhood and historic district since 1974. Today the building serves as a symbol of community engagement and activism. It is a preservation success story. Saved from demise during the national bicentennial, the Jug Tavern is a testament to the efforts of many people: Ossining residents, government officials, local community groups, and many volunteers. A treasured Ossining landmark, it has been on the National Register since 1976.

The Jug Tavern (known by this name only since the 1940s) predates the settlement of Sparta, and was built as early as 1780s by Peter Davids, a tenant farmer for Philipsburg Manor. From 1814 Nathaniel and Annis Garrison called it home, and eventually doubled the size of the building. Annis (known as Auntie Garrison) outlived her husband by 26 years and died in 1869 at the age of 99. Local lore says that she sold candy and sewing notions out of the house. Nathaniel and Annis are buried in Sparta Cemetery. Into the 20th century the house was referred to as the "Old Garrison House."

Sparta resident Michael Geisler, a Prussian

immigrant and cooper by trade, purchased the property in 1882 from a Garrison descendant. Two years later the building was demolished for reasons unknown and rebuilt in the same style on the original foundation. The central chimney was put in at this time. The house remained in the family for 94 years, occupied by Michael Geisler Jr. until his death in 1950. The property was sold by William and Elenor Mowatt (Michael Jr.'s niece) to the Town of Ossining in 1976 for \$15,000. It had been vacant for some time before the sale.

Reports that this building served as a tavern have not been confirmed by research or archaeological evidence. For about 200 years, this building was simply a home. By the 20th century, the ground floor contained two rooms: a kitchen and dining room, balanced by a bathroom on the south end and a staircase on the north end. A living room and three bedrooms occupied the second floor.

Sitting in this building today is no small thing. In 1974, the future of the Jug Tavern was uncertain. At this time, the Town of Ossining was approached to purchase and restore the building for use as a center for local national bicentennial celebrations. Members of the Sparta Association (a resident group since the 1950s) raised awareness of the historic significance of the Jug Tavern and gathered signatures in support of its preservation. Eventually the Town purchased the property in

1976, and the Ossining Restoration Committee (formed in 1975 by Louis Engel Jr.) was tasked with fundraising and carrying out the restoration. The future for the Jug Tavern looked bright.

In 1976 the outside of the Jug Tavern was restored to its 1890 appearance with a new coat of red paint and a repaired roof. The bicentennial passed and funding dwindled—a full restoration would wait another 15 years. In 1986, the property eventually was purchased by the newly formed Jug Tavern of Sparta whose sole purpose is to preserve and maintain the building for future generations. The group completed renovations in 1991. The first floor became a meeting room with a small kitchenette and restroom. A new one-bedroom apartment with a private entrance was built on the second floor. The exterior of the building was repaired and painted gray.

In a 1986 letter to Florence Brennemann, first president of the Jug Tavern of Sparta, vice president John Lee writes, "The Davids were merely one of the Philipse's many tenant farming families. That their house should survive today, is pure luck." The Jug Tavern of Sparta continues that luck today through community support and many volunteers. Since 2015, the Jug Tavern has upward of 300 visitors per year, who take walking tours, attend programs, and keep history alive.

—By *Martha Mesiti*