



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: RENEE KILBRIDE EDELMAN, BARBARA LEVINE, ROSEMARY HOCKING-SANZARI, AND BUNNY SOLOMON

River Reflections

SPARTA SPEAKS 2019: *Return to the River!*

This year we returned to the river for inspiration and built a series that looks at the Hudson River through the different lenses of history, art, and music. In addition, all of our presenters have a personal connection to Ossining. Our season kicked off at our annual meeting in May with Ossining Town Historian **Scott Craven**'s captivating presentation: "**The Mouth of the Croton River.**" Scott encouraged us to consider how the historic and natural themes of the Hudson Valley blend where the Croton and Hudson Rivers meet.

This summer we are treated to the visual beauty of the Hudson River Valley from two perspectives: the 19th-century Hudson River School and contemporary artists right here in Ossining. Art historian **Suzanne Altman** will present "**The Art of the Hudson River School,**" which will cover artists and paintings of America's first art movement and discuss how that movement expanded beyond the Hudson Valley. In conjunction with Suzanne's lecture, we are delighted to have the **Ossining Arts Council** in the house for "**River Reflections,**" an exhibit of artworks celebrating the Hudson River by OAC members. The Jug Tavern has been transformed into an art gallery from August 11th through October 27th, and will be open on Sunday afternoons from 12 to 4pm for the duration of the exhibit. The Jug would like to thank OAC President Jill Kiefer, OAC and Jug Tavern volunteers, and especially the artists for making this wonderful exhibit possible.

Sparta Speaks 2019 wraps up on October 26th with the return of Jug Tavern favorites **Tim Rowell** and **Ambrose Verdibello**, for two concerts at 3pm and 7pm. Playing a variety of instruments, Tim and Ambrose will share the long aural tradition of commemorating significant historic events in song. We hope you can join us for this special program of American Roots music.

The Jug Tavern of Sparta wishes to thank our sponsor, **Houlihan Lawrence Briarcliff Brokerage** for their support of our Sparta Speaks 2019 season.



Sparta Cemetery Tour This Fall

The Jug Tavern of Sparta and the Ossining Historic Cemeteries Conservancy are teaming up on a guided tour of Sparta Cemetery happening on October 20, 2019. Ossining historians **Dana White** and **Scott Craven** will lead the way through

Ossining's oldest cemetery and the stories of its permanent residents. More information about this event and how to get tickets will be available in September. Watch your mailbox, follow us on Facebook, or visit www.jugtavern.org and www.ossininghistoriccemeteries.org.



LEFT: 15 Fairview Place with its simple Queen Anne elements - shingles, bay windows, and small tower; TOP RIGHT: Cobalt medicine bottle labeled "POISON" found buried in the yard. CENTER RIGHT: A clay pipe stem stamped "McDougal" on one side and "SCOTLAND" on the other; BOTTOM RIGHT: A watch back engraved "PATENT LEVER... FULL JEWELLED... GENEVA."

PROPERTY PROFILE: *15 Fairview Place*

As we seem to do with all major life decisions, my husband Ted and I decided to move to the Sparta neighborhood of Ossining quite impulsively. While I examine the ingredients of every grocery item I buy, when it comes to things like getting married or moving to a village we'd barely heard of, somehow we just leap. Luckily we've landed in pretty good situations so far.

Ted first heard about this funny old house in a place called Ossining from a guy who would talk about the work he and his wife put into it every weekend. Eventually, this guy revealed that he and his wife were moving, and wondered if Ted knew anyone interested in purchasing their house. I started daydreaming. We'd spent lots of time in the Hudson Valley because of its history and beauty, so the idea of living in this oddly-named village right on the banks of the Hudson was intriguing.

We decided to look at the house, which just felt right – weathered, sturdy, humble, and smelling of old wood. Its idiosyncrasies were charming, even though some of them have driven us crazy over the years. It had a porch I knew our cat Boris would love and was next to a beautiful old stone house that was the onetime church to which our house had purportedly been built as a parsonage. So off we leapt to a funny old neighborhood called Sparta in an village called Ossin-

ing on the Hudson River we loved.

Once settled in, we discovered the unique history of Sparta. A stop on a key thoroughfare during the Revolutionary War, it developed into a bustling if somewhat unsavory 19th century port serving the needs of Manhattan through access to its quarries. In recognition of the need for the moral enhancement of its denizens, the Sparta or Calvary Chapel was established for the souls of Sparta in 1888, a stone church with an air of permanence. Eventually Sparta became a quirky exercise in community development by a banker named Frank Vanderlip, who decided to re-engineer the neighborhood by purchasing and moving around some houses and cleaning up some of its less picturesque characteristics.

Somewhere between 1893 and 1898, as far as I can tell, the house that would become 15 Fairview Place was built. At that time, the land was owned by Melodia F. Carmichael Foster and her husband, a carpenter named Ebenezer Foster; they purchased the land from Francis Larkin, an Ireland-born lawyer who owned significant portions of land throughout the area, including much of Sparta.

The property was purchased in 1898 by the Fosters' son, physician Edward Agate Foster, but he does not seem to have ever lived there – he was a resident of Patchogue, Long Island, who owned many properties in Ossining, including the land

north of Liberty Street and east of Spring Street in Sparta. There is a 1907 surveyor's map proposing subdivisions to his land along what was to become Fairview Place that showed only 11 (Sparta Chapel) and 15 Fairview Place as including structures.

The house intersects Frank Vanderlip's influence on Sparta when his wife Narcissa purchased it from Edward Agate Foster in 1920. Sold to Orson P. Warren a year later, perhaps after renovation, the house was sold in 1928 to Floyd Owen, a school janitor according to the 1930 Census and the first clear case where the property's owner lived onsite. Orson P. Warren bought the property back in 1935, but lived on Spring Street, and the house remained in the Warren family until 1944. The 1940 Census shows a renter named Alonzo Thompson, a prison guard at Sing Sing, living there with his family of five children.

The story continues, of course, while many historical details remain unclear; the rumors of a parsonage seem unlikely. And as I search the "official" records, I love finding the more tangible hints of its residents' stories buried in the ground: a clay pipe manufactured in Scotland, a vivid blue bottle that once contained poison, a watch back, many fragments of china. This simple, intrepid house safeguards these artifacts of the residents it has outlived – a perspective I find humbling and reassuring. —By Margaret Phelan