



LEFT: Sparta turns out for Joanne Tall. At front from left: Ossining Mayor Rika Levin, Hannab Kamen, Abigail Kamen, Scott Kamen. Present and former members of the Village of Ossining Historic Preservation Commission from left, Manuel R. Quezada, Deborah Van Steen, Joyce Sharrock Cole, Dana White, Miguel Hernandez, Eric Schatz, Alan Stahl, Lisa Buckley.

## Joanne Tall and Sparta

**O**n May 22, residents of Sparta joined with friends and dignitaries from throughout the area to celebrate the naming of the block of Liberty Street between Spring Street and Hudson Streets “Joanne Tall Way.” The designation of this block was especially significant in that it is not only the location of the house that Joanne shared with her husband Scott Kamen and their daughters Abigail and Hannah, and in which she died on March 13, 2020, but is also considered the most characteristic and beautiful street of nineteenth-century Sparta. Joanne was an active member of the Sparta community and in 2001 was honored by the Jug Tavern for her work on the preservation of the Sparta Historical District.

In remarks at the street renaming ceremony, Alan Stahl, who succeeded Tall as chair of the Village of Ossining His-

toric Preservation Commission, remarked that “just about everything I know about local history and historical preservation I learned from Joanne. In her years as a member and then chair of the Commission, Joanne brought her professional knowledge as a restoration architect and her personal empathy as a resident of a contributing house in the Sparta Historical District to her work with residents and stakeholders throughout the village on questions regarding the appropriate treatment of historic structures, always keeping in the forefront of considerations that the best way to preserve a significant structure from the past is to make it a beneficial place for living and working today. Through her twenty-five years service to the entire Ossining community, Joanne left her mark on countless buildings whose preserved historical character is the source of great pleasure to all its residents and visitors.”

*Sparta Speaks 2021*  
**Frederic Edwin Church:  
 Painter of the World**  
 Suzanne Altman, Art Historian  
 Wednesday, August 4, 2021 at 7:30 p.m.

JOIN ON ZOOM AT:  
<https://princeton.zoom.us/j/99968856931>

Frederic Edwin Church, *Cayambe* (1862)

**P**lease join us for a virtual presentation by art historian Suzanne Altman about Frederic Edwin Church (1826–1900), a central figure in the Hudson River School of painters. Church is best known for his large landscapes, depicting dramatic vistas of mountains, waterfalls, and sunsets. In his works, he explores regions from the Amazon to the Arctic, with an emphasis on realistic detail and panoramic views. This talk will explore his life, his paintings, and the amazing Olana, his home in Hudson, New York.



Suzanne is an art educator and art historian who has presented programs for adult and teenage audiences throughout Rockland, Bergen, and Westchester counties. She is also a painter and works out of her studio and art

school in Ossining, New York. Suzanne exhibits frequently on both sides of the river.



1) 8 Liberty Street 2021; 2) back porch 2021; 3) 1978 wood shingle siding; 4) 1968 aluminum siding; 5) original siding exposed during recent shingle restoration; 6) Michael Zerilla and sons circa 1955.

## Property Profile: 8 Liberty Street

**E**ight Liberty Street caught the eye of Doug Turshen (Jug Tavern president), before he and his wife Rochelle Udell moved in at 12 Liberty next door in 2007. A few months later, when No. 8 became available, they purchased it as a workplace for Doug’s book design studio.

Built about 1795, No. 8 has retained its original proportions: two floors, with six-over-six paned windows on the first floor, and half-height windows above. Two chimneys connect to three brick fireplaces below. The floors are original wide-plank boards, and the basement has its original hard-packed earth floor. Four steps lead up to the front door and an open porch is at the back.

For most of its life No. 8 was a home. It was purportedly built by a Captain Delanoy, who ran a packet ship daily between Sparta Dock and New York City. In the nineteenth century owners were part of the early industry of Ossining: ship captains, brick masons, fishermen, and shoemakers. From about 1890 to 1920, the home was rented out by Ossining business owners, who lived in the Village of Ossining. It was during this period when Sparta began its decline, prompting banker Frank Vanderlip to rehabilitate the neighborhood. The building is unique among its neighbors in that it is the only structure from that time period along this block of Liberty Street that was not part of Vanderlip’s project.

The Zerilla family had the longest residency – almost 60 years. Michael Zirella purchased the house in 1920 and worked as a truck driver for the Vanderlip estate. According to Frank Vanderlip Jr., Mickie “was too respectable and kept his house and garden immaculate and so perfect that

there was no desire to buy him out.” Michael, the eldest of six children, was no stranger to the house. He had already lived there for at least ten years when his father Dominic rented the house. Dominic and his brother Antonio were stone masons who came to the United States to work on the New Croton Dam. Dominic brought with him his wife, and their three eldest children in the 1890s.

By 1920, Michael was 29 and married to Lillian Mae Trathen, a girl from around the corner on Hudson Street. Son Michael Jr. arrived in 1918, and by 1934 ten more children followed, 5 more sons and 5 daughters. All told, 20 members of the Zerilla family lived at No. 8 over the years – as many as 13 at one time!

The living area is a cozy 480 square feet. What may have been originally two rooms up and two rooms down, became by the 1960s four bedrooms upstairs, a fifth bedroom in the enclosed back porch, with a small closet bathroom on the first



shingles, and filled the house with antiques. In 1979, a subsequent owner made a second-floor bathroom out of one of the bedrooms and combined two other bedrooms into one.

When Doug and Rochelle took over No. 8, they had little to do in the way of renovation. On the outside they rebuilt the foundation and restored the siding and painted it white. On the inside, they added built-in bookshelves and replaced kitchen fixtures. Doug loves the scale of the building; the size is perfect for his studio. For the most part, the house is in its original state. Considering this is one of the earliest structures in Sparta and has been continuously occupied since about 1795, this charming house and all its inhabitants represent Sparta’s living history. —*Martha Mesiti*



floor. A garage was added out back sometime in the 1920s (replaced by Rochelle’s art studio in 2015), and the house was later covered in aluminum siding.

Since 1968, when Richard Paladore purchased the home from the Zerilla family, the house’s historic character has been restored. Richard was a fabric designer and weaver of tales. He called No. 8 the Enchanted Cottage and regaled his friends about his meetings there with a ghost named Nancy. Over 10 years he restored the three fireplaces, exposed ceiling beams, uncovered the porch, replaced the aluminum siding with wood



**We hope to see you soon.** If you are not already a member, please join our mailing list for invitations to events and reminders of what’s happening at The Jug. Or better yet, become a member! Find us on Facebook and at [www.jugtavern.org](http://www.jugtavern.org).