

You Keep Us Going

In supporting the Jug Tavern, you help to keep our history alive, now and for our next generation.



“In 1996, whenever the real estate agent was showing us houses in Ossining, he’d always make a point of entering the village via Rockledge Avenue, so we could see the Jug Tavern as a symbol of the historic and neighborly feel of the place. Whenever we return home these days, we consider the Jug Tavern as the sign that we have returned to our home neighborhood.”
—Bill Hanauer and Alan Stahl



“As a Canadian immigrant, born in Montreal, early years spent in Ottawa and a couple of years in Manchester, England, as a young adult, I appreciate the diversity of Sparta.”
—Bernice Masse



“The Jug Tavern is the heart of our Sparta community. It’s a constant reminder that we are standing on the shoulders of those who have lived for centuries on these same lands along the beautiful Hudson River, who contributed to the growth of New York City, and indeed, our country.

I appreciate Jug Tavern events, guests & speakers who weave tales of the heritage of this area and reminders of our place in history. I’m happy to contribute to these programs and to the upkeep of this historic landmark, so it is here for the next generations.”
—Gina Piazza

WHO WE ARE: The Jug Tavern of Sparta, Inc., was founded in 1986 to preserve The Jug Tavern building for future generations. The Jug stands at the gateway of the Sparta historic district, the oldest settlement in Ossining, comprised of 41 contributing buildings. The neighborhood’s unique history is shared with the community by our members and historians who volunteer their time and expertise.

WHAT WE DO: At The Jug Tavern we focus on community engagement. Our curriculum provides historic walking tours, lectures, concerts, exhibits, histories of individual neighborhood properties, and partnering with other local historical organizations.

WHAT’S NEXT: Because history is fluid and open to interpretation based on what is learned, we have added two ambitious projects: The first is to redo our timeline through a more inclusive lens. This includes the history of the Native American community from the region, as well as the African American population and other underrepresented people. Our mission is to fill in the gaps and tell the truth. Our focus is local within the greater context of what was happening, starting with the Dutch settlement in the late 17th century. The second project is the planting and caring of a native garden, supporting sustainability goals that align with The Village of Ossining.

WHY IT’S IMPORTANT: Our members and friends stay connected to us because they are interested in learning how the past informs today’s behavior, defines our values and helps us understand what worked and what didn’t, knowing it is ultimately the consequences of our actions over time that help us make good decisions for our future.

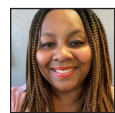
HOW IT HAPPENS: At The Jug, we are fortunate to have members and historians that guide us, creating a more robust history and productive democratic debate. Here’s just a little glimpse, a brief introduction to the people who make it work.



MARTHA MESITI is our champion of programming at The Jug. As Ossining Town Historian (2010-2017), she worked on several public projects and was managing editor of *The Ossining Story: A Bicentennial Celebration* (2013). Martha is a lifelong Ossining resident, and by day she is Assistant Director of the Mount Pleasant Public Library where she curates the local history collection. (Jug Board member)



ALAN STAHL leads our popular walking tours from April through October. The author of ten books and over 100 articles on aspects of history and numismatics, Dr. Stahl is the Curator of Numismatics at Princeton University where he also teaches in the Classics and History departments. He has served as chairman of the Ossining Historic Preservation Commission and as president of The Jug. (Jug Board member)



JOYCE SHARROCK COLE is the Ossining Village Historian. She serves on several historical society boards and is a frequent presenter to historical groups, library audiences, and local schools. Joyce recently led Black History Month at Bethany Arts Community, including her exhibit *Black Presence. Profound Influence.*, and the production of the play *The Execution of Helen Ray Fowler*, which Joyce cowrote with Misha Templar Sinclair, based on her own research. Joyce works for Westchester County and is a lifelong Ossining resident. (Jug Board member)



MARGARET PHELAN is passionate about environmental issues and as a member of The Ossining Pollinator Pathway has led us, at The Jug, to transform our gardens back to a native state, which is vital to preserving our region’s biodiversity. Margaret is Director of Development at Historic Hudson Valley. (Jug Board member)



CAROLINE CURVAN is the current Ossining Town Historian. A professional researcher and frequent presenter, she writes the popular blog “Ossining History on the Run.” In March 2024 she curated the exhibit *Remarkable Women in and around Ossining* at Bethany Arts Community, and in 2022 coauthored *Croton Point Park: Westchester’s Jewel on the Hudson* with Scott Craven. She is an adjunct professor of research and English composition.



SCOTT CRAVEN is a frequent and engaging lecturer at The Jug and throughout the area. Scott is an environmental historian focusing on the connections between people and their landscape. He is a retired Ossining police captain and served as Ossining Town Historian (2018–2022). In 2022 he coauthored *Croton Point Park: Westchester’s Jewel on the Hudson* with Caroline Curvan. Today you can find Scott working at the Ossining Public Library.



DANA WHITE is an Ossining Village Trustee, freelance writer, reporter and storyteller. She served as Ossining Village Historian for five years and on numerous historic and municipal boards in Ossining. Her research and presentations have added to our historical archive. She has contributed to *The New York Times* and *Westchester Magazine* among many others, and is The Jug’s go-to photography sleuth.



“The Jug Tavern is a historic preservation success story that deserves to be celebrated. The history of the building can only be told alongside the story of the community that saved it. I support the Jug for its mission to tell the truth and its model of outreach. Sharing the neighborhood’s history and cultural heritage in turn strengthens our sense of community and builds a better future for everyone.”
—Martha Mesiti

“I support the Jug because of my interest in preserving history, but also for neighborhood pride. I’m proud to live in a preserved part of the town, and the Jug is at the center of our mini village.”
—Lana Kitcher

“I support the Jug because I care about preserving my community’s history and sharing it with everyone.”
—Eric Goldman



“The Jug is a symbol that reminds us, whether we’ve lived here for decades, or just moved in, we’re all connected by our newly shared history.”
—Doug Turshen



“In preserving these buildings, we are preserving a culture . . . They tell a story, and the story ceases to exist when the places where they occurred cease to exist.”
—Scott Kamen



Join Us for walks and talks as we build the future of our history, a more inclusive and diverse legacy. **DONATE AND BECOME A MEMBER.** Add your name to our mailing list for invitations and reminders of what’s happening at The Jug!

PROPERTY PROFILE

The Resilience of 338 Spring Street



LEFT: An archived photo from the 1950s of a truck crashed into 338 Spring Street (looking south); RIGHT: the same house restored in 2024 after a similar accident.

The history of a house includes its architecture, its role in the neighborhood, and the stories of the people who lived there. The charming Federal style house at 338 Spring Street in Sparta is one of the oldest homes in the neighborhood. We don't know when this house was built, but it could have been as early as the 1790s. On two early maps dated 1795 and 1820, a structure is indicated at the same location at the top of Olive Street (Spring Street today). It is probable that the original portion of the house was its northern section, which was three bays across with the front door on the left.

In 1831, Bray Prince purchased 338 Spring Street from Bedford owner Anna Sarles. He lived there with his wife Julia. Nine years later Prince appears on the 1840 census, where we learn that Prince is a "free colored person" living with two women, one Black, one white. On that same census page, we find Lewis Brady heading another household of free colored persons in Sparta. Brady purchased his house in 1836.

The 1850 census is the first census to list household occupants by name and to indicate a measure of personal wealth in the value of real estate. Here we learn that Prince was born in Virginia about 1780, that he is living with 54-year-old Abigail Hadden and 65-year-old Sarah Vincent. (Julia Prince is not listed because she died in 1849 at the age of 75.) The census indicates that both Prince and Hadden are landowners, as is their neighbor fisherman Lewis Brady. To be a Black homeowner in a mostly white neighborhood was exceptional at this time.

Sometime after 1850, the Prince property passed out of family hands, but the chain of ownership still needs to be researched. Local maps indicate that the house was occupied or owned by Sherwoods in the 1860s and 1870s (Thomas Sherwood also ran the Union Hotel, which was at 12 Liberty Street). In 1958 the property was purchased by Joseph L. Naar, Jr., and his wife Flora W. Gee Naar. They lived there for almost 50 years. After Joseph's death in 1998 Flora sold the house to Allison Mitchell.

The Naars were an active and well-known family in Ossining. Joseph L. Naar, Jr., was a newspaper man like his father and grandfather before him. He started his career at *The Citizen Register* under his father, Joseph L. Naar, who was its editor from 1931 to 1970. Joseph Jr. and Flora met when they both wrote for the *Citizen Register*, Joseph as a police reporter and Flora as social editor. They married in 1952.

Flora Naar was a lifelong Ossining resident and had a large civic presence and long list of accomplishments in community service. A sampling of her activities included serving on the boards of Ossining schools, Ossining Public Library, Westchester Library System, the Town Republican Committee, Ossining Restoration Committee and the Ossining Historical Society. Flora kept busy. When she was 69, she learned to fly a plane; at 72 she began work as an historic interpreter for Historic Hudson Valley.

Flora was also a visible key member of the Sparta Association, an organization that addressed concerns of neighborhood residents. She wrote letters to the editor in opposition to proposed projects such as a Con Ed plant and the Hudson Expressway, she organized community clean up days, and probably helped with the collection of signatures to prove community support for the Town to purchase and preserve The Jug Tavern in 1976. She served as the Sparta Association president in 1978.

Although The Sparta Association dissolved in 2006, its spirit lived on in neighborhood get-togethers. Then, in February 2023, an accident stoked the embers toward its revitalization. A vehicle driving south lost control and crashed into the northeast corner of 338 Spring Street. The north and east facades were heavily damaged, and the front of the house was forced a foot off its foundation. This wasn't the first time the house had been hit by a wayward vehicle, but hopefully it was the last. Architect Jason Cea, who oversaw the restoration of the house, explains that the house remained standing due to its balloon frame construction that acted as a shock absorber of sorts. Later this spring the house will return to its familiar white shingles and black shutters.

It seems a fitting tribute to Flora Naar's memory that her house was one of the incentives to reboot the Sparta Association and its role "to preserve and improve the quality of life in Sparta." The Village of Ossining has responded, and traffic signs are in place to help slow traffic. The resilience of 338 Spring Street reflects the neighborhood: It comes from good bones, a sturdy foundation, and a community that cares.

Be sure to check our newsletter archive www.jugtavern.org/newsletters for more history of the neighborhood.



LEFT: The Ladew plot in Sparta Cemetery; RIGHT: Members of OHCC and JTS, left to right: Joyce Sharrock Cole, Patty Bassak, Joyce Markovics, Regina Albinus, Scott Craven, Martba Mesiti, Jane Botticelli

The Restoration of the Oldest Grave Marker in Sparta (1764)

On March 14th, along with the Ossining Historic Cemeteries Conservancy, the Jug Tavern co-sponsored a social and informative evening with Scott Craven, who presented a program on the history and legends of Sparta Cemetery. The guests for this packed event included members of both organizations, as well as folks interested in Sparta Cemetery. The event was also a fundraiser for the restoration of the Ladew family plot at Sparta, site of the oldest grave marker in Sparta (1764), as well as the famous "cannonball" stone.

MAKE TIME FOR THE SPARTA TOUR

Each year from April through October, the Jug Tavern conducts monthly walking tours of historic Sparta. Dr. Alan Stahl 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.

Reservations at www.jugtavern.org

April 14, May 5,
July 14, August 11,
September 15, October 13

The Jug Tavern is a 501c3 non-profit. We rely on members and donors to help preserve the Jug Tavern and share its history, one of Ossining's oldest structures! Contributions make it possible to offer relevant educational programming. Please visit us at www.jugtavern.org