

# Cornwallville News

## SECOND CORNWALLVILLE DAY TO BE AUG. 24



Posing for posterity at the Cornwallville picnic of 1915

### PROGRAM FOR CORNWALLVILLE DAY

#### AT THE FIREHOUSE:

11 am Jerry Cunningham on running the family farm.

12 noon Barn dance music.

1 pm Rob Handel on foraging for mushrooms and other edibles.

11-3 Silent auction.

#### OTHER:

9-10 am: Tour of the Greene Bee Greenhouse gardens, with a focus on hydrangeas, 2744 County Route 20.

11-3 All stands open in the village center: Hotdogs and lemonade, artists, books, etc. Paula Lalala Mvsevm open in the former church hall.

2-4 Stone House Open House. 459 Strong Road.

9-4 Durham Task Force community-wide yard sale. Maps on sale for \$1 at the East Durham Firehouse and at the Paula Lalala Mvsevm.

5-7.30 Community picnic. See details on p. 4.



Cunningham

#### Free talks and music, yard sales planned

The second annual Cornwallville Day will take place on Saturday, August 24, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Well-known farmer and town board member Jerry Cunningham, 80, who's been running his family's farm on Cunningham Road since he was 18, will give a talk at the firehouse beginning at 11 am.

Continuing this year's theme of farming and agriculture, the program at the firehouse, located across the road from the post office in the village center, will include barn dance music and a talk on foraging by professional chef and mushroom expert Rob Handel. There will also be a silent auction.

In addition to the events at the firehouse, there will be hotdogs and lemonade for sale, free face-painting for kids, displays by local artists, a used book stand, and a chance to visit the Paul Lalala Mvsevm, which will be selling specially-made Cornwallville mugs and T-shirts.

Just outside the village center, there will be a tour of the Greene Bee Greenhouse gardens in the morning and an Open House at the M.H. Merchant Stone House on Strong Road in the afternoon. (See article on page 3.)

The day will end, as it did last year, with a community picnic. We hope the turnout for this year's picnic will exceed not only last year's total of over 50 but even the turnout at the Cornwallville Picnic of 1915.

Cornwallville Day will take place rain or shine. It will be on the same day as the annual Durham Task Force community-wide yard sale and artists' open house. If you'd like to be on the Task Force map, or to apply for a yard sale spot or other type of stand near the post office, see page 4.

Volunteers are needed. Please email or phone Mary Ann Ledda (skigrandma41@gmail.com; 378-9573) if you can help. To donate gently-used books, email or call Lee Lange (leontina3d@gmail.com, 239-4764). All proceeds will go toward Cornwallville Day activities.

### "A Taste of Cornwallville"

Come meet your neighbors, share a meal, and raise funds for Cornwallville Day

Anna and Walt Grote will host an informal barbeque for 20 people at their house on Cornwallville Road on Saturday, July 27. Reserve immediately to guarantee your spot. See page 4 for details.

# WW I: CORNWALLVILLE ANSWERED THE CALL

By Karen R. Rivers

In 1917, when the United States entered World War I, Cornwallville was still a quiet village far removed from world events: Farming continued to be the main occupation, children attended the one-room schoolhouse, and the village church was the center of social as well as religious life.

But change was in the air. Rural areas such as Cornwallville were in decline, while the introduction of motorized transport and the telephone were bringing the world closer together. The Great War, as it was then known, would hasten these changes.

On April 6, when the US declared war on Germany, there were two weeklies in Greene County. One missed the news by a day; the other, as noted in an article by Richard Muggeo in a Greene County Historical Society publication, went to press a day later and managed to insert an announcement on the front page. But perhaps reflecting how little impact the war initially had, the announcement shared space with stories on a Catskill baseball game and a piano recital.

Even after the war declaration, it took months to gear up for war. In Cornwallville, the majority of the eleven young men who joined the armed forces didn't do so until the spring of 1918, and of those, only two saw action in Europe. One, Russell C. Sutton, who grew up on Sutton Road on his parents' farm, enlisted in April of 1918 in a machine gun battalion. He was badly injured in France, suffering a fractured shoulder and leg as well as the loss of three fingers on one hand and two on the other.



Happily, Sutton recovered after a lengthy recuperation. According to Tom Sutton, officer in charge of the Durham police and Russell Sutton's nephew, it was only thanks to the efforts of Rev. Robert S. Inglis, a New Jersey resident who owned a second home in

Cornwallville, that they learned he was in a hospital in New York City. A note to Sutton's parents from Inglis, who often preached at the Cornwallville church,

recounts how Sutton held the flag while the congregation sang "America" at one service he conducted. He also told Russell's parents that members of the congregation spoke of Sutton's "modesty and manliness" and commented that "it gave the mothers a good cry, and made the fathers choke up with pride to see a real wounded soldier."

After the war, Sutton moved with his wife to Coxsackie, where they bought a farm and raised eight children. One, Russell Jr., served in World War II. Despite Russell Sr.'s loss of his fingers, Tom Sutton recalls, he was able to milk cows and continued to hunt. He never talked about the war, Tom says. "I don't even know if he had any medals. That's how it was in those days; people just got on with things."



Russell Sr. (left) and Russell Jr.

While young men from Cornwallville were signing up for military service women of the village also did their part, knitting and sewing for the troops. *The Recorder* newspaper of January 4, 1918 notes a list of items sent from Cornwallville to the Red Cross that includes three pairs of knitted socks, one-and-a-half dozen washcloths, seven sets of pajamas, four sweaters and ten mufflers.

From the beginning, citizens were exhorted to buy war bonds, save on fuel, and go without meat once a week—all in the interest of defeating what were repeatedly referred to as "the Hun." Still, people found ways of having fun. A Red Cross fund-raising ball held in Catskill attracted nearly 400 people.

Perhaps the saddest story to come out of Cornwallville was that of John Bartholomew, listed in the NY State Archives as a 23-year-old farmer from the village who enlisted in February of 1918. He was described in *The Recorder* as among those honored at a farewell dinner in Catskill, before being waved off by hundreds of people at the railroad station.

But Bartholomew never made it overseas; he died in May, while still in training on Long Island. His name is not on the boulder in front of the Cornwallville cemetery listing those who served in the war. While the cause of Bartholomew's death is not stated in the State records, it's very likely that it was influenza, which worldwide killed three times as many (*continued p. 4.*)

# From early homestead to village landmark

## THE M.H. MERCHANT “STONE HOUSE” ON STRONG ROAD

By Stephen Ellwood



It was 11 years ago when I first set foot on the land around the Stone House. I knew in that moment that I would spend much of my life here, and that I had come home to a place that reached down and touched the depth of my bones. The warm air of that day in Cornwallville was filled with the rhythmic knocking of the pileated woodpecker, an incantation of sorts that still summons me here as it did on that day. There was no question that I had, in that moment, assumed the responsibility of loving this old house as the previous owner had. The Stone House is a curious creature: drafty, barely updated for the modern age, and requiring constant tinkering, but full of a beautiful power.

The story of the Stone House, as it's commonly known, goes back to the early days of Cornwallville. Members of the Jerome family, headed by John Jerome and his wife Margaret Stickle, were among the early settlers in the Town of Durham. They purchased 94 acres of land in 1816 and built a thriving farm, while also raising a family of twelve children. One of their great-grandsons was William S. Borthwick, whose diaries chronicle the life of Cornwallville and its inhabitants over many years.

In 1869, the Jerome homestead passed on to Horatio Hough, a farmer and boardinghouse keeper. It burned to the ground in 1893; in 1899, the property was sold to Melvin H. Merchant. Merchant was a farmer, an active member of the Cornwallville Church, and an inventor.

He began work on a new house, which he designed, in the summer of 1900. The two-story structure, built of local fieldstone blocks, has walls 22 inches thick. The name of the stonemason is unknown; however the initials H.E. are carved into a cornerstone. The house, the only one of its kind in the area, is a unique example of a vernacular style of stone architecture that does not reference older Dutch stone houses in the Hudson River Valley.

The fieldstone walls display an array of shifting colors depending on the time of day, changing weather conditions, and the seasons. The house can appear pale grey in early summer noontime sunlight; moss green in the foggy spring season; or a golden quartzite hue on a clear winter morning.

The house is square, measuring roughly 24 feet wide by 24 feet, and has a steeply pitched roof. The main floor was clearly the parlor and bathroom, with the upstairs reserved for bedrooms. In the bathroom are two period pieces original to the house: a claw-foot tub with a wooden oak lip and the sink basin. Also original are the six-paneled doors and door hardware, as well as the double-hung, four-paned windows.

The Stone House is attached to what appears to be an older wood frame building containing a kitchen, sitting room, attached barn, and a dormer bedroom. This portion may have served as the primary residence after the 1893 fire until the stone house was built.

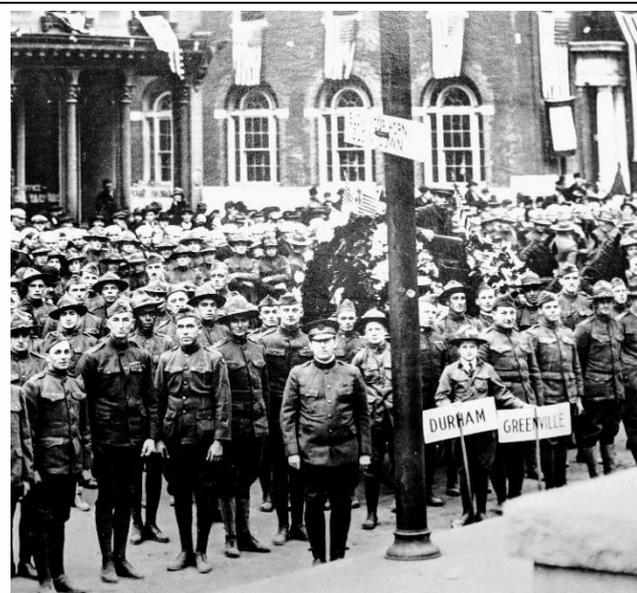


In 1923, the farm and the stone house were sold to the Wing family, and in 1972, the house was sold to Bonnie Greer, who made it her home for 36 years. Greer, who worked in the Cornwallville Post Office and as a trail guide at Tanglewood Ranch, sold eggs from her laying hens, baked her own bread, and was frequently seen riding her horse through the village.

I was captivated by the beautiful craftsmanship of the stone walls, which use fieldstone and hazelnut mortar. While not literally Craftsman in theme, the house shares with the Craftsman movement an appreciation for simple, handcrafted forms. A main theme of the interior is its connection to the surrounding landscape; the deep-set windows act as framed views to the outside. There is, overall, a natural feeling of lightness and simplicity.

*A special thank-you to Sylvia Hasenkopf, who provided much expert research on the history of the house.*

*The Stone House, 459 Strong Road, will be open to visitors between 2-4 pm on Cornwallville Day.*



*The celebration in Catskill (Courtesy Vedder Library)*

### **World War I in Cornwallville** (continued from p. 2)

people as died in the war. David Dorpfeld, the Greene County Historian, noted in an article in the Historical Society journal that the flu was almost certainly an important reason for a nearly 15 percent drop in the Greene County population between 1915 and 1920.

If the beginning of WW I was fairly subdued, its ending in November of 1918 was followed by much greater outpourings of emotion. A year later, in October, 1919, a celebration was held in Catskill to honor the 1,225 Greene County veterans. Clearly evident in a photo taken on that day are a large number of men massed behind a sign reading "Durham." The events included a parade, which drew twenty-two Civil War veterans, a band concert and a ball game.

*Karen R. Rivers is the author of In the Shadow of the Catskills: An Illustrated History of Cornwallville, NY, available in local shops and on Amazon. It will be sold on Cornwallville Day at the special price of \$10.*

### **COME MEET YOUR CORNWALLVILLE NEIGHBORS**

**FUNDRAISING DINNER FOR CORNWALLVILLE DAY:** Walt and Anna Grote will host an informal barbecue at their home at 1178 Cornwallville Road on Saturday, July 27, 5-9 pm. Guests are limited to 20, so reserve now by emailing catsandcoons@gmail.com. Please indicate if you're vegetarian. The cost is \$30 per person, which includes the meal as well as beer, wine and soft drinks and special desserts. Checks, made out to "Cornwallville Day," should be sent to Lee Lange, 275 Flinn Road, Cornwallville, NY 12418. They **must be received by July 15** to avoid the strong possibility that your spot will be given to someone on the waiting list.

**COMMUNITY PICNIC ON CORNWALLVILLE DAY:** Cornwallville residents are also invited to a community picnic from 5-7.30 pm on Cornwallville Day at the home of Karen and Bernard Rivers at 2973 County Rte 20. The picnic will be held in the big meadow behind the house, which has a wonderful view of the mountains. Bring your own food, drink, chairs, blanket. Follow signs to parking area.

*The Cornwallville Day committee thanks the Greene County Legislature for a \$500 Wayne C. Speenburgh grant.*

*Check out our "Cornwallville Day" Facebook page for the latest news.*

**Durham Task Force 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Durham-wide Community Yard Sale \*\*\* To be held on the same day as Cornwallville Day**  
**Saturday, August 24, 2019 9 am-4 pm**

Earn a bit of extra cash while supporting the work of the Durham Task Force, which organizes the July 4 parade and runs the Reading Room in East Durham, among other activities. Cut off and fill in the form below, write a check to "Durham Task Force," for \$10 and mail the form and check to: Durham Task Force, PO Box 1, East Durham, NY 12423. **DEADLINE: AUGUST 15.**

Your address will be listed on a map of yard sale locations that will be on sale for \$1 on August 24 at the Firehouse in East Durham and at the Paula Lalala Mvsevm in Cornwallville. Artists can also use this form to have their open houses or open studios included.

Questions? Contact Linda Sutton (tomswife2009@hotmail.com; 518-239-4571).

Note: If you want to reserve a spot in the village center for a yard sale stand or another type of stand, email or call Lee Lange (leontina3d@gmail.com, 239-4764) **by August 15.** You will need to bring your own table.

**Request to be included on the Durham Task Force Yard Sale map (Be sure to include your \$10 check.)**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ If you are an artist, please put an X here: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_