

History Advisory Committee
June 28th, 2025

Attendance: Rich Coons, Alvin Sheffer, Yvonne Crawford, Tony Albino, Ethan Dickerman, Tom Shannon

- We discussed a general plan regarding the Parsonage archaeology project based on the recommendations SHPO sent us earlier in the month. Among the recommendations were setting a hard deadline for reports, recalling the artifacts and whatever field notes exist, and filling in the open excavations in the hearth room. If the Town Board is amenable to it, Tom will work with Joyce Vale on reorganizing the Town Records Room in July and August. This will give us an idea if the Records Room is a feasible home for the artifacts. If not, we'll have to explore other options. Once we have a viable short term and long term plan for storage, reach out to Bard with a reasonable timetable for returning the artifacts. It was the consensus of the committee that another report timetable would just delay the inevitable. Formal MOU discussions with Bard began in May 2023 and ended in March 2024 for lack of agreement on producing reports.
- SHPO also encouraged us to discuss the "field school loophole" in NYS law, which helped produce the above described situation, with our state level representatives.
- We discussed an initiative that Friends of Historic Germantown is hoping to pursue: updating the National Register of Historic Places nomination form for the 1767 Parsonage. The original nomination was solely for architecture, and has a scant historical narrative. Additionally, nominating it as an archaeological resource will open grant opportunities to help us ameliorate the above described situation.
- Letter of Intent to the Hover Foundation due on July 1st. We will ask for Revolutionary War monuments for Roe Jan Kill Park and Twin Lakes based on accounts of a raid and skirmish described in William Smith, Jr.'s memoirs. Additionally, we will ask for a roadside NYS historic marker for the first public school in Germantown c. 1796. This will go on the pole where the "First Schoolhouse" sign is now on Church Ave. The existing first schoolhouse sign will be placed on a new pole at the First Reformed Cemetery on Sharp's Landing Road, the closest public land to the location of Rev. Haeger's c. 1711 school.

- The Bank of Greene County awarded \$1,000 through FOHG for cemetery cleaning efforts. We will focus on Valley View Cemetery on Hover Avenue this summer, shifting to Viewmonte Cemetery if there is any leftover. The grant ceremony will be held in early August.
- Recent donations: Jason Munz donated a dozen or so diaries kept by Anna Meiner, formerly of the old hamlet of Burden in the Town of Livingston.
- Hudson River Valley Ramble event on Sept. 27th, rain/wind date of Sept. 28th. Kayak tour of the Germantown Waterfront. Cheviot to Roe Jan Creek Boat Club and back, with stops at the boat club and Ice House Landing.
- PATH Through History event on Oct. 11th starting at 5 PM. Campfire evening at the Parsonage.
- Tom will give a talk on William Smith, Jr.'s memoirs at Clermont State Historic Site on August 16th at 2 PM.
- "The Enduring Impact of the Palatine Migration on Columbia County" is now available to view on the Hudson Area Library and Jacob Leisler Institute YouTube channels.
- Noah Coon, 2022 GCS Valedictorian and current Marist undergraduate, will be volunteering at the History Department this summer.
- The Germantown Library is putting together heritage programming for 2026 and has asked for assistance with local content for Women's and Black History Months, as well as a Palatine history month in October.