

# DRYDEN HISTORY HOUSE

Dryden Town Historical Society  
36 West Main Street, Dryden, NY 13053  
607-844- 9209

History House Hours:  
Saturday 10am to 2pm and by appointment

## The Southworth Homestead, by Harry L.D. Weldon

The Dryden Town Historical Society has been willed the Historic Landmark Southworth House. The Southworth House is listed on the Register of Historic Places and has been around for ages, since the early days of the Town of Dryden. What a treasure to befall the Historical Society.

Its last owner, Sara Rebecca Wood Southworth Simpson, who bequeathed the structure to the Society after her death, was the great granddaughter of John Southworth. And since that time it has been owned by some member of the Southworth family. "Becky" as called by her friends was brought into "the Southworth Homestead" as an infant by her aunt and uncle, Howard and Florence Southworth after her mother succumbed in the "great influenza epidemic" after giving birth to her in the hospital; in later years she married George Simpson.



**DRYDEN HOLLY TOUR!**  
**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 4, 1-4PM**

See inside (Page 4) for more details!

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## New Exhibits at the History House

### New Mini Exhibit

#### HAND KNIT MITTENS AND SWEATER FROM CORRIEDALE SHEEP, IRISH SETTLEMENT ROAD

In the 1950s Willis and Betty Marion lived on the Cole farm on Irish Settlement Road. Willis was farm manager for Barton–Miller Farms. They raised prize-winning Corriedale sheep. Their 98 sheep produced 176 lambs in the spring. Willis says each Corriedale sheep would give 12 pounds of especially long fiber wool. Just before lambing–time, about the end of March, Mr. Hunt came from Cornell to shear the sheep raised on the Barton–Miller and the Ross farms, The neighborhood came to watch the shearing – a real community event. Most of the wool was sent to Watkins Glen Wool Pool, except what Betty Marion and Kay Ross wanted to use for handcrafts. That wool was sent to Maine and made into yarn, usually natural color, but green, blue, and lavender, too.

Betty made hundreds of pairs of wool mittens as gifts for her family, for church fairs and giving, and for her daughter's students, all from their own sheep wool. Betty says, "for just about anybody who was in need of warm mittens." One year when she was in her 80s, Mrs. Nita Marion used some of the wool to knit a coat sweater. Today Betty has a great grand daughter who is interested in hand crafts and Betty will pass on her needles and knitting patterns.

### New mini exhibit

on loan at the History House

A painting by local painter, Betty Hurst is currently on display. The painting she did in the 1980s is of Freeville's 5 sided Railroad freight station. Betty said that the day after she took a photo of this building in Freeville it was gone. In the book, "Railroad Station Planbook," 1977, Freeville is featured on page 49 – 53..



New mini exhibit "Marion Made". Pair of mittens knit by Betty Marion and sweater jacket knit by Nita hall Marion. These hand-knit items were made from wool from the sheep raised on Irish Settlement Road.

## "Recent Gift"

Dryden Historical Society recently received a gift from Professor George Conneman of a painting of the 1881 barn. Betty Hurst, local painter, did the painting before 1986. This local landmark, known for its cupola with the date 1881, was located near the corner of Irish Settlement Road and Route 13. It burned to the ground on April 1, 1986. The strong south wind whipped the sparks across the road and within a very short time, the barn known as a "German swing beam barn" was also burned to the ground. In not much longer than an hour Dryden lost two large 19th century barns.

## Barton Family Reunion

On July 22nd Members of the Barton family gathered for a family reunion. They set aside time to stop at the History House to check out our resources. Lois Fox was on hand to visit with family members. Lois had memories to tell of the summer she worked on the Barton Miller farm when she was a teenager in the 1940s. The Dryden Historical Society welcomes the opportunity to share information and family histories.

## Remember...

Every Saturday at the History House, see exhibits, maps, photographs and research family histories, and the spinning wheel made in the town of Dryden in 1858 by Richard Townley.

Shop for local history books, note cards by Betty Hurst and nature photos by Bard Prentiss. "A local gift is a thoughtful gift."

## Southworth House Committee

Soon after the news of the bequest of the Southworth House to DTHS by the will of Rebecca Southworth Simpson, a committee of six DTHS trustees was formed. The Southworth House committee consists of Betsy Cleveland, DTHS president, Gina Prentiss, DTHS vice-president and committee chair, Sandra Prugh, DTHS treasurer and DTHS trustees, Bob Jacobson, Bob Watros, and David Smith. This committee has met almost weekly to become familiar with the Homestead and to consider all the possibilities that this bequest holds for our organization.

Dryden Historical Society is committed to the preservation and conservation of this historic building that has been cared for and maintained so well by the family for almost two centuries. We have met with and are working with leaders in historic preservation: Michael Tomlan, director of Cornell Historic Preservation Program, Dan Krall, Historic Landscape Architecture Program, Historic Ithaca and NYS Preservation League. Randy Crawford, preservation architect of Crawford and Stearnes, will prepare drawings and a current conditions report as a first step toward a formal plan. We know it will be a challenge to document and interpret this great resource. We know it will be a financial challenge to maintain this historic structure. More than anything, we know that we will need many volunteers and the support of all our membership and the community for this adventure. We are eager to investigate all ideas.

We plan to move slowly and with great care in identifying the Homestead's future needs and uses. In time this gift of The Southworth Homestead will add a new dimension in the historic treasures that are available to the local community.

Gina Prentiss, Chair Southworth House committee

## UPCOMING FALL PROGRAM

**Southworth House**  
**Past, Present and Future**  
**Presenter: Bob Jacobson**

Wednesday, November 16  
 7pm, Village Hall  
 Doors open at 6:30PM

It isn't very often that a house remains in the same family for 175 years. It is even less likely that such a historic house is bequeathed to a local historical group. The homestead at 14 North Street has been in the Southworth family for 175 years, and was bequeathed to the Dryden Town Historical Society by the will of Rebecca Southworth Simpson. In 1836 John Southworth built his home of brick in the village of Dryden that is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

DTHS will share their excitement and appreciation for the gift of this grand house with a public program on Wednesday, November 16. This program will look at the long history of the family and their house, the present activities and some visions for the future of this historic structure. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. Come early and look at displays.



## MARK YOUR CALENDERS!

**Dryden Town Historical Society's**  
**HOLLY TOUR**  
**Sunday, December 4**  
**1 – 4pm**

It's time for our 3rd bi-annual Holly Tour fundraiser for the Historical Society on Sunday, Dec 4, 1-4. This year we're featuring the Etna area and are very excited about our homes. Come see lovely places all decked out for the holidays. The Historical Society has big expenses pending with our future acquisition of the Southworth Homestead so your support at this event will be most appreciated!

This year's homes are:

- Peggy Brewer 1384 Dryden Rd., Dryden
- Michael Brandt and Jen Sage, 24 Upper Creek Rd, Etna
- Dick and Pat Deeb, 31 Upper Creek Rd., Etna  
 Christ Chapel at George Jr. Republic

Reception to follow at the Etna Community Church, 1 Upper Creek Rd., Etna.

Tickets are \$10 and available at the History House, from any Board member, several merchants about town or by calling me, Betsy Cleveland, at 844-4289.

Many thanks go out to our homeowners for opening their homes to us and helping us to answer that age-old question: "Gee, I wonder what that house looks like inside"!

See you on the 4th!  
 Betsy

*The Southworth Homestead, continued*

The story of this “homestead” treasure begins with the birth of John Southworth who was born in Salisbury, Herkimer County, NY on September 26, 1796; the son of Thomas Southworth from Massachusetts.

Thomas Southworth came to Dryden Township (a.k.a Town of Dryden) with his family in 1806, young John being a lad of ten years age. Thomas was a tanner and currier by trade and first settled on a farm in Willow Glenn, just west of what was to become the Village of Dryden.

It was a few years later that this purchase of land was sold off and the son John bought the farm close to the “Dryden four corners” in what was in all likelihood to become greater than that of the Glenn. Here he established the “Southworth Homestead.” During these formative years he developed a propensity for accurate judgment of property values and developed a rapid ability to conclude favorable transactions for both buyer and seller. Through John’s real estate successes and some other enterprises in the business world he was able to amass a sizable bank roll.

One such business enterprise occurred in November 1836, when John engaged in the mercantile business with Thomas McGraw, later to become a son-in-law. In 1836 he built the original brick store on the corner of South and West Main (now 1 West Main St., and location of the Dryden Community Café) and that same year he built the brick half of his house on North St. (now 14 North St.). Half of the latter is constructed to this day of wood. This gives it somewhat of an appearance of a brick house with a wooden attachment.

It is recorded in several local history books that while Mr. Southworth’s house and store were being built he lived in a little house on East Main St. It is theorized that it had been moved from its location to make room for the store. Hence, he did not live in the “Homestead” wooden portion while the brick part was being built. Another account tells that while the wooden portion was under construction, clay suitable for making bricks was found on the property. This discovery led to a brick addition being added to the wood section. That does explain the step down level from one second floor in the brick section to the second floor into the wood section

Whatever, the circumstances of its construction, it all adds to the unique historical treasure of the “Southworth Homestead” in the Village of Dryden, NY.

Closing one’s eyes for a moment—adjusting to visions that the mind’s eye sees ... perhaps ... of the future of the Historic Southworth Homestead ... it sees the Society perfectly at home immersed with Dryden heirlooms, artifacts, exhibits, collections, oil paintings, photographs and in sundry historical things from floor to floor, room to room and outside on the grounds. Static displays, gardens, old time agriculture equipment. And the barn—the barn might even see someday parked inside a restored automobile, perhaps a 1915 Model-T like one of those used to turn the Ferris wheel at the Dryden Agriculture Fair before 1918 ... the possibilities are awesome!

## LISTINGS OF APPRECIATION

### *CONTRIBUTIONS RECEIVED (since November, December 2010, January 2011 Newsletter)*

#### January 2011

**Sally P. Guzetta** – In memory of Laurence & Ruth Beach and Marie Park

#### February 2011

**Doris Nitsios** (Candle Light B & B) – In memory of Seraphim "Sam" Nitsios  
**Bob Timmerman** – Providing 30, 25, 20, et cetera Anniversary Banners for History House

#### March 2011

**Sandra Hunt** – In memory of Calvin Hunt

#### April 2011

**Dr. Bob Jacobson** – White Signicade Kit (i.e. "sandwich board") to announce activities  
**Robert & Margaret Lorenzen** – In memory of Ruth Sweetland; in memory of Christine Slocum; And a gift membership

#### May 2011

**Nancy P. and Stephen S. Brown** – In memory of Rebecca "Becky" Simpson  
**Richard and J'nelle Cahoon** – A gift membership  
**Elsie Gutches** – In memory of Rebecca "Becky" Simpson  
**Dryden Senior Citizens, Inc.** (c/o Carol Ayer) – In memory of Rebecca "Becky" Simpson

#### June 2011

**Dr. Laura Lamash** – To DTHS in general  
**Laurie Sutherland** – In return for Genealogy research

#### September 2011

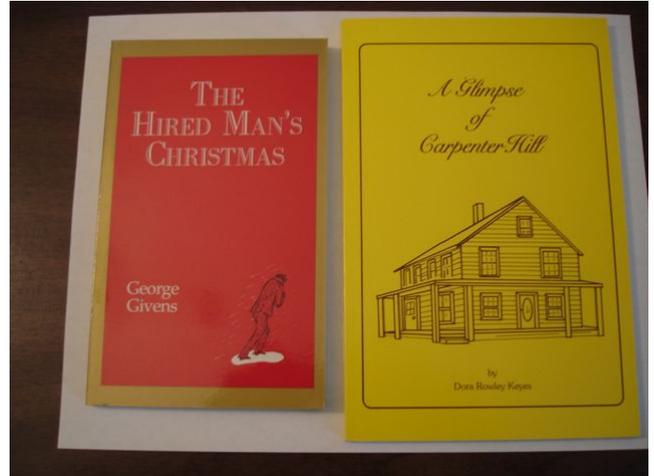
**Judy Hogan** – "Donation-in-Kind" of stationary supplies  
**The Estate of Sara Rebecca (Wood Southworth) Simpson** – In accord with her Last Will and Testament

#### October 2011

**Dryden Mutual Insurance Co.** (c/o **Bob Baxter, CEO**) – Toward Annual Insurance Premium of archived Insurance Company Ledgers



Betty Hurst, Freeville RR painting on loan



LOCAL BOOKS for sale at the History House



1881 barn, painted by Betty Hurst, gift from Prof. Geo Conneman



7/22/11 Barton/Miller Family Reunion @History House. Barton family members look over historical material at the History House.



Lots of beautiful pies and breads at the 2011 DTHS Pie and Bread Sale



A box of breads baked by Carl Taylor for Pie and Bread Sale

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Society**

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PO Box 69  
Dryden, NY 13053

**Phone:**  
607-844-9209

**E-Mail:**  
historyhouse@odyssey.net

**WINTER HOURS AT THE HISTORY HOUSE**

January – March  
1st and 3rd Saturdays  
10 am – 2 pm

**Reminder**

Membership renewal notices for 2012 will be mailed shortly. The Trustees encourage you to renew your membership!

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**Board of Trustees**

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