

# Forward, into the Past

## An 1875 Map & Historic Preservation

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Historic preservation is coming into its own in the Ellenville/Town of Wawarsing area as the township prepares to celebrate its two-hundredth birthday. As 2006 draws closer, activity heightens in Ellenville and Napanoch especially.

Aside from individuals and organizations restoring, renovating, and otherwise upgrading their properties, there is a groundswell of interest in preserving important community buildings as they were originally built, maintaining their historical and architectural integrity, while incorporating modern technology in an unobtrusive way.

The *Hunt Memorial Preservation Committee, Inc.*, first met in October 2002 and officially organized in January 2003 to “restore and preserve the architectural integrity and historical significance of the **Hunt Memorial Building**, located at **Liberty Square** in the Village of Ellenville” and “expand its purpose to similar activities in the area of historic preservation within the Village of Ellenville and/or the Town of Wawarsing.” The *HMPC*, as it is familiarly called, is moving slowly, but surely, toward restoration in its 2005 efforts to, first, patch the existing roof and, secondly, to secure the funding to install a new roof and chimneys on the almost 90-year-old local landmark.

During 2004, the Village of Ellenville adopted “Chapter 127, Historic Preservation” as part of its local laws ([www.wawarsing.org/elv/HistPresFinal.htm](http://www.wawarsing.org/elv/HistPresFinal.htm) for full text). In stating the purpose of Chapter 127, the Village states, “There exist in the Village of Ellenville places, sites, structures and buildings of special historic significance or which... are of particular significance to the heritage of the village. The conservation, protection and preservation of such places, sites, structures and buildings is a public necessity in harmony with the Village’s Comprehensive Master Plan.”

The *Historic Preservation Commission* stipulated within the legislation includes Peter Backman, Marion Dumond, Danyel Rubin, Mary Sheeley, and John Unverzagt. The *Commission* meets at least once a month to discuss procedures and potential landmark candidates. At its October 2004 meeting, a consensus chose four specific defining points to be considered:

1. a structure at least 75 years old which has had significant impact on the community;
2. the home of a resident of notable achievement;
3. a location that was the site of an historically significant industry, and;
4. a site of archeological significance.

Commission members subsequently benefited from a workshop conducted for them by the *Ellenville Public Library & Museum*, so they could see and handle research tools that will be helpful in their search for reliable information.

One of the tools to be used by the *Commission* will be the 1875 map of Ellenville, which also appears in Beers’ Atlas of Ulster County. The official citation for the atlas is County Atlas of Ulster, New York: From Recent and Actual Surveys and Records, by Frederick W. Beers. Walker and Jewett, 1875.) This map identifies the property that is presently occupied by the **Hunt Memorial Building** as the residence of J. H. Tuthill (*next page*).

Mr. Tuthill had married Maria Hartshorn, the daughter of Charles Hartshorn, Ellenville’s first postmaster, first “president,” and probably the most famous citizen of Ellenville’s early days. Maria and Joseph Tuthill lived with Hartshorn in the house he had built, and inherited it after his death. In 1875, the year the map was drawn, they gave the Village of Ellenville a large part of their front lawn, the part with a fountain, for the purpose of a public square. This structure certainly fits most of the Village landmark eligibility criteria and the map is an important document in confirming that fact.

The 1875 map locates the mill on property belonging to J. W. Morse (*below, at upper left*), a structure in existence prior to 1875, actually prior to 1871 when the *South Ulster Press* (February 10, 1871) reported on the good water power at the **Red Mill** and its “large custom business grinding grain for farmers here and thousands of bushels of Western grain.” Mr. Morse also owned a substantial parcel directly across **Cape Ave.** from the mill. ➔

