

# Plan On It

A Dutchess County Planning Federation eNewsletter

April 2011

## Historic Resource Survey *An “Old” Mapping Project Renewed*

By Robert Wills, Senior GIS Project Coordinator

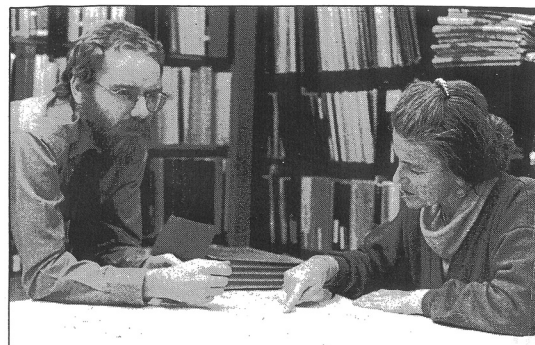
Long before computers were the standard, mapping required a different kind of hand-eye coordination — instead of a mouse, drafting skills and artistic sensibility were necessary to create the visual communication tool that is a map. Maps are more accurate these days, and analysis is easier and more legitimate as the computer allows us to work with very accurate data visible as superimposed layers, revealing relationships difficult to see in the “old days.”

Our recent effort to transform the Historic Resource Survey from a set of paper maps into an electronic map layer available to the public has given us the opportunity to blend the beauty and personality of “old” maps with the accuracy of new.

### What is the Historic Resource Survey?

The Historic Resource Survey was conducted in the 1980s and resulted in a set of maps, photos, and detailed documentation of the location of historic resources such as buildings, structures, landscapes, and objects. Compiled by Stephanie Mauri from the Dutchess County Historical Society, John Clarke from the Dutchess County Department of Planning and Development, and other architectural historians, they were the product of a comprehensive field survey of almost every road in the County. Architecture, and cultural and working landscapes were documented, even Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s favorite roadside view.

Voluminous in detail, quaint in description, and beautifully colored, they included many subjective notes about the structures and natural features observed. In addition, an extensive architectural inventory included photographs and formal descriptions of each resource. Incorporating these layers of information into our county website mapping tools would achieve the rich user experience we sought.



Stephanie Mauri and John Clarke work on the original Historic Resource Survey (1985).

The Historic Resource Survey, the product of an agreement between the County Planning Department and the State Historic Preservation Office

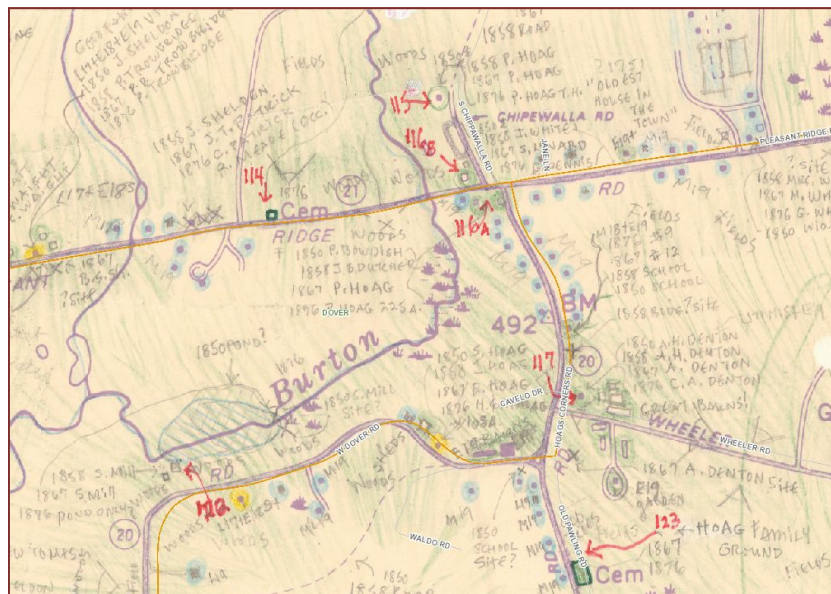
(part of NYS Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation), was meant to streamline the requirement for historic review of all projects proposed in the Community Development Block Grant program (CDBG). Cross-checking against the inventory would be a way to assure that CDBG monies did not negatively affect historic resources. These maps are still used today for this same purpose.

Beyond regulation, the maps had special value in communicating the importance of our historic settlements. At the time, former Planning Commissioner Roger Akeley stated:

*"There can be no argument that the cultural landscape of Dutchess County is seriously threatened by the adverse effects of growth and changing land-use and development decisions that are ignorant of or insensitive to historic preservation. This survey....will be useable in local and county planning, contributing directly to the preservation of historic resources."*

## Making Old Maps New Again

Creating an appreciation of Dutchess County's rich historical heritage would aid communities in protecting their legacies. Further, this documentation would provide initial information to help nominate a property to the National Register of Historic Places. Now accessible to the public on the County website, the Historic Resource Survey can better fulfill its purpose to aid in "appreciation and protection" of Dutchess County history. Importantly, overlaying history with our current parcels and environmental layers makes for a rich educational experience, while the artistic beauty of the original maps engage the viewer.



An example of notations on the original Historic Resource Survey maps.

## Project Challenges

A number of challenges confronted us as we began the process of transforming the paper maps into a digital product. The maps were large and in fragile condition. Our first task was to stabilize them in preparation for large format full color scanning. Once scanned, GIS tools enabled us to overlay these images with all other county data layers.

Summer interns then completed the tedious task of scanning the supporting documentation for each site, which totaled thousands of pages of forms and photographs. Our goal was to enrich the user experience by having a direct link between the map and the documents. This was achieved by creating a GIS point at each historic site, upon which a viewer could click to see the site documents.

The original maps included other symbols indicating the location and direction of significant views. We recreated the location of these in the "Viewpoints" layer.

## Using the New Maps Online

[GeoAccess](#), Dutchess County's internet map viewer, allows the public to examine the Historic Resource Survey. Turning on the original maps lets one see their beauty and detailed notes. Other current data, like road names, parcel lines, and environmental data can then be simultaneously viewed. And by turning on the Points of Interest, one can focus on specific information about a property or landscape feature (see step-by-step directions at the end of this article.).

Residents and local officials can use the history of their properties and their locality to assist with land use decisions, or to "contribute directly to the preservation of historic resources." Seeing the historic context can foster a sense of preservation instead of potential demolition. Designers can better understand original intent, allowing a greater sensitivity to scale of the original when designing additions to structures. Once historic resources are identified by local preservation groups, the parcel lines and ownership information can guide outreach efforts. Towns with Local Waterfront Revitalization Plans can use the documentation in support of demolition laws to protect significant historic resources.

**BUILDING-STRUCTURE INVENTORY FORM**  
 NYS OFFICE OF PARKS, RECREATION & HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
 DIVISION FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
 (518) 474-0479

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY  
 UNIQUE SITE NO. \_\_\_\_\_  
 QUAD \_\_\_\_\_  
 SERIES \_\_\_\_\_  
 NEG. NO. \_\_\_\_\_

YOUR NAME: STEPHANIE W. MAURER DATE: JUNE 1988

YOUR ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ P.O. Box 88  
 Poughkeepsie, NY 12602

ORGANIZATION (if any): \_\_\_\_\_ 914-471-1630  
 Dutchess County Historical Society

**IDENTIFICATION**

1. BUILDING NAME(S): SHeldon Gravel  
 2. COUNTY: Dutchess TOWN/CITY: Bangall VILLAGE: \_\_\_\_\_  
 3. STREET LOCATION: Pleasant Ridge Road (1/2 E. (100-11 St) @ 1/2 m.  
 4. OWNERSHIP: a. public  b. private  c. 100-20 West of Pounding Road  
 5. PRESENT OWNER: \_\_\_\_\_ ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
 6. USE: Original: Family Gravel Present: Cemented, Inactive  
 7. ACCESSIBILITY TO PUBLIC: Exterior visible from public road: Yes  No   
 Interior accessible: Explain: \_\_\_\_\_

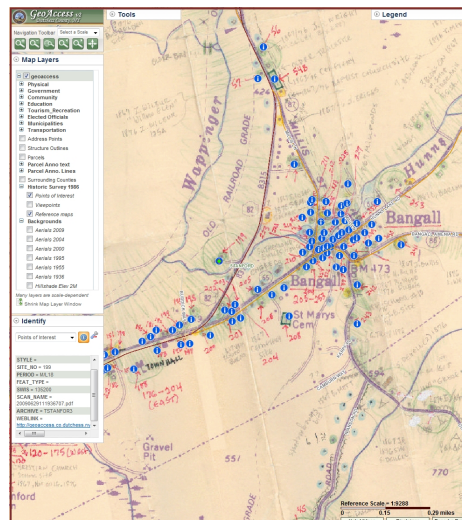
**DESCRIPTION**

8. BUILDING: a. clapboard  b. stone  c. brick  d. board and batten   
 MATERIAL: e. cobblestone  f. shingles  g. stucco  other: \_\_\_\_\_  
 9. STRUCTURAL SYSTEM: a. wood frame with interlocking joints  b. wood frame with light members   
 (if known) NA c. masonry load bearing walls  d. metal (explain) \_\_\_\_\_  
 e. other \_\_\_\_\_

10. CONDITION: a. excellent  b. good  c. fair  d. deteriorated   
 11. INTEGRITY: a. original site  if so when? \_\_\_\_\_  
 c. list major alterations and dates (if known): @ 85 (mcs) 1836 -> 1881

13. MAP:

An example of the Historic Site Documentation. Many of these also include photos of the related structures.



The blue dots are Points of Interest for the Hamlet of Bangall, as viewed in the online version of the Historic Resource Survey.

Viewshed Analysis, based in part on the Historic Resource Survey, has been used by Amenia and Milan to develop open space plans, design ridgeline protection zones, and review the visual effects of proposed cell towers. With visibility determined, corresponding areas of protection or greater scrutiny can be developed.

On a County level, the Community Development program is now using the electronic version of this resource, saving time

(and substantial risk to the old maps) by checking grant applications against historic properties. The Department of Public Works is using it to identify historic areas before conducting road work.

You may notice that the towns of Rhinebeck and East Fishkill and the cities of Poughkeepsie and Beacon are not included in the Historic Resource Survey — they completed their own independent surveys. Our next task is to incorporate their information into our system, and complete the data necessary to do a county-wide viewshed analysis.

We hope you will find this resource as useful as we do. Anyone care to guess where President Roosevelt drove to take in his favorite panoramic view?\*

### Town of Amenia Viewshed Analysis

Amenia used a combination of the Historical Resource Survey viewpoints with terrain information to define a Scenic Protection Overlay boundary. Three criteria were important to the Town: visibility from at least three Historic Survey points, elevation above 750 feet, and steep slopes. When combined in GIS, significant visual resources that merited protection were identified, which allowed additional scrutiny of development proposals.

[CLICK HERE](#) to view map.

### To View Online:

In [GeoAccess](#), to use the Historic Resource Survey:

1. In the "Map Layers" box, click the "+" next to the layer named "Historic Resource Survey 1986" (use scroll bar next to layer list if you can't see it)
2. Click the check box for each layer you want to open (e.g. Points of Interest, Reference maps, and/or Viewpoints)
3. Zoom in to your geographic area of interest
4. In the "Identify" box, select which layer you want to view information about from the drop-down menu (e.g. Points of Interest)
5. Click on a Point of Interest on the map (blue dot with white "i")
6. In the "Identify" box, scroll down to the WEBLINK section and click on the link to view the Historic Site Documentation and related photos.



\*Answer:  
Charlie Hill Road in the Town of North East, looking west towards the Catskills.

[CLICK HERE](#) to view past issues of the DCPF's newsletter, *Plan On It*.

This newsletter was developed by the Dutchess County Department of Planning and Development, in conjunction with the Dutchess County Planning Federation.

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