



The Yonkers Historian

THE JOURNAL OF THE YONKERS HISTORICAL SOCIETY
VOLUME 28, NUMBER 1, 2021

Sherwood House Gets a Facelift



In spite of 2020 being a year of upheaval for all of us, it proved to be beneficial for our northeastern Yonkers historic museum, Sherwood House. Much needed repairs to the exterior began in October, and we can all enjoy the outcome of phase one with new paint and repaired siding on the north face of the house. Thanks to the meticulous reconstruction by Fifty Three Restorations of Long Island City, New York, the facade is now watertight and looks fresh and healthy. The process of choosing which company would do the work on the museum was undertaken with careful consideration, most importantly in order to maintain the authenticity of the building by matching materials used. For this project, windows were removed and refurbished, and several clapboards that were in poor shape were removed and replaced in kind. Several portions, however, of original siding were pieced together to make use of as much of the original material as possible.

Additionally, the timber sill and an original post in the north side parlor room wall had deteriorated causing the exterior wall to move outward. Replacement of part of the sill and reinforcement of the original frame has stabilized the structure. Meeting with Deirdre Rylander was Olivia Brazee, Historic Site Restoration Coordinator of NY State Parks & Recreation, to assess the parlor room wall and historic “mud and stud” infill. Cosmetic repairs to the interior of the room have yet to be undertaken. The rehabilitation of Sherwood House is an ongoing job and there is still the south façade of the house that requires equally tender loving care! Thanks to membership, contributions and grants we are able to keep this work going. Watch for updates throughout 2021 of progress at the site.



Sherwood House under construction



South face in need of repair



*Olivia Brazee and
Deirdre Rylander*



Sherwood House north face after repairs

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Yonkers Historical Society On-Line Charity Auction!

Starting 5/15/21 ending 5/21/21

**Raising funds for a new cedar shingle roof,
exterior clapboard siding repair, and interior
restoration – projected to cost \$150,000**

Auctioned items donated by 3 estates & 1
renowned NYC art dealer.

Real antique furnishings, gold/silver jewelry,
artisan jewelry, signed 1st edition books, large
collection of art books & catalogues, antique toys,
paintings, signed prints by known artists.

Some never used items.

*Lisa Kohl, auction manager for Clearing House Estate
Sales (CHES) on AuctionNinja*

<https://www.auctionninja.com/clearinghouseestatesales>

Sp Adobe Spark

First and foremost, on behalf of the Board of Trustees, I extend our hopes that you and your loved ones are keeping safe and well. These difficult times have imposed unprecedented personal and professional challenges on all of us.

I'm grateful that our Trustees and devoted volunteers have continued to work on advancing the Society's mission without interruption, including answering research and informational requests, maintaining our Facebook pages and website (www.yonkershistoricalsociety.org), co-sponsoring on-line events with the Yonkers Public Library--thanks to new board member Michael Walsh--and finally, preparing this issue of *The Historian*--thanks to our new volunteer editor and board member, Loren Chaidez. (See Michael and Loren's bios on page 7.) Just as importantly, we have continued to maintain Sherwood House and perform long overdue repairs, as reported here, as well as to pursue grant opportunities with private donors, the City of Yonkers, and New York State. Although we will not be opening the museum to the public until September, we are hard at work ensuring that the property looks its best when we do re-open.

The pandemic's economic downturn has hit small non-profits like the Yonkers Historical Society especially hard. We've been unable to host visitors or hold our usual annual fundraising dinner and flea markets, and donations are down from private and corporate donors who are also suffering. Therefore, know that any donation you are able to make is especially needed and appreciated. And check our website and FB pages for the links to our on-line auction through Clearing House Estate Sales on Auction Ninja, to be held in May. Thanks again for your loyal and generous support!

*Letter from
the President*
Deirdre Rylander



Warm regards, *Deirdre Rylander*



Letters to the Editor

In response to a letter from
Katherine Sutton on the Yonkers Ferry,
we have a letter from Barbara Pape:

I read with interest Katherine Sutton's letter regarding the Yonkers ferry transporting her family's car from New Jersey to Yonkers.

Transporting cars from one side to the other was only one part of what the ferry did. From Yonkers, the ferry took us out of our congested apartments to "the country" Alpine, N.J. On weekends in the 40s the ferry would be full of families loaded with food for the day. There was a pavilion there that sold supplies but most families brought their own. If we were lucky we might get a nickel to buy an ice cream cone from the pavilion.

As the ferry pulled into Alpine it resembled a fjord in Norway. The Palisades were overpowering. Once off the boat we ran to take over one of the barbecue pits and picnic tables. Our moms would set everything up while the dads tried to get a fire going.

There was a beach for swimming. Supposedly the Jersey side of the river was not polluted like the Yonkers side.

On weekends when I was in high school (Class of '52 Commerce HS) some of us would bring a lunch and head for the ferry and hiking in the Palisades. We found beautiful waterfalls and gorgeous views. It took us far away from our city life.

Attached are pictures of us on the ferry and also shows what the barbecue pits were like. In the bottom picture from the left are Barbara Bender, Martha Skrobola, Barbara Winn and Lorraine Landwehr.



Please submit your letters to us! yonkershistorian@gmail.com

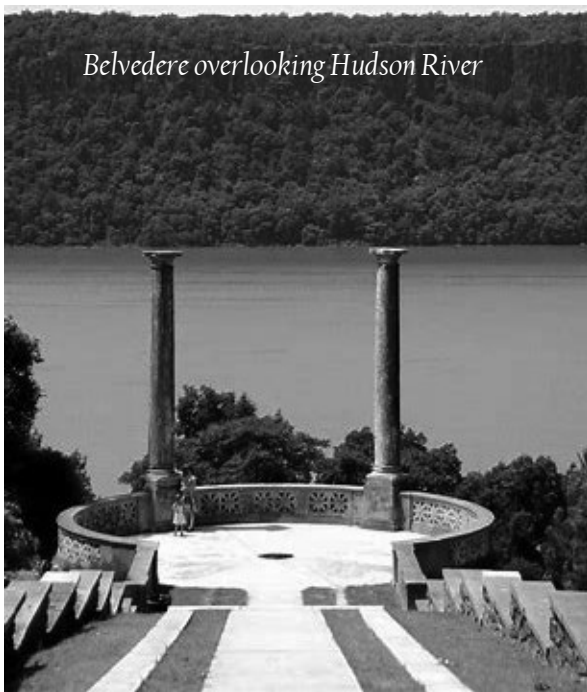
Just as there are New Yorkers who have not ventured to the Empire State Building or the Statue of Liberty, so too are there Yonkersites (Yonkersonians?) who have not been to Untermyer Park. If you fall into that category you're definitely missing out – it's nearby, it's beautiful, it's educational, it's free, and parking is not a problem. The park is all that's left of Samuel Untermyer's estate and magnificent gardens including a rare example of an Indo-Persian walled garden. Ongoing restoration projects are bringing the landscape back to life. If you have been to the park, but not during the winter, the holiday-season lighting of the Walled Garden is enchanting. Dress warmly, arrive at dusk and watch the place transform as the sun sets. Put this on your calendar for next year.

So how did this exceptional piece of landscape design where Isadora Duncan once danced come into being? In 1865 Yonkers businessman John Waring, owner of the world's largest hat factory in the mid 19th century, purchased 33 acres on North Broadway sloping down to Warburton Avenue. He built an enormous 99-room pile of cut granite executed in a

chilly, Gothic meets French Second Empire style with spectacular river views, naming it Greystone.

Financial reverses forced Waring to sell the place to former NY Governor Samuel Tilden in 1876 who retired to Greystone after becoming the only Presidential candidate to win an outright popular majority (not just a plurality) yet lose the election – and we still haven't fixed that! Tilden, who added considerable acreage to the property, was interested in horticulture, and built greenhouses for flowering plants and produce. He died in 1886 leaving the bulk of his worth to establish libraries in New York City, Yonkers, and his hometown upstate.

Samuel Untermyer, a prominent New York City lawyer and financier, acquired the property at auction from Tilden's estate in 1899. He remodeled the mansion and expanded the estate to 150 acres. An accomplished gardener himself, in 1916 Untermyer hired a Beaux Arts architect and landscape designer to lay out sprawling formal gardens on the property.



Belvedere overlooking Hudson River

Greystone

by Richard A. Mangini, YHS member

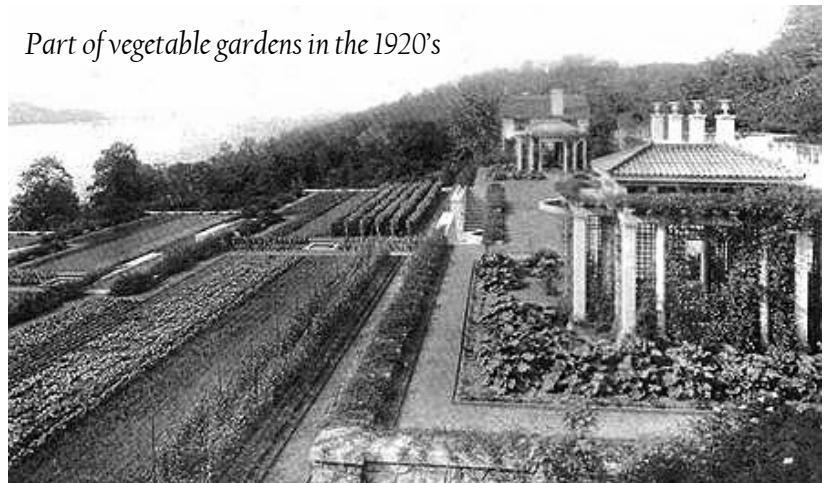


"Three Dancing Maidens" once graced Untermyer's property, now in the conservancy garden in Central Park, NYC



Temple of the Sky in walled garden

Part of vegetable gardens in the 1920's



Untermeyer imported architectural antiquities to complement the plantings, constructed a monumentally long staircase down towards the Hudson ending in a belvedere, created an artificial rock cropping with cascading water, installed an Italian mosaic swimming pool, built a circular Grecian temple, and planted six color-gardens each in a single hue, terraced down the sloping property. The crowning achievement was the Walled Garden inspired by near-eastern walled “paradise gardens” – all the Moghul emperors had one. The home and gardens were open for public enjoyment once a week for 25 years with a record 30,000 visitors one day in 1939 when the mums were at their peak. Greystone was no one trick pony; Untermeyer’s wife Minnie, a patron of the arts as well as a political progressive, made her home a cultural and intellectual mecca. Before he died in 1940, Untermeyer intended to leave his house and gardens to the nation, the state or the City of Yonkers as a public park. His children were not interested in the property, likely because it was a resource-draining white elephant. They may also have

resented the estate as dad paid more attention to it than to them. Without also providing an endowment for upkeep, there were no takers. Even power broker Robert Moses refused the offer – no endowment, no deal. Eventually the city accepted only 16 acres of the property comprising the core gardens. The remainder of the estate was sold off piecemeal and the grand house demolished in 1948. Ironically, when Untermeyer’s will was finally settled, a tidy endowment-sized sum remained. After a protracted decline, a short-lived partial restoration, and some reputed unsavory cult goings-on in the 1970s, the gardens have been experiencing a rebirth since the 1990s. Thanks to the tireless efforts of the Untermeyer Gardens Conservancy, the scope of the garden’s magnificent past can be seen through the beautiful restorations already achieved.

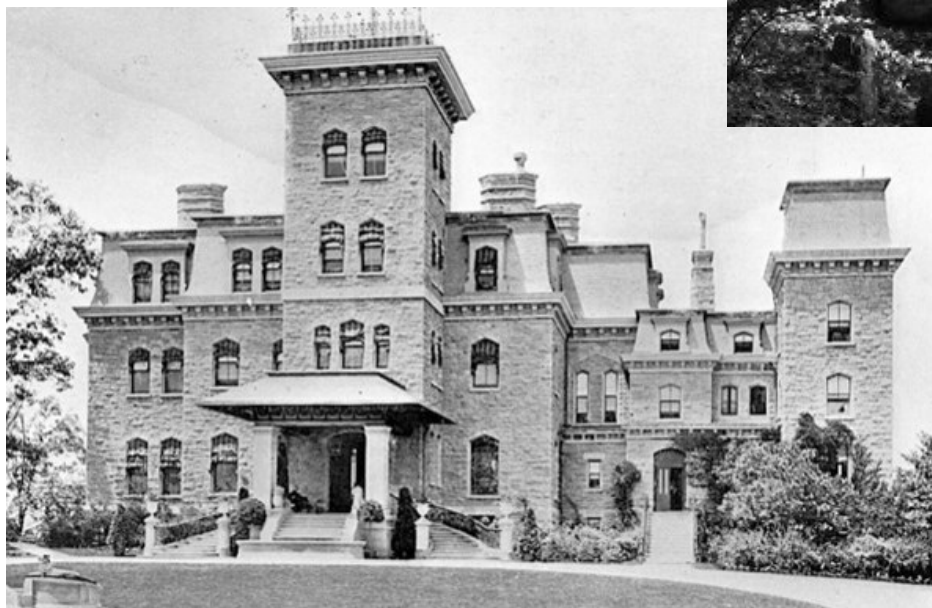
“If I could do it over again, I would want to be parks commissioner of New York City.” – Samuel Untermeyer

Revisited

*Interior of
walled garden*



Temple of Love



*Greystone,
built 1865,
designed by
John Davis Hatch*

2019 AMERICAN HISTORY RECOGNITION AWARDS

On Sunday, May 19, 2019, the Yonkers Historical Society presented its American History Recognition Awards to students completing their junior year who had demonstrated excellence in the study of American History. Two students from each of the Yonkers Public High Schools were chosen by their teachers. Guest Speaker Julia Mandalakis, Docent Intern and American History Major at Sarah Lawrence College, spoke about her college experience in that major. The event, held at the Sherwood House Museum, included a tour of the 280-year-old tenant farm house.

The 2019 Student Honorees were:

Gorton High School: *Denel Newton and Helen Oommen*

Lincoln High School: *Allenia Robinson and Brandon Olague*

Palisade Preparatory School: *Christian Kumar and Indirah Bowman*

Riverside High School: *Alexander Gomez and Briana Marciano*

Roosevelt High School – Early College Studies:

Keyri Corona-Estevez and Rain Borbon-Galano

Saunders Trades and Technical High School: *Johana Ramirez and Michael Quinteros Suquitana*

Yonkers Middle High School: *Farida Larry and Aaron Liranzo*

Yonkers Montessori Academy: *Bejimmy Shehata and Doni Berdynaj*



Deirdre Rylander and Kathy Ennis with guest speaker Julia Mandalakis



Kathy Ennis and Deirdre Rylander with award-winning students.

2021 PATRICIA MANGOLD SCHOLARSHIPS • Submission Deadline: May 24, 2021



This award is to be presented to a high school senior residing in Yonkers who has demonstrated both an educational and a significant personal interest in Yonkers history. The applicant must be planning to pursue further education. First prize: \$1,000; Second prize: \$500.

Applicants are to present a project showing understanding and appreciation of Yonkers history. Projects may be in the form of, but not limited to, a written essay, photographic montage, video, mixed media, etc. A bibliography or reference list must be included when applicable. Students may choose any topic, but the project should contain more than repetition of facts from the internet or text books. Possible themes for applicants to consider are: a debate or claim based on Yonkers historical facts; relating Yonkers history to their own family; comparing the past and present in Yonkers; showing Yonkers involvement in events of U.S. or World history. **Projects are not limited to those suggestions.** Many events, institutions, businesses, organizations and cultures have shaped Yonkers history. People, starting with Native Americans through our most recent immigrants, are all part of this history.

The application is available on request at yhsawards@gmail.com or by calling the YHS Office. It can also be found on our website (www.yonkershistoricalsociety.org). E-mail your application, project and transcript to yhsawards@gmail.com or drop it off at the YHS Office in the Grinton I. Will Library, 1500 Central Park Ave., Yonkers, NY 10710, when the Office is open. Call ahead of time (914) 961-8940 to confirm someone will be there, and please leave a message, if necessary. If mailed, the deadline is by postmark **April 19, 2021**. Submit the application form, project and student transcript to:

Yonkers Historical Society
Patricia Mangold Scholarship Awards
P.O. Box 190
Yonkers, New York 10710



PROFILES

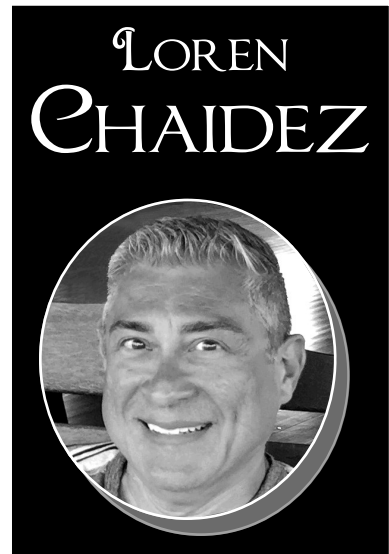


Meet our New Board Members

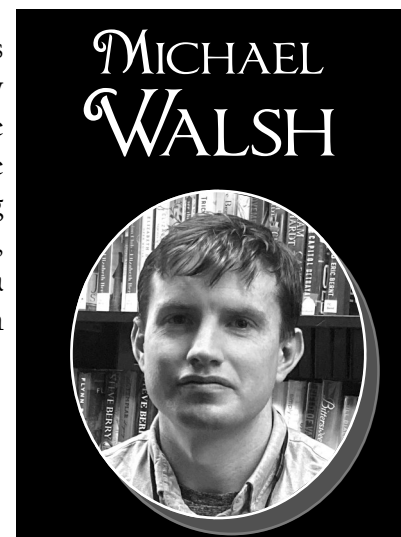
Loren Chaidez, a member of the Yonkers Historical Society, was elected to the board as trustee in late 2020. He volunteers working on reinvigorating the garden and helping to maintain the Sherwood House Museum. He is currently the editor of *The Yonkers Historian* and most recently was a contributor to the Armour Villa Neighborhood Association *The Villa Voice* newsletter writing the bi-monthly garden article.

Loren, originally an Eastchester resident, graduated with a Bachelors Degree in Music Education from Manhattanville College in 1977. After many years at Columbia Records and Universal Music working in publicity and promotion he founded his own independent promotion company. For 36 years he promoted many major recording artists and labels. Now retired, he enjoys living in Yonkers and devoting time and expertise to the YHS. He is an avid gardener and received honorable mention in *Garden Design Magazine's* best backyards in America contest in the year 2000 for his garden at his summer residence in Sullivan County, New York.

His goal for the Society is to help expand public awareness of the Sherwood House Museum and to liaise with other groups to promote the visibility of the museum moving forward.



Michael Walsh has worked as a Reference Librarian at the Yonkers Public Library for 5 years. He is president of the Local History Roundtable of the New York Library Association (NYLA). He graduated from Juniata College with a BA in history in 2010. He received a Master's in Library Science and Information from Long Island University in 2013. Michael joined the board in September 2020, and is responsible for our joint programming with the library. As a Trustee with YHS, he hopes to share his passion for history with others.



Relative to Marcia Biederman's bio of the famous restaurateur, I'd like to share some 1960s memories of my first job as a "Popover Girl" at Patricia Murphy's Candlelight Restaurant on Central Avenue.

Back then, children as young as fourteen could apply for working papers. Permissible hours for this child labor included after-school and on weekends.

Working papers in hand, I went with several of my classmates over to Central Avenue, and my first close-up view of Patricia Murphy's Candlelight Restaurant. I'd never seen such a splendid space, though I have very little recall of the greenhouses and the gift shop, the lake or the seasonal plantings.

My first task was to select a spring uniform; there were several colors to pick from, but options narrowed with size availability. Pale pink, blue, icy green and subdued yellow were the spring colors of the Popover Girl, and a sheer, lacy apron topped the outfit. Distributing popovers was but one of the jobs of a Popover Girl, and accessories varied given a particular day's assignment.

One of the most popular features of a lunch at Patricia Murphy's was the arrival of the Relish Cart. This cocktail table on wheels was loaded with bowls containing pickle relish (sometimes called chow-chow by church ladies), currant jelly, cottage cheese, and other items. Most customers asked for a "little taste" of every offering on the cart. It was a great challenge to serve the mustard-based pickle relish without making the entire cart look messy. And the currant jelly was oh, so sticky. None of the relishes enhanced the look of the popover uniform, so my poor Mom usually had to find a way to clean up Saturday's uniform for Sunday at noon.

Another assignment was to offer brownie cookies to diners following their dinners. These little brownie squares were baked on full-sized sheet cake pans by the same patient baker who made the popovers. They were delicious, and we were allowed to eat them out of sight of patrons.

The popovers, made fresh all day long, were indescribable puffs of deliciousness. While I worked there, popovers were made by only one person, a man who toiled over a huge vat of batter. He buttered the enormous muffin tins using an odd looking implement, and ladled just the right amount of batter for each popover. This magician kept a very hot oven filled with an ever-changing series of pans, and knew exactly when each pan was ready to be served. He would then dump the hot, steaming popovers into our waiting oversized baskets. Every so often we would squish a piping hot morsel and stuff it into our mouths. Heaven! Other sought-after delicacies were the crispy, crunchy bits of baked batter that covered the parts of the tins between the popovers. Yum!

The dining rooms were always filled with an ever replenishing stream of families celebrating special events, couples on dates and other enthusiastic patrons. But the diners who live most vividly in my mind were the Church Ladies who arrived on buses from all over the tristate area on Saturday afternoons. Invariably, they were accompanied by a pastor who made remarks and offered prayers of grace before they all settled in to enjoy their luncheons. The ladies were all dressed in spring finery, and most wore elaborate hats. They were a milliner's dream. All our customers seemed to completely enjoy all the treats offered by the Popover Girls, perhaps because they may have felt like freebies. Looking back at some of the menus from the 1960s, the hearty dinners offered at Patricia Murphy's were very reasonably priced. But it was clear that an excursion to

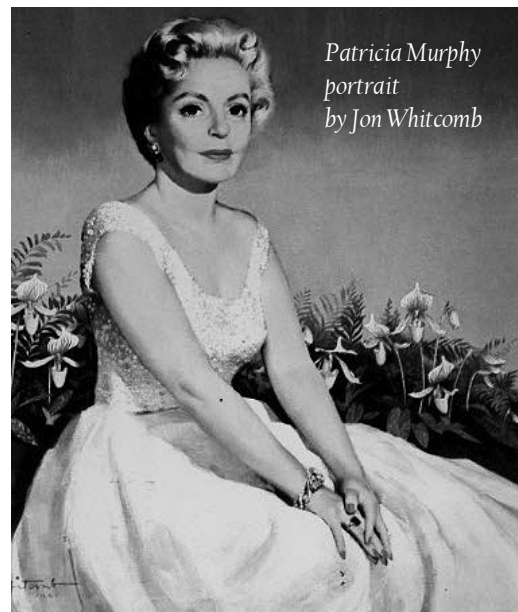
Patricia Murphy's Candlelight Restaurant was a very special occasion. A search of newspapers of the time reveals that all manner of civic organizations held luncheons and recognition events in the glow of candlelight. The Chamber of Commerce, school administrators, health associations and garden clubs all chose Patricia Murphy's for their events. In 1963 more than 550 members of 70 garden clubs from Putnam, Dutchess, Westchester and surrounding counties met at Patricia Murphy's for their annual meeting and luncheon. Each table was visited by Ms. Murphy. In 1966, when Penny Donahue of Yonkers was named "Miss New York" in the run-up to the Miss America pageant, a "Rally Round the Queen" party was held in Penny's honor. Advertisements appeared in upstate newspapers, announcing bus trips to the Westchester Candlelight restaurant (for the princely sum of \$5.50 per person, including the bus ride from Albany). Weddings, anniversaries and other milestones were marked in the Garden Room, the Crystal Room or the Gold Room.

All employees ate for free in a fairly spartan dining room back behind the area where the stuffed lobsters were prepared. I recall enjoying London broil and mashed potatoes during meal breaks, followed by brownie cookies. As I looked for comments about Patricia Murphy's on social media sites, I would occasionally see health department citations mentioned, and references to unsanitary conditions and vermin. I must say that I never observed such scenes. I do recall floors that were wet after having been hosed down to clear away shrimp and crabmeat stuffing for the giant lobster halves. But the kitchens seemed clean to me, a fourteen year old. I always wished that my family would join the ranks of Ms. Murphy's guests. Sadly, by the time I was earning enough to go out to dinner with friends, the restaurant was long out of business.

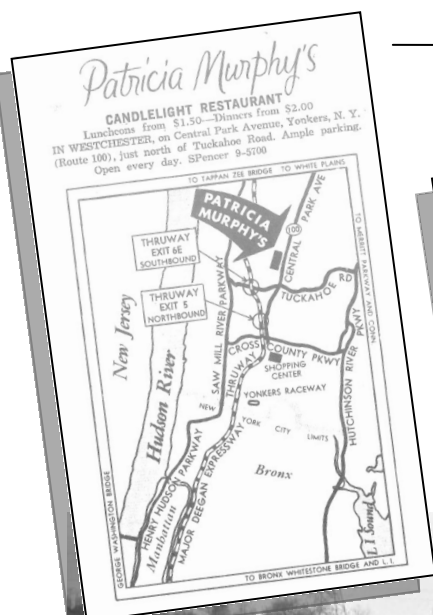
My friends, whose parents drove us to and from the restaurant each weekend, quit, thus ending my career as a Popover Girl. I recall long weekend days into nights for less than \$1.25 per hour, and that kind of schedule took its toll on a fairly young person, though two of the girls I started with went on to become hostesses. Ms. Murphy was very proud of providing opportunities for her workers to move up in her organization.

Memories of a Popover Girl

by Chris Kenney O'Rourke



Patricia Murphy
portrait
by Jon Whitcomb



PATRICIA MURPHY'S POPOVERS

Put 1/3 tsp. butter or Crisco in each muffin pan (or custard cup). Heat in oven 5 minutes while you are mixing batter.

1/4 tsp salt
1 cup sifted flour
1 cup milk
2 eggs
1 tbsp butter, melted

Sift flour and salt into a bowl. Beat eggs with rotary beater, add milk, butter and sift in flour, beating only enough to make a smooth batter. Fill hot muffin pans one-third full of the mixture. Bake in hot (450°) oven 30 minutes, then at 350° for 15 minutes or until firm, brown and popped. Keep oven door closed while baking. Makes 6 large or 9 small.

*A menu from 1959.
Enjoy the prices.*

PATRICIA MURPHY'S CANDLELIGHT RESTAURANT	
WESTCHESTER	OPEN EVERY DAY
MONDAY	SEPTEMBER 21, 1959
OUR GREENHOUSE DISPLAYS AND SELLS PRIZE-WINNING FLOWERS AND PLANTS	
FRESHLY CUT ORCHIDS ARE ALSO FOR SALE IN THE LOBBY AND IN THE GREENHOUSE	
DINNER	
CHOICE OF ONE	
V8 Vegetable Juice	Jellied Consomme
Chilled Vichyssoise	All Fresh Fruit Cup
Consomme With Noodles	Chilled Tomato Juice
Chilled Grapefruit Juice	Chilled Pineapple Juice
Devilled Egg On Cole Slaw	Cranshaw Melon With Lime
Strawberry And Pineapple Cup	Puree Of Green Split Pea Soup
Fresh Shrimp Cocktail 50¢ Extra	
8 Little Neck Clams On The Half Shell 50¢ Extra	
Fresh Maryland Crabmeat Cocktail With Russian Dressing 50¢ Extra	
BROILED FILET MIGNON OR SIRLOIN STEAK WITH FRENCH FRIED ONION RINGS	\$4.95
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BAKED HALF MAINE LOBSTER STUFFED WITH SHRIMP AND CRABMEAT	\$3.95
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BRISKET OF CORNED BEEF WITH STEAMED NEW CABBAGE AND BOILED POTATO WITH CANDLELIGHT CREAMY MUSTARD SAUCE	\$3.25
ROAST LONG ISLAND DUCKLING WITH APPLE DRESSING AND CORN FRITTER	\$3.25
FRESH SHRIMP, LOBSTER, OR CRABMEAT SALAD WITH SHOESTRING POTATOES	\$3.25
ROAST VERMONT TURKEY WITH CHESTNUT DRESSING, GIBLET GRAVY AND WHOLE CRANBERRY SAUCE (All White Meat 50¢ Extra)	\$3.25
FRIED JUMBO BUTTERFLY SHRIMP WITH TARTAR SAUCE AND LEMON	\$3.25
ROAST LEG OF SPRING LAMB WITH PINEAPPLE MINT CONSERVE	\$3.25
SOUTHERN FRIED HALF CHICKEN WITH CREAM GRAVY AND SPICED CRABAPPLE	\$3.25



An interior photo from 1954

*An old rendering showing
"The new Patricia Murphy
Candlelight Jewel Box Gift
Shop and The Party Room"*



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The YHS Opening Hours

The Yonkers Historical Society
Office at the
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Historic Sherwood House
Museum for the
2021 season will be open on
Sunday afternoons
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September 12th through
November 21st.
Holiday Candlelight Tour
will be announced soon.

Call the Office at
(914) 961-8940

or email:

yhsociety@aol.com

for further information
or to schedule
an appointment
or group tour of the house.



We rely on your generous support!
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I am interested in the following Volunteer opportunities:

Sherwood House Gardening (seasonal)	Tuesdays: Mornings ____ Afternoons ____
Sherwood House Docent and/or Visitor Assistant	Sundays: 1pm - 4pm (April - June and September - early December)
Sherwood House Chaperone for school & group visits	Weekdays TBD (April - June and September - early December)
YHS Archives Project (at Will Library)	Thursdays 1 - 5pm or other times TBD

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