

From the Town Historian

The Complete History of the Smyrna Opera House (Town Hall)

The Smyrna Opera House stands on lands once owned by Paris G. Holly. Paris was born in 1792 in Rhode Island. He was listed as living in Smyrna in the 1830 Federal Census.

Paris G. 1792 – 1875. Francis 1791 – 1865. Paris bought the land from Robert H. Willcox and Mary his wife, and Hannah Willcox all of the Town of Smyrna, Chenango County State of New York on the 23rd of March 1861. For the sum of \$825.

Paris sold the property to Ann A. Holly, his daughter in 1867 for the sum of One Hundred Dollars. Two years after Francis (Sweet) wife of Paris died in 1865. Paris and Francis Sweet Holly are buried in the Sherburne West Hill Cemetery.

In 1881 the Last Will & Testament of Ann Holley states : “ the property shall be left to my four sisters Susan Collins, Elizabeth Collins, Mary Felt, and Harriet Teff.” This never came about because after Ann died in 1893, Henry Holly executor of Ann’s will had to sell the property to settle her estate and pay funeral expenses.

On September 10th, 1897 - Henry sold the property to a Frank R. Taylor for the sum of \$600.

November 19th, 1898 - Henry Holly bought the property back from Frank Taylor For the sum of \$600.

On April 11th 1899 -Henry Holly sold his farm of 160 acres in Lot # 50, Town of Smyrna and the property in the Village of Smyrna for the sum on One Dollar to Duane Holly of Lee MA., Burt A. Holly of Williamstown VT, & Clara Willcox of Hindsdale, MA.

May 3rd. 1899 -the sale of property between Duane Holly, Sara M. Holly his wife of Lee, MA. Burt A. Holly, Williamstown, VT.& Clara A. Wilcox, Jesse Wilcox, her husband and Jimmie Holly over to Earl Sternberg of Smyrna for the sum of \$450. This ½ acre (more or less) in Smyrna Village is just for one part of the lot which is next to where the Opera House stands today. One by one the other parties, Duane Holly and his wife Sara, Clara A. Willcox, Jesse M. Willcox and her husband sold their share to Burt A. Holly.

On the 28th day of March 1907 Burt Holly sold the Lot to Austin A Hecox and his wife Esther Hecox of Smyrna N.Y Chenango County for an unknown sum (there is no record of this deed in the Chenango County office building). On April 1st 1907 Austin Hecox and Esther Hecox sold the Lot to the Town Of Smyrna, N.Y Chenango County for the sum of \$250.

Feb 12. 1907

A big majority carried the Town proposition in regard of building a Town Hall.

March 9th 1907

The town board of the town of Smyrna, N.Y met at the office of G.A Munson on the 9th day of March 1907 at 8 o'clock P.M & the following present:

John W. Shepardson	Supervisor
Charles Doll	Town Clerk
Geo. A. Munson	
G.P. Pudney	Justice of the Peace
S.K Willcox	
J.W. Boynton	

And the following resolutions were offered:

Resolved that the Town board of said Town in pursuant of the proposition voted at the biennial town meeting of said town on the 12th day of February 1907 authorizing the town board to purchase a site and building a Town Hall thereon, the said Town Board purchase and enter into contract with A.A. Hecox of said Village for the purchase of the Holley property in the village of Smyrna, N.Y for said site. For the sum of Two Hundred and Fifty dollars. The north line of such site is 12 feet from the south side of the blacksmith shop owned by said A.A Hecox in said village. & that said town board be & hereby are authorized to borrow the money to pay for said site until the bonds to be issued for that purpose are sold. Resolution carried unanimously.

Whereas the biennial town meeting of the town of Smyrna, N.Y the proposition following was voted and carried:

Shall the sum of four thousand dollars, or as much thereof as is necessary, be raised on the faith and credit of the Town of Smyrna, Chenango County, N.Y., by the Town Board of said town borrowing the money by an issue and sale of bonds of said town, payable in five equal annual payments, the first of which shall be January 1, 1909, for the purpose of purchasing a site and building a town house thereon; the money so raised and the interest thereon to be a charge upon the property in the town taxable therefore ?

Resolved that the said town board takes such action & proceedings as shall be required & necessary to issue & sell the bonds mentioned & voted in said proposition for the purpose therein mentioned. Resolution unaniously adapted.

J.W. Shepardson –Supervisor
Charles Doll - Town Clerk

At a special meeting of the Town Board of the Town of Smyrna, N.Y. duly called and held at the office of G.P. Pudney in said town on the 1st day of July, 1907.

Present:

J.W Shepardson,	Supervisor
Charles Doll,	Town Clerk
S.K Willcox	
Geo. A. Munson	

J.W. Boynton	
G.P. Pudney	Justices of the Peace

The resolution following was offered by G.P. Pudney seconded and unanimously adopted and carried by said Board and its members.

Whereas, heretofore and at the biennial Town meeting of said Town held on the 12th day of February, 1907, a majority of the voters of said town voted to raise the tax the sum of \$4000, for the purchase of a site and building of a town house thereon, and to issue bonds in payment thereof, and whereas such action was thereafter taken by said Town Board, that sealed proposals were advertised for the sale of said bonds, notice thereof duly published and posted as required by law. Now therefore resolved the to following named persons, who submitted proposals for said bonds or portion of them, and have complied with the requirements of said notice be and are hereby awarded said bonds, each in the amount set opposite his or her name respectively as follows, to with:

<u>Amount in dollars</u>	<u>1909</u>	<u>1910</u>	<u>1911</u>	<u>1912</u>	<u>1913</u>
Mrs. A.L. Willcox					\$100
S. Humphrey	\$200	200	200	200	200
Geo. Smith	\$200	200	200	200	200
H. Dimmick	\$100	100	100	100	100
H.J. Crumb	\$100	100	100	100	
Mrs. J.P. Willcox	\$	200	200	200	100
<u>Mrs. C.L Ireland</u>	<u>\$200</u>				<u>100</u>
Total each year	\$800	800	800	800	800

Such persons taking them at the lowest rate of interest named in any such proposals, or any proposals received. And be it further resolved, that the said Supervisor, and attested by the said Town Clerk of said town as required by lay, and delivered to the persons aforesaid entitled thereto and as provided by the first part of this resolution upon receipt of payment therefore.

Signed: J.W. Shepardson

Charles Doll
Town Clerk

On December 3rd 1907 a motion was made from the town board to lease the town hall & 1 front office to G.A. Munson for \$150 a year. The motion was carried.

A motion was made and carried that the Supervisor collects all bills due for furnishing the town hall & report it at the next meeting

On Jan. 16 1908 The town Board of the town of Smyrna met at the office of G.P. Pudney for the propose of giving a note for the amount of \$750 being for money paid out for furnishing stage and extra expenses on the town hall. All members of the board present.

May 4th 1921

Motion was made by Justice J.W. Boynton and seconded by Justice C.L Bidwell to instruct the Supervisor C.A. Tinker to proceed to have the opera house wired for electricity. Carried unanimously.

Another motion was made for the opera house to be rented to C.W Humphrey and C.H. Parker for moving pictures. Price to be five dollars per night for the first six months and seven dollars per night for the following six months. The renters to furnish there own electricity.

November 11th 1921

The following resolution was resolved that the Supervisor (C.A Tinker) be empowered to borrow the sum of three hundred dollars (\$300.00) to pay for decorating the town hall, the same to be paid by said supervisor on or before Jan. 1 1922.

April 22nd 1922

Town Board Meeting in the Town clerks office in the Town Hall.

May 17th 1924

The supervisor (C.A Tinker) was directed to provide the necessary Exit to the town hall as required by department of labor.

Please take notice of a resolution duly adopted by the town of Smyrna, New York, on the 17th day of May 1954 which provides for the leasing of the Town Hall of such Town to Sherburne Central School District for an original term of three (3) years, with two one year additional terms, at an annual rental of \$2000, and for the reconstruction of such Hall by the town at a cost not to exceed \$6000 prior to September 1, 1954

Sept. 12th 1960 overhead door put in lower level of Town Hall.

Oct. 3rd 1960 motion made for Elections to be held in the Town Hall.

April 9th 1960 Mary Fargo appointed as Town Historian.