

Holy Trinity Monastery – National Historic Register Celebration

December 3, 2011

Thank you all for coming today and being part of this wonderful celebration of years of hard work and dedication to a special place in New York State.

Holy Trinity Monastery is centered in the historic Mohawk Valley region. This valley and Otsego County to the south was viewed by Colonists and Native Americans as prime land for its rich and fertile soil and valuable Transportation routes from the Hudson River to the West. However it also became a Target for Invaders – The French, the British and various Native American tribes with the American Colonists caught in the middle of many wars. Over 100 battles of the American Revolution were fought in New York State and many of the most critical ones were in this region.

Herkimer County, home of the Holy Trinity Monastery, was always in the center of many of these actions. But through a combination of Fortitude, Persistence, Teamwork and a mindset that we would Never be defeated, enemies were driven off. Peace, Tranquility and Place of Reverence was restored to this special place.

However, about four (4) years ago, another threat emerged and again from a foreign country. This threat would have forever changed the historic and rural character of the Mohawk and Otsego Landscape and would have especially affected the Holy Trinity Monastery. The Church was under attack – this time without cannons and guns but no less of a destructive force.

As in years past, leaders in the region saw the danger and took up the fight. My first call for help was from Susan Brander who gave me a passionate briefing and invited my wife and me to her farm for Quiche and coffee but I suspected mostly to lobby me to get my Commission involved in the fight. I and many here will always remember Sue Brander for her love of this land the willingness to do anything to protect it.

And so I came to Holy Trinity one cold day to be educated in the problem, to meet the special people in ministry here and to see the beauty of this special place for myself. As always and to this day, Nun Barbara kept me on the straight and narrow regarding protocol and policy. It was found that outsiders with power and money, who would do anything to achieve commercial success, were aggressively attacking the Church and surrounding lands.

That beginning forged an alliance between the Church, Otsego 2000, Mohawk Valley Heritage Corridor Commission, The New York State Preservation League, The Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP), and many others. There are many heroes in this alliance which exists to this day. Some are known and some are not. Many are here and many are here in spirit.

(Frankly I was a little apprehensive on Day One but when I found that the Sisters and Priests were e-mailing away, I grew very confident)!

This Team won that battle and the subsequently long struggle to gain New York State and National Register Status. We are here to celebrate that accomplishment and to say 'Thank You' to all who made it happen. In closing, let me suggest that we stay vigilant and

aware of the treasure of the Holy Trinity Monastery in Jordanville, New York. Today's celebration should be a Beginning NOT the End.

I strongly urge this wonderful Team to stay Vigilant. There are those out there who envy this Treasured Place and Landscape and would move to take from you the Peace and Tranquility that is synonymous with Holy Trinity Church.

Tighten the bonds that got us here. Invite and accept help from new professionals and organizations which can bring help in many ways. Otsego 2000 has new members, Architects like Randy and Beth Crawford are here today, and others who can write grants, offer solutions to new problems, and become the support spine of Holy Trinity, need to be welcomed eagerly. Let us NEVER take a step backwards! Use the Holy Spirit and some very excellent people to preserve this special place for generations to come.

Thank you for inviting my wife and my family to this grand celebration and we wish you all Godspeed. I love you all!

Fred Miller

(Ret) Executive Director

MVHCC