



MEDIA ALERT

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JAMES BERKISE TO SPEAK AT 1pm ON JULY 21: HISTORIC HUDSON RIVER FERRY OPERATION AT GOMEZ MILL HOUSE

James Berkise, local historian and Marlborough resident, will share findings from his recent investigations focusing on a long-running ferry operated by Gomez Mill House residents Wolvert and William Ecker.

Berkise received his Bachelor's in Engineering, and his Master's in Library Science from Pratt Institute. For over 34 years, he worked as a professional researcher and corporate librarian supporting scientific research at such prestigious institutions as AT&T Bell Labs, NEC Research Institute, and National Economic Research Associates- a Marsh & McLennan subsidiary.

Since his childhood in Pennsylvania's Wyoming Valley where he observed the mining of coal that the D&H canal carried to the Hudson near here, James has been interested in waterway transportation: its infrastructure; how it evolved; and how it shaped the development of communities. His interest in Ecker's ferry comes from a 1998 book, *When Horses Walked on Water* by Art Cohn of the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum, in which a map shows a horse powered ferry coming out of Wappinger Creek near New Hamburg, NY. Berkise initiated his research by searching for the west shore landing in Marlborough.

Gomez Mill House resident Wolvert Ecker operated the original ferry service at this location until 1799, and his son William continued it until his own death in 1827. In 1830, other locals bought it and made it the Hampton-Hamburg Ferry Company.

The mission of Gomez Foundation for Mill House is to preserve the 299 year old Gomez Mill House—the oldest standing Jewish dwelling in North America and home to Patriots, Preservationists, Artisans and Social Activists—as a significant regional- and national-ranked museum, and to educate the public about the contributions of its former owners to the multicultural history of the Hudson River Valley

The Gomez Mill House and Historic Site is located at 11 Mill House Road off 9W, in Marlboro, NY. General admission to the Museum (includes Gallery admission) is \$8 for adults, \$6 for seniors 55 or older, and \$3 for students with ID and children age 6 to 18; children under 6 are admitted free. Groups of 10 or more receive discounted rates and reservations are required.

The Gallery is open 10am – 4pm Wednesday through Sunday. Gallery admission is \$3 for adults, \$2 for seniors, & \$1 for children/students.

All programs start at 1pm, unless otherwise noted. For more information contact: Gomez Mill House and Historic Site at (845)236-3126 or via Email: gomezmillhouse@juno.org.