HOW WYNANTSKILL GOT ITS NAME

I've often asked how the hamlet came to be called Wynantskill. It came from the stream that runs through town. First off, the "kill" is a Dutch word for stream. It doesn't mean murder. Many years ago, I was at a conference where a woman was complaining that they should change name of Fishkill N.Y. to something not advocating the killing of fish. After explaining what the word "kill"meant, she dropped her argument.

The "Wynant" comes from Wynant Gerreste Vanderpoel a Dutch settler in the 1600's who owned part interest in a sawmill on this body of water which flows from Sand Lake all the way to the Hudson River. He never lived there, but the "kill" took his name "Wynant's Kill". I believe the sawmill was located on the stream/kill adjacent to Mill Street in South Troy.

Wynant and his wife Trijntje came to this country in the early 1650's and lived in what is now downtown Albany. By trade, he was a "Kistmaker" or a carver of ornate chests. This may be the reason he purchased half interest in the sawmill across the river from Albany.

As to his personality, I am indebted to David Vanderpool, a family researcher who gathered interesting information from Dutch

Court Records. Several entries in the Court Records of Fort Orange (now Albany) show that he was frequently in court for being in arrears on debts, for fighting and not building on his property lot as required.

Wynant's longest court battle was with the widow Geertruy Vosburgh who inherited half interest of the sawmill from her husband's estate. Lawsuits claimed Wynant was absent from the sawmill and had not put in his full time at work there, in accordance with their contract. The Court intervened saying if the parties didn't reach agreement, the sawmill would be sold at auction. Finally in 1674 ,the widow Vosburgh sold her half to Wynant who intern sold the sawmill in 1685.

By the early 1690's Wynant disposed of his properties and moved to New York City where he died in 1699.

So that's how the name Wynantskill originated. Perhaps since Wynant owned part of a "mill" our hamlet should be called "Wynantsmill".