



Warrensburgh Historical Society

Volume 1 Issue 1

November 1996

The Bent Finial Manor

by P.M. Scully

In 1889 Lewis Thomson, a Warrensburgh native and wealthy cattle baron, returned to purchase a two acre plot on the Main Street and began an extensive plan for what today is Bent Finial Manor.

Thomson had become the principal stock holder of timber and mining companies in the Adirondacks and had the money and knowledge to design and construct the Queen Anne Victorian mansion.

He began by moving the three two-story dwellings that existed on the land to the west side of the site, naming the new street Thomson Street and selling the houses on their new foundations to other prominent families. The houses remain today.

Thomson hand selected more than twenty-three different native hardwoods that comprise the interior floors, moldings, ceiling beams, pocket doors and lavish cherry staircase. He personally picked the stone for the foundation from a local quarry. The stained, etched, and beveled glass windows were placed in the mansion to best advantage. The mansion was built by local craftsmen under Thomson's watchful eye.

The mansion was featured in a 1900 cover story of *The Lake George News* when the house was illuminated for the first time. This was Warrensburgh's first home to have electric service. Previous to this time, the generators on the Schroon River were used exclusively by the mills and factories, and the owners shut the generators down at dark.

Thomson and his wife Phebe lived in the house with a meager staff of five servants until his death two years later. Mrs. Thomson remained in the house until her death several years later when the house passed to their only heir, Pearl Rice. Mrs. Rice and her husband owned and operated *The Brown Swan Club*, a large resort hotel in Schroon Lake.



*Rice's Guest House
Warrensburgh, N. Y.
"A charming place to stay"*

Courtesy of Caron L. Akeley

During the 1930's the mansion became known as Rice's Guest House and hosted many grand private parties. The guests included such prominent people as Alfred Smith, then Governor of the State and an aging European Count or two. Pearl Rice, widowed, eventually sold the Brown Swan and retired to the Warrensburgh mansion until she sold her home in the late 1960's.

Earthquake Last Night.

An earthquake of considerable severity was felt in Warrensburgh and vicinity at 9:30 o'clock last night. It was of brief duration but was terrifying while it lasted.

Violin, mandolin, banjo and guitar strings, and fittings for all these instruments in stock by John L. Tubbs, Warrensburgh. Mail orders carefully and promptly filled.

The wise man takes note of the little things in life, the fool sees only the big ones and forgets even them.

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A Note From the President

Here we go! The first issue of the WHSQ-we're excited about it! With it, we hope to peak your interest, not only in the history of Warrensburgh, but also in her well-being. Understanding her past encourages caring for her future. Besides, history can be fun, especially when it's about your family and where you live and grew up. But, putting this thing together is tough, and we want, no absolutely need, your help. Please share your memories and your stories. Help maintain the historical integrity of Warrensburgh.

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Warrensburgh Historical Society Quarterly

P. O. Box 441
 Warrensburgh, New York 12885

Published Quarterly,
 March, June, September
 and January

Submissions are welcome
 Next Issue Deadline is
 January 30, 1997

Editing Linda Denner
 Layout Leonard Denner

Production coordinator:
 Delbert D. Chambers

Published by John McGlre Sr.
 Denton Publications Inc.

We gratefully acknowledge the contribution of our Secretary, John Wulfken, who generously underwrote the expense of this our first Newsletter.

We invite all of you to share your stories, photographs and memories of Warrensburgh with us! All contributions are welcome. Please submit your ideas to the Society. We want and need your input to make this journal, an ongoing history of our town, serve us all. We will be happy to assist you in arranging your submission into a form suitable for publication. Simply submit your ideas or copy to:
 Warrensburgh Historical Society
 P.O. Box 441
 Warrensburgh, New York 12885

Society News

In April of 1996, a group of Warrensburgh citizens met with some past officers of the Warrensburgh Historical Society. The Society was founded in 1973, chartered the following year, but became dormant about 1983. Throughout the summer we worked to revitalize the Society by establishing a current Board of Directors, and electing officers, applying for charter renewal, handling a backlog of paperwork for the New York State Board of Regents, our controlling authority. The by-laws were updated, and a system established for accepting general membership. On September 10 we met with the Warrensburgh Town Board and the town's Museum Director. The intent of this meeting was to assure the town leadership of our desire to be a community oriented organization. Our goals are to help preserve our community history by providing a focal point for others of like mind. The Society ambitions are:

- promote historically oriented social activities
- support existing programs and organizations consistent with our goals
- collect, preserve, and display artifacts of historical interest including structures, events and people
- compose and publish material of general historic interest.

We also asked for any input toward the benefit of the Society. The supposition by our Supervisor was for the Society to pursue a new home for the town's museum. This then, although not a priority at the time is an ongoing discussion with the Society. Your input is most welcome.

By the end of September we had actively begun seeking to increase the membership of the Society. We began the actual work on this newsletter at that time. This is our first effort to give back to our community that which we have gleaned from it.

Delbert Chambers
 President



Antique Soup

by Caron L. Akeley

On the bottom of the Schroon River lies a small bit of Warrensburg history seldom seen by anyone except the occasional canoe paddler on a peaceful summer day. Bits and pieces, and sometimes only a slightly damaged example of 19th and early 20th century dishes litter the river bottom and mark the existence of long gone homes and boarding houses. In those days, before landfills and recycling, most unwanted, unburnable items were simply carried outside and deposited in the "bottle dump" away from the house. However, people living at the edge of a body of water, whether ocean, lake or river, simply gave the item a toss and, as it sank, it became "out of sight, out of mind".

One type of china, of which pieces are commonly found nestled in the bottom silt of the river, is the Blue Willow pattern, popular for many years at either side of the turn of the century. This familiar pattern was first produced in England around 1790. By the late 19th century, Japan and several other countries were exporting Blue Willow to the United States and it was first made in this country by the Buffalo Pottery in 1905.

The bright blue pattern on a white background incorporates a teahouse, bridge, people, willow tree, a boat, a fence, and two birds facing each other. These things, along with other components in an oriental motif, tell of the legend of two Chinese lovers who are destined never to be married, but are changed by the gods into a pair of lovebirds so they never have to part.

It is said that the old term "blue plate special", originated because of the vast number of restaurants and diners that used Blue Willow dishes.

The next time you look down into the water of our beautiful Schroon and a small piece of blue and white catches your eye, look around for an old house or foundation and know it once graced the dining table therein.



Photograph by Caron L. Akeley

Books

Popular Reprint Fiction

Many late books now 49c

We are also ready with a lot of Boys' and Girls' Books, at . . . 25c

Lots of Alger Books for Boys 10c

All kinds of Picture Books for Children, 5 and 10c

HERRICK'S Variety Store

River Street
WARRENSBURGH

RICHARDS' LIBRARY NOTES.

Many Books of Timely Interest Suggested by the Librarian.

The library is having an exhibit of new books. Come in and look them over and make a note of those you wish to read.

Don't forget to call at the library and get a garden book.

Some new recipe books have recently been added, among them "Mrs. Lincoln's Boston Cook Book."

Cornell regularly sends to the library its bulletins for farmers' wives, and many excellent recipes may be found in these, as well as suggestions for the flower garden, vegetable garden, the school luncheon and the general arrangement of the house, both interior and exterior.

Two books of practical interest at the moment on a subject to which Mr. Cleeve, of the Farm Bureau, is giving so much attention, are "The Farm Dairy," by H. B. Gurler, and "Farm Dairying" by Laura Rose. These are yours for the asking.

Dodd, Mead & Co., of New York, announces the establishment of a Current Events Bureau, which will answer free of expense all questions regarding current events. For further information see the bulletin board.

We have recently purchased the "New Standard Dictionary" which you will find in the reading room, together with a Webster's unabridged.

The American School of Home Economics has published a bulletin called "Five Cent Meals." You will find it on the bulletin board.

1916 NOVEMBER 1916						
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12	13	14	15	16	17	18
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26	27	28	29	30		



James Warren, a Man of Mystery

by Jean Hadden

Most Warrensburgh history buffs would be hard pressed to remember names of many of the town's earliest settlers, but the name that always seems to come to mind to most people is that of **James Warren**. He was not the first person who arrived here in 1786, nor was he one of the other eight recorded settlers who arrived here before 1800. This area, then a part of Thurman, was a bustling little settlement commonly called "**The Bridge**", in 1804 when Warren came with his 33 year old wife, Melinda and their three year old son, Nelson. Thomas Jefferson was president of the United States. It is not known where the Warrens came from but the 1850 census says that Nelson was born in New York.

James Pitts established the first tavern in town in 1789 which could accommodate 40 guests and Jasper Duell conducted it in 1801. Warren bought the tavern which was located on land now occupied by Stewart's Ice Cream and he kept it for the rest of his life. He also built a general store on land recently vacated by LeCount Real Estate and built a pot ash factory about where the Brew 'n Stew is now. A post office was established on his tavern property in 1806 with Kitchell Bishop as the first postmaster. Bishop lived where Donegel Manor is now. He was succeeded in his post by James Warren and in later years, Nelson J. Warren took over the postmaster position. The Warren House, as it was always called, became a well known hotel with barns, stables and outbuildings. The fine stone walls may still be seen today behind the present store. James accomplished a lot in eight years!

It was customary in those days, according to Smith's History of Warren County, to hold the annual elections at different points in the town for three consecutive days, it being practically impossible to establish any central point which would enable all the voting population of the town to cast their vote and return home the same day. On April 23, 1812, James was on his way back from an election held at the Nathaniel Griffing Farm, across from land that was later to

become Thurman Station. Legend has it that he and eleven year old Nelson were in a boat, with the ballot boxes, crossing the West River (Hudson), when the skiff capsized in the rushing spring currents. James Warren was drowned and the experience was said to have been so terrifying for his son that his hair turned white and stayed that way for the rest of his life. Less than two months later, on June 18, the War of 1812 began when President James Madison officially proclaimed the United States to be at war with Great Britain.

About ten months after James' untimely death, "The Bridge", broke away from Thurman and was established as a town on February 12, 1813. Was the town named for tavernkeeper James Warren? Was it named for Dr. Joseph Warren who died at the Battle of Bunker Hill, for whom Warren County was named? Town and County were established and named within a month of each other. Was it named for a piece of land on the east side of the Hudson River, known as "The Warrensburgh Tract", which was patented by the State of New York and subdivided for the purpose of paying off Revolutionary War soldiers? Most sources believe that the honor goes to James Warren but there is no record left to tell us for sure. One thing we do know is that Warrensburgh was spelled with an H at the end by the people who gave the town its name and it is a fact that the spelling has never been legally changed. In 1813 an Indian uprising in the south brought on the beginning of the Creek Indian War.

Melinda Warren continued to operate The Warren House after her husband's death. The first town meeting was held there April 4, 1813. James L. Thurman was elected Supervisor and Melinda's brother, Myron Beach was made Town viewer. Beach had served as artillery captain in the historic Battle of Plattsburgh and became a Warrensburgh merchant in 1820. Also at that first meeting a ten dollar bounty was proposed to be offered for each wolf killed within the town limits and \$50 was appropriated for the support of the less fortunate.

Melinda Beach Warren outlived her husband by 51 years. She died

November 23, 1863 at the age of 92 years. On the very day she died, the Battle of Chattanooga, Tennessee was taking place in the awful years of the Civil War. In 1834 Nelson Warren bought the town saw mills of Dudley Farlin and went on to become a well-to-do citizen. Warren was Supervisor in 1844, 1846, 1850 and 1856. He was never married and the 1850 census says he lived in a house on Main Street with Rebecca Maxham and Hiram Judd. They were probably hired help. He died October 10, 1886 at the age of 85 years. Just 18 days after his death the Statue of Liberty was unveiled and dedicated by President Grover Cleveland in a ceremony on Bedloe's Island. Nelson J. Warren saw 82 years of exciting Warrensburgh history that will never come again. He is buried with his father and mother in the back of the old Warrensburgh Cemetery.

THOMAS A. EDISON ON VACATION

Passes Through Warrensburgh With a Party of Distinguished Friends.

Thomas A. Edison, Henry Ford and H. S. Firstone, of Akron O., head of the automobile tire concern that bears his name, left Orange, N. J., Monday morning of 1st week to camp in the Adirondacks. They passed through Warrensburgh Friday, going north. John Burroughs, the naturalist, joined them below here. Camp equipment, cooks and other attendants followed in automobiles. The four expect to camp two weeks.

The four men will camp with the object of getting back to nature and escaping cares of business. Following out the "seclusion" idea, the infrequently traveled roads will be traveled. The camping trip will be the first vacation Mr. Edison has taken without his family. It will be his first summer vacation in two years. In 1914, with Mrs. Edison, he took a motor trip through New England.

A few years ago Mr. Burroughs joined the Edisons at their winter home at Fort Meyer, Florida. They made a camp in the Everglades and recorded songs of birds and other woodland sounds with special phonographs.



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Crandall Block, Warrensburgh

Band Concert in Lewisville.

The people of Lewisville by voluntary contributions raised a sufficient amount to pay for installing electric lights in D. E. Pasco's park and the band will hereafter include that part of the village in their weekly concert schedule, playing there every third week on Tuesday night. The first concert was given this week and was enjoyed by a large crowd. The ladies provided refreshments for the musicians during an intermission in the program. The next concert will be given in Pasco's park, uptown, Tuesday night.

Regains Health at Echo Lake Poultry Farm

Miss Laura Lewis, who has been a guest of Miss Maude West since July 1, at the Echo Lake Poultry Farm, returned Saturday to her home in Buffalo to resume her duties as assistant superintendent of the woman's hospital in that city. Miss Lewis, who was in poor health when she came here, was greatly benefited by her sojourn and goes back to her important work with a new store of health and vigor. She is a daughter of W. W. Lewis, a former resident of this village.

Warrensburgh Town Historian Mable Tucker

by Kaena Peterson

River Street was a lively, enterprising Mill section when Mable's parents and grandparents moved into their new home in 1920. Though Mable was just four that year, the family moved from Thurman for Mable to be close to school. The Warrensburgh Academy, a stone building on Stewart Farrar Street, opposite today's Richard's Library, offered an excellent education for first grade through high school. Years later the Academy would be replaced by the Warrensburgh Elementary School, and the razed Academy would become the site of a postal facility.

A horse and wagon in the balmy days, and a sleigh for winter months, provided basic transportation for the family. Mabel's Father continued to work as a farmer, but the many factories along the Schroon River provided an abundance of employment for local men and women and drew great numbers from adjoining towns. The Pulp Mill, Woolen Mill, Shirt Factory, and Grist Mills bustled with workers. Out of towners frequently boarded; many stayed on and built homes that climbed the hills surrounding the Mill District.

Household gardens provided ample vegetables for families, and chicken coups yielded eggs and Sunday dinner. Children joined scouting groups, read, fished in the Hudson and swam in nearby Echo Lake. Saturday night, "Fairylund" the movie on Main Street brought the glitter of excitement from the outside world. Concerts were held regularly in Pasco Park, the current site of Curtis Lumber on River Street. Some referred to the spot as Pine Park for the tall pine trees that offered shade. For special affairs young ladies hung lunch sacks on the branches, later to be claimed by a future beau who would share the meal and the evening.

By the forties the mills began to close and the town of Mable's youth had changed dramatically. Tourism grew, and



Photograph by Kaena Peterson

80th Birthday celebration
for
Mable Tucker

today she is happy to see more and more people moving into Warrensburgh. Serving as Town Historian for 37 years she lives in the same family homestead on River Street. She is custodian of documents, photographs, and memorabilia that records our past. Her hours are posted and she is available by appointment. Her memories sort the years and faces, and on a warm evening she can still hear the music playing in Pasco Park.

JARS

We have just received a large carload of Jars, large and small.

PRICES RIGHT

D. E. PASCO & SONS

River Street, Warrensburgh



Photograph by Teresa A. Whalen

JUDD BRIDGE
Prior to 1996 Construction

THE JUDD BRIDGE
....a poignant view.....

I am the Judd Bridge
Here I have stood for over
seventy years, winter, spring, summer,
and fall
I thought I was doing my job well and all
were pleased with me,
But along came the experts

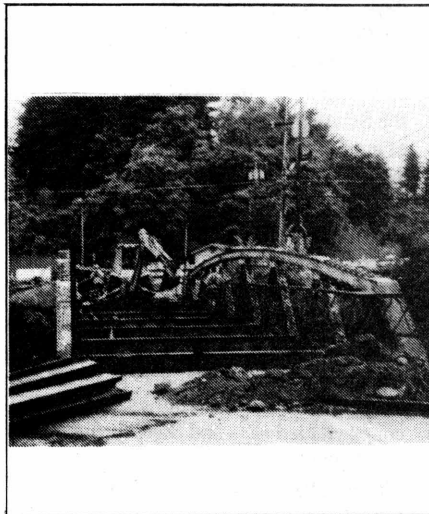
My old friend, the Judd House, has
always looked after me
And he is trully old
But, we supported and cared for each
other and all was well.

I have felt the rattle of horse drawn
wagons on my old planks and the sleek
woosh of modern automobiles
and I thought all was well as I did my job
But, along came the experts

I could have used a helping hand as I
grew older
I trusted the folks who I had aided
through so many seasons
I thought I had given them so many
reasons
I was sure they would help me and keep
me going in my old age
But, along came the experts

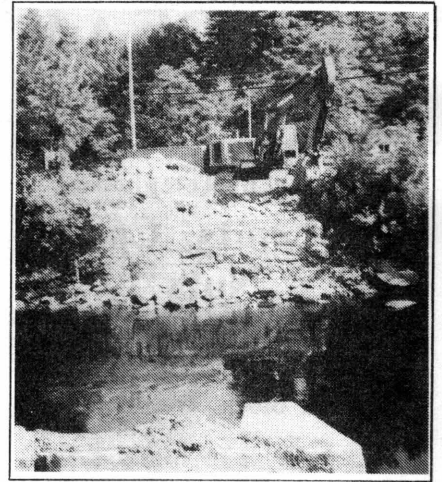
I am dying now, my planks have been
ripped off
Soon the blow torches will start their
work
I think about so many friends aho have
gone before
I weep my tears of river water and
wonder how many more of us must go
Because, along came the experts

Summer 1996, anonymous



Photograph by Sarah Farrar

1996 Demolition of the Judd Bridge



Photograph by Jean Hadden

**Concrete Remains of the Old
Judd Bridge**

Summer 1996

Anonymous

could
this
indeed
be
a
call
from
the
bridge,
a
frightened
plea
fearing
it's
genocide,
or
at
the
very
least,
a
plea
for
RESPECT
in
it's
passing,
to
be
recognized
for
all
it's
contributions
to
ALL



Follow the Porter Brick Road

by Teresa A. Whalen

In the Spring of 1995, the Main Street of Warrensborough, New York, in preparation for the new millennium, was brought up to twentieth century standards by the construction of new sidewalks and curbing, the addition of streetscape in the form of trees and shrubbery, and the resurfacing of the roadway. The end result - a safer, more pedestrian friendly Main Street; the bonus - a look back in time.

The project encompassed the length of Main Street south of the Floyd Bennett Memorial Park to the Plank Road Bridge, crossing the Schroon River, at the southern most point and Richards Avenue to the Osborne Bridge. With an October 15th deadline looming overhead and the State Budget not yet etched in stone, the construction crews were eager to begin. One early June morning Route 9 was transformed from a busy thoroughfare to a construction site. Regardless of all the lasting benefits that lie ahead, the community tired of the endless traffic delays and its effect on the local economy.

Many of us local history enthusiast saw this occasion as an opportunity to view history in the making and captured the event on film. For myself, my limited knowledge of earth science and the various layers leading to the earth's core was extrapolated to the depth of the project area below the road's surface, as layers of transportation history: the plank road, the trolley tracks, the brick road, were being exposed. Once encapsulated by pavement and frozen in time, they suddenly unearthed for all to see one last time before becoming landfill. While photographing a large trench in front of the newly constructed Rite Aid building, reminiscent in design of the Adirondack Hotel first built on that site, I was asked by one of the

construction crew "Would you like a brick?" A souvenir part of Warrensborough history, I was as a child with a new toy. I took my treasure home and promptly gave it a bath. What I found under the layers of subterranean dirt was one work, a name, "Porter". Coincidentally, or maybe not, that Spring I began to research and collect West Troy Pottery. What does West Troy Pottery and a brick from the Main Street of Warrensborough have to do with one another - alot!

In 1839, the firm of Nathan Porter and Charles Dillon took over the Champlain Street Pottery in the Village of West Troy, New York, now the City of Watervliet. By 1863, after several fires and many partners, Nathan Porter and his last partner, George B. Fraser, had done well enough to retire from business, and on July 13 sold their land, pottery and business to George W. Seymour, who held it for just four years before turning it over on November 1, 1867 to Andrew J. and John L. Russell, young entrepreneurs from Warrensborough in Warren County. Hence, the Warrensborough connection. The Russell brothers remained in control until the business was sold to Daniel Shepley in 1879. It is a fair assumption that sometime between 1867 and 1879 the Main Street of Warrensborough was paved with brick. The Russell family retained ownership of the property; in 1899 John L. Russell demolished the pottery building and erected row houses. Appropriately known as Russell Place, the houses stand today.

My fascination regarding the West Troy - Warrensborough connection was motivated not only by my thirst for local history, but by my personal history. Originally from Watervliet, formerly West Troy, I now call Warrensborough my home (as do the brick). After my research was made public at a hearing held on July 24, 1995 and featured in a front page article in the August 23, 1995 issue of the Adirondack Journal, authored by Thom Randall, the now famous brick became much sought after.

People were coveting bricks wherever and whenever they could find them. Fireplaces, walls and walkways, including the one leading to the front entrance of the Emerson Town Hall (the "W" design was commissioned by the Architectural Heritage Committee of Warrensborough Beautification Inc. and constructed and laid by Wallace "Shortie" Persons) have incorporated the Porter brick into their design. A part of Warrensborough's history has thus been preserved in our homes and in our hearts. My brick now resides in a place of honor next to my Nathan Porter ovoid crock.

New Fall Line

Just Received

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Home-Knit Socks
and Mittens
wanted in exchange
for goods.

Chas. E. Lavery
Warrensborough
Near the Osborne Bridge



UPCOMING SOCIETY NEWS

December 8

Look for the Historical Society's display at the "Christmas in Warrensburgh" celebration. On display will be some artifacts of Warrensburgh's history, on loan from private collections. A special feature will be an early twentieth century feather tree. (If you don't know, come find out !)

December 18.....

The regular monthly meeting of the Society's Board of Directors (all members are welcome) will be waived in lieu of an evening of repast and regalement. Chef Shane Newell has promised to satiate us with his gastronomical expertise. An evening of social interaction, based on the sharing of local history, is planned. Also, on display will be some antique Christmas ornaments. A cash bar and soup by the five at six o'clock with dinner to be served at seven o'clock. The cost is twenty dollars per person with a special rate for Society members at a modest fifteen dollars per member. Reservations are required and must be made by December 14. Call Delbert Chambers at 623-3514 or Jean Hadden at 623-3660.

February 13

The Annual Membership meeting of the Warrensburgh Historical Society will be held at The Richards Library at seven o'clock. Following Society business there will be a program entitled, "Courting in Warrensburgh". Refreshments will be served and all are welcome!

March

Expect the Spring issue of the Warrensburgh Historical Society Quarterly.

Warrensburgh Historical Society Membership

Annual membership runs from January 1
through December 31

Send your membership fee to ;

Warrensburgh Historical Society
Post Office Box 441
Warrensburgh, New York 12885

Please include your name, mailing address
and phone number. Include membership
classification with your application.

Donations are tax deductible by law

Membership Classifications:

1. Individual active member. Any adult individual not covered by any of the following:
2. Junior member. A student under 16 years of age, at a minimum dues level. This is a non-voting member, ineligible to hold office or directorship.
3. Student member. A full time student 16 years of age or older. Eligible to vote and to be a director but not to be an officer of the corporation unless 18 years of age or older.
4. Senior member. A reduced dues category open to adults 62 years of age and older.
5. Family membership. Available to a family of two or more as a single membership having one vote.
6. Contributing member. A person, group or firm supporting the objectives of the society at a higher level of dues.
7. Corporate member. Any business interested in the history of Warrensburgh shall be eligible. A representative officially designated by that organization shall have one vote and be eligible for elected office.

8. Institutional member. Any organization, board, school, or library interested in the history of Warrensburgh shall be eligible. A representative officially designated by that organization shall have one vote and be eligible for elected office.

9. Life member. Individual only.

10. Honorary members. Honorary membership in the society may be conferred upon any person whose activities over several years have notably contributed to the objectives of the society. Honorary members shall be elected by a three-fourths vote of members present at an annual meeting, upon nomination by the Board of Directors. Honorary membership is for the life of the designee and is not conferred lightly.

No individual person shall have more than one vote, regardless of membership held.

Classification Fee Schedule

Individual.....	\$10.00
Student.....	\$5.00
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Senior.....	\$5.00
Contributing.....	\$50.00
Institutional.....	\$50.00
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