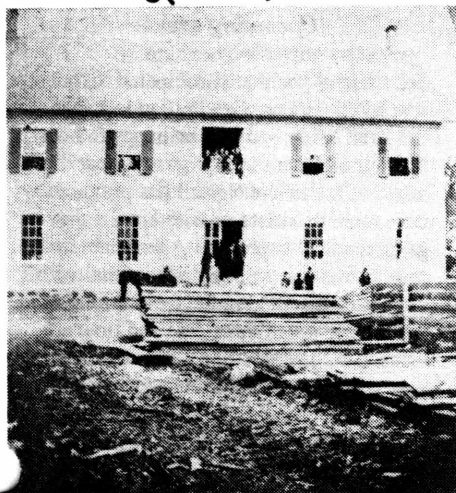




Warrensburgh Historical Society Quarterly

Volume 2 Issue 13

September 1997



*The Empire Shirt Company 1879
courtesy of The Richard Library*

The Empire Shirt Company by Linda Denner

Warrensburgh, a growing village at the gateway to the Adirondacks, offered a variety of industrial and manufacturing enterprises in the 19th Century. The excellent water power provided by the Schroon River and its ideal location contributed to a healthy economy.

In the fall of 1879, Louis Weinman and L. W. Emerson built and established the Empire Shirt Factory. The building as shown in the photograph was erected at the start of the business. In 1882, James A. Emerson, then only 19 years of age, became the sole owner of the Empire Shirt Company. In 1882 at the time of transfer, the company employed about 100 hands and manufactured about 25,000 dozen shirts per year.

A constant increase in business, each successive year, was attributed to the careful attention to detail and the excellence in their product. Output quickly rose upwards of 100,000 dozen shirts yearly.

The company employed a corps of

skilled designers, pattern makers, cutters, pressers, and sewers. The workforce consisted of men and women drawn from the surrounding area. The ledgers, owned by Shane Newell, the present day owner, reveal the impressive piecework production with family names still familiar to modern day Warrensburgh. Workers are identified by name as well as location such as Harrington Hill.

By 1890 the company boasted their product's fame throughout the world offering new and novel styles that displayed the resources for devising new and original patterns.

In 1891, J. P. Baumann & Son joined and extended the structure and the production into a new and fast growing market of ladies shirt waists. Baumann began his production of this novelty garment in New York City, and demand was so great that he soon was building factories all over the country for their manufacture. In 1896, the adjacent structure attached to the shirt factory noted production of 500 dozen waist and 200 dozen night robes daily. This branch of the business gave employment to upwards of 800 people. The showroom for the H. P. Baumann & Sons was located at No. 139 Spring Street, New York City. The firm advertised that if all their shirt waists were worn by individual women East of the Mississippi River, there would not be a woman in that part of the country without a shirt waist of their manufacture.

The Empire Shirt Company eventually changed hands and in time was purchased by a Troy Company that continued manufacturing in the present plant for many years. Business was active and thriving throughout the 1940's into the early part of the 1960's. When manufacturing was finally terminated the overpass linking the two structures over River Street was taken down. During the 1970's into the 1980's the Shirt Waist Factory was known as "The Outlet Barn".

Tourists delighted in purchasing clothing at discounted rates, and shopping at a variety of shops contained within the building.

Currently the building is host to a weekly Antique Auction conducted by Yvette Baker and family every Friday evening at 6:30. The original shirt factory building, pictured, has been purchased and is under restoration by Grist Mill owner Shane Newell. This site is now home to the Riverside Antique Barn where multiple dealers display their wares in the atmosphere of this historic and charming structure. The building has an impressive collection of antique wagons and sleighs on view. A visit to this historic building is well worth your time and interest.



*Congratulations to Jim Kubaryk the 1997 Sticky Wicket
Croquet Tournament Winner
Tim receiving the trophy from Society
President Delbert Chyambers
photo Caron Akeley*

A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

"And the Ladies Wore Pretty Hats!"

On a recent Sunday afternoon the Society presented our 1997 *Sticky Wicket Croquet Games and Picnic*. The weather was exceedingly hot and we reminisced of the "dog days of summer" of our younger years. A steady breeze off the river made the tournament play bearable and in the shade of the pavilion it was quite pleasurable. It was a slow, relaxing afternoon, shared by almost forty people. There was plenty of picnic food, as folks brought dishes to share with all. There were salads and baked beans and deviled eggs and chicken and cakes and watermelon and so much more. Some of the ladies dressed special for the occasion, wearing pretty afternoon dresses or skirts and fancy big hats. The conversation was endless, and, as attendance included folks from various corners of our community, as well as "out-of-towners", we all had the opportunity to make new acquaintances or catch up on what was happening about town. John Wulfsen chauffeured both young and old in his 1908 International automobile. The architectural house tour was so successful that it required being given twice. And the grounds were beautiful, but we've learned to expect that at the Warren County Fish Hatchery. As was our intent, the affair had an air of an early 1900's Summer afternoon picnic. We'll do it again next year.

Delbert D. Chambers

We will be participating in The Warrensburgh World's Largest Garage Sale on October 4th and 5th. We hope to encourage membership in our Society as well as inform the public of the historical richness of our town. **We will need volunteers to man the booth. Please call Delbert Chambers at 623-3514 if you can spare an hour or more!**

New Members:

Addie L. Hastings
Dorothy L. Reed
Warder H. Cadbury
Lydia Langworthy Shipley
Martha E. Fish
LeeAnn Noble Rafferty
Maxine Schermerhorn Baker
Orpha Terrell Baker
Marie Borth
Eldon Hall
Barbara Shaw Anderson

We extend a very sincere *Thank You* to those involved in making our 1997 *Stickey Wicket Croquet Games & Picnic* a success

Wicket Sponsors:

Town of Warrensburgh
Warrensburgh Chamber of Commerce
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Warrensburgh Lions
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Cleverdale Antiques
Grist Mill Restaurant
Jacob's & Toney IGA
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Tamarack Inn
Pat & Dennis Terrell
This, That & In-Between
Warren Ford-Mercury
Warrensburgh Fruit Market
John Wulfsen, Home Maintenance

Wicket Workers & Contributors

Caron Akeley
Len Denner
Jean Hadden
Shane Newell
Sandi Parisi
Kaena Peterson
Regina Porter
Dorothy Reed
Pattie Steves
Pat Terrell
Dennis Terrell
Teresa Whalen
John Wulfsen
and our trophy artisan, John Lynn

We wish to make special thanks to Pat Terrell for the hours of service she gave to make this event a success as well as her acquisition of new members...Thanks Pat!

Board of Directors

Delbert D. Chambers, President
John Wulfsen, Vice President
Linda Denner, Secretary
Shane Newell, Treasurer
Caron L. Akeley
Jean Hadden
Kaena Peterson

Upcoming events

For those of you that participated in our special Christmas Celebration last year at the Grist Mill, you will be happy to hear that our plans are in motion to repeat this affair. Chef Shane Newell has promised once more to satiate us with his gastronomical expertise. A cash bar and soup by the fire will begin the social with dinner to be served in the main dining room. The specifics of date and time are waiting for confirmation. The cost last year was a special rate for members with non-members invited to participate at a slightly higher fee. Call our President Delbert Chambers at 623-3514 for reservations or for more updated information. We all look forward to greater participation this year and the opportunity to share in a celebration of a successful year as well as a happy holiday.

We gratefully acknowledge the contribution of John Wulfsen who underwrote the publication cost of this issue

**In Loving Memory of
his Mother
Mary Wulfsen**

Warrensburgh Historical Society Quarterly
is published March, June, September and December

Submissions are welcome

Next Issue Deadline is November 1

**Editor Linda Denner
Production Coordinator:
Delbert D. Chambers**

**Warrensburgh Historical Society
P. O. Box 441
Warrensburgh, NY 12885**

Antique Soup

by Caron L. Akeley

Cover Up With A Coverlet

With the crisp, cool nights of

autumn rapidly approaching, what more pleasant thought could we have than snuggling down in bed under nice warm coverlet just as our forebearers did.

Coverlets were a very popular and slightly more expensive alternative to quilts in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. They were mainly loomed with the warp threads of undyed cotton to give them strength and the weft threads of dyed wool to give them warmth.

Spinning and weaving were very important skills for the earliest settlers and most early coverlets were hand-loomed at home. By the nineteenth century, European and British immigrants who were skilled in weaving were coming into the northeast and traveling from town to town, setting up their looms and taking orders from local families. If business was good, these weavers often settled in one spot and set up shop.

The colors used to dye the wool depended largely on what was available and so is fairly limited. Indigo blue was the most popular. It was imported from India, but also could be made from a plant grown in the south. Red color dye was imported from Asia and South America. Brown and yellow dyes could be made from the leaves, bark and flowers of native plants. Most types of coverlets are found with a seam down the middle because of the narrowness of the loom.

Some coverlets are reversible depending on the weaving techniques used. A type called Summer and Winter were woven with the light and dark areas of the pattern reversed from one side to the other, with the intention of the lighter side being shown in the summer, and the darker in the winter.

Double weave coverlets were loomed simultaneously in separate layers. You can actually pull these layers of cloth apart.

Jacquard coverlets were made on a loom with a special attachment called a Jacquard, named for the Frenchman who invented it in 1801. This attachment was a series of cards with holes in them resembling computer punch cards, that organized the warp and weft threads into different patterns.

Luckily, a few of these treasures have been carefully packed away for generations and can still be found in chests and closets in relatively good condition if they have never been discovered by a hungry moth.



Warrensburgh Fish Hatchery

Remembered

by Jean Hadden

The Warren County Fish Hatchery property, known as "The Old Ben Glynn Farm", was bought by the State of New York in 1914. The hatchery was established in 1915 under Sumner M. Cowden. That first year a water supply, hatchery building and concrete raceway was installed. On July 22, 1915 a contract was entered into between George D. Pratt, Conservation Commissioner and George E. Farrar, builder, for construction work of the Fish Hatchery building. The job cost \$4,389.22. The property consists of 72 beautiful acres and also includes an island in the Hudson River.

Ken B. Nichols, Superintendent of Fish Culture for the New York State Conservation Department, began work in 1919 as a member of the Blister Rust Control Crew. The following year he started his 44 year service in Fish Culture. From foreman in 1928, to district supervisor in 1948, to superintendent in 1959, his long career was a proud success story. He retired in 1964.

Raymond V. Stone started as foreman at the hatchery on October 1, 1952 and retired October 30, 1963 after 36 years with the Conservation Department. He was succeeded by Erwin Annis, formerly from the Rome and Cambridge hatcheries, who started working in Warrensburgh in June, 1963.

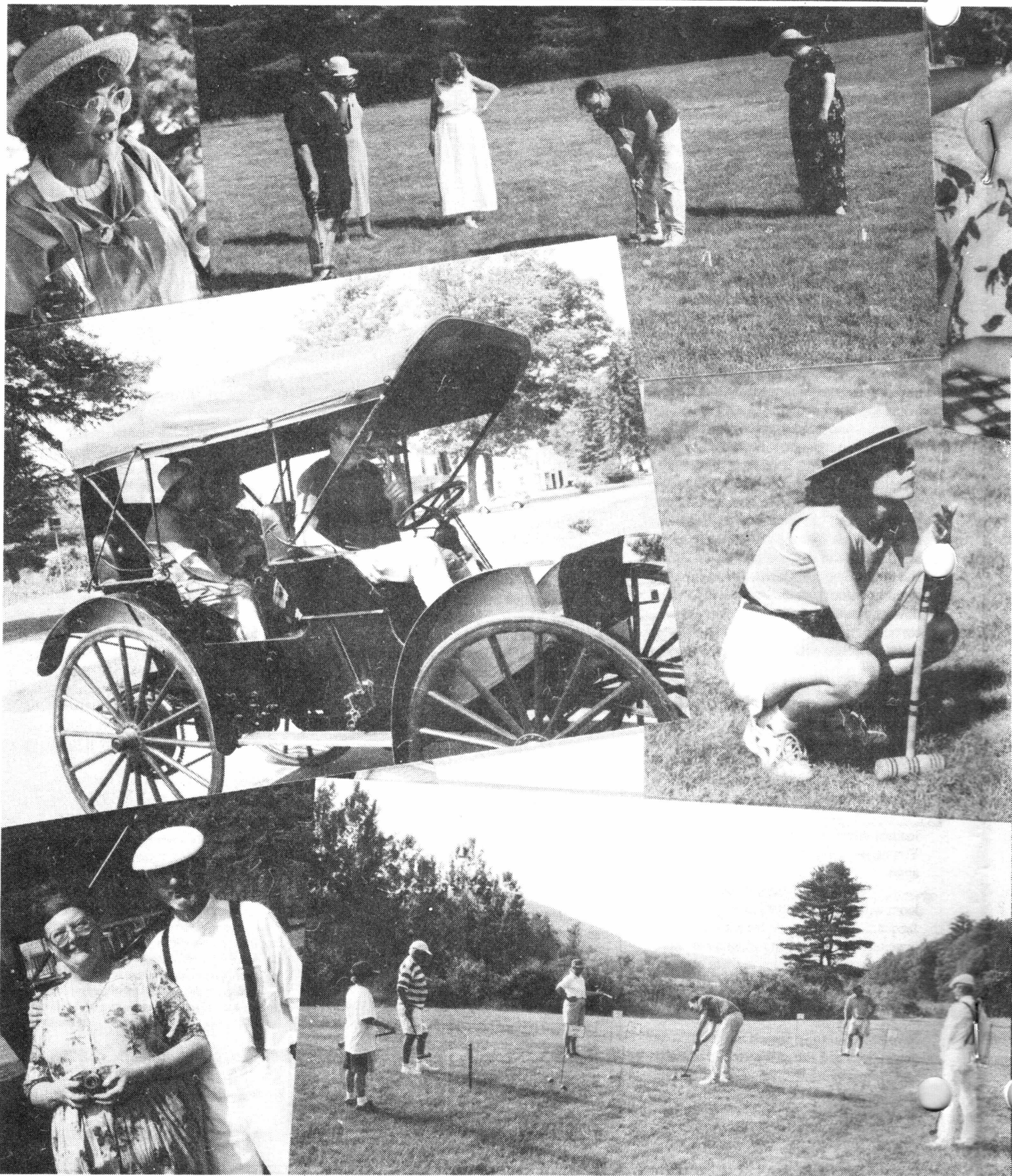
Beecher Wallace began his career with the hatchery on July 13, 1943 and served as a valuable asset to the organization until his retirement 20 years later on July 30, 1963.

The Warrensburgh Hatchery became an experimental hatchery for the rearing of all experimental lots of trout for use in nine regions of the state by fish managers. Rainbow trout and brook trout, commonly called speckled trout, are raised here. The hatchery also supplies lake trout to Lake George.

In the mid 1940's construction work was done on six ponds. The hatchery closed in 1980 and Warren County purchased it from New York State in 1982. The eighth pond was built in 1983 and the brood stock building was built in 1991. The area is a favorite attraction for tourist,

The Multiple Property State and National Register Listing of Historical and Architectural Resources in the Hamlet of Warrensburgh, New York comprising a total of 222 properties was submitted for review in July, 1997. This does not include 23 individual properties identified as potentially eligible that are still to be evaluated by National Register eligibility. Anyone interested in contributing to this large scale effort or obtaining further information send to:

**Warrensburgh Beautification Inc.,
P.O. Box 312
Warrensburgh, New York 12885**





**1997
Sticky
Wicket
Croquet Games
and
Picnic**

photo credits :

**Caron Akeley
Jean Hadden
Jane LeCount
Teresa Whalen**



**Charley Prouty
and the Country Auction**
by Ed Kreinheder

We first became acquainted with the Warrensburg antique dealers in 1941. Ed Powers was located in the stone Antique shop "Frances", John Sullivan was in a long rambling building stretched along where the stone retaining wall now stands, just south of the stone shop Charley Prouty was in the large frame building directly across from the Ed Powers shop and is the building Bell Hagar operated many years as an antique shop, and is still owner by her. The old house to the north was not joined to it at that time.

Charley was then in his sixties a friendly jovial fellow, gray haired medium wiry build, and quite hard of hearing. He was not a rich man, but had a large stock and kept busy. You could deal with Charley. He had set up his two sons in the Antique business in Arlington Vermont, where they were very well known, active dealers and were occasionally visited by Norman Rockwell, who probably used some of their pieces in his art work. Charley had a very extensive knowledge of early Americana, country furniture and glass.

Being a friendly sort of fellow, he explained and taught me a great deal. He always had some fine pieces but liked to buy country furniture of the 18th and early 19th centuries that needed help. These he would restore, not meticulously, but good enough for the tourists which was the mainstay of the Warrensburg antique trade. At one time he showed me a fine pine grandfathers clock with wooden movement and boldly signed across the face, "R. Whiting-Winchester", (now Winsted Conn.) At that time this was priced \$35-\$45, now it would be worth \$1200 or more. I told him I had a Riley Whiting tall clock at home but someone had changed the movement to one in brass and hoped to find an original. Charley said you take this movement and dial, and give me \$10, and bring yours back when you come up again. Charley was a shrewd man, but you could do business with him.

At the time in New York State people did not want painted furniture. They wanted the paint removed and

refinished natural to show the aged patina of the antique wood. Charley had a large vat of lye on the bank of the river where he soaked the smaller pieces and hosed them off. Rough but effective. I once saw Ed Powers clean off a painted corner cupboard with a pail of lye and a broom. A broom only lasted one job. Other methods were disc sanders and scraping.

Charley always had a nice collection of early glass, early blown gin bottles, rum and snuff bottles, some Steigle type glass and historic flasks. I once bought a "Success to the Railroad", historical flask for \$5, now worth \$200 and up. His shop was a very interesting place where you could always find Chippendale, Hepplewhite and even Pilgrim century items, usually needing repairs. Always a dozen or so Windsor chairs mostly in need of help.

We kept in touch with Warrensburg during the war years and in 1946 moved up permanently. In 1947 my wife and I opened an antique shop in Warrensburg where the Warren Auto now has their showroom. We made some important finds in antiques and did some good business but eventually had to give up as a full time business and work at it part time.

We had a Ford stake truck with a twelve foot body on it at that time and Prouty asked me if I would like to go to a country auction in Washington County next morning. I said I would, and we left for an on-site auction next morning, a warm sunny day, and arrived at a little country house. There were no auction galleries in those days. Almost everything in the house was antique and in nice condition. There were sets of chairs, drop leaf tables, one and two drawer stands, chests, dressers, beds and glass and china.

I believe that Charley and the auctioneer, Howard Hanna, were old acquaintances. Charley was very hard of hearing but was an old hand at auctions and knew everybody. He was in a good mood and this was one of his few holidays. Being hard of hearing he kept on bidding against himself and carried on a continual banter of witty remarks to the auctioneer. Soon the crowd was howling with laughter and Charley was having fun. I am sure the auctioneer and Charley understood each other and realized it was good business to keep the crowd happy and interested.

Charley bought a lot and they kept on putting it on the truck for him. Finally in the afternoon it was over and we got ready to leave. We had a large load, and I told Charley we would have to rearrange the load and pack it better. Charley said "No, its good enough, I've got lots of places to go". There was a fine ornate cast iron coat rack against the stakes and it extended up about 3 feet above the stake supports. I tied on the load and away we started off. We stopped at antiques shop after shop until late at night, and kept piling stuff on. Finally it seemed we had a load as big as a load of hay, but Charley continued and bought a Pier Mirror about 6' long. I climbed up on the stakes and he handed it up to me to lay on top. Finally I said, "Charley, this is the end, I am leaving for home if I have to leave you here!" We started the long trip home. Too late to unload that night, I took the load home to Stony Creek, a rough bumpy road.

The next morning I arrived in Warrensburg to unload. John Sullivan surveyed the load and asked if Charley had been drinking. I told him that I had not seen him take a drink, but he had been in good spirits. I suspect John had bankrolled the expedition. The cast iron hall tree was missing its top section, and the Pier mirror had slid off. The rest of the load was in pretty good condition. I faulted myself for not taking better charge of things.

Sometime after that the Carluccis, who had bought the Stone Antique house, bought Charley's store. He moved around the corner to a ramshackle old building overhanging the river. Sadly that was the end of Charley's career as a successful antique dealer. He finally moved over to Vermont with his sons, an old man.

We request all of you to share your stories, photographs, and memories of Warrensburg with us! All contributions are welcome. Please submit your ideas to the Society by mail or call Delbert Chambers at 623-3514
Send copy to:
Warrensburgh Historical Society
P.O. Box 441
Warrensburgh, New York
12885

A. C. Emerson & Company Sawmill

This mill was built by Dudley Farlin between 1818 and 1820 and was known in local parlance as an Old English Mill. It was a gang mill containing seventy saws set in gangs. These saws operated in an up and down motion.

Mr. Farlin remained the sole proprietor of the business until about 1834 when he sold it to Nelson J. Warren, who, after conducting it for a time, sold his entire interest to Joseph Russell. The latter transferred one-fourth interest to Stephen Griffing, and purchased another one fourth interest of Mr. Russell. In 1855, Joseph Woodward bought Russell's remaining shares. In the same year, Albert C. Emerson became grantee of one-half of Joseph Woodward's interest. In 1858, James McDonald secured an interest in the firm, which he retained until 1865.

In the meantime....1859...Isaac S. Woodward purchased the entire interest of his uncle, Joseph Woodward, and in 1865 he and A. C. Emerson secured title to McDonald's share. It should be stated that Griffing's interest was distinct and separate from that possessed by the others. He ran the mill a part of the time alone, and conducted the business jointly the remainder of the time. In 1866, George E. and Edward S. Starbuck bought out Griffing's interest in the mill.

The next change in the complex relations between the members of this quasi-company consisted in the form of a partnership between A. C. Emerson and I. S. Woodward of the one part and I. Starbuck & Brothers of the other part, under the firm name of Starbuck, Emerson and Company.

George Harvey and Lewis M. Baker bought out the Starbucks in 1868 and the firm assumed the name of Harvey, Emerson & Company. Harvey purchased Baker's rights in 1869, and on February 13, 1872, Harvey, who by this time owned one-half of the entire property, disposed of his interest to S. W. Johnson and David W. Woodward, and the name was changed to A. C. Emerson and Company.

From that time on, several changes were made regarding various interests. In 1927, D. E. Pasco and sons

purchased a one-half interest in the company and eventually came into possession of the remaining portion.

The company is now owned and managed by Robert Pasco, grandson of D. E. Pasco and son of Wyman D. Pasco, still under the name of A. C. Emerson and Company.

This recount is among the early records of the Warrensburgh Historical Society, dating it about 1973-74. The author is not identified but credit is given to Stewart A. Farrar for furnishing the information.

Grandma Was A Slave to Fashion by Jean Hadden

In these modern times, if we have dinner out in a "nice" restaurant, chances are that the average fellow sitting at the table next to us is wearing scruffy sneakers, cut off jeans, a tee shirt with something printed upon it that would make Grandma blush, and a baseball cap worn backward. His wife would look about the same.

In another era, when I was in grade school, I used to go to the grocery store every Friday with my mother because if I was good, she would buy me a whole lobster for twenty-five cents, that had been cooked and put on ice before it had a chance to die of old age. Nothing in this world could have made my Mom leave her house unless she was wearing her long, dark-colored rayon dress, corset, cotton stockings, sensible oxford pumps, hat with a little black veil, and dark patent leather purse. When we went to church on Sunday morning, she wore about the same outfit except she would not be without her white gloves. Wallis Simpson, the Dutchess of Windsor, was the ideal of every American lady. Mom actually had it pretty good compared to what her mother and grandmother had to endure.

Nearly a hundred years ago, one of the most popular publications in the country was Cram's Magazine. A delightful old curmudgeon by the name of Dr. Eugene Murray-Aaron wrote a monthly article called, "For Our Young People, whether seventeen or seventy." It was clear from the onset that he hated women and was dismayed at their stupidity. In the May, 1900 issue he raved

on about the sheer ignorance of the feminine style of dress.

He wrote, "Style, which is only another name for wastefulness, says that womankind must wear a microbe-collecting skirt that sweeps through or over all the filth and offal of the street, carrying a part of it home in the edge, which is often of fur, or in some other way best fitted to hold such a collection, and thus pollute their rooms and carry disease home to their dear ones. This skirt, being taken off over the head, with that motion drops into the owner's hair and wafts around the room the disease germs thus brought home."

Starting to huff and puff a little, he went on to say, "A few yards of silk sweeping along an ill-swept street may be very beautiful - far too beautiful - as a street sweeper. It is positively ugly as a human garment and every right-thinking man or boy instinctively feels either pity or contempt for the wearer, if he gives the matter thought."

I imagine Dr. Murray-Aaron waving his finger in the air as he pronounced the clincher by saying, "In the waist the dress and garments beneath it are so bound in that not one woman or girl in one hundred can breathe properly, nor has adequate room for the food she eats, that the dress usually has no pocket, so that its wearer has to carry her pocketbook and other treasures in her hand as an invitation and open temptation to all thieves, and it is in these days topped with a collar and a hat that do all in their combined power to prevent the wearer from seeing approaching danger." Running down he gasped, "Here we have a combination to make angels weep!"

It seemed to dismay the good doctor to no end to see a lady wear a good many wasteful yards of material from the waist down and so very little on top when she attended a dinner party. A frock with a plunging decollete, leaving the neck and shoulders bare, was the fashion of the day. The doctor told of a wit, by the name of Sidney Smith, being asked how a certain titled lady at an evening banquet was dressed and he replied, "Well, really, you know, I didn't notice; for I didn't look under the table."

I hate the sloppy fashions of our modern day but on the other hand, they are not really so bad compared to what Grandma had to put up with in her bygone days of old.

Architecture of a Small Town*by Delbert Chambers*

An ornament suspended from ones neck is called a pendant. In an architectural context there is a similar enchantment, more properly, a downward projecting ornament. This too, is called a pendant.

Architecturally, there is also an ornament that projects upward which is called a finial. *Pendants and finials* are totally aesthetic details, they have no structural function. But that's OK, in fact, that's good! We are far beyond the sole need for only basic shelter, certainly we have a soul need for more. More being decoration, or enhancement, and with it, making a shelter a home. Even the cave dweller decorated his walls.

(Although come to think of it, who wants a goofy looking mastodon likeness slobbered on their living room wall?!) But I digress.

Both pendants and finials are often rounded, as turned on a lathe, are almost always geometrically symmetrical. Their size will vary greatly depending on where they are used. A diameter of 4-6 inches and length of 8-24 inches is typical. Many have definite representative shapes, such as: cannonball, acorn, pineapple, pine cone, and urn. Warrensburgh can boast of fine examples of both pendants and finials. To note a few, look at the heavily decorated gable of 179 Main Street to see pendants that are duplicated at the lower corners of the roof. A different form can be seen in the fancy work beneath the roof line of Victorian porches, as at 52 Elm Street. Finials, too can be seen in high places, such as the tower at 194 Main Street (it seems that some are bent!). An impressive "urn" finial adorns a porch post at 53 Main Street.

These two architectural details can be seen inside one's home also. Furniture, usually that made before 1910, will often incorporate the use of pendants and finials. Very often, Victorian parlor tables will incorporate a pendant within its legwork. As I write this I look at an Empire Period game table. Within its lyre like base is a finial. Furniture pendants and finials, typically, are turned having a diameter of 1-2 inches and 1-3 inches in length. Another wonderful place to find a finial is at a fancy staircase, atop the newel post (the heavy post at the bottom of the railing). And any elaborate Victorian woodwork will often make use of these ornaments. Anyone can see a finial securing a shade to a lamp. In antique shops many examples can be found. And, in almost any town, buildings can be found that retain these interesting details. Look at the top of our bandstand.

**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. Please note if you are renewing membership or are a new member.

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 with each adult member having a 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

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