

WARRENSBURGH HISTORICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY

VOLUME 3 ISSUE 4

WINTER 1998

Woolen Mill Days Remembered by Jean Hadden

The Warrensburgh Woolen Mill, later called The Warrensburgh Pants Factory was once a thriving business whose superior product was known all around the U.S. It is generally assumed the concern was established in 1885 but Mabel Tucker, our town historian, once told me she found a reference to it in the very first newspaper, Volumn I, Number I of the Warrensburgh News which came out on January 30, 1878. At that time R. J. Whitby manufactured "plain and fancy cassimeres." Mabel said that "cassimeres" meant fine woolen cloth.

The history books say that The Woolen Mill was established in 1885 by Whitby, Emerson, and Eldridge. I assume this is a reference to Dick Whitby, a renowned local musician, the Hon. Louis W. Emerson and T.J. Eldridge, a prominent North Creek merchant. When The Warrensburgh Woolen Company, "manufacturers of men's all-wool trousers and woolen cloths" came into being in 1899, Mr. Eldridge's son, Milton N. Eldridge became general manager. Milton was a handsome, unmarried and "accomplished gentleman" who must have broken hearts right and left among all the ladies who worked for him.

John Botham Twaddle came to town in 1900 from Malone, New York to occupy the position as superintendent of the Woolen Mill. He recruited many ladies to work in the mill on his way here. My husband's mother, the former Ida May Robinson of Madrid, near Massena, was one of them. She came to Warrensburgh on April 23, 1902, married Edward Hadden and stayed here for the rest of her life. She worked from that time in the Pants Factory, sewing in pockets and later in the Dress Factory

until she retired in 1951.

When the Pants Factory started in 1899, about twenty operators were employed and the output was sixty pairs of trousers a day. A few years later fifty operators were completing 250 pairs daily. The street where the factory was located, Milton Avenue, was named for Milton Eldridge. The single-lane Woolen Mill Bridge, making the connection from River Street, was formerly a railroad or trolley bridge which was installed in 1903.

It is interesting to note that on April 18, 1949, The Warrensburgh Woolen Mill, Incorporated, was sold to Albert L. Emerson and Martha Eldridge Hayden. Mr. Emerson held an interest of 71.48 per cent and Mrs. Hayden held the remaining 28.52 per cent.

Pants manufactured in the Pants Factory were known far and wide.

Called salt and pepper they were said to be indestructible. For a short time the factory produced blankets. A pair of the pants may be seen at the Warrensburgh Museum of Local History.

The Emerson National Bank of Warrensburgh, brought an action against the Warrensburgh Woolen Fabrics, Inc. and foreclosed on their mortgage. April 7, 1950. The building fell into disrepair and many were torn down over a period of time. I heard the story that Mark Bruce won the property and the sale deed was transferred to Marcus Bruce and John Arehart on Feb. 6, 1956 by the Emerson Bank. It was next sold to Adirondack Manufacturing Company and Bud Hayes operated his welding shop in one of the outbuildings

(Continued on page five)



The Warrensburgh Woolen Mill, later called Pants Factory, which employed many workers, once stood on Milton Avenue. Established before 1878, sections of the building were still standing as late as 1966. Courtesy of Jean Hadden

From the President

This community of Warrensburgh has over 4000 residents. This publication has a readership of 300 to 500 or more, depending upon the issue. This Society has a membership of 70 plus. Why is it that the same six people do all the writing? (With four exceptions to date.) In the past I've tried politely, I think, to encourage stories from more of you. I now offer the hard reality that without more contributors, it is questionable as to whether this Quarterly will continue as the fine publication it has become. If you want to see the Warrensburgh Historical Society Quarterly continue in its present form, get involved! Call me or Linda Denner or just mail your script to us!

I hope that many of you will join us at our Holiday Dinner Social. This year our hosts will be the Carringtons, proprietors of the Merrill- MaGee House. This, now annual affair is looked forward to by many of our members.

Board of Directors

Delbert D. Chambers, President
Sandi Parisi, Treasurer
Linda Denner, Secretary
Caron L. Akeley
Jean Hadden
Kaena Peterson
Patricia Terrell, Vice Pres.
Teresa Whalen

Quarterly Editor...Linda Denner

Special Notice

Pat Terrell has accepted the Chairmanship of our Nominating Committee. Pat and her committee will be responsible for filling the vacancy of two Directorships on our Board of Directors. If any member of our Society would like to serve on the Nominating Committee or submit their name as a candidate for the Board of Directors, please call Pat at 623-2490.

New Members

Brenda and John Cleveland

Calendar of Events

No Board of Directors meeting in December

Holiday Dinner Social-December 17

Board of Directors meeting, January 28, 7PM

Articles for WHSQ, Spring '99 due, February 1

Annual General Membership meeting, February 11 held at the Richards Library, 7PM

Board of Directors meeting, February 25, 7PM

WHSQ Spring edition, Early March Release

Contributors to This Issue

Caron Akeley
Delbert Chambers
Linda and Len Denner
Jean Hadden
Ed Kreinheder
Sandi Parisi
Pat Terrell

Letters To Our Staff

Jean Hadden recently reported a letter received from Jean L. Bennett of Schenectady, a niece of Floyd Bennett, on October 27, 1998.

"Dear Ms. Hadden:

I really enjoyed your article in the Fall Edition of the Historical Society Quarterly. I had picked it up Sunday at the Dedication of the Airport.

I do not know if you were there or not. It would have been nice to meet you. There were four of us attending. There was some sort of "glitch" and we never got introduced. Can you correct some information for your records. Leroy Bennett's children: Jean L. Bennett of Schenectady, NY, Lucille McCumber from Georgia, Lura Hunter from Colorado, Joyce Mikita of Florida, Leroy D. Bennett of Syracuse, NY and Betty Lou Hardel of Atlanta, Georgia. (Joyce and Lucille's were wrong) Also one of the Bennett's grandchildren have a picture of My Father and Grandmother at the Funeral. As soon as we can locate it, I will send you a copy.

Again thank you for your work. It was a welcome addition to the Dedication.

Sincerely,
 Jean Bennett

P.S. Four of us were at the dedication. There are about 41 nieces and nephews great and great great living."

Mark your Calendars for our Annual Christmas Dinner held this year at the Merrill Magee House 6:00 PM for Cocktails 7:15 PM Dinner Thursday Evening December 17, 1998

for members and non-members \$20.00 per member/\$25.00 per Non-member

**Choice of Entrees
 Stuffed Pork with Blackberry Sauce
 Broiled Salmon with Hollandaise
 Prime Ribs of Beef**

RSVP by Dec. 11 to 623-3514

Antique Soup by Caron Akeley

Registration Marks on Old English China

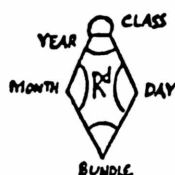
When one finds an old treasure lurking on the far back shelf of the pantry or comes across a similar treasure in a garage sale or flea market, you think to yourself, "It's old, but how old is it?" When this treasure happens to be a dinner plate, saucer, bowl, etc. made in England in the 19th Century, solving the mystery of date of manufacture is no problem at all.

Between the years 1842 and 1883, all china, glass, metal and wood products made in England had to be registered with the British Patent Office. On earthenware china, the mark took the form of a diamond with a circle on top imprinted or impressed on the back of the piece. From 1842 to 1867 the letters and numerals on the registration changed somewhat. This will become apparent when looking at the accompanying sketch.

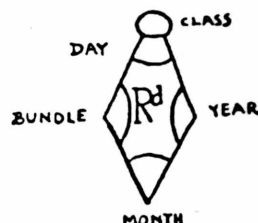
1883 was the beginning of the use of another registration mark. This consisted of the letters "Rd" followed by numerals in a horizontal line. After 1891, the word "England" is found on the bottom of chinaware and the phrase "Made in England" appears after 1900.

In the circle above the diamond the "class" of goods, in this case being earthenware china, is always marked with the Roman numeral IV. metal I, wood II, and glass III were also marked.

Armed with this valuable information, one can not only find the year your treasure was manufactured, but also the exact month and day.



Year letters 1842-67:		
X 1842	P 1851	Z 1860
H 1843	D 1852	R 1861
C 1844	Y 1853	O 1862
A 1845	J 1854	G 1863
I 1846	E 1855	N 1864
F 1847	L 1856	W 1865
U 1848	K 1857	Q 1866
S 1849	B 1858	T 1867
V 1850	M 1859	
Month letters 1842-67:		
C January	E May	D September
G February	M June	B October
W March	I July	K November
H April	R August	A December
Cycle 1868-83		



Registration marks, contd. Cycle 1868-1883

Year letters 1868-83:		
X 1868	U 1874	J 1880
H 1869	S 1875	E 1881
C 1870	V 1876	L 1882
A 1871	P 1877	K 1883
I 1872	D 1878	
F 1873	Y 1879	
Month letters 1868-83:		
C January	E May	D September
G February	M June	E October
W March	I July	K November
H April	R August	A December
Note: in 1878, from 1st to 6th March, the registration letters were G for the month and W for the year.		

Pat's Column

Mother's Coat!

Sometime toward the end of the "Great Depression", our family like all others were struggling to survive in the Adirondacks. Somehow, and no one now living in our family can remember where the money came from, but we were able to buy a new coat for Mother. It was truly beautiful, a black wool low pile fabric with a black velvet insert to the collar, this made it very "rich looking" and I believe the style was called *Chesterfield*.

Mother was very proud of her *Chesterfield* and all of us, myself and two older sisters, "strutted our stuff" when walking in the village.

A couple of years later my oldest sister's coatsleeves were up her

arms about four inches and the length was too short as well. So, Mother's coat went to Maxine, Maxine's coat went to Corky and her coat to me.

Within the next year the *Chesterfield* got a new set of buttons, was given a new piece of velvet for the collar, and Corky wore it for three years.

About this time I started school and being the poor coat had by now lost most of its nap, faded some and being beyond repair, was taken apart. The "good sections" were patterned, cut and sewn into a beautiful jumper dress for me.

Now.....my triumph was one of a kind, not off the rack and was designed by a wonderful loving Mother.

I am proud to be one of my family and to say.....recycling is nothing new to me!



Mother Schermerhorn
courtesy of Pat Terrell



*Chippendale Style Desk of 1790-1800
Courtesy of Ed Kreinheder*

***Some Antiques Sold in our
Warrensburgh Store 30
Years Ago
by Ed Kreinheder***

After the Revolution our American Artisans returned to their native crafts. After following the styles of the great English cabinetmakers for almost 200 years, they gradually developed a Federal style using a combination of native woods, veneers and patriotic motifs. The English styles were more sophisticated and flamboyant while the American styles were more austere, more vigorous, nicer proportioned so we think.

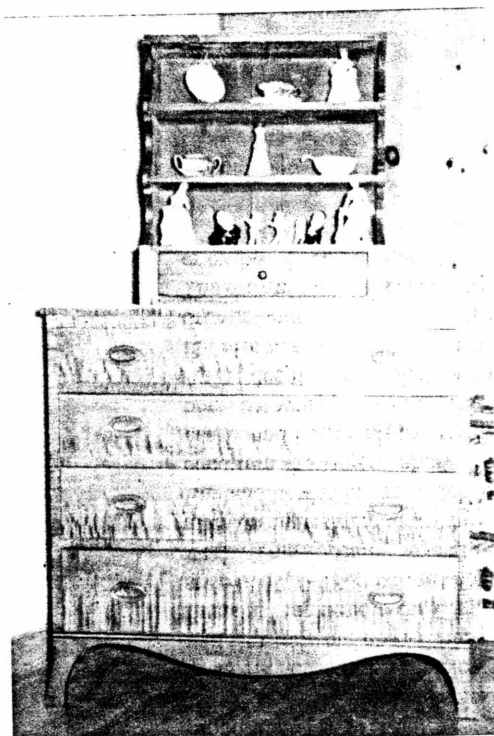
A few pieces we picked up in an old house in Fonda, New York, will illustrate our observations. First a fine slant top desk in the Chippendale style of 1790-1800 period cabinet work. This appeared several decades after its highest popularity in England. It was in completely original condition showing no abuse or hard usage, and having all its original brass bat wing pulls and escutcheons. A fine deeply carved shell on the slant lid, also neatly carved and curved drawers and compartments inside. The drawers were reverse serpentine or ox-bow in contour usually

laminated and veneered in England. These were carved from 3 1/2" planks, strictly an American innovation. There were four drawers of graduated depth, four hand carved claw and ball feet. The whole executed in the finest workmanship and dove tailing. The entire desk was made of first growth butternut with fine grain, which when properly stained and finished had the exact appearance of mahogany.

Another piece from the same house was a fine tall cased clock by Fredrick Vingate, Augusta Maine, eight-day brass movement and metal painted dial with moving moon showing the phases. This was in a fine Roxbury Connecticut style case in cherry and mahogany with a fret work arch over the dial and three brass ball and spire finials. the Roxbury case was an American innovation made in Roxbury around 1800. Cost of this fine clock was about \$600; today it might be worth \$12,000.

Also around the same time, found in town a very nice curly maple four drawer chest in country Hepplewhite style with a very strong figured curl. It was exceptionally well made with fine dovetailing on the drawers. This was purchased from the Herrick family and said to have been made at a local cabinetmakers shop here in Warrensburgh.

Another American



*Curly Maple Chest made in
Warrensburgh
courtesy Ed Kreinheder*

innovation was the wooden works clocks with movements completely made of wood. The gears were made of birch and cherrywood and plated of 1/4 sawn white oak. As these works, once well seasoned and stabilized would not shrink or warp, they wore very well. These were made from about 1790-1830 and were much easier and cheaper to make than the brass works. They were made in great quantities, mostly in Connecticut. They were very cheap, worked well, and were distributed all over the Northeast. Most ran for thirty hours but a few had eight day movements. The movements for tall case clocks were carried by peddlers and sold as Wag-on-wall, or tall case was made by a local cabinetmaker. Riley Whiting, Winchester, Connecticut was famous for these and are plentiful today. The shelf clocks had a wooden case with half round pillars on either side and a

(Continued from last page)

a scroll top board between two plinths. The pillars and scrolls were painted black with gold stencils. Common stencil motif included American eagles, cornucopias, baskets of fruit and foliage designs and were very handsome when well done. They were also made in a very dainty mahogany case designed by Eli Terry about 1815. They had slender free standing columns and broken arch scroll top with three brass ball and spire finials. These were the most attractive of all wooden work clocks and were called the Pillar and Scroll. The lower door had a reverse painted glass panel with historic motifs. These clocks bring \$2000 today and are much sought after.



Then and Now

The "Colonial Arms" well known restaurant and inn of Warrensburgh
Courtesy of Jean Hadden

(Continued from page one)

Woolen Mill

for a time. Dick Potter bought the place in 1965 and sold it to Merv Hadden in 1966.

In 1949 Martha Hayden owned a part of it with a factory on it and in 1998 Jean Hadden owns all of it with no factory on it. Every single person, with the exception of Dick Potter and I, who were involved with the Woolen Mill property, are all dead and gone. It is a sobering thought.

On a warm summer day I like to sit down on the beach facing the Schroon River and think about the way things used to be and wonder what will come next. It will be up to someone else to write the next chapter in this story.



Rite-Aide Pharmacy

Built on the same site as the beloved hotel. Photograph taken June 1998
courtesy of Jean Hadden

Warrensburgh Enters Modern Times The Construction of the Northway

by Linda Denner

"At 5:15 p.m., every evening the dog would go down to the cellar to avoid the crash of dynamite that would be heard every night at precisely 5:30," Sarah Farrar the town librarian recalled. The year was 1964 and the blasting was clearing the rocks for the construction of the Adirondack Northway. The northern route would connect Albany, New York with Montreal, Canada. The Adirondack mountain rock formation is ledge and progress was slow through the mountain range. A single blast would clear a very small portion of rock at a time. That year enrollment at the Warrensburgh Schools hit an all time high as road workers gathered from all over the country to participate in this huge undertaking. Staff photographer Dunn from The National Geographic Magazine, took up residence in the village to record the ongoing progress.

The Adirondack mountains were historically sparsely populated by nomadic Indian tribes. Up to the early part of the eighteenth century, Indians hunted in the woods and vacationed along the shores of the many lakes, including the presently named Lake George, to escape the summer heat. William Bond was the first settler of Warrensburgh in 1786, followed by assorted adventurers and settlers. The town was formally chartered in 1813. Affectionately known as the Queen Village of the Adirondacks, its natural endowments included the confluence of the Schroon River and the Hudson River bisecting the village, which lies at the foothills of the famous mountain range. Farming, tanning, lumber, and growing industries carried the increasing population of the village into the twentieth century. In 1882 the J.P. Baumann & Son's Shirt Waist Factory opened their doors in Warrensburgh. "Good products are always in demand in the trade centers of the country," toted the owners. The output of its goods reached 100,000 dozen of shirts yearly and employed

800 people. In the 1890's it was calculated by a manufacturer of cotton goods that the amount of cloth involved in a single purchase at this plant was sufficient to reach from New York to Chicago. If all the waists manufactured by this firm were worn by individual women east of the Mississippi, there would not be a woman in that part of the country without a waist of their manufacture. This activity continued for many years to come, by the 1950's "When the noon whistle blew, people poured out the doors of the factory like bees from a hive," commented Adirondack native Pat Terrell. By mid-twentieth century, the town boasted a pulp mill, grist mill, saw mill, and a woolen mill that had provided the clothing for Admiral Byrd's polar expeditions. In the center of town a bandstand was constructed to mark and celebrate the accomplishments of favorite son, Floyd Bennett. Bennett served as aviator for Admiral Byrd's trip. Years later local antique dealers would sell the famous son's crib to visiting tourists/collectors again and again.

This section of the Adirondacks was familiar to most summer tourists from the nineteenth century to the present as a popular vacation destination. Millions would come through neighboring Lake George Village making day trips to Bolton Landing on Lake George, and beautiful little Warrensburgh became famous for its hospitality as well as numerous antique shops.

In 1962 when the Northway project gained impetus, Town Supervisor Charlie Hastings expressed concern that the traffic and resulting commerce might come to an end. Prosperity and the world would pass the town by. Naturally natives welcomed the "summer visitors" exit come labor day, but the income provided from the industry they generated was undeniable. The locals saw it as a necessary evil, but enjoyed the resumption of quieter times, no lines at the supermarkets and roads that were once again open for ease in traveling.

Without the new construction, travel between neighboring communities would be limited to old Route 9, a two lane country road that resulted in bumper to bumper traffic from Memorial Day through Labor Day. "When we needed to go down to Glens Falls, Sarah Farrar recalled, we would drive west over to Stony Creek, south on to Corinth, and come up from the south to Glens Falls through the country routes instead of Route 9. It was a much greater distance, but it took the same amount of time, and my Father said, "We could at least enjoy the scenery." Time and circumstances demanded that action be taken to correct this ever increasing dilemma. Progress demanded change and in 1966, Governor Nelson Rockefeller cut the ribbon opening the road North at Warrensburgh.

Today in 1998, thirty-two years later the change can be seen in the town. Fears that the world would pass by proved false. The population then was about 2000 and now stands at approximately 4,000. Northwest destinations remained more directly approached through the small village. Gore Mountain, Indian and Friends Lakes, popular tourist destinations for winter sports as well as summer holidays, meant traversing the Main Street of the small town. Hudson Headquarters Health Center located in the center of town serves a radius of seventy miles for medical services. Some of the formal homes build by previous industrial entrepreneurs remain but have been converted into Bed and Breakfast establishments, altered but intact.

Antique dealer, Caron Akeley established her shop here, Cleverdale Antiques, eighteen years ago. Coming from neighboring Lake George, essentially a summer tourist community, the appeal of Warrensburgh lay beyond the location of an Antique Shop. Purchasing a home in the town it has provided the usual appeal of small town life. Caron explained her view, "It's homey, nose as hell, but you get to like it. If you broke your ankle on the sidewalk, people would pick you up, take you home and leave you a pork roast in the oven." Natives, like Pat Terrell explain, "We live a slower pace life and we take more notice of everything that happens, and we don't take much for granted." Newcomers and Adirondackers that trace their lineage back to the very beginnings of

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choice, remain in the small community.

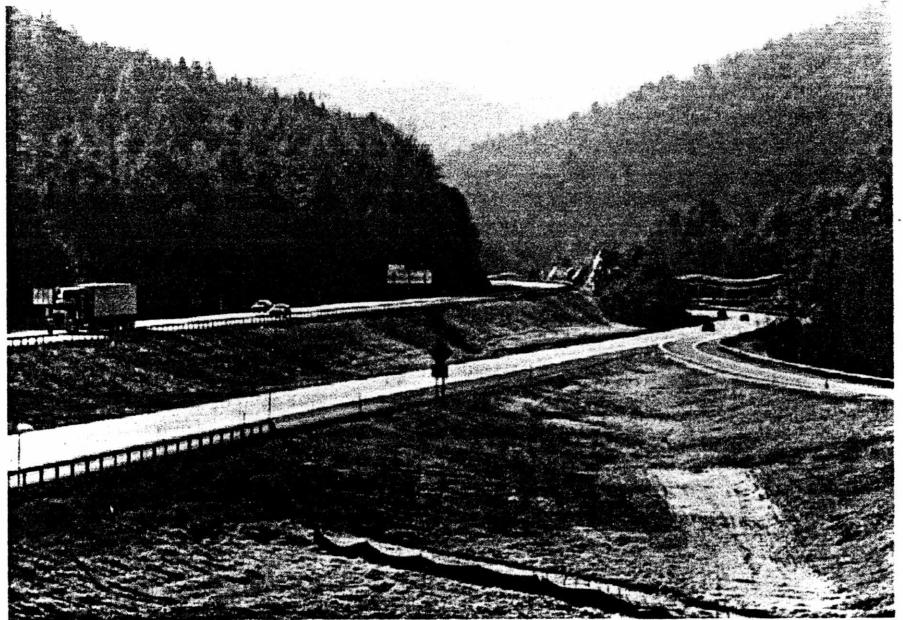
Retirees who find no problem with the severe winters of the North County, are representing an ever increasing segment of the town's population. Librarian Farrar recounted that the regions most famous entrepreneur, John T. Thurman, in the late eighteenth century would travel south to meet ships landing on the wharfs of New York City. They were arriving from England and Scotland at that time, and Thurman would lure them to the Adirondacks with tales of wonderful farming. With glowing promises the immigrants would follow Thurman north and establish homesteads, many traceable to current residents. Thurman failed to mention the short growing season or that the mountains seemed to grow rocks better than anything else, but the charm of the landscape as well as the plentiful wildlife held them to the land. It is speculated that since the growing season is short due to cold temperatures, only three to four months, residents are consummate and enthusiastic gardeners. Every household, small or grand is covered with flowers come June, and you can find a vegetable patch in every backyard.

Summer visitors of previous years, return again and again, and in time, at the end of their professional careers, return to take up permanent residence for the final years of their lives. Regina Porter, retiree who has established a busy and vital life in the town, reported that in her experience as an Executive Secretary in relocating company transfers, the successful ones were those who became involved in the local community. They would slowly and steadily create a new network of friends and associates making their new location feel like home. Small towns in present day American life make it easy for newcomers. The walls between the native born and the newly transplanted seem to have relaxed. This may be a reflection of the general homogenization that is taking place throughout the American landscape. Television and the media are diffusing the dissimilarities of geographic regions. Shopping malls look the same whether located in the North,

South, West or East, same stores, same merchandise. The melting pot continues to boil away and, at times the ingredients added have become more and more blended into a single flavor.

Most of us share a dream for a home, friends and acceptance. Home is where somebody knows your name, as the song states, and acceptance is where they take you in come what may. Small town living offers a home for those of us who have decided that we need to know our neighbors name and history and they ours. It is a choice made by many who have the economic where with all to have options. Small towns did not die with the advances of superhighways and manufacturers taking their facilities to more lucrative settings. We still have the entrepreneurs like J.P. Baumann who began a shirt factory in 1890 and went on to finance and extend his reach into other business ventures. Cyberspace finds several business addresses in Warrensburgh and cottage industry as well as tourism remain fundamental to the local economy. The area boasts of many authors that can find the inspiration as well as the isolation the creative process requires. The delight

of a resident who can solve a neighborhood problem by a simple conversation with his Town Supervisor, without months or years of red tape still occurs. Many problems that remain unsolved for large urban areas are not present in small town USA. When a need arises, everyone is aware of it. Surely not everyone responds, however, most times the community takes care of its own. Last year Warrensburgh's local Baptist church, built in 1810, was lost to fire. The parishioners were heartbroken, but within one week they had been provided with Bibles from the Episcopal Church, and a hall, free of charge, for their services. It was viewed as a loss for the whole town. On Easter Sunday 1998, their new Church opened for services. Residents, Baptist or not, carried flowers and offerings to wish them well. The town rejoiced, in one voice, to the resurrection. It was a happy and notable event for everyone who lives in this small town of 4000.



*Adirondack Northway facing North at Warrensburgh Exit 23 taken 1998
Courtesy of Len Denner*



*All Enjoy our October Meeting with Master Gardener Lainie Angel
Top Left Sarah Farrar, Kaena Peterson, Lainie Angel; Right Linda
Denner and Steve Parisi, Lower Center Lainie Angel, Teresa Whalen,
Jamie Rafferty and Caron Akeley.*

**We Invite You All to Submit
Stories, Photographs, and
Remembrances
for Inclusion in our Upcoming
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We publish a Fall, Winter,
Spring and Summer
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